

Race to the Top Progress Update – 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

- Project 1/78 (*Office of Reform and Innovation*) – Though only with us since early July, Ramona Brown, has had a very positive impact on our ability to effectively manage RTTT funds.
- Project 2/1 (*Program Evaluation*) – CAIRE has created a process for the utilization phase of evaluation and finalized that process with RTTT leadership. The initial stages of that process have begun.
- Project 41/24 (*Educator Effectiveness Academy*) – As of August 6, 2012, all 11 EEA will have been conducted.
- Project 39/25 (*Teacher Induction Academy*) – The second Teacher Induction Academy was held during the first week of July. All 24 LEAs participated. Responses from participants were very positive.
- Project 3/2 (*Formative Assessments*) - Project scope expansion is under consideration to avoid overlaps with P32-35. Developing a pilot that uses digital storage and playback of students work and learning activities with digital rubrics as the formative assessment tool
- Project 8/11 (*LEA System Application Upgrades and Infrastructure Upgrades*)
Production installation has begun for the P20 system; LEA enterprise security design team has begun work.
- Project 10/28 (*Multimedia Training*) - RFP issued for LEA teacher LDS coaching services
- Projects 17/32-20/35 (*Test Item Bank*) - RFP issues for procurements of CAT and item bank systems; team to investigate status and synergy with Smarter Balanced CAT and Item bank solution

- Project 13/61 (*Enhancement to LDS to develop P20 and Workforce Data Warehouse and Center*) - Phase 1 dashboards in development for higher education data warehouse, and phase 2 in design; p20 has a new user interface design
- *All tech projects*: Installation and configuration of the second virtual data center (cluster #2) at DPSCS has been completed. Work is in progress to partition virtual machine (VM) environments, along with the cloning of the Educator Information System (EIS) production environment that resides within the MSDE environment.
- Project 21/42 (*Implement Statewide System to Support Student Instructional Intervention*) - Technical proposal for three vendors were evaluated, and vendor oral presentations were held for the Student Instructional Intervention System. Project is on track to make an award recommendation during the month of August
- Project 26/43 (*Implement a System to Support ELearning for Intervention, Enhancement, and Enrichment*) - Completed a configuration, sizing and implementation planning project to assess the feasibility for an on-premise solution for the LMS. Decided to adopt a hosted solution for the LMS platform. Received Core Team approval on the proposed LMS procurement strategy

Challenges

- Pricing negotiation with vendors who proposed solutions that exceed projects' budgets. Specifically, Project 22/6 (*Develop Online Instructional Intervention Modules*) - If we are not able to negotiate a better price with this vendor we may need to rebid the RFP, further delaying the project.
 - Coordinating with procurement to prepare and submit documentation within required lead times to submit project solutions to the Board of Public Works for approvals
 - Resource allocation for service requests with MSDE co-location vendor has delayed technical implementations
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?

We are on track to meet our goals and timelines. We have a number of governance processes that enable us to address obstacles/issues in a timely manner.

Maryland, July 2012

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

We do not require any additional help at this time.

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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:² (E)(2)

STATE's goals for this sub-criterion:

- Establish the Breakthrough Zone and identified schools
- Complete robust needs assessments to determine priorities for district actions and state assistance (and provide such assistance)
- Develop a partnership with two schools systems to convert schools in restructuring to charter schools

Relevant projects:

44/41 The Breakthrough Center
42/17 Academy for Turnaround Schools
45/67 RITA Team Audits
46/57 Extend Student Learning and Improve School Culture, Climate, and Student Support
47/45 Coordinated Student Services
48/69 School Health Services
49/63 Physical Activity
50/58 Extended Learning
51/71 STEM Project Lead the Way
52/77 Primary Talent Development
53/44 Charter Schools

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 44/41 The Breakthrough Center

During 2011-2012, MSDE's Breakthrough Center continued to provide turnaround services to the bottom 5 percent of schools in Maryland, 16 Title I low-achieving Priority Schools.

The partnership agreement with Prince Georges County Public Schools (PGCPS) has been robust and vibrant. Recently, the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of PGCPS accepted a superintendent position in other school districts. This may influence the ability of the

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

² All highlighted fields will be pre-populated by the Department Program Officer prior to State completion.

Breakthrough Center to maintain this strong relationship. The partnership agreement with Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) has greatly improved during the last six months with an increase in the number of Breakthrough Center support services provided to BCPS Breakthrough schools.

Plans are underway for the Center for Application and Innovation Research in Education (CAIRE) to conduct a formative assessment of the Breakthrough Center. The purpose of the formative assessment is to provide ongoing feedback to the Cross-Functional Team on how to improve the delivery of support services to the lowest-achieving districts and schools and to determine the degree to which BCPS and PGCPs are building their capacity to support the lowest-achieving schools and sustain improvement. During the spring, project managers identified specific, measurable outcomes for their respective projects delineating the changes in structure, process, and/or behaviors that are anticipated in schools. These outcomes provide the framework for impact phase of the evaluation process.

Monthly meetings between MSDE Breakthrough Center staff and senior district staff in BCPS and PGCPs resulted in collaborative, continuous improvement efforts in the turnaround schools.

Highlights include the following:

- During April 2012, teams of reviewers conducted needs assessments in ten feeder schools to the bottom five percent of the lowest-achieving schools in Maryland. Results of the needs assessments will be shared with district leaders and school principals to prioritize areas for improvement and assistance from the Breakthrough Center.
- A work session was conducted on April 16 in PGCPs with the Breakthrough Center's student services team, the Turnaround Director for PGCPs and a representative from Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium to develop teacher professional development outcomes and modules for the six turnaround schools in 2012-2013.
- A focus group session was conducted with BCPS on April 18 to develop a plan for expanding leadership development Breakthrough Center services to the turnaround schools
- A new Aspiring Principals' Institute has been designed specifically to begin building a pipeline for teacher leaders who serve in Breakthrough Center schools in Baltimore City and Prince George's County. All Aspiring Principal Fellows will complete a year-long Turnaround Leadership Project, connecting their own personal leadership plan to the improvement work taking place in their school. The Breakthrough Center will also provide the Fellows with a mentor in each school district to support them as they work to complete their Leadership Project.

