

## Race to the Top Progress Update

### September 2011 Monthly Call -- Maryland

**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:

- MSDE conducted "Lessons Learned" work sessions for all Executive Sponsors and PMs to review amendment and financial protocols and procedures to ensure consistency.
- We have conducted additional Project 2010 training for all PMs to ensure that project schedules are maintained throughout the year.
- Evaluation feedback from participants in the Educator Effectiveness Academies and Teacher Induction Academy has been very positive.
- School systems have begun administering the pre-assessments for Foundations of Technology (FoT) for the ITEEA Project. To date, over 30,000 assessment seats have been created for Maryland students.
- Project interdependency review meetings are progressing well, as a number of technology and DAADS projects jointly converge on amenable solutions.
- The Maryland Business Roundtable is continuing to make progress on the development and deployment of STEMnet and is currently planning to conduct a limited Biology pilot.
- Final hardware installs for OBIEE/Portal/Security platforms to open connection between MSDE and department of Public Safety and Corrections System (DPSCs) have been completed.
- We have designed and developed first multimedia module – Quick Navigation aid for OBIEE. The module is installed on the LDS Training Portal and released internally for UAT review
- The crosswalk proof-of-concept is built and loaded with labor, higher education, and k12 individual test data for the P20 system.
- Through the SFSF grant, LEAs have received for the first time student growth percentiles linked to teachers for students in grades 4 through 8.

Challenges:

- MSDE is trying to find ways of ensuring that LEAs understand the impact and benefits of RTTT for schools, principals, and teachers. We are developing a communication plan to address the need.
- We continue to work with CAIRE to effectively address RTTT program evaluation issues.

- We are converting sub-grants to contracts for private IHEs which may pose a problem regarding tenure and promotion at private IHEs. We are in the process of finding a solution that will allow private IHEs to continue to participate in RTTT.

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?

With project teams in place and project monitoring processes established and implemented, meeting project goals and timelines is being aggressively pursued. As indicated previously, we continue to work with USM to define expectations and deliverables and to remove any impediments so that formative and summative evaluations of projects and LEA initiatives can be evaluated in a substantive and meaningful manner so that the impact of our RTTT endeavors can be defined.

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

USDE can assist MSDE by finalizing the technical assistance request for the educator evaluation system that will provide needed guidance to MSDE and the 7 pilot LEAs.

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### Sub-criterion B2 and B3

**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)).<sup>1</sup> All responses in this section should be tailored to the goals and projects associated with this sub-criterion.

**Application sub-criterion:** (B)(2) and (B)(3)

**STATE's goals for this sub-criterion:**

- (B)(2) Develop and implement assessments aligned with Common Core Standards
- (B)(3) Create curricular documents in parallel format

**Relevant projects:**

- (B)(2) 3/2 Formative Assessments
- (B)(3) 4/3 Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development
- 5/4 Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development for ITEEA
- 6/76 Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development CTE-SREB
- 7/5 World Languages Pipeline

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?

#### *Project 3/2 Formative Assessments*

The Formative Assessment Project (03/2) program manager was hired May 16, 2011, and a number of key accomplishments have taken place since that time. A project work plan has been crafted. Local accountability coordinators in each LEA have been contacted to assess current activities and professional development in the area of formative assessment. The *Notice of Grant Award* process is complete and will be finalized by the end of September for the three LEAs for PSAT testing as defined in the project. The grant award process for helping *all* students benefit from the diagnostic and instructional planning tools of the PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) by providing funding for districts not currently paying exam fees for students in grade 10 will be complete by the end of September. Cross-divisional collaboration with regularly scheduled planning meetings has been established with other RTTT project managers and other MSDE projects to identify and accommodate interdependencies. Research on current formative assessment efforts and resources for building a state-wide system has been conducted and relationships with other states involved in systemic formative assessment implementation have been developed. Collaboration with projects in Section B3 to support transition to the Common Core State Standards and high-quality assessment practices is in progress. Presentations to introduce the

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

project and establish communications with LEAs have been conducted at the meetings of local accountability coordinators of the 24 LEAs, with plans for additional presentations to teacher groups and at the Maryland Assessment Group Conference. The initial research and planning for RFP development is underway.

The main challenge has been the lengthy state process of developing position descriptions, announcements, and solicitation for hiring the remaining project staff. Fortunately, applications have now been received and reviewed and the interview process is underway with plans for project positions to be filled shortly. With the project team hired and in place in the next month, meeting project goals and timelines will be aggressively pursued and moved to on-schedule status.

