



Now What? Life in New York After Race To The Top

In 2013-2014, the BOCES District Superintendents asked S/CDN leadership to prepare for the conclusion of Race To The Top funding with a report that would describe the impact of the conclusion of funds and make subsequent recommendations. The District Superintendents also wanted a description of the impact that the Race To The Top/Regents Reform Agenda was having on work that had already been occurring across the state. Lastly, they also asked about the work that is needed to truly prepare our students for College, Career, and Citizenship Readiness. Here are the recommendations (the complete whitepaper is available at scdn.wsboces.org):

- 1** The driving goal of College, Career, and Citizenship Readiness must be broadened beyond the myopic definition presently employed. The business community has repeatedly communicated what it desires of our graduates. The characteristics and qualities detailed in the SCANS Report (and incorporated into NYS CDOS Standard 3a) continue to be what businesses say they want in employees. It is time to look beyond a definition based on college remediation. We should let the 4Cs (Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creative Problem Solving) drive our vision for College, Career, and Citizenship Readiness. Districts were already beginning to shift their focus to the future before the RTTT came along. In many places, the Regents Reform Agenda goals narrowed the definition of Readiness. Some districts and BOCES, despite limited resources, have continued their longer-ranged focus. It is time that New York's leadership looks to the future, too.
- 2** At the very least, funding for professional development and Common Core implementation have to be maintained at their present levels for a sustained period of time. SED should work with the federal and state legislative and executive leadership to ensure a sustained funding stream that does not employ competitive awards. The fundamental premise that competition promotes innovation is flawed and only exacerbates inequitable and uneven implementation. Sustained funding and clear expectations is the better path to consistent and pervasive implementation.
- 3** The emphasis on instructional technology should shift from preparation for computer based testing to an emphasis on the use of technology to help learning and to prepare students for their future in a world that regularly uses technology to research, communicate, collaborate and construct meaning. In addition, technology access should be equitable throughout the state. Teachers will require professional development as the paradigm of instructional technology shifts from being a special event to a way of doing business.
- 4** The provision of a comprehensive "Road Map" by the State Education Department (SED) would help districts plan for SED requirements and expectations and allow districts to better integrate local initiatives with state initiatives. Understanding that the only constant is change, the road map could be adjusted and revised as necessary. The clear expression of expectations, both performance and structural, would increase the likelihood of a consistent implementation and decrease room for interpretation and speculation.
- 5** The focus of Data Driven Instruction (DDI) should pivot to instruction. Resources and attention should be directed to DDI rather than to accountability data and the data portal. The public mood is intolerant of the present emphasis. A course correction toward the original emphasis on common formative interim assessment would be welcomed by the community and would have a greater impact on learning. SED and the legislature should redirect resources to support professional development in this area. S/CDN and the BOCES are prepared to provide the training and support needed in the field.