

**Race to the Top
Progress Update – July 2015 Call**

Directions: In preparation for monthly calls, a State must provide responses to the questions in Part A for their overall plan, and responses to the questions in Part B for *two* application sub-criterion.

Part A: *In preparation for monthly calls, States must provide information that addresses the three questions below on the implementation of all aspects of its approved scope of work. This may include a written response. If your State already has a state-specific system to report on its progress, please work with your program officer to determine the best method of providing this information for your State.*

1. What were the State’s key accomplishments and challenges this past month?

Sub-criterion A2: Building strong statewide capacity

Accomplishments: As part of project 1/78 (Office of Academic Reform and Innovation), Maryland’s Race to the Top (RTTT) leadership continued to hold regular RTTT Stat meetings with project managers to assess the status of the State’s projects with No Cost Extensions (NCEs), address any issues that the projects were facing, ensure all funds are being spent, and provide information about what should be done and when to ensure that all NCE projects are completed on time and successfully. Project managers received training for completing end-of-project reports – those reports have been completed by all project managers and reviewed by Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) RTTT leadership. The project team and relevant staff from other MSDE Divisions continue to update professional development events on the Comprehensive Training Plan Calendar, which is available through the State’s LearnMD website, <http://learnmd.org>. The Communications Hub has been installed. Nine conference rooms and the State Board room are now equipped with SMART boards, video and teleconferencing capabilities, and digital displays. MSDE Communications Hub Liaisons have been trained on using the new equipment and they are now delivering training to interested MSDE staff so that these new technologies can be utilized to their fullest capacity to ease the communication with Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

In project 2/1 (Program Evaluation), the team from the Center for Application and Innovation Research in Education (CAIRE) at Towson University completed and submitted to MSDE its three major deliverables – statewide and regional findings from the spring 2015 Survey of

Teachers and Principals; a comprehensive analysis of statewide findings from the fall 2013 through spring 2015 surveys of teachers and principals to analyze their transition to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards; and summary of findings from the spring 2014 through spring 2015 survey of teacher candidates completing MSDE approved teacher preparation programs across Maryland.

Challenges: The projects in sub-criterion A2 did not report any significant challenges this reporting period.

Sub-criterion B2: Developing and implementing high-quality assessments

Accomplishments: In project 3/2 (Formative Assessment), all mathematics and English/Language Arts (ELA) assessment tasks have been delivered to MSDE and are being uploaded to the Maryland Resource Exchange website. The 250 participants in the Formative Assessment for Maryland Educators (FAME) cohort have completed the FAME course and were awarded credits. All Maryland Classroom videos have been added to the FAME modules and delivered to MSDE. The last video of Maryland classrooms was sent to MSDE for final review. Two-day FAME Leadership Institutes were held for approximately 150 school leaders representing 91 schools, who will lead their schools through FAME training this coming school year.

Challenges: The project in sub-criterion B2 did not report any significant challenges this reporting period.

Sub-criterion B3: Supporting the transition to new standards and assessments

Accomplishments: In project 4/3 (Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development), a final review of the Foundations of Technology (FoT) course was completed. Staff in Calvert County Public Schools are preparing to pilot the FoT course starting on June 29, 2015; and staff in Baltimore and Montgomery Counties will pilot FoT in the fall. Additionally, the online Financial Literacy Course has been completed and plans are underway to pilot the class in the fall 2015. Units 4, 5 and 6 of the Financial Literacy course are currently being edited.

To date, in project 5/4 (Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development for International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA), 30,050 students have participated in the FoT assessment and local supervisors have access to their LEA's assessment data. As mentioned above, the FoT online course has been completed and is being piloted in three school systems. Additionally, summer professional development sessions for teachers are scheduled in several locations throughout the state.

Challenges: The projects in sub-criterion B3 did not report any significant challenges this reporting period.

Sub-criterion C2: Accessing and using State data

Accomplishments: The project 8/11 (Develop Overall Technology Infrastructure) team has developed and implemented a Federated Security Solution for integrating the LEA user access to the Dashboard tools. They have resolved federation (security access between LEA and MSDE) issues with Carroll County and are working to resolve issues in three other LEAs (Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and Washington). The team also presented the new LearnMD portal to the Maryland State Board of Education at their May meeting, and they continue to make presentations about LearnMD and its capabilities at curriculum briefings, statewide professional learning sessions, and conferences throughout Maryland.

Challenges: In project 8/11, now that the proof of concept regarding how to fix federation issues in Carroll County is complete, the project team will encourage the federation of the remaining LEAs to go faster. The team will continue to work with LEAs on security access.