- The Breakthrough Center received a \$725,000 grant from the Jack Kent Cook Foundation to increase the number of high-achieving students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds attending the Maryland Summer Center for Gifted and Talented Students. Students who attend Breakthrough Schools in Baltimore City and Prince George's County will have the opportunity to attend the newly created Maryland Summer Center for Marine Biology at the National Aquarium in Baltimore or the Center for Space Engineering, Robotics, supported by NASA in Prince George's County
- Kathleen Smith, Director, Office of School Improvement, Virginia DOE, Larry Kugler, former Title I Director of Fairfax County Public School, Virginia presented to the Cross-Functional Team regarding the implementation of Indistar, an online tool for school improvement. The meeting also included a video conference with Seydric William, Principal of Westside Elementary School, Roanoke, Virginia who shared his experienced using Indistar as a tool to manage turning around a low-achieving school.
- Breakthrough Center staff participated in a Turnaround Symposium on May 18 sponsored by PGCPS. The symposium brought together national experts, successful turnaround practitioners, and local school district leaders to examine critical issues for turnaround school improvement, identify policy reforms and practices that have been effective in supporting transformational changes in other school districts, and build stakeholder investments in sustaining improvements in PGCPS turnaround schools. The purpose was to engage district senior staff and PGCPS Teachers Association in dialogue around the district's response to the turnaround schools. As a result the Chief of Human Capital agreed to establish the turnaround schools as a district priority for recruiting, hiring, and placing highly-qualified staff.
- The Executive Director of the Breakthrough Center met with the CAO of BCPS, Sonja Santelisis to review the work of the Breakthrough Center for 2011-12 and discuss renewal of the partnership agreement for 2012-2013. The response from CAO to the services of the Breakthrough Center was very favorable.
- The Executive Director of the Breakthrough Center and the Director for School Improvement initiatives met with the Maria Navarro, Executive Assistant to the Baltimore City CAO, to discuss increasing the level of job-embedded reading and mathematics professional development for teachers in the turnaround schools. Dr. Navarro proposed that the City would hire additional education content specialists that would work under the direction of the Breakthrough Center. Pending approval from the CAO, additional specialists will be hired during the summer of 2012.

- The MSDE Director of School Improvement Initiatives and an education specialist collaborated with the Chief Academic Officer in PGCPS to refine an instructional framework for collaborative planning for the six turnaround schools.
- Prince George's County Public Schools and the Prince George's County Education Association reached an agreement to provide differentiated compensation as a way to recruit and retain teachers at the six turnaround middle schools. The compensation will begin during the 2012 -2013 school year.
- Maryland's Breakthrough Center is developing a community of practice for school turnaround. This summer, district executive officers and principals from 62 turnaround schools have been invited to participated in a two-day Academy for School Turnaround. The purpose of the Academy was to provide district and school leaders with practical turnaround actions, behaviors, and structure, supported by research, which can be immediately implemented to achieve rapid improvement in teaching and learning. A follow-up session will also be provided during the 2012-2013 school year.

Teacher Professional Development

The two goals of the Teacher Professional Development initiative through the Breakthrough Center are to:

- Improve teacher knowledge of both subject matter and effective instructional strategies.
- Build the capacity of the school leadership team to provide job-embedded professional development to increase student achievement.

Ten MSDE specialists are providing reading and/or math support in four School Improvement Grant (SIG) and five feeder schools in Prince George's County as well as five SIG and three feeder schools in Baltimore City. The number of feeder schools that MSDE originally supported in Prince George's County has been reduced by three since District staff eliminated these schools due to the progress that they are making.

The MSDE professional development delivery model has been modified to provide a transition to the Common Core State Standards Curriculum. As a result, our model for each monthly cycle now includes the following:

- Unit planning centered around a set of standards
- Development of content knowledge related to the Common Core Standards addressed in each unit

- Use of the collaborative planning process (lesson planning, lesson implementation, and debriefing/analysis of student work)
- Identification of follow-up responsibilities for administrators, school resource staff, and MSDE staff based on teachers' needs determined through lesson implementation

Based on the evidence gathered from end-of-year instructional walkthroughs, many teachers were applying the information acquired from professional development sessions led by MSDE specialists. Additionally, LEA benchmark data continues to increase for each administration from the same period during the previous year. We recently received MSA results. In Prince George's County, 10 of 12 schools met the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) in reading and 7 of 7 schools met the AMO in math. In Baltimore City, 2 of 4 schools met the AMO in reading and 4/ of 4 schools met the AMO in math. Even though we have seen growth in teacher performance in all schools, MSDE specialists will be working with a large number of teachers new to the schools during the 2012-2013 school year due to significant turnover in teaching staff, especially in the SIG schools.

During the 2012-2013 school year, there was a critical mass of novice teachers as well as teachers who had not received appropriate professional development in the past in these SIG and feeder schools. As a result, Breakthrough Center and district leadership staff have explored ways to recruit high quality teachers for these turnaround schools. Hiring practices have been revised to afford principals the opportunity to select high quality candidates of their choice.

To help achieve the two aforementioned goals, principals need to be an integral part of this initiative by participating in the professional development sessions offered by MSDE and reinforcing the information through feedback to teachers based on informal classroom observations. During the past school year, most principals adhered to this expectation. With the transition to the Common Core, principals, more than ever, must understand the need for their involvement in all aspects of MSDE's work in their schools. In cases where administrators are not appropriately involved in the sessions or are not providing the appropriate follow-up, MSDE staff will continue to confer with the principal and the executive officer (the person who evaluates the principal) to emphasize the importance of the administrator's role and identify ways to increase principal involvement.