#### *Project 4/3 Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development*

The Curriculum Development and Formative Assessment project (4/3) has made progress in the following areas during September 2011: (1) held various meetings and reviews to progress curriculum resource development of model units and lessons, (2) created and submitted to MSDE Procurement an RFP for online high school STEM courses that is currently under review, (3) increased planning and coordination activity with the Formative Assessments project (3/2) team, and (4) successfully added five curriculum specialist positions to ensure curriculum development progress the literacy standards in social studies/history, science and technical subjects.

The prime obstacle will be getting the STEM online courses RFP through the State procurement process in a timely manner for earliest possible availability. The Curriculum Development and Formative Assessment project manager is paying close attention to this activity to ensure adequate progress. Another challenge is getting sufficient curriculum and formative assessment information available for the summer 2012 Educator Effectiveness Academies (EEAs). The addition of the new specialist positions will significantly help our ability to provide this information for our educators at the 2012 EEAs.

#### *Project 5/4 Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development for ITEEA*

MSDE, working with the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA), STEM Center for Teaching and Learning (STEM CTL) will deliver a rigorous program of study in Technology Education through online formats. Professional development is provided through both face-to-face and online formats. The use of pre- and post-assessment data is used to inform instruction, expand curricular resources and to strengthen the professional development model. All resources are being developed with the understanding that MSDE and ITEEA would develop a rigorous program of study that would serve as the baseline instructional model adopted by local school systems. MSDE fully expects local school system staff and teachers to work across districts to further develop resources and share best practices. Currently, 18 local school systems, 110 high schools, and over 275 teachers are voluntarily participating in this project.

MSDE and ITEEA staff have developed a standards aligned, resource rich curriculum guide with embedded just-in-time professional development for the Foundations of Technology (FoT) course. The FoT course is used by most local school systems to meet the Maryland Technology

Education graduation requirement. The curriculum guide includes ready to teach, educational resources such as presentations, design briefs, grading rubrics, student exemplars, formative assessment items as well as sample end-of-course assessment items and embedded videos. The guide is organized via a website, which can be viewed on a teacher's computer or mobile device. The guide is available to participating Maryland school systems at no cost. Further development of the curriculum guide will produce a student website and possibly a curriculum "app" which could be downloaded by students and/or teachers.

Master teachers were responsible for conducting both face-to-face and online professional development sessions. Four, one week, face-to-face professional development sessions were conducted during the summer of 2011. Each master teacher maintained a series of online office hours as a way to dialogue with teachers both formally and informally. Office hours will be held biweekly throughout the school year and are hosted via EdOnline (ITEEA's online learning community). Just-in-time professional development is provided through the embedded videos included in the curriculum guide. The embedded videos showcase effective teaching practice and insight into the hardest to teach concepts.

The FoT model course guide includes standards-based assessments administered in three parts; a pre-test (online), end-of-course assessment (online), and design challenge (hands-on & online). Results from both the pre-test and end-of-course assessment are used to measure gains in students' technological literacy, identify gaps within the curriculum guide and inform teacher professional development. The design challenge is used to assess students' understanding of the engineering design process, through both a scenario-based challenge and online follow-up assessment. Results from the design challenge are used to better understand how students' thought processes are applied within a problem-based curriculum. Results are collected by ITEEA and distributed to staff in participating local school systems and MSDE. Data are reported by course, unit of instruction and by the standard being assessed. Further, the reports outline teacher, school, school system, state, and national data trends. A new assessment system is currently being developed and will be piloted in the spring of 2012. Through the new assessment system teachers will be able to administer both formative and summative course assessments and produce instant data reports which will have an immediate impact on instruction.

The project team is very interested in work related to curriculum and assessment development. The model developed under this project has expanded beyond all expectations. This project directly relates to STEM education, the new assessment system and the new curriculum delivery system.

#### *Project 6/76 Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development CTE-SREB*

The primary emphasis during the first year of the project has been the development of CTE curricula in Construction Management and Design that will eventually lead to the development of assessments, instructional materials, and professional development. The work has been done in collaboration with the Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB) multistate consortium that includes representatives from business and industry, higher education, non-profit organizations,

secondary education, and professional organizations. Despite some initial setbacks, considerable progress has been made during the current fiscal year.

