



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

To: Superintendents and Charter School Leaders
From: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner
Date: April 1, 2010
Subject: Round 2 of Race to the Top

As you know, we learned on Monday that Massachusetts was not selected as a winning state in Round One of Race to the Top. We were disappointed at the news, but knew that ours was not the only strong application that was submitted, and that the process was extremely competitive.

We have since received detailed feedback from the U.S. Department of Education, and have begun to think through improvements we can make to our application to reapply for Round 2. We will need to cut approximately \$37 million from our overall budget, and will revamp our application to strengthen and clarify sections that left the reviewers with questions.

This revision period will also provide us with an opportunity to reopen our Memorandum of Understanding process to allow districts that did not previously submit a completed MOU another opportunity to participate. We will only accept MOUs that are signed by the district leadership team: superintendent, School Committee chair and teacher's union president. **These new MOUs will be due on May 14.**

We encourage those of you who were unable to gain the support of your School Committee or union leadership to reopen the conversation, and to share with them our Preliminary Menu of Options (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/arra/rttt/menuofoptions.doc>), which details a variety of projects that differ widely in cost and time commitment.

As we revise our application, we do not intend to make any radical changes, and remain committed to our four key initiatives:

1. Developing and retaining an effective, academically capable, diverse, and culturally competent educator workforce
2. Providing curricular and instructional resources that support teacher effectiveness and success for all students
3. Concentrating great instruction and supports for educators, students, and families in our lowest performing schools
4. Increasing our focus on college and career readiness for all students

Our goal over the next eight weeks will be to use the USED feedback to strengthen and sharpen the focus of these initiatives, respond to questions and reinforce our overall strategy for Massachusetts.

We were extremely proud to note in our Round 1 application that more than 250 districts and charter schools committed to participating in our RTTT initiatives, and I am hopeful that our numbers will swell even higher for Round 2. If you have questions about how to submit an MOU for your charter school or district by the May 14 deadline, please contact Heidi Guarino at hguarino@doe.mass.edu.

I am confident that after completing our revisions, Massachusetts will make an even stronger showing in Round 2 of RTTT. That said, whether we are successful or not, I am extremely pleased with the work we have done to draft our proposal, and see it as our roadmap to the next, critically important phase of Education Reform in Massachusetts.

I hope that after reviewing the details of our proposal with your district leadership team, you will choose to join us on this important journey.