

RTTT

Results Overview



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 Responses: Completes
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5. Please make your comments here in response to any (or all) the questions above.	
#	Response
1	Districts do not have the funding to implement the changes as outlined. The Federal Government has to stop printing money it does not have. If these changes were so important where were our elected officials during the last 10-15 years? They pull it off in a month. We submit the grant a month after the deadline and it gets through. A deadline is a deadline. Michigan did not have the ducks in a row.
2	In order for us to "re-imagine" and win the "race for top" it is imperative that classroom educators and building administrators, who daily face the challenges, are involved in the process.
3	I am concerned that it seems the urban high schools will be "targeted." As you can guess, I work in one. I work at Lansing Eastern High School. I am a Nationally Board Certified Teacher and a proud member of NME. I am very involved at my school and within my school district. I push for and help implement change. Every year we look more closely at more student data. We make staffing/schedule decision based on what we think is best for students. We handle all of this locally. I worry that Race to the Top will erode some local control. We are talking about fundamental Constitutional ideas here. Further, with the core standards and eventual common assessments, what will we be producing? Do we want all of our kids to learn exactly the same things? I realize there is some flexibility in all of it, but this is a philosophical issue. Forgive me, but I may meander a bit; my thoughts on the current state of education (no pun intended), like those of my colleagues, are many. When will we truly innovate? Entertain me for a moment as I consider our high school students...I am thirty-seven years old. When I was growing up in the late seventies and early eighties, my distractions were few: reading, music, the mall, playing outdoors, a handful of television channels. Today, our students have many more distractions, from hundreds of television channels - even in our poorest households - to the internet. And who controls what they see? They do! That is my point. When they tire of something on t.v., they change the channel with facility. And the internet? By design they have to constantly change what they're looking at, jumping from page to page. And video games? The goal is to control and conquer and win. The game keeps changing; that's where half the fun comes from. Then they wake up earlier than they want to, hop on a bus, and head to school. What do we do to them? We sit them down in one-hour blocks. WE decide what they will do. WE decide where they will sit. WE decide what they will read, study, figure out, etc. They lose all control. It's no wonder they want to text their friends and talk about how bored they are; they've been trained to do so. We need to teach differently. I'm not excited about it and don't want to "cater" to them, but they're different than "we" are. We have to reconstruct our school days, our school years, and our offerings. Why is it that when I talk to education professionals - teachers, principals, central administrators, ISD consultants/etc. - they all have great ideas for what we need to do, but few of us can actually effect the change we want to see or that we KNOW will be better, or at least worth the old college try? The time is ripe. Everyone wants to see success and change. I'm tired of the excuses from all levels. Why don't we truly innovate. Our district needs "alternative" paths with freedom to operate alternatively. We need something for the truant that will draw them in and teach them how to operate successfully in society. We need something for those who do not fit in the traditional model. If we no longer care about "seat time" and only "mastery" or "acquisition" of skills, then we need to create mega-campuses with a drop-in-when-you-can format. Online courses. Tutoring. You name it. And for the ones who want to consider college? We can offer seminars, recitation/discussion sections, etc. The loss of CTE is a terrible tragedy. We need more CTE with relevant training/education for today's jobs. Students shou
4	As a science educator for 35 years I am committed to help advise and restructure the "reinvention" of the Michigan School system.
5	The Race to the Top is flawed in its emphasis on using test scores to determine successful teaching practices. How will you determine who actually influenced the success of an elementary student: the classroom teacher, the special ed. teacher, the reading teacher, one of the specials teachers? Maybe the counselor helped solve a critical problem for a a student that was preventing learning. Also, how do we assign responsibility for the family's role in the success of their child's education? Before committing to increasing the number of charter schools, a thorough investigation into their success should be completed first. I have heard horror stories about the Dream Academy in Benton Harbor from a former teacher. To send any public money to this school is a crime!
	Some of the legislative changes necessary to become a viable candidate for RTTT funding are solid--and needed, in Michigan. Others merely reflect the current thinking at USDOE, and the money dangled by RTTT

