

**IT INVESTMENT CAPITAL FUND  
PROJECT STATUS REPORT**

**To:** Information Technology Strategy and Investment Committee  
John Vittner, Office of Policy & Management

**FROM:** Kevin Corcoran

**AGENCY/PROJECT NAME:** Board of Regents – CT Education Academy

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Kevin Corcoran

**REPORTING PERIOD:** Project Inception through 6/30/2015

**Total Funds Requested:** \$ 1,857,615

**Bond Commission Approval(s):** Date: Jan. 2014 Amount: \$ 1,595,838

**Accumulative Total Capital Fund Expenditures to Date:** \$1,095,841.38

**Brief Project Description/Summary:**

The CT Education Academy is an eLearning ecosystem for the State of Connecticut workforce to receive mandatory training as well as professional development opportunities via online coursework.

**Summary of Progress Achieved to Date:**

**January-June 2014**

During the first six months, the initial set of specifications was drafted for the program, and the development of the administrative and learning system platforms, as well as the Department of Administrative Service's *Active Shooter Response* course, had begun.

**July-December 2014**

During the next six months, the first phase of the CT Education Academy administrative system was finalized to accommodate web-based training. (A summary of functionality is included as Attachment A.) A high-availability designed Blackboard learning system was also fully deployed during this time. Additionally, the *Active Shooter Response* course development was completed.

In November 2014, a group of 30 state employees connected to state training and education efforts were invited to pilot the finalized *Active Shooter Response* course within the CT Education Academy system. The feedback provided by the pilot users was collected and addressed in system and course improvements throughout the month of December in preparation for the next, larger pilot group scheduled for early 2015.

**January – June 2015**

- Course and platform feedback implemented - enhancements
- Engaged SABA community for system requirements
- Prepared for go-live launch
- Worked on sustainability/pricing
- Inaugural advisory council
- Transition of leadership

In February 2015, a second pilot group containing 120+ Department of Administrative Services employees and 80+ Charter Oak State College employees completed the *Active Shooter Response* course within the CT Education Academy platform. The pilot feedback coupled with the course evaluations provided additional information to further enhance the program and was implemented during this time period. A full quality assurance process was completed on the system and course in preparation for a state-wide launch.

Also from February through April, we visited state agencies currently utilizing SABA for online learning to ascertain what system features would be required in the CT Education Academy platform to accommodate current business processes in the SABA system. During the visits, we were able to determine current business practices and processes needing to be addressed as well as current processes in need of improvement and missing functionality in the current system. We gathered this information to develop a Phase 2 road map for the CT Education Academy program. The Phase 2 plan will not only provide similar functionality, but will provide enhanced processes and additional features. We are waiting for confirmation that Phase 2 will be approved and funded.

In March 2015, the Advisory Council had its inaugural meeting. This group was orientated to the CT Education Academy program and asked for feedback on how to best serve the state. The Advisory Council will be asked to help guide the future direction of the program and help determine the state's current training needs.

In May 2015, the initial stage of course development was started on the *Workplace Violence Prevention* course.

In June 2015, the Executive Steering Committee met to discuss a roll-out strategy to the state agencies interested in the *Active Shooter Response* course and the CT Education Academy platform.

#### **Issues and Risks:**

There is a concern about having enough time to successfully complete a potential SABA LMS migration to CT Education Academy by October 2016 without confirmed 'go-ahead' and funding to complete the project. Considerable time has been invested on two different tours to visit with these agencies to gather specifications and requests for their potential migration to CT Education Academy.

There is also increased interest by some agencies to adopt the CT Education Academy for their agency's own training program, needs. Without a set sustainability plan in place, pricing has not been determined making it difficult for agencies to commit to the CT Education Academy program.

#### **Next Steps & Project Milestones:**

We look to partner with the Commissioner's Office of the Department of Administrative Services to recruit agencies to participate in the *Active Shooter Response* course within CT Education Academy. On July 29<sup>th</sup>, the Commissioner's Office will send out a recruitment letter to other agency commissioners. On July 30<sup>th</sup>, a follow-up letter will be sent to the agency training and technical leads to assist with agency set-up and preparedness. Agencies that agree to participate will be provided with administrator training for their designated training administrator as well as have a technical readiness assessment performed to ensure their technology will work correctly with the program.

We will work with either CORE-CT or the agencies themselves to establish the hierarchy of the agency structure within the CT Education Academy platform. Once established, we will pre-populate the system with employee account information into the proper agency department unit.

While the Active Shooter Response course is being rolled-out state-wide, we will continue to work towards completing the next course, *Workplace Violence Prevention* and identifying the next course to be developed.

We will continue to work with the Executive Steering Committee to determine and finalize the sustainability model for the CT Education Academy program and how to onboard interested agencies.

We will look to continue the Advisory Council meeting structure and explore what professional development opportunities the state workforce may need.

Lastly, we will continue to develop and grow the CT Education Academy program and platform. We will continue to develop new functionality within the original scope and funding. We hope to have approval and funding to start work on expanded functionality to support the migration of agencies currently utilizing the SABA LMS system.

## **Attachment A: CT Education Academy Functionality**

The web-based administrative system allows for the management of state agency workforce training through online course enrollment and record keeping. The CT Education Academy platform supports the (parent/child) hierarchy of complex agencies that may contain sub-units like bureaus and divisions. Within the agency hierarchy, cross-unit groupings may be created of similar employees (i.e., new hires, IT staff, HR staff).

Once an employee has been entered into the system, s/he can self-enroll into any course that has been made available to that employee role in the catalog. Once enrolled, the employee may have immediate access to the online course, depending on the course start date. Employees will be seamlessly connected to the Blackboard learning environment once enrolled.

The Blackboard Learn system was designed to be a clustered/load balanced environment to ensure high availability and high performance. The employee online classroom experience is contained within the Blackboard system, but data related to course completion, grade, and certification is transferred back to the CT Education Academy administrative system for storage and analysis.

Agency training administrators will have access to a bevy of course and registration reports for their agency's employees. Employees will also have access to their training history, transcripts, and certifications earned.