

## **RACE TO THE TOP: PROJECT 5 - Grading and Assessment**

### **Executive Summary:**

Grading and Assessment Project invests additional resources (\$418,328) in the district's ongoing efforts and process to restructure how grading and assessment take place, both in preparation for CCSS implementation, and as a result of our drive toward educational equity throughout our District. This project invests in staff time to develop, test, analyze, improve, and implement a grading and assessment system based on our educational reforms and imminent implementation of CCSS in California in 2014. We are also budgeting for teacher-leader coaches who will follow-up with teachers during class time and during Instructional Leadership Team meetings around grading and data – driven assessment. Funds are one time expenditures for substitute and/or stipends and materials for task force members to attend meetings and professional development.

### **January 28, 2014**

Some big changes are happening in the 9th grade Algebra 1 classes at Logan, thanks to the hard work and dedication of teachers and students. This amazing team of teachers is working to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed in Algebra. The changes they've made fall into three main areas: equitable practices and policies; implementing the Common Core and Math Studio; and collaboration. This work is part of Project 1 (Literacy and Common Core) and Project 5 (Grading and Assessment) in the RTTT-D grant.

The six teachers who teach 9th grade Algebra 1 and their math coach, George Oliviero, started by agreeing to three significant policy changes in grading, classroom management plan, and common formative assessments. They (also are striving) to use multiple entry points, multiple representations and error analysis as common practices. The focus is on giving every student an equitable opportunity to learn and show content mastery in the class, even if it means allowing students to make up assignments and retake tests as needed. The team has created common formative assessments, which allows teachers to determine which skills and concepts the students have mastered or need to work on, and then provide interventions as needed. (District equity consultant) Enid Lee has been consulting with the team to support them in developing and implementing these policies.

In addition to changes in policy, the teachers are rebuilding the Algebra 1 course based on the common core math standards. They are implementing their learning from Math Studio, infusing the Mathematical Habits of Mind and Habits of Interaction in their classrooms. This year teachers and students have had a particular focus on student discourse, as well as on functions and patterns.

Collaboration has been key in making all these changes. The master schedule was created to give them a common prep period, when the teachers can talk informally about their lessons, visit each other and discuss issues at length. The team has been meeting outside of school as well, often meeting after school, over dinner and on weekends to create units. They have been paid hourly for their work, but they have truly gone above and beyond.

The work by these teachers is extensive and difficult, but rewarding as well. The best news is that they are truly making a difference for students. There was a good improvement in the passing rate for students in the first quarter. At semester, the passing rate was about what it had been in the past. The Cohort is examining both its practices and student practices for future improvement, showing that with change it's often two steps forward and one step back.

Thanks to the Logan 9th Grade Algebra teachers for doing everything they can to make certain that all students succeed.

### **June 11, 2013**

“This week, our focus is student assessment, which is part of many RTTT-D projects, including Project 1, 3, 4 and 5. Below are updates on what's happening with NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association assessments, used to measure individual student progress,) our new data and assessment management system, and coaching (as it relates to student assessment).

“NWEA: Given that next year is the initial implementation of the CCSS, and that the professional development being provided aligns to the CCSS, we will be transitioning to the CCSS aligned version of the NWEA benchmark assessments for K-6+ (this includes grades 7-9) math and reading. Students will still be given individual growth goals and RIT scores (from a curriculum scale that uses individual item difficulty values to estimate student achievement), and the goal areas and DesCartes (a tool that displays learning statements that enhance a teacher's ability to provide targeted instruction) will be aligned to the CCSS. In order for students to have accurate growth targets, it was advised that we begin the year with the CCSS aligned version. Sites will still be able to project proficiency based on the CST (California Standards Test) due to the norming study that links the current California standards with the NWEA RIT scores.

“Data and Assessment Management System: Our district has been in need of a data and assessment management system since we lost Data Director. Included in the grant are provisions for a new system that will enable us to access assessment information; (both summative and formative); create formative and summative assessments connected to the common core from an item bank; and formulate "user-friendly" reports allowing teachers to use data to inform instruction. Vendors will be interviewed (this) week, and we will make a selection soon after that.

“Coaches: All sites will have literacy and math coaches in the fall. We have hired nearly all of them ... As part of their work, coaches will be working with teachers to help them use assessments to inform instruction. Beginning in 2014-15, we will have assessment coaches as well, to further assist staff in using data to support student learning.

“Since summer break begins next week, this will be the last RTT-D Update for the 2013-14 year. Thank you for your thoughtful questions and suggestions in response to the updates.”

### **March 12, 2013**

“Project 5 is the continuation of the district's ongoing efforts and process to restructure how grading and assessment take place, both in preparation for the implementation of Common Core

State Standards, and as a result of our drive toward educational equity throughout our District. The grading and assessment task force has been meeting together for nearly two years, working to develop, test, analyze, improve, and implement a grading and assessment system based on our educational reforms and the CCSS. RTTT-D funds are now being used to support this work. The task force is a committee of K-12 teachers and administrators, and they met last week, discussing, learning and working on:

- Updating RTT-D grading and assessment time lines and deliverables
- Common core standards and assessments and Smarter Balanced Assessments
- Drafting a grading and assessment document
- Aligning and being responsive to connections to other parts of the RTT-D grant (technology, Evaluation Task Force, literacy, math, community, college and career)

“Leading the work is K-12 Director Dr. Olivia Lynch. We thank the grading and assessment task force for their work over the last two years, and look forward to a new vision for grading and assessment in New Haven.”