Leadership Development

The goal of the Leadership Development initiative through the Breakthrough Center is to provide professional development and technical assistance to build the instructional leadership capacity of school principals and instructional leadership teams in the lowest-achieving schools in Baltimore City and Prince George's County.

Breakthrough Center support continues to be provided in a comprehensive, collaborative and focused manner to PGCPS. Leadership support in the area of strategic goal setting and planning is provided to the Director of the Turnaround Schools. Mentoring continues to be provided for 3 feeder high schools to the Turnaround Schools. An Aspiring Principals' Institute, a year-long program designed specifically to create a pipeline of leaders for Turnaround Schools has concluded for the first PGCPS cohort. A Leadership Educational Specialist was hired to provide additional support directly to school leadership and leadership teams in the Turnaround Middle Schools with particular emphasis on coaching the Aspiring Principals' Institute fellows. MSDE leadership staff has been included in PGCPS system leadership development funded by the Wallace and Freddie Mac Foundations.

At the request of BCPSS, MSDE has been preparing to support school leadership teams. MSDE leadership has conducted a review of exemplary practices in successful Turnaround Schools across the country. These practices form the basis to provide school leadership staff with professional development in the City Schools. Plans have been confirmed to offer the Aspiring Principals' Institute: City Schools Turnaround for system identified candidates in the Pre-K to 8 schools commencing in August. Academy content has been carefully reviewed by district and BTC staff to ensure alignment to systemic initiatives. A Leadership Educational Specialist has identified and the hiring process is in motion to provide additional support directly to school leadership and leadership teams in the system identified Turnaround PreK-8 Schools with particular emphasis on coaching the Aspiring Principals' Institute fellows. MSDE Leadership staff has been invited to participate in City Schools Principal Leadership summer sessions.

Project 42/17 Academy for School Turnaround

The Academy for School Turnaround is on target to provide professional development to principals of the lowest achieving schools in Maryland. This summer, district executive officers and principals from 7 districts (62 turnaround schools) were invited to participate in a two-day academy. The purpose of the Academy was to provide district and school leaders with practical turnaround actions, behaviors, and structure, supported by research, which can be immediately

implemented to achieve rapid improvement in teaching and learning. The content for the academy is based on the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Practice Guide: Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools. Their work includes 22 evidence-based practices for use by educators to quickly and dramatically improve student achievement in their low-performing schools focusing on leadership, instruction, and people. This is especially important since persistently failing schools need guidance on what will work quickly to improve student achievement. One key aspect of their report is the need for dramatic change. Therefore, an important aspect of the academy content focused on the principals' ability to lead complex change.

We have made logistical decisions regarding the two-year project timeline. Year one focused on schools from 7 districts: Anne Arundel, Charles, Dorchester, Montgomery, Prince Georges, Somerset, St. Mary's. A key decision was made to include the executive officers, those who supervise principals as Academy participants. A total of 77 participated.

Evidence of Progress:

- Sam Redding, a recognized national leader in school turnaround, met with us on January 4, 2012 to discuss additional content and resources to consider.
- In November 2011, we sent a letter to the superintendents of the 8 districts to announce the dates, location, and the schools whose principals and executive officers will be participating so that each district would be aware of their commitment to this project (MOU). We have maintained contact with the executive officers to insure that as new principals are appointed, they are invited to the Academy.
- In December 2011, a contract was awarded to Maureen Mirabito to work with us to develop and design the content and activities for the Academy.
- In May 2012 we met with the executive officers to give them an overview of the Academy.
- The Academy was held on July 24-25, 2012 at Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School in Upper Marlboro. The initial feedback forms indicated that the 77 participants found the sessions to be very relevant for their work as turnaround leaders.

One of the recommendations from the IES publication is the need to build committed staff at these schools. This may include releasing, replacing, or redeploying staff members who are not fully committed to turning around student performance and bringing in new staff who are committed. One of the roadblocks to achieving this, as verified by our MD Breakthrough Center work, is the recognition that principals need systemic support. We can overcome that challenge

by having the participation of the executive officers. They will be involved throughout the Academy and have a keen awareness of all the recommendations, including the need to make decisions on a district level that will support the recommendations.

The Academy planning team meets monthly to plan all aspects of the project, working in conjunction with the information we glean from the work of the Breakthrough Center and feedback from this year's participants to insure that the Academy will be relevant and meet the identified needs of these schools. Follow-up sessions will be designed based on the feedback we receive from the principals and executive officers after the summer Academy sessions.

Project 45/67 RITA Team Audits

The RITA Team Audits were included in the Race to the Top Grant in year one and year two only. The year two goals have been met. MSDE conducted comprehensive needs assessment through RITA Team Audits in the last 10 (5 schools in Baltimore City and 5 schools in Prince George's) of the 20 Feeder pattern schools to Maryland's identified and served School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools. The Restructuring Implementation Technical Assistance (RITA) school/district audits were completed in April 2012. RITA Team Audits were conducted in the following feeder pattern schools in year 2:

Baltimore City

1. Overlook Elementary
2. Hillcrest Heights Elementary
3. Potomac High School
4. DuVal High School
5. Fairmont Heights High School

Prince George's County

1. Moravia Park Primary
2. Patapsco Elem/Middle
3. Lockerman Bundy Elementary
4. Alexander Hamilton Elementary
5. James Mosher Elementary

Similar to year one, the year two RITA visits were conducted by teams of highly skilled educators assembled through the MSDE's Division of Business Support release of "Request for Qualified Providers" (RFP) bid request to serve as RITA Team Leaders and RITA Team members. 31 bids were submitted to MSDE for Team Members and 7 bids were submitted for Team Leader. The MSDE RITA Review Committee reviewed the RFQs and their final selection consisted of 25 highly skilled consultants (5 RITA Team Leaders and 20 RITA Team Members) with strong backgrounds in school based administration.