On a monthly basis, we either meet with or conduct conference calls with SREB and other partner-states regarding similar projects to assist in the overall development of CTE curriculum and assessments. In May, there was delay in curriculum development due to a change in the curriculum writing team. The individual who had agreed to lead the writing project resigned to work on other unrelated curriculum writing projects. The design team members, working with postsecondary and industry partners, immediately began the search for a new lead-writer. We met with the Maryland Center for Construction Education and Innovation (MCCEI) a public-private partnership dedicated to expanding relevant career pathways in construction. MSDE is in the process of establishing a three-year contractual agreement with MCCEI at Towson University to support the development of the Construction Design and Management CTE Program of Study. A curriculum writer from the community college system has been identified. The writer will work with MCCEI to development the content for four high school courses. The last course in the series will enable students to attain college credit. We are also working with the University of Maryland College Park and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. We have been meeting with the curriculum design consultant to review potential resources to support hybrid (i.e. online and in-class) curriculum development process requirements. The focus in year 2 will be the development of the first two courses in the series. In addition, during August we also met with a representative from AutoDesk regarding materials used in the AutoDesk Design Academy. Through this partnership, teachers will have an opportunity to participate in workshops/training on the use of updated software and curricular support materials. The first workshop is scheduled for October 21, 2011.

Due to the delay and loss of the original curriculum writer for this project, not all of the funds in the year one budget were spent. There will be an adjustment in the timeline for curriculum development and a corresponding realignment of funds in year two. Partnership engagement has actually been expanded and strengthened as a result of our work with MCCEI. It is anticipated that these changes will result in placing this project on-track.

#### *Project 7/5 World Languages Pipeline*

Of the three FTE World Language Specialists Positions, we have hired 1.0 FTE Chinese, .5 FTE Arabic, and .5 FTE Spanish. The first accomplishment was the development of an application and scoring guidelines for LEA sub-grants. Four LEAs were awarded sub-grants to initiate Arabic (1), Chinese (2), and Spanish (1) programs in elementary schools. They are in the planning and early implementation stage and the MSDE world language specialists are providing technical assistance. The second major accomplishment was the curriculum development workshop held this summer to create STEM modules for grades K-1 and Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish. Curriculum members were an eclectic group of teachers representing eight LEAs. The modules are now being revised and translated. While Hindi was included as one of the potential languages in the project, to date, there is no interest in the LEAs to initiate programs in that language.

The late hiring of world languages specialists posed a challenge. One FTE remains vacant and two of the part-time specialists have indicated that they cannot continue in the position resulting in two FTE vacancies for project year two. Additionally, while the specialists have language teaching expertise, they lack experience with elementary world language curriculum; therefore, they are not qualified to write an online course for teachers.

We have been in consultation with the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) at the University of Maryland for the STEM curriculum modules writing project. In addition, an MOU is almost finalized that will enable the NFLC to create the online course for teachers within the project budget. We continue to advertise the specialist positions and will interview additional candidates in October.

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?

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 year two. Project managers review their respective project schedule with their program director weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly to ensure that project activities, issues, risks, and concerns are discussed. Project managers are responsible for maintaining up-to-date project schedules as they relate to percentage of activities completed and changes in the duration for completing tasks. Monthly reports are also submitted by each project manager delineating accomplishments, program and/or budget issues. Technology projects also follow the State's Department of Information Technology (DoIT) software development life cycle (SDLC) process. Technology projects are also subject to additional quarterly reviews by DoIT. Communication, verbal and electronic, occurs on a regular basis between MSDE and its various vendors (e.g., MBRT, MPT). Finally, the quality of implementation of the activities will be determined by our overall program evaluation that has been built into the grant. The formative and summative evaluation tools to be developed by USM for each project will enable us to assess the degree to which we met goals and objectives established for each project.

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

The quality of implementation has been excellent. Project managers have created and are maintaining detailed project schedules which are reviewed and updated monthly. Risks and obstacles are identified immediately and have been addressed in a timely and proactive manner. There is a high level of communication between and among project managers, project directors,

executive sponsors, and the Core Team enabling modifications and adjustments to be made so that short-term and long-term goals and objectives are met.

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?

We are on track to meet our goals because of the actions taken by project managers, program directors, and executive sponsors to address obstacles and modify project schedules through the amendment process. These actions are delineated in the preceding project summaries. In addition, policies, procedures, and protocols within MSDE have been established and/or modified to enable to meet performance measures and timelines. Recently, “lessons learned” workshops, a project manager resource manual was created, and Project 2010 follow-up training was provided to enable consistency of action and results.

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?

Each of the preceding project summaries identifies challenges/obstacles that may have impacted the implementation of the project and the actions taken by the project manager to overcome those challenges so that the project is on track to meet its goals and objectives.

*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)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 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.



### Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

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