Sub-criterion C3: Using data to support instruction

Accomplishments: In project 15/7 (Expand the Instructional Toolkit), Maryland Public Television (MPT) has completed 100 percent of all English/Language Arts modules and 100 percent of all Algebra course modules. All of these completed modules have also now been uploaded to Maryland's eConnect website - <https://msde.blackboard.com>. Of the resources being

completed by the project's other vendor, AP Ventures, 100 percent are now complete and copyright and accessibility verification for all Toolkit resources has been conducted.

In Project 16/20 (STEM Instructional and Career Support), site visits have been conducted at all 24 LEAs to learn about programs, determine local needs, and find ways MSDE can provide support. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) resources have been gathered from the field to share through the project's STEM website as well as in briefings and meetings. Phase 1, 2, and 3 regional STEM teacher workshops have been completed. All 24 LEAs received Notice of Grant Awards (NOGAs) providing funding for them to send 11-15 elementary, middle, and high schools teachers to those regional STEM workshops.

The project 17/32 (Implement a Test Item Bank System) team has completed all planned LEA site visits (20 in total) to view local assessment systems. The team also implemented Phase 4 (final phase) of its award allotment (providing \$351,000 to 14 LEAs) to assist LEAs in the continued enhancement of their existing assessment systems and the implementation of formative assessments in the classroom. In total, \$2,749,166 has been awarded to the LEAs.

In project 22/6 (Develop Online Instructional Intervention Modules), MPT has completed 100 percent of its science modules (70 in total) and 100 percent of its social studies modules (70 in total). All modules have also been uploaded to Maryland's eConnect website.

Challenges: The projects in sub-criterion C3 did not report any significant challenges this reporting period.

Sub-criterion D2: Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

Accomplishments: The project 29/48 (Develop and Implement an Educator Evaluation System) team has revised the annual data collection manual to provide LEA data leads with details about what information they need to collect and provide for teacher and principal evaluation at the end of the 2014-15 school year. The team also completed the Office of Teacher and Principal Evaluation's 2015-16 strategic plan for the delivery of information, training, and other services

to LEA and school staff around Teacher and Principal Evaluation. The outside partner, WestEd, has conducted its annual statewide survey of educators and school and LEA administrators (this year's survey received over 19,000 responses), as well as focus groups and superintendent interviews. The data collected is being analyzed and compiled into a report on the current state of Teacher and Principal Evaluation in Maryland. Additionally, six short-term Request for Proposals (RFQs) have been drafted. The first of those RFQs to sequentially accomplish research elements for FY 2015-2016 related to effectiveness ratings data collection has been posted.

In project 30/48 (Expand Educator Information System (EIS) to Accommodate Additional Data), the project team has configured and matched the test environment to the proposed production environment. Additionally, the first phase of User Acceptance Testing has been completed and the system has been updated based on that feedback. The second phase of testing is currently underway. The team has also loaded and applied proper security to EIS data, as well as to 1.7 million documents. Final integration of the interfaces that will automate the verification of the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) request for new hires, cross-check against the Sex Offender Registry, update the Praxis score retrieval process, and improve the transcript retrieval process has been completed. The team has also compiled a training and user guide to EIS/CRM, and completed three training Webinars.

Challenges: MSDE continues to utilize all necessary resources to complete the EIS system.

Sub-criterion D3: Ensuring the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

Accomplishments: In project 34/51 (Compensation Incentives for Teachers in Shortage Areas), the three participating LEAs have completed their projects and submitted end-of-year reporting requirements, specified by MSDE, to the project manager. Despite the shortened time frame of this year's project (which ended in June instead of in September as in previous years), all three LEAs were successful in completing their projects and providing stipends to incentivize highly effective shortage area teachers to work in their low-achieving schools.

Challenges: The project in sub-criterion D3 did not report any significant challenges this reporting period.

Sub-criterion D5: Providing effective support to teachers and principals

Accomplishments: The project 39/25 (Teacher Induction Academies) team attended their first National Teacher Induction Network (NTIN) Meeting to collaboratively plan for sustainability for LEA and state induction programs beyond RTTT. The team also attended Presenter Academy II to complete the final coursework for licensing by New Teacher Center to facilitate and deliver their proprietary content. All site visits conducted with LEA Induction Coordinators were completed and summary data about those visits has been compiled.