6	(and the competition it's inspired) have been used successfully to push all states to make sweeping policy changes just for a relatively small chance for some districts to get money. The negative reaction from many districts' leadership (not the union) should tell the MDE all it needs to know. We're now stuck with these policies, good or bad--and working through the details of bringing unneeded, poorly prepared (but cheaper) teachers into the classroom, or finding a fair way to connect teacher performance to MEAP scores, will soak up considerable time and resources that might better be spent on improving instruction, or getting effective teachers where they're most needed. NME members are thrilled to be at the table. We are, however, being brought to the table to support something we had no input into developing, and many of us don't support. This is an old trick--trotting out good teachers as a shield against criticisms. The sad thing is that many of the reforms predicated by RTTT are good ones that might genuinely help, if a broad group of stakeholders had helped construct them.
7	Politics and procrastination have and will cause this initiative more problems than necessary and have included some poorly developed sections.
8	I agree that it is time for educational reform in the state of Michigan.
9	I always worry about the lack of accountability with "free" money. Look at Detroit.
10	I agree with the sentiment of Superintendent Steve Gaynor "... 'Just Say No' to the so-called experts in Lansing and Washington who would force our teachers to drop all the excellent work they do and instead teach to the MEAP (Michigan Education Assessment Program test)," Gaynor wrote. "We are a high-performing district that doesn't need or want one-size-fits-all solutions like (Race to the Top), with outsiders telling us how to evaluate our teachers -- we already have an excellent plan for evaluation that appropriately looks at student achievement."
11	As a member of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, many of the provisions in the new legislation for RTTT are part of our new contract language. I view this as an opportunity to be engaged in defining how these changes will be implemented (teacher evaluation, peer review, standards - based curriculum, etc.) Not only will students benefit from these changes but we have an opportunity to elevate the status of the teaching profession in Michigan.
12	As educators we must be involved. We are the experts in our field and we must be consulted and involved in shaping the future of education in the nation and in our state. We cannot allow politicians to guess at solutions for our profession. We must lead RTTT and its implementation in Michigan.
13	I take exception to the introduction which accompanied this survey. The laws were passed with little debate, input from stakeholders, or attention to research as to the benefit and impact these changes have on student learning. Instead, in order to possibly gain one time funding due to the state's current economic crisis, the laws were hastily changed. I think we do ourselves and our students a disservice if we say, oh well, the laws have been passed, so we might as well go along to get along. I expect more from this group of educators. Sincerely, Lynne Cobb, NBCT
14	This seems to be one of those situations where the general populations of teachers and the population in general has no idea what is going on, leaving the chance for discussion to be based on reactionary ideas and comments not true discussion of how change can occur. Change is messy and many do not want it to happen.
15	I disagree with the speed at which this application is being pushed through. Districts and individuals do not have the time needed to analyze the consequences of the this legislation. Also, there is nothing in this legislation that calls on parents and caregivers to make a commitment to their child's education. Without this commitment, or the kind of constant recognition of parents' roles in ensuring their child's success, the Race to the Top legislation will put pressure on educators and students to change without the support they need. I am not against educators and students working hard, I am just very frustrated with the lack of political support for saying what needs to be said to parents.
16	I have to say that I have been disappointed with the way that the Race to the Top application has been handled by the MDE. I feel that this has been a "rush" job with poor communication, very little involvement of teachers from the beginning, and an "excuse" to "do something" to be able to apply for (not necessarily receive) one-time money. I believe that the intent of the federal funds (RTTT) is good, however the means in which states have been asked to apply for the funds has been less than appropriate. There has been very little dialog regarding the impact of the new reforms enacted by the state or how this impacts local control (school boards, administration, parents, and teachers.) It is unfortunate that this "rush job" has resulted in the public once again being skeptical of how things are handled in public education. Any school that isn't going to sign the MOU will be perceived as not willing to get additional funding - when reality is that educators want to have all information when it comes to the impact a decision will have on children. To have the state impose new policy/mandates (that could/will cost school districts more money), and at the same time reduce the funding to schools seems contradictory. The Race to the Top funds/application process is just another "excuse" that state lawmakers can use to not fix our current state funding problems. They've passed these new education reforms (they can look like they've done something to reform education), while they've done nothing to address the broken tax system in the State of Michigan and the crisis it has created for inadequate funding of our schools. Unfortunately this situation has been mishandled by State officials, and the MDE, and has left a "bad taste in