MSDE's RITA Leads prepared the RITA Team Leaders and Members to work in concert with the school and the district for their RITA audit visit. The RITA process consistently provides training for RITA Team Leaders and Members prior to the two day onsite RITA school audit. They were trained in the use of the RITA standards and indicators to analyze all facets of the programs in the

Feeder schools and the support of the district for those schools. Additionally, MSDE RITA Leads collected and assembled pre-Site RITA Documentation Binder Materials with comprehensive data and program information for each of the 10 Feeder schools, including school improvement plans, instructional programs, collaborative planning, and parent/community engagement. Each of the 25 consultants was provided with a RITA training binder with all the tools for their RITA Audit visits and two school binders with extensive pre-site documentation. RITA teams conducted RITA audits at their 2 assigned Feeder schools in either Prince George's County Public Schools or Baltimore City Public School System. Following the onsite RITA school visits, each RITA team leader and member reviewed all data collected from the school audits (including classroom visits, formal interviews, school hallway walkthroughs, informal discussions, school pre-site binders, etc.) and wrote their independent school and district recommendations based on 8 RITA standards and indicators. Then the 5 RITA Teams met and reached consensus on the team's RITA recommendations for the school and the team's RITA recommendations for the district for the school.

The MSDE RITA Leads finalized the RITA report for each school and shared the reports in a face-to-face meeting with PGCPSS and BCPSS. MSDE shared the final RITA recommendation reports with Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) on May 21, 2012 during the monthly Breakthrough Center Meeting in the LEA. Prince George's shared that the RITA report recommendations are used to build their district capacity to serve low performing schools across the district and to plan for future school feeder patterns. MSDE shared the final RITA recommendation reports with Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) on June 7, 2012 during the monthly Breakthrough Center Meeting in the LEA. Baltimore City shared that the district reviews the RITA report recommendations with each of the school principals to assist them in prioritizing their improvement efforts.

The RITA audit project was only included in Year 1 and 2 of RTTT grant. All project 45/67 activities were completed according to our two year project timeline. There were no major concerns in the implementation of this project. When all expenses are reconciled, there will be a balance at the end of Project 45/67: RITA Team Audits.

Project 46/57 Extend Student Learning and Improve School Culture, Climate, and Student Support

The foundation created in year one is served as the building block for year 2 of the project for addressing the four goals of the project: 1) Work with identified schools to conduct needs assessments on discipline and school climate 2) Train or arrange training for schools and school

teams in the area of PBIS and other evidence- based programs as the result of identified needs. 3) Provide ongoing technical assistance and monitoring of programs while assisting schools and LEA's in building capacity for long term sustainability. 4) Develop and provide training based on the specific needs of each school as identified by the needs assessment.

1.) Work with identified schools to conduct needs assessments on discipline and school climate

As indicated in previous reports Tier I and Tier II school data collection is completed. For schools in Baltimore City and Prince George's County this means that school profiles, Restructuring Implementation Technical Assistance (RITA) Reports, and climate surveys have been collected cataloged and are being used to support the upgrade of culture and climate in identified schools.

This process of updating and analyzing this material in ongoing and is used to address areas of need for schools as individual entities and as a part the larger LEA. Examples of "need" areas include: understanding the nature of the middle school learner; intervention strategies for challenging behavior (classroom and school wide); and team building.

2.) Train or arrange training for schools and school teams in the area of PBIS and other evidence- based programs as the result of identified needs.

The training of schools and school teams is ongoing and is gaining momentum as relationships are developing and partnerships remain strong (e.g. Sheppard Pratt, Johns Hopkins, and Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium). For example as assigned behavior specialist, I work with Johns Hopkins and Sheppard Pratt on the state PBIS leadership team that has resulted in direct support to Tier I and Tier II schools and state-wide PBIS training including summer workshops, and forums.

The above mentioned training is paramount to the success of project 57 as all Tier I and Tier II schools are in varying stages of implementing some form of school wide behavioral intervention. For example in Prince George's County, G. James Gholson MS, Thurgood Marshall MS, Thomas Johnson MS, and Drew Freeman MS have all requested training in implementing PBIS data systems, an indication that PBIS is in the process of being implemented. At the same time, Benjamin Stoddert MS and Oxon Hill MS received statewide recognition for PBIS achievement for the 2011-2012 school year.

In Baltimore City, Fredrick Douglas HS and Ben Franklin HS are implementing *Capturing Kids Hearts* as the evidence-based practice to address their schools needs. Baltimore City Schools

participating in state wide training in PBIS are: Booker T Washington MS, Commodore John Rogers ES, Garrison MS, Harford Heights ES, and Samuel Coleridge Taylor ES.

The partnership with Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium has resulted in more direct service by providing professional development in areas such as bullying, cultural responsiveness, and personal wellness. In addition to school intervention, the relationship has sought to strengthen the link between student, school, and family, by arranging activities, improving communication, and supporting the efforts of school teams.

3.) Provide ongoing technical assistance and monitoring of programs while assisting schools and LEA's in building capacity for long term sustainability

The strong leadership of Prince George's Counties Turnaround Director and willingness to open doors by Baltimore City's creative Student Services and Safety Executive Director is enabling the program to gain momentum and ultimately sustain itself. At this time, the RTTT team has made more progress in Prince George's County in terms of direct service. However, Baltimore City Schools we will continue to plan with/for and communicate the hope that services will be rendered to schools and ultimately sustainable.

4.) Develop and provide training based on the specific needs of each school as identified by the needs assessment

In year one, the collecting data was completed and now needs to be updated (School Climate Surveys, RITA reports, and School Improvement Plans). The resulting information is being used to develop and provide staff development with each school principal lending his or her guidance to best suit the individual buildings.

For example, at Thurgood Marshall Middle School, Principal James has granted access to his student service teams, PBIS team, and set aside training days to the RTTT team to support school-wide growth in areas of need. To date the collaboration has resulted in numerous training opportunities in areas ranging from classroom management to team building.

