



To: Superintendents
Charter School Directors

From: Alice Seagren
Commissioner

Date: December 4, 2009

Re: Race to the Top Plan Update

The Minnesota Department of Education (“Department”) will be hosting WebEx seminars and small group meetings to share with you the state of Minnesota’s Race to the Top (“RTTT”) plan. We are excited about enhancing and improving the State’s educational system through this initiative.

As you may know, the United States Department of Education recently released the final application for the Race to the Top plan. The final application is very similar to the application outlined at regional meetings with school districts and charter schools in October. We appreciated hearing your feedback during the regional meetings and through individual stakeholder meetings.

The final Race to the Top selection criteria are grouped against six assurance areas:

1. **State Success Factors:** Having a well articulated and broadly supported reform strategy with sound implementation plans, past success in raising student achievement and closing the achievement gap.
2. **Standards and Assessments:** Adopting internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace.
3. **Data Systems to Support Instruction:** Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices.
4. **Great Teachers and Leaders:** Recruiting, developing, retaining and rewarding effective teachers and principals.

5. **Turning Around Struggling Schools:** Turning around the persistently lowest performing schools.
6. **General Selection Criteria:** Making education funding a priority, ensuring successful conditions for charters and other innovative school models, and demonstrating other reform conditions.

WebEx Seminars

The Department will host WebEx seminars for school districts and charter schools on Tuesday, December 8 and Wednesday, December 9. The WebEx Seminars will allow school districts and charter schools to receive an overview of the State's Race to the Top plan prior to the small group meetings. Space is limited to 195 spaces per session. You must pre-register in order to participate. The WebEx seminars will be available on the following dates and times:

Tuesday, December 8

10:00-12:00 noon

To register for this session, go to:

<https://mde.webex.com/mde/k2/j.php?ED=130898222&UID=1088515557&FM=1> and enter your name and email address. Once the host approves your registration, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the session.

Tuesday, December 8

1:30-3:30 p.m.

To register for this session, go to:

<https://mde.webex.com/mde/k2/j.php?ED=130898082&UID=1088515922&FM=1> and enter your name and email address. Once the host approves your registration, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the session.

Wednesday, December 9

10:00-12:00 noon

To register for this session, go to:

<https://mde.webex.com/mde/k2/j.php?ED=130898307&UID=1088516652&FM=1> and enter your name and email address. Once the host approves your registration, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the session.

Wednesday, December 9

1:30-3:30 p.m.

To register for this session, go to:

<https://mde.webex.com/mde/k2/j.php?ED=130898322&UID=1088516677&FM=1>

1 and enter your name and email address. Once the host approves your registration, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the session.

Due to availability of space, your district/charter school will be allotted one slot on a first come, first serve basis. District and charter school staff will be asked to identify themselves prior to entering the conference call; this information is being requested in order to ensure that all school districts and charter schools have a chance to participate in the WebEx seminars.

To test your system's ability to connect to a WebEx session, you may join a test session at any time between 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. on Monday, December 7. A conference call will not be a part of this test and MDE staff will not be sharing information during this test session. Pre-registration for this session is not required. When you have successfully joined this session you will see a PowerPoint slide that indicates you have successfully joined the session and may log-off (leave) this practice session.

To join this TEST training session:

1. Go to <https://mde.webex.com/mde/k2/j.php?ED=130945077&UID=1088633917>
2. Enter your name and email address.
3. Enter the session password: RTTT2009!
4. Click "Join Now."
5. Follow the instructions that appear on your screen.

RTTT Group Meetings

In addition to the WebEx meetings, the Department will be holding small group meetings with local districts and charter schools from December 10-18, 2009. These meetings will provide staff with the opportunity to learn more about the plan in a smaller group setting. The Department will also review the process for participation, budget information and timelines for state and local activities proposed under the state of Minnesota's Race to the Top plan.

School district superintendents are *strongly encouraged* to invite local teacher representatives, school board members and appropriate staff. Given the importance of teacher participation, the Department will reimburse the school district for substitute pay for one teacher to participate in the meeting. Please send the Department an e-mail message to mde.rttt@state.mn.us if you plan to request substitute pay reimbursement.

School districts and charter schools (including superintendents, teachers, and school board members) may attend any one (1) of the following meetings listed below.

