Race to the Top
Monthly Report: October 2010
Maryland

Date Submitted: October 27, 2010

Activities
<u>Department-wide</u>
- Reorganized the Department per organization chart submitted to USDE
- Conducted Department-wide retreat to inform and seek advice on moving forward with the Race to the Top grant
- Created committee structure to ensure coherence to implementation of RTTT plan
- Attended Delaware meeting

<u>Personnel</u>
- Advertised in the newspaper for a variety of positions
- Distributed a Request for Resumes for a variety of positions (including a Chief Information Officer for Software Applications)
- Advertising for Communications position devoted full-time to Race to the Top (internal and external communications)
- Set up interviews for the above positions
- Conducted a qualifications review on all applications submitted (approximately 700)
- Conducted a space utilization meeting to determine placement of personnel to be hired
- Hired Race to the Top Project Director

<u>Budget/Procurement</u>
- Submitted the required budget amendment to establish a Race to the Top account
- Created PCA codes for all expenditure categories in order to properly track RTTT expenses
- Set up internal protocols for requisition approvals and tracking of expenditures
- Began procurement process for needed equipment and supplies

<u>LEA Scopes of Work</u>
- Created a template for LEA Scopes of Work
- Created a sample document in response to the template (narrative, action plan, and budget for section D)
- Created a Frequently Asked Questions document
- Created a rubric for scoring the submitted LEA Scopes of Work
- Conducted a technical assistance phone call with LEAs regarding the Scope of Work
- Conducted individual ½ hour technical assistance phone conversations with LEAs to assist them in developing their Scopes of Work

- Responded to numerous phone calls regarding Scopes of Work

Project Management
- Created a master list of all 54 projects in Microsoft Project
- Assigned an Executive Sponsor for all 54 projects
- Assigned a program manager for all 54 projects
- Assigned project managers as appropriate

Outreach/Communications Activities
- Created a "Maryland Classrooms" dedicated to information on Race to the Top for distribution to all administrators and school-based staff
- Enhanced the Race to the Top website with information for LEAs on their Scope of Work

Successes
- Accomplishing the above activities within significant time and resource constraint
- Overall generation of good feelings about receipt of the grant
- Sense of excitement among staff and greater community about reform possibilities

Challenges
- Time continues to be the biggest challenge.
- There is a challenge for all 12 Race to the Top states to design and implement a credible model for teacher and principal evaluation

Projected Activities for November
- Review of LEA Scopes of Work (team of 21 people will be doing the reviews)
- Feedback to LEAs and resubmission to MSDE
- Submission of LEA Scopes of Work to USDE
- Interviews for personnel
- Orientation of newly hired personnel
- Create RTTT program evaluation protocol with MARCES (University System of Maryland Research Center)
- Completion of brief amendment to Maryland's Race to the Top application to serve as our State Scope of Work.

Questions
- Will USDE require a consistent template for regular reports by LEAs, or will that be left up to the States?
- How should we document changes to our budget which are below the threshold required for USDE approval?
- When will we get monitoring requirements from USDE (how we will be monitored; how we are expected to monitor LEAs)?

- How should we handle internal requests for changes in budget (e.g., use of funds to pay for something that was not explicitly stated in the submitted budget but is well within the required amount for USDE approval)?