Project 47/45 Coordinated Student Services

All year two goals and activities are or are going to be met by September 30, 2012. Since January 2012 relationships have been developed with the Turnaround personnel in Prince George's County and they continue to seek our support and assistance. Baltimore City relationships change as they continue to change personnel.

Baltimore City Public Schools -

Accomplishments to date include the hiring of one staff person in Baltimore City Public Schools to serve as the Student Support Services Network Liaison (SSSNL). Baseline data on suspensions and non-promotions for five of the six secondary schools were provided in order to assess the success of the interventions provided by the SSSNL. Final data for school year 2011-2012 should be arriving by the end of July 2012.

Employing an audit instrument created by the project manager to reflect the requirements for coordinated student support teams in COMAR, the project director and network liaisons have evaluated the effectiveness of student support teams in several of the Baltimore City Public Schools and Prince George's County Public Schools. Data from the audit instruments and school visits have been shared with the district's Network liaisons and central office staff (School Counseling Coordinator, newly appointed Student Services Coordinator) . Data revealed that not all required members of student support attend teams, some schools have no student service teams, roles need defining, and processes need streamlining. Visits to schools will continue. .

At this time I have visited the following Baltimore City Schools:

Benjamin Franklin at Masonville Cove High School (audit instrument completed)

Samuel Coleridge Taylor Elementary School(audit instrument completed)

Harford Heights (using a contractor under the direction of this grant)The contractor is working on culturally responsive /instruction and discipline for classroom management.

Frederick Douglass High (technical assistance provided for forming team)

Moravia Park Elementary School (audit instrument completed)

Commodore John Rogers Elem/Middle (audit instrument completed)

Meetings at schools with individual principals have resulted in site specific assistance, and at this time one Baltimore City school, Harford Heights, continues to receive

assistance focused on culturally responsive classroom management and instruction from a contractor hired through the project.

Technical assistance for Baltimore City Schools continues to include the sharing of resources with the Central office and the modeling of student support strategies and processes in several of the schools (Benjamin Franklin at Masonville Cove, Samuel Coleridge Taylor, Frederick Douglass).

Prince George's County Public Schools -

The audit instrument created by the project manager has been implemented in Price George's County Schools. Data from the audit instruments and school visits have been compiled and have been shared with the district's Network liaisons. Data revealed that not all required members of student support attend teams, some schools have no student service teams but use other teams to deliver student support services, roles need defining, and processes need streamlining. Visits to schools will continue. .

At this time I have visited the following Prince George's County Public Schools:

Oxen Hill High School (meeting with principal)

Thurgood Marshall Middle School (audit instrument completed)

Benjamin Stoddard Middle Schools (audit instrument completed)

Thomas Johnson Middle School (meeting with principals)

Gholson Middle School (audit instrument completed)

Drew Freeman Middle School (audit instrument completed)

Needs assessment results were discussed with Prince George's county personnel and plans for professional development in Prince George's County are in process. The first two-day professional development sessions related to students service teams will be held on August 10 and 17, 2012. These two workshops will focus on Response to Intervention models and strategies and on the roles, functions, and process of student support teams. A plan for continued professional development (problem-solving models for teams, culturally responsive behavior management strategies, case management) has begun to be created and will continue to be structured based on discussions at a planning meeting with Turnaround staff and principals at a meeting held on July 13, 2012 at the Turnaround headquarters in Prince George's County.

Progress:

Baltimore City Public Schools -

During this period, small adjustments were made to the project schedule to reflect the needs of the LEAs. Dates were adjusted for the receipt of reports from the Baltimore City (SSSNL). Because the personnel provided by the grant were not identified quickly, the person responsible for the grant data did not begin to gather the data until late in the school year. Time frame adjustments were created in order to allow for the districts to prepare for professional development. Small budget adjustments allowed for trainings outside of Maryland as appropriate.

Obstacles that exist are generally related to several newly filled central office student support positions in Baltimore City Public Schools, and their continued reluctance to help us get into the schools. In order to overcome this obstacle, we worked more directly with Baltimore City Breakthrough Center staff to move the project forward in the schools and we focused more on the central office staff as the positions were filled. At this point, Baltimore City Public Schools Breakthrough Center personnel have agreed (verbally) to meeting with our student support services team four times a year (dates have not yet been determined) to focus solely on student services issues and needs. School visits will continue to be arranged by Breakthrough Center student services personnel as they are invited into schools by the school administration. This strategy is very limiting and has not yet served to provide us access to school student service teams. It appears that city school personnel are slow to accept assistance for student service teams even when the visiting personnel are from the City Schools Breakthrough office. While some school principals in both districts continue to focus on instruction only, more and more have become aware of the importance of student support systems and how they affect student learning and behavior.

Prince George's County Public Schools -

Progress can be determined in several ways. A new grant award has been created for professional development for the Prince George's County Public Schools which would allow student services personnel to seek professional development outside of the school system. Attendance at conferences on teaching the whole child, building effective relationships with students, and strategies for improving attendance and student engagement will be encouraged and partially financed by this grant. These workshops would be jointly approved and would need to reflect outcomes for sustained growth in student service teams. That Prince George's county trusts us enough to consider entering into this venture jointly is progress.

Additionally, the request for the two-day training mentioned above reflects a new dynamic in the relationships between Prince George's County Public Schools and the MSDE student services teams. It is certainly reflective of the progress we have made in establishing ourselves as trustworthy, knowledgeable and helpful that we have been given two days to address the student services needs that were identified jointly by MSDE and Prince George's County staff.

Prince George's County has involved the project manager in the training of their Turnaround Student Support Services Network Liaison, thus establishing a direct link to the schools and demonstrating the quality of the relationship that has been established with the district. Central office student support staffs in both districts have continued to ask for consultations, providing evidence of the respect they have for the project. Products such as training PowerPoints, forms, self-assessment tools and long range planning tools have been created and several are being used at this time.