Meetings on Thursday, December 10, 2009 - AM

Who: Metropolitan School Districts

Location: **Falcon Heights**
TIES Building
Larpenteur Room
1667 Snelling Ave. N.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us

Meetings on Thursday, December 10, 2009 - PM

Who: **Charter Schools**

Location: **Roseville**
Minnesota Department of Education
Conference Center A, Room 13
1500 Highway 36 West

Time: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: **Rural School Districts and Charter Schools**

Location: **North Mankato**
North Port Building
1970 Lookout Drive
North Mankato, MN 56003

Time: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Meetings on Friday, December 11, 2009 - AM

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Thief River Falls
District Offices, Board Conference Room
230 LaBree Avenue
Thief River Falls, MN 56701

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Rochester
District Professional Development Building
Room 105
334 16th Street SE
Rochester, MN 55904

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Meetings on Friday, December 11, 2009 - PM

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Brainerd
District Offices, Room 200
804 Oak Street
Brainerd, MN 56401

Time: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Meetings on Monday, December 14, 2009 – AM

Who: Rural and Metropolitan School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Northfield
Longfellow Building – Room 102
201 Orchard Street
Northfield, MN 55057

Time: 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Meetings on Monday, December 14, 2009 - PM

Who: Rural and Metropolitan School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: St. Francis High School
3325 Bridge St
St. Francis, MN 55070

Time: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Meetings on Tuesday, December 15, 2009 - AM

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Albert Lea
Brookside Education Center - Board Room
211 West Richway Drive
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Hutchinson
District Office Conference Room
30 Glen Street North
Hutchinson, MN 55350

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Lac Qui Parle
District Office – Board Room
286-291st Avenue
(Hwys 40 and 119)
Madison, MN 56256

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Moorhead
District Office – Board Room (#224)
2410 14th Street South
Moorhead, MN 56560

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Meetings on Tuesday, December 15, 2009 - PM

Who: Rural and Metropolitan School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Delano
City Hall Conference Room
234 2nd Street N.
Delano, MN 55328

Time: 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Marshall
Marshall High School – Fine Arts Conference Room
400 Tiger Drive
Marshall, MN 56258

Time: 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Owatonna
District Office – Board Room
515 W. Bridge Street
Owatonna, MN 55060

Time: 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Fergus Falls
District Office – Conference Room
1519 Pebble Lake Road
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

Time: 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Meetings on Wednesday, December 16, 2009 - AM

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Mountain Iron
Northeast Service Coop – Superior Room II
5525 Emerald Avenue
Mt. Iron, MN 55768

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Worthington
Worthington High School Media Center – Board Room
1211 Clary Street
Worthington, MN 56187

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Alexandria
Woodland Elementary – Oak Conference Room
1410 S. McKay Avenue
Alexandria, MN 56308

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Metropolitan School Districts

Location: Falcon Heights
TIES Building - Cafeteria
1667 Snelling Ave. N.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Proctor
Proctor Community Center – Conference Center
100 Pionk Drive
Proctor, MN 55810

Time: 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: St. Cloud
Apollo High School – Conference Room A
1000 44th Avenue N.
St. Cloud, MN 56303

Time: 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Fairmont
District Office – Room 112
115 S. Park Street
Fairmont, MN 56301

Time: 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location, to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Meetings on Thursday, December 17, 2009 - AM

Who: Metropolitan School Districts

Location: Falcon Heights
TIES Building – Snelling Room
1667 Snelling Ave. N.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Time: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date, location, and time to: mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Meetings on Friday, December 18, 2009 - PM

Who: Charter Schools

Location: Roseville
Minnesota Department of Education
Conference Center B, Conference Room 18
1500 Highway 36 West

Time: 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date and location to:
mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Who: Rural School Districts and Charter Schools

Location: Bemidji
District Office – Board Room
3300 Gillette Drive NW
Bemidji, MN 56601

Time: 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Registration: Send list of participants, along with meeting date, location, and time to:
mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

Follow-up WebEx Seminars

After the small group meetings, the Department will host another series of WebEx seminars. These seminars are designed to give school districts and charter schools the opportunity to ask any follow-up questions. In addition, school districts and charter schools are welcome at any time to directly request information from the Department by sending an e-mail to mde.rttt@state.mn.us.

The WebEx seminars will be available on the following dates and times:

Tuesday, January 5, 2010

10:00-12:00 noon

WebEx Access Information: TBD

Wednesday, January 6, 2010

1:30-3:30 p.m.

WebEx Access Information: TBD

Thursday, January 7, 2010

10:00-12:00 noon

WebEx Access Information: TBD

Friday, January 8, 2010

1:30-3:30 p.m.

WebEx Access Information: TBD

Please note that district and charter school staff will be asked to identify themselves prior to entering the conference call; this information is being requested in order to ensure that all school districts and charter schools have a chance to participate in the WebEx seminars.

Final RTTT Participation

The school district and charter school's final participation form must be provided to the Department *no later than Wednesday, January 13, 2009 at 4:30 p.m.* Forms must be sent via e-mail to mde.rttt@state.mn.us, faxed to 651-582-8724 or may be *hand delivered* to:

Lesley Hinz
Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113

The Department *will not accept* the forms by U.S. mail due to the general delay in receiving U.S. mail in Roseville.

RTTT Key Dates

December 8 and 9, 2009

RTTT WebEx Seminars (see schedule above)

December 10-18, 2009

RTTT Small Group meetings (see schedule above)

January 5-8, 2010

Follow-up WebEx Seminars (see schedule above)

January 13, 2010

Districts and charter schools must deliver RTTT support form *no later than 4:30 p.m.*