The project 40/15 (Professional Development for Executive Officers) team has selected dates for convenings and finalized the list of 48 participants in the second cohort of the Promising Principals Academy (see Project 41/24). Those participants attended regional orientation sessions during the week of June 15 to learn more about the Promising Principals Academy and what will be expected of them during the intensive, year-long program. The first convening of the second Academy cohort will be from July 27-30 and will feature state and national experts providing training on instructional leadership, team building, and the effective use of technology for school leaders. RFQs have also been posted for the eight Academy coaching positions. The team also conducted a statewide Student Learning Objective (SLO) training for Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) principal preparation programs at McDaniel College on June 18.

The project 41/24 (Educator Effectiveness Academies) team held five regional College and Career Ready Conferences at locations across the State from June 18 through July 9. Prior to the Conferences, the project team delivered training to the Master Teachers who led portions of the summer conferences. MSDE staff who assisted with the conferences also received training from members of the project team. Approximately 4000 Maryland educators registered for the conferences. The project team has also completed delivery of the final two (of four) regional SAT workshops in Anne Arundel and Carroll Counties. The regional workshops informed participants on the alignment of the new SAT to Maryland's College and Career Ready

Standards. The audience was comprised of high school principals and school counselors, as well as central office personnel from the offices of English, mathematics, and school counseling.

In project 43/21 (Develop Online Professional Development on Educator Instructional Improvement Content), the vendor has completed six professional development courses, including accessibility verification for the Foundations of ELA, Practical Applications of ELA Methods (K-2), and Practical Applications of ELA Methods (3-5), Algebra II, and Digital Portfolios for STEM courses. Errors that were found in the Geometry course were corrected. Three courses have been piloted – the Practical Applications of ELA Methods (K-2) and (3-5), and Digital Portfolios for STEM courses.

Challenges: In project 43/21, the contract between MSDE and the second vendor was terminated and the three STEM courses were not delivered. MSDE researched ways to purchase Commercial Off The Shelf (COTS) materials or licenses to make up for the three courses not delivered by the vendor, but was unable to identify any. Information on this was sent to USDE and an acknowledgement was received.

Sub- criterion E2: Turning around the lowest-achieving schools

Accomplishments: In 44/41 (The Breakthrough Center), the project team visited all sites to provide guidance for the Aspiring Principal fellows and continued to assist them with the projects assigned to them by their school’s principal. The team also provided professional development for all instructional support staff and LEA personnel, as well as provided monthly differentiated professional development and content-based planning for mathematics and reading to all instructional leaders in the identified schools. Finally, the team provided support to schools’ Student Support Teams (SST) and consulted with counselors, teachers and staff as needed.

In project 46/57 (Extend Student Learning and Improve School Culture, Climate, and Support) the team conducted multi-day “Check and Connect” training for Prince George’s County and Baltimore City Public Schools. Check & Connect is an easily sustainable alternative to

suspension/dropout prevention strategy that relies on close monitoring of school performance, as well as mentoring, case management, and other supports. The team also conducted Olweus Bullying Prevention Training for staff in Baltimore City Public Schools.

Recently, the project 51/71 (Project Lead the Way (PLTW) – Gateway to Technology (GTT)) team conducted a site visit in Dorchester County and later shared and discussed its site visit report with school administration, central office staff, and GTT teachers. The team also conducted a site visit to Baltimore City. Site visit reports have been shared with school administrators, central office staff, and GTT teachers.

Challenges: The project in sub-criterion E2 did not report any significant challenges this reporting period.

Sub- criterion F2: Ensuring conditions for high-performing charter schools

Accomplishments: The project 53/44 (Charter Schools) team has completed its review of draft forms of all modules of the publications webinar series. Support was also provided for the Maryland team’s participation in the Statewide Technical Assistance/National Charter School Conference, which was held June 21-24, 2015.

Challenges: The project in sub-criterion F2 did not report any significant challenges this reporting period.

2. Is the State on track to meet the goals and timelines associated with the activities outlined in its approved scope of work? If not, what strategies is the State employing in order to meet its goals?

Maryland is on track to meet the goals and timelines associated with the activities outlined in its approved scope of work. All of Maryland’s RTTT projects with No Cost Extensions are making progress toward their final goals and any issues/delays are being addressed and mitigation plans are being implemented where necessary. Deliverables that are being monitored closely include the completion of the EIS (Project 30/49) and the completion of security in Project 8/11. MSDE

RTTT leadership continue to work closely with all project managers, holding regular RTTT Stat meetings as well as weekly one-on-one meetings to ensure that PY 5 work is completed as planned, all invoices are received, and all grant work is finalized.

3. How can the Department help the State meet its goals?

MSDE appreciates the valuable insight and assistance that USDE continues to provide, especially regarding closeout procedures and reporting requirements. MSDE also appreciates the continued support of all USDE staff during the transition and the guidance received during the past five years.