Project 48/69 School Health Services

Since our last report in January 2012, there have been several positive developments.

Consultation with IT leadership at Baltimore City Health Department progressed regarding placement of computers into the Turnaround schools and their feeders(CHAN component). An amendment to transfer funds for City Schools' computers and data installation, was submitted in April. This will facilitate implementation of the project. The grant award for the electronic data implementation project to City Schools through the Baltimore City Health Department. Health Department is moving forward to finalize Memorandum of Understanding between City Schools and the Health Department. A letter requesting the NOGA was just received from the Commissioner of the Health Department. This will result in the placement of equipment in 18 targeted schools. Additionally, in Baltimore City a training with all nursing supervisors who directly staff and oversee health staff in the City Turnaround Schools in Baltimore was held. A comprehensive outline of this project was presented, with timeline, to coordinate the placement of internet lines and computers into all Turnaround Schools over next several months. Complete cooperation between the Health Department and the City Schools is necessary for the sustainability and success of the Project. Consultation with state Health Department stakeholders

is ongoing in the effort to execute the plan for comprehensive health data collection and health problem management.

Plans and a process for the placement of computers in schools in PGCPS is being discussed with the interim Deputy Superintendent, the Director of Turnaround Schools, and the Chief Information Officer in PGCPS. It is hoped that there will be a quick resolution. Training for nurses is scheduled for August 14-15, 2012.

Talks with Information Technology in both Prince Georges and Baltimore City are being scheduled to move implementation of IT upgrades in the Turnaround Schools in both jurisdictions over this summer. There are two major challenges: internal and external pressures in both systems bear down on the staffing structure of RN's covering the health rooms which directly influences the fidelity with which the schools will be capable of sustaining; difficulty in coordination with information technology staff in both systems. The range of health staff capacity in the City Schools Health Services will impact the speed and fidelity with which this project can be implemented. Health staff capacity assessments have been completed in 13 of the 16 Breakthrough Center schools. A significant amount of time, attention, and support will be required to fulfill the completion of this project.

On June 14, 2012, a planning session was held involving the MSDE Student Services Team with all stakeholders of BCPS. Action steps were identified, plans for quarterly updates on progress with entire team were developed, and a plan for sharing strategies with administration and team members at Turnaround Schools was identified. The new Turnaround Director is now in place to move implementation forward for the MSDE Student Services Team with BCPS.

The Project Manager has been included in on-site attendance team meetings in 5 Baltimore City Schools. As a result, this forged a link between the PM and the onsite Turnaround Student Services liaisons and Directors in Baltimore City. Attendance intervention presentations have been made in 6 schools: Gilmore ES, Harford heights ES, Commodore John Rodgers ES, Samuel Coleridge Taylor ES, Thurgood Marshall MS, and Ben Franklin HS. The University of Maryland partners will provide family interventions for attendance issues at 2 City schools - Samuel Coleridge Taylor ES and Booker T Washington MS.

The PM developed a framework for Health Services Asthma/Allergies and Attendance Intervention which was approved by both school systems' health services leadership. Buy-in to this process is essential to moving forward. With strategic focus now on asthma and allergy

identification and interventions in schools as a strategy to improve attendance, two planning meetings were held with Baltimore City Health Department and one is pending with leadership of BCPS.. On-site training in parent engagement to improve management of severe chronic health conditions causing absenteeism, especially the large student population suffering from asthma, was started in Prince Georges County Schools. In addition, the 3 Prince Georges schools have identified severe attendance problems related specifically to asthma. The PM is consulting with University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins Pediatric providers to build a primary care infrastructure to support the health needs in those schools. The school system has already had talks with Children's National Medical Center. Talks are underway with continued planning over the summer.

Parental Engagement has arisen as a necessary area of attention for the success of this project. Health issues cannot be addressed without it. The PM has devoted an ever increasing amount of time to collaborative planning, and facilitating relationships with community supports (such as services and community supports to Frederick Douglas High School, Baltimore City) and the Mid Atlantic Equity Consortium (Prince Georges' parent engagement partner)

In conjunction with the Baltimore Student Attendance Campaign, which hosted a city-wide stakeholder meeting in April 2012, the PM initiated a planning session with the goal of preparing for sustainability. A four (4) domain skills and resource capacity assessment was developed and implemented. This will provide the basis for targeted needs individualized to each school. For example, if the school has no full time nurse, the capacity for implementation of the project will be affected. This tool evaluates such capacity.

Beginning in June 2012, the PM held 4 planning sessions for Baltimore City Schools related supports for pregnant and parenting teens to prevent dropout. She met with Home and Hospital staff from 2 high schools and the University of Maryland School of Social Work to provide technical assistance. In conjunction with this effort, a planning meeting with Early Child Care Judy Center leaders at MSDE was held to assist in building capacity and provide resources for 3 City School student support teams (primarily high schools).

Project 49/63 Physical Activity

The milestones for the Physical Activity project for Year 1 have now been met but as a result of delays in Year 1, many tasks scheduled in Year 2 are still in progress. However, we anticipate a

steady increase in productivity as each LEA becomes more aware of the services we provide and the accessibility to schools continues to improve.

With the exception of 3 schools in Baltimore City (BCPS), the remaining schools from the original 16 Turn-around Schools in BCPS and Prince George's County (PGCPS) have ordered and received their fitness assessment equipment. This will enable them to assess the fitness of their students and track improvements. Schools that did not order their equipment declined our support or had personnel changes that resulted in miscommunication about their role in the ordering process. However, 2 of the 3 remaining schools left will have ordered and received their equipment by August 1, 2012. All of the additional 20 feeder schools will be ordering their equipment prior to the start of the school year. These funds have been signed and approved and are simply waiting administrative processing before the orders can be placed. In addition to monitoring changes in the fitness levels of students, this new equipment will also provide these 35 schools an assessment tool to help assess the effectiveness of wellness policies and relevant programming.

