Race to the Top Progress Update
June 2011 Monthly 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?

   Accomplishments:

   - Maryland has posted on its website the Frameworks in English language arts and mathematics based on the Common Core Standards. Since the adoption of the standards by the State Board in June of 2010, Maryland educators have been working to determine the essential knowledge and skills associated with those standards. The draft frameworks are the result of that effort. Over the next several years, the full-blown Maryland Common Core State Curriculum will be developed by Maryland educators to support the implementation of these new standards. The curriculum will have as its centerpiece a toolkit that contains model unit and lesson plans as well as a wide variety of instructional aids for teachers.

   - The first four of eleven three-day Educator Effectiveness Academies commenced on June 27, 2011. Principals and four teachers from every school representing 11 LEAs attended. The major focus of this year's academies is the rollout of the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum (MCCSC) Framework. During the academy, each school team will develop a transition plan for their school so that teachers throughout the State will have an understanding of the MCCSC framework for Math and Reading/English Language Arts. By August 3, 2011, 6000 educators (all principals in all twenty-four LEAs and three teachers from each school) will have participated in one of the Educator Effectiveness Academies.

   - On June 20, 2011, The Maryland Council for Educator Effectiveness (MCEE) conducted its final session to discuss and finalize their initial recommendations to the governor, the state legislature, and the State Board of Education for a statewide educator evaluation system. Please see the attached report of the Council.

   - On June 13, 2011, a technical assistance session was conducted for representatives from all 24 LEAs that included: the CFA, the Master Plan Liaison, and the RTTT Liaison. The

       session focused on the revised Master Plan process that will now incorporate the development of the RTTT scope of work for 2011-12. Emphasis was placed on providing greater specificity in the year two RTTT action plans for each assurance area detailing the year two goals and the actions and activities that will be taken to achieve those identified goals. Examples were provided to participants. The information and guidance was well received. An additional technical assistance/work session will be provided to LEA RTTT liaisons later in the summer to review the revised scope of work rubric so they understand the level of detail and specificity that is required in their year two action plans.

- Ray Lorion, USM, completed interviews with executive sponsors and project mangers regarding formative and summative evaluations of RTTT projects. A summary of those interviews was submitted. In addition, USM submitted an invoice for deliverables and administrative/ evaluation expenses for January-May 2011 for tasks related to program evaluation of RTTT. A document specifying the data collection procedures for FY 11 projects has been received.

- LEAs received a RTTT monitoring questionnaire to be used to report their annual progress to date. LEA liaisons from the Division of Academic Reform and Innovation are in the process of reviewing the questionnaire and discussing with LEA RTTT representatives successes, challenges, and financial management of RTTT funds. All LEAs will have reported by July 1, 2011.

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?

    Yes, pending approval of amendments, the goals in the approved scope of work will be achieved.

3. How can the Department help the State meet its goals?
    Timely review and approval of amendments.
    Assist with the possible use of the line of credit available to states.

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Race to the Top Progress Update
Sub-criterion D2

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Part B: *In preparation for monthly calls, States must submit written responses to the following questions for **two** application sub-criteria (e.g. (A)(2) and (D)(4)). [1] All responses in this section should be tailored to the goals and projects associated with this sub-criterion.*

Application sub-criterion: D2 and F2

STATE's goals for this sub-criterion:
- D2
  * Develop statewide student growth measure for statewide educator evaluations
  * Expand the educator information system

Relevant projects:
  #28/47 – Develop and Implement a Statistical Model to Measure Student Growth
  #29/48 – Develop and Implement an Educator Evaluation System
  #30/49 – Expand Educator Information System to Accommodate Additional Data

1. What is the extent of the State's progress toward meeting the goals and performance measures and implementing the activities that are included in its approved scope of work for this sub-criterion?

#28/47 Develop and Implement a Statistical Model to Measure Student Growth

The student growth measure project has gained the endorsement of student growth percentiles by the National Psychometric Council. This endorsement has enabled MSDE to begin preliminary preparations for 2010-111 using student growth percentiles (SGPs) as a measure of student growth. A growth percentile is a percentile ranking of how well a student did on a test relative to all students in the state with the same prior year score. The approach was developed by Damian Betenbenner of the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (Betenbenner 2008). It has been adopted by Colorado as its key growth metric, and the computer program for calculating SGPs is publicly available. Preliminary modeling of LEA data in anticipation of the needs of the 7 pilot LEAs has begun. During meetings with LEAs there were opportunities to discuss SGPs and their value to differentiating and improving classroom instruction and building capacity among education practitioners. The SGPs will be released with an interpretation guide to ensure clarity of understanding for all stakeholders (LEA administrators, teachers, etc.). The project is running on time and according to the work plan approved by USDE. MSDE is pleased with the progress of this project.

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[1] On each monthly call, program officers and states should work together to select two sub-criteria for the following month.

#29/48 Develop and Implement an Educator Evaluation System

Please refer to the attached report, *Maryland Council for Educator Effectiveness, Initial Recommendations, Statewide Educator Evaluation System, June 2011*

The Educator Evaluation project team has visited 22 of the 24 LEAs to learn how each LEA uses Information Technology (IT) systems to store educator evaluation data and the tools each LEA uses to evaluate teachers and principals/assistant principals. From this information, a summary report is being produced to share with all RTTT project managers as the IT systems information collected is important to the IT framework for other RTTT projects. MSDE has signed a contract with a consultant to develop the framework and management system for the teacher portfolio system to measure student growth. This system will be web-based. We are investigating the use of free code (Weebly) to develop this system. An RFP is being prepared for a web-based teacher evaluation system for LEAs that would be in compliance with section D2 of the RTTT grant (this will be the MSDE default tool). After the release of the RFP, another RFP will follow for the principal evaluation default tool that will also be web-based. This project is running on time and according to the work plan.

#30/49 Expand Educator Information System to Accommodate Additional Data

Recognizing the importance of aligning student growth with principal and teacher effectiveness, Maryland will design and implement a process to enhance the Educator Information System (EIS) to include teacher and principal evaluation and professional development data aligned with the P-12 Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) to connect student growth with teacher and principal effectiveness. This emphasis on teacher and principal accountability, as it relates to student growth, necessitates major changes to EIS in order to facilitate access to this new data set to make employment related decisions.

Pursuant to the expansion of the current CRM based system, the project team is in the final stages of requirements gathering and has a series of Joint Application Development (JAD) sessions scheduled with Local Education Agencies (LEA) to collect their input relative to the expansion of the system. This is an important change management step necessary to secure end-user buy in and commitment to the project's objectives. In order begin technical analysis relative to the design and implementation of the new system, a draft Task Order Request for Proposal (TORFP) is under review to hire a contractual resource. Review of the current production environment is scheduled relative to defining architectural requirements for building a parallel environment in

preparation for future testing and development activities. Additionally, a request has been sent to the O&M vendor to provide a current release of the database schema in preparation for future analysis and design work. This project has also submitted a project amendment in April 2011 to move a prorated amount contractual funding from year one to years two, three, and four. Approval of this request is still pending.

2) What methods, tools, and processes is the State using to determine the progress toward the goals and performance measures and the quality of implementation of the activities described for this application sub-criterion?

As with all sub-criteria, we are utilizing project management techniques for monitoring and controlling the program at the project/activity level and for determining progress towards milestones and goals. Microsoft Project Professional is being used to develop project level schedules. Project schedules have been detailed for 54 projects with specific activities planned for the remainder of the year. Project managers review their respective project schedule with their program director to ensure that project activities, issues, risks, and concerns are discussed. The quality of implementation of the activities will be determined by our overall program evaluation that has been built into the grant.

Maryland will be using the approved performance measures (dated June 21, 2011) to measure our success with the projects in section D2. The pilot systems are beginning to make concrete plans for the upcoming pilot year now that the Governor's Educator Effectiveness Council has submitted its initial recommendations. We anticipate no problem meeting these measures.

3) What is the State's assessment of its quality of implementation to date?

Maryland feels that the quality of implementation to date has been excellent. We are very pleased with the initial recommendations of the Governor's Educator Effectiveness Council, and we are looking forward to the pilot year with the 7 school systems.

4) If the State is not on track to meet the goals, performance measures, timelines and quality of implementation related to this sub-criterion as outlined in its approved scope of work, why not, and what strategies is the State employing in order to meet goals and performance measures?

N/A

5) What are the obstacles and/or risks that could impact the State's ability to meet its goals and performance measures related to this sub-criterion?

There obstacles for a successful completion of this project have largely been removed with the submission of the report of the Governor's Council on Educator Effectiveness. That is not to say that we still do not face challenges in the pilot phase of the statewide system of evaluation, but we are certainly in a much stronger position than we were six months ago. We look forward to continuing to work with our teachers and principals in developing a rigorous, fair, and transparent statewide system of evaluation that has student growth as 50% of the evaluation.

Evaluation: Based on the responses to the previous question, evaluate the State's performance and progress to date for this sub-criterion (choose one)

Red (1)   Orange (2)   Yellow (3)   ***   Green (4)

Race to the Top Progress Update
Sub-criterion F2

Part B: *In preparation for monthly calls, States must submit written responses to the following questions for two application sub-criteria (e.g. (A)(2) and (D)(4)). [2] All responses in this section should be tailored to the goals and projects associated with this sub-criterion.*

Application sub-criterion: F2

STATE's goals for this sub-criterion:
- Develop a partnership with two school systems to convert schools in restructuring to charter schools

Relevant projects:
#53/44 – Charter Schools

The focus of this project is three-fold: (1) ensuring that only high-quality charter schools exist and thrive statewide (2) using charter schools as a turnaround strategy (3) improving consistency and transparency of the charter school approval process. To date, the following actions have been taken to achieve these goals. First, a sub-grant process for incentive funds was developed and shared with LEA charter school liaisons from Baltimore City and Prince George's County. Technical assistance was provided for completing the application. The first draft of the Maryland Quality School Standards was competed in March 2011. In April, the draft was shared with stakeholders during the 8th Annual Maryland Charter School Conference. Focus groups were conducted at the conference involving LEA charter school liaisons, charter school operators, school-based charter school staff, parents, and community partners to review and provide feedback in terms of the content and practicality of the draft document. Each group also identified ways to use the standards as a resource for existing and yet to be identified charter schools. In late April, the first annual Charter School Authorizers' Symposium was held for LEA superintendents, school board presidents, and LEA liaisons identifying the next steps for professional development and/or technical assistance. Work has also begun to align the quality standards with the charter school performance contract. The sub-grant submissions for restart charter school in Baltimore City, Furman-Templeton Academy and its partner Mid-town Academy Charter School, was reviewed. Baltimore City has not yet identified a second school. To date, no schools in Prince George's County have been identified as restart charters but it is anticipated that schools will be identified this summer.

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[2] On each monthly call, program officers and states should work together to select two sub-criteria for the following month.

1. What is the extent of the State's progress toward meeting the goals and performance measures and implementing the activities that are included in its approved scope of work for this sub-criterion?

   Maryland is on track to meet the goals with this sub-criterion. The two school systems will have identified schools in restructuring to be converted to charter schools this summer.

2. What methods, tools, and processes is the State using to determine the progress toward the goals and performance measures and the quality of implementation of the activities described for this application sub-criterion?

   As with all sub-criteria, we are utilizing project management techniques for monitoring and controlling the program at the project/activity level and for determining progress towards milestones and goals. Microsoft Project Professional is being used to develop project level schedules. Project schedules have been detailed for 54 projects with specific activities planned for the remainder of the year. Each project manager reviews their respective project schedule with their program director to ensure that project activities, issues, risks, and concerns are discussed. The quality of implementation of the activities will be determined by our overall program evaluation that has been built into the grant.

   Additionally, the goal is to have two systems convert schools in improvement to charter schools. One has already done that, and we believe the other will be doing so shortly.

3. What is the State's assessment of its quality of implementation to date?
   The State is on target with this project and feels that the quality of implementation has been excellent.

4. If the State is not on track to meet the goals, performance measures, timelines and quality of implementation related to this sub-criterion as outlined in its approved scope of work, why not, and what strategies is the State employing in order to meet goals and performance measures?

   N/A

5. What are the obstacles and/or risks that could impact the State's ability to meet its goals and performance measures related to this sub-criterion?

None at this time.

Evaluation: Based on the responses to the previous question, evaluate the State's performance and progress to date for this sub-criterion (choose one)

Red (1)   Orange (2)   Yellow (3)   ***Green (4)[3]

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[3] Red – requires urgent and decisive action; Orange – requires substantial attention, some aspects need urgent attention; Yellow – aspect(s) require substantial attention, some aspects good; Green – good, requires refinement and systematic implementation.

Maryland, June 2011

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