	the mouths" of many.
17	While I have fundamental concerns about the increasing role of the federal government in our country's state oversight of schools, I do indeed recognize the need for on-going improvement in our educational institutions and see RTTT as an important force that can facilitate change. I sincerely hope that the collaborative efforts of our Network of Michigan Educators in partnership with the SBOE, MDE and many other stakeholders, will help more children in Michigan realize their dreams through this work!
18	I understand the necessity of the RTTP application, I am not sure that I agree that my expertise as a teacher can be assessed 100% on the achievements of my students. There are too many variables in student motivation, family life, readiness, etc. that are out of my control.
19	I disagree with the way the money (RTT) will be disbursed to schools. The district I work in is slated to get less than \$25,000. This amount of money will not even begin to fund any type of quality program to support and encourage student achievement. Unfunded mandates do not work- No Child Left Behind is a perfect example of an unfunded mandate. Teachers are always looking for ways to help their students find success. We (teachers and school districts) just need the funds to back up the mandates.
20	Difficult to get excited about 400 Million in FEDERAL funds with significant strings attached when the state legislature continues to play games with school funding, causing massive layoffs and program cuts, and send negative messages about our schools. Maybe if our funding and programming remained consistent and students not placed in the middle of partisan politics, we could take the RTTT a bit more seriously as a way to improve education in our state, but if the people we elect at the state level won't fund it consistently, why would we get excited about more federal mandates that are under funded? Restructuring needs to occur in school finance and equity. Much of the RTTT legislation passed in December has MANY questions to be answered such as: now that you require students to stay in school until they are 18, what are you going to provide for meaningful programming...etc.
21	This is good to see but many educators need to know that this a positive step forward. Much consternation about this proposal in schools around the state. Even superintendents are feeling they shouldn't sign on because it adds much more work and little gain. We need to help show it is a positive and not just more overburdening work for districts. I will look to assist through informing others of the great opportunities available.
22	We need to rethink the entire issue of "education" as we know it- from a model that was developed several hundred years ago to a new one that will meet the needs of 21st century learners and teachers.
23	Local districts with lower promised dollar amounts due to small low socio-economic student populations will be hesitant to sign on. These districts will preserve to reserve their local autonomy.
24	I am not convinced that the amount of money offered through the Race to the Top program will substantially benefit the schools in the state nor provide any actual reform. It is a waste of time, money, and effort. Especially with no actual teachers involved in the application or the "project".
25	I'm not all that familiar with the program but have heard that teacher salaries will be tied to test scores. There has to be a better way. This could be another "teach to the test" situation. This makes real teaching impossible. There are always strings attached to money, so I think we have to be very careful of the "strings."
26	All of the current research on charter schools has not supported the creation of more. Some of the other changes seem promising but the definite response that it "will" change student performance seems presumptuous at best but I hope and pray it does. Our kids deserve the best everyday.
27	The application does place enough emphasis on the importance of community involvement or any state provided extended learning opportunities for students. You can make teachers jump through all the hoops you want, but for those of us teaching in at risk districts what we need more than anything is extra teachers to help with all of the struggling students who have little to no support from home. The application should look beyond the schools and emphasize the need for communities to work together for the success of the students.
28	The process is moving so quickly, I am afraid just like Proposal A, we are not "crossing our t's and dotting our i's" and it will come back to "hunt us " negatively in the future. Do we need changes - absolutely yes-but changes that can sustain use for the future when the token monies is no longer available.
29	My main concern is that NCLB has not been altered; the curriculum in MI is so difficult that so many of our students are not prepared to make it through HS in 4 years. Students are not prepared for HS because basic skills are not being addressed in MS or elementary. Additionally, not all situations fit neatly into this puzzle. Our increase of refugees is rapidly growing and the state still has not addressed the specifications 'fair' to this population to ensure a good education and appropriate standardized testing. Further, there are still concerns regarding the SE population. Overall, NCLB has backfired and schools are witnessing more students falling behind due to factors out of the control of HS staff...Reform is necessary, it is plausible; however, I am a firm believer that we will not move forward until we increase the amount of time students spend in school (year round education, longer days). Year round education has proven to increase test scores, lower retention rates in elementary and middle school as well as set the priority that education is necessary to be successful. Finally, I believe that all MI schools should follow the same credit system, semester system and title for

	classes with the exception of specialty programs like IB or AP. This will make transferring from school to school less desirable for our transient population.
30	I am currently in training as an instructional coach in order to be prepared to share my knowledge and insights with other teachers.
31	I am excited about the opportunities that lie before us. I hope what has been rushed up to this point will be well planned and thought out in implementation. We need to educate the educators and continue to get everyone on board so they don't feel like this is being shoved down their throats. We can do all of this and I look forward to helping!

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