As such, we have begun the process of developing training modules to assist school administrators and faculty with the process of developing and implementing school-based Wellness Policies. A survey was sent to all school Principals to determine their desire for support on this federal mandate that requires schools to have and support wellness policies. Many of the schools responded to the survey and ALL schools expressed an interest in our assistance with this initiative. Many schools will need to create a Wellness Team to determine their needs and to ensure support from all stakeholders. To that end we are prepared to assist schools with team building strategies based on Student Services Team models. The creation of Wellness Teams in each school and the subsequent task of creating Wellness Policies specific to the needs of the school will help guide decision makers as they look to incorporate wellness programming before, during, and after school.

We continue to explore partnerships with various vendors that provide wellness programming. We have successfully piloted a training model with Dance for Peace, Inc. and expect to implement this program across 2-3 schools in the fall. This is an activity based program that includes conflict resolution skills and will be piloted in two schools in PGCPS in early spring. A sustainability model will be put in place to help train teachers to supervise the program each year.

Another program that some schools may consider is Playworks, which is a supervised before and after school and recess program that provides equipment, supervision, and organized activities. Several schools in Baltimore City already use Playworks and several Turnaround Schools have expressed interest in the training model for this program, which would allow them to implement and run the program on their own at a reduced cost. We continue our dialogue with Playworks Inc. and others in hopes that we can negotiate the cost of a special training model that would be appropriate specifically for the Turnaround Schools. However, as schools consider these vendors and others, we will help guide them to ensure that programs align with their newly developed Wellness Policies, are cost effective and sustainable. Our support on this wellness initiative will also include developing an online training program for teachers across the disciplines on how to infuse physical activity into their daily and existing curriculum. Teachers may earn CEU's for participating in this training and will be encouraged to share their new ideas in an online yet to be determined format to improve the sustainability of this project. A plan is in place to introduce all of this information regarding Wellness Policies and Wellness Teams to school administrators through the respective LEA Turn-around personnel at their team meetings in August, 2012.

Much of the aforementioned is evidence of completion to many project tasks and despite some challenges that we have experienced thus far, we have adjusted our timeline as needed and are ready to implement new training programs and activities as appropriate. We have clarified the appropriate procedures for processing grants and hope that this prevents future processing delays. In addition, support from the Breakthrough Center has improved access to schools and more importantly has informed schools of the services we can provide. Further, we have developed positive relationships with personnel at the respective LEA's, which continues to facilitate our work.

While the personnel at PGCPS have been very supportive and has appropriate personnel to assist with this project, most of the short term obstacles and risks still exist with our Baltimore City partners. Physical Education is not a part of their Teaching and Learning Curriculum Program and is relegated to Student Support Services. As such, they do not have a Coordinator of Physical Education so items related to this discipline are often not addressed. One member of the BCPS Athletic Administration team has attempted to fill this void but is often overworked and undermanned and does not have complete knowledge of the facilities, equipment, or staffing at each school. In addition, some teachers do not have computers or BCPS emails and are very difficult to reach during the school day. Those teachers have provided their personal email addresses and cell phones to maintain communication. Further, many teachers complain that

facility work orders are not completed or are completed after a lengthy wait. This means facilities may not always be safe or usable or their equipment is not maintained. All of this limits the activities for which teachers are able to engage their students in their physical education classes.

MSDE also has our own challenges. We are in the process of redeveloping our web site and cannot post new web sites at this time. This has prevented us from creating a site for Student Services with a link specific to the RTTT Physical Activity project. This site would allow us to share resources and contact information, as well as act as a guide for the wellness policy initiative. We hope to post this information as soon as possible.

However, despite the delayed timeline and many challenges thus far, we continue to make significant progress and have much to look forward to as we move forward. Each LEA is assisting us as we organize and coordinate student services meetings and trainings for Turn-around School administrators. This will provide a significant opportunity to share information about projects in Student Services and begin to work with school personnel one on one as needed. Further, LEA personnel and school administrators seem to have linked our services to the improvements they are seeking in their schools and have expressed a desire to learn more about these supports.

Project 50/58 Extended Learning

All year two goals and activities have been met. The *Extended Learning Coordinator/Education Program Specialist* (ELC/EPS) is providing ongoing technical assistance to Tier I and II Breakthrough Zone schools and their feeder schools (BZSATFS) as they implement their 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) projects or prepare their FY13 21st CCLC proposals.

In February and May 2012, the ELC/EPS served as a member of the *School Improvement Grant Team* monitoring Benjamin Franklin (BFHS) and Frederick Douglass (FDHS) high schools and the Baltimore IT Academy (BITA). From January through April 2012, the ELC/EPS provided both LEAs (BCPS and PGCPS) and 16 BZSATFS and their partners with 21st CCLC overviews and technical assistance as they wrote their FY12 21st CCLC grant applications.

In the overview sessions, LEAs and the following BZSATFS and/or their partners received information on the grant application and scoring processes, and the services available from the ELC/EPS:

- a. Alexandria Hamilton (AHES)
- i. Overlook (OES)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| b. Augusta Fell Savage Institute of Visual Arts (AFS) | j. Oxon Hill (OHMS) |
| c. BFHS | k. Patapsco (PEMS) |
| d. BITA | l. Potomac (PHS) |
| e. Booker T. Washington (BTWMS) | m. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (SCTES) |
| f. Carmody Hills (CHES) | n. Thomas Johnson (TJMS) |
| g. FDHS | o. Thurgood Marshall (TMMS) |
| h. James Mosher (JMES) | p. William C. March (WCMMS) |

The overviews also included a mini-workshop component based on the backward design model of grant writing, and participants were provided the following four resources needed for their 21st CCLC proposals: grant writing and partner selection strategies; a list of potential funding sources, research-based programs, and extended learning opportunity research findings; sample student, staff, and parent surveys; and, census and school level demographic data. All overview documents and resources were forwarded to all 35 BZSATFS principals by the *Turnaround Office* staff.

The ELC/EPS provided the aforementioned 16 BZSATFS and their partners with some level of technical assistance--test data analysis, updated census and school level data, and/or adaptation of surveys to capture the unique features of a school. In addition, every Tuesday over the 60-day grant writing period, the ELC/EPS sent both LEAs and all BZSATFS and their partners grant writing tips and strategies.

In April and May, the ELC/EPS helped one school, James Mosher (JMES) that was unable to submit its 21st CCLC application on time, to identify three potential sources (Verizon, PEPSICO, and Wells Fargo) to fund its proposed 2012-13 extended learning program. From April onward, the ELC/EPS has been engaged in two major writing activities. First, based upon feedback from a USDE 21st CCLC monitoring team and branch discussions, the ELC/EPS assisted with the revision of the proposed 21st CCLC FY13 application, scoring rubric, continuation application, and monitoring tool. Second, the ELC/EPS used feedback from BZSATFS and the USDE 21st CCLC monitoring team to revise and expand two BZSATFS resource documents (*A 21st Century Community Learning Centers Resource Guide* and *A 21st Century Learning Centers Primer*) that will be posted on the MSDE RttT website and distributed during the aforementioned mini-workshops or via email. Both documents contain hyperlinks so that BZSATFS may learn more

about any specific funding source and/or research-based program listed or gather demographic data about their communities.

Eleven (69%) of the aforementioned 16 BZSATFS submitted FY12 21st CCLC applications. Three (27%) of the eleven schools (CHES, FDHS, WCMMS) were awarded three-year 21st CCLC grants and one school (SCTES) was awarded RttT funds for an extended learning project based upon the 21st CCLC guidelines. The programs range from credit recovery in high school to reading interventions in grades 4 and 5 in elementary school.

A lack of time prevented five schools and/or their partners from either writing or submitting FY12 21st CCLC applications. Three schools (BITA, BTWMS, and TJMS) and/or their partners could not find the time to write a grant while concurrently preparing for a second SIG monitoring visit and administering the Maryland School Assessments. Two schools (AHES and JMES) were unable to deliver their completed applications to MSDE by the 2:00 pm deadline.

It is noteworthy that four (CHES, FDHS, SCTES, and WCWMS) of the six schools that used the backward design of grant writing were awarded funds for extended learning. Only two schools (BFHS and PEMS) using this process were not awarded grant funds. It is also noteworthy that for the 2012-13 school term the number of BZSATFS implementing extended learning opportunities based upon 21st CCLC guidelines has expanded from two schools (Benjamin Stoddert and Commodore John Rodgers) to six schools - a 200% increase.

The ELC/EPS expects to continue to increase the number of BZSATFS implementing extended learning programs based upon 21st CCLC guidelines by:

- a. Continuing to provide technical assistance and resources to BSMS, CHES, CJREMS, FDHS, SCTES, and WCMMS as they implement their extended learning programs;
- b. Encouraging AHES and JMES and other schools applying for FY13 21st CCLC funds to submit their applications the day before the application deadline;
- c. Conducting future overviews and mini-workshops at schools that did not receive one during the 2011-12 school year; and
- d. Providing technical assistance and resources to schools planning extended learning opportunities and/or writing and submitting FY13 21st CCLC proposals.

There are, however, two potential obstacles that may prevent more BZSATFS and their partners from writing fundable 21st CCLC applications. First, schools and their partners are not always aware of the amount of upfront work (i.e., conducting a needs assessment, reviewing the educational literature and evaluation studies, and soliciting input from key stakeholders) involved in writing a fundable 21st CCLC proposal. The ELC/EPS will strongly encourage schools and their partners to commence data gathering and identify evidence-based programs and extended learning findings at least 30 days prior to the issuance of the FY13 21st CCLC *Solicitation for Grant Application*. Also, the ELC/EPS will work with them to develop a timeline to overcome this obstacle.

Lastly, schools and their partners do not always recognize the importance of having a second grant writing team score their proposed 21st CCLC application and providing feedback to the grant writing team prior to the submission deadline. This feedback process allows all schools to improve their applications. The ELC/EPS will strongly encourage schools applying for FY13 21st CCLC funds to have a second grant writing team score their proposed applications and provide the grant writing team with feedback prior to their submission.

Project 51/71 STEM Project Lead the Way

The project team working through the Breakthrough Center has had success in identifying low-performing schools ready to implement the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Gateway to Technology (GTT) program in Prince George's County Public Schools and Baltimore City Schools. Prince George's Public Schools will implement the GTT program in three new sites: Oxon Hill, Thomas Johnson and Thurgood Marshall Middle Schools and will continue the program at Drew Freeman, Benjamin Stoddert and G. James Gholson middle schools. Earlier this year, the project team met with Baltimore City Central office staff and scheduled school visits to five potential GTT sites. Each visit included a meeting with the school administration to discuss project expectations and a tour of the school facilities which would support the program. As a result, four potential schools have been identified in Baltimore City which could implement the GTT program in project years three/four. The potential sites are:

- Calverton Elementary/Middle
- Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle
- Garrison Middle
- Commodore John Rogers Elementary/Middle

In Prince George's County, the Career and Technology Education (CTE) office is being restructured. The CTE office has been the primary contact in managing the GTT sites. However, GTT implementation plans are moving forward. During this period of transition, the project team will work through the Breakthrough Center and with Prince George's County central office staff to finalize teacher training and equipment purchases for all sites.

At this time, Prince George's County school staff are completing training for GTT at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). The UMBC training model includes two-weeks of intense professional development on each of the GTT modules that will be implemented in the coming school year. Staff will conclude training at the end of the month. Further, Prince George's County central office staff have approved the project year two grant from MSDE and will begin purchasing equipment within the coming weeks.

Within Baltimore City, the project team will continue to work through the Breakthrough Center to confirm the list of sites and provide technical assistance. Several of the potential sites have requested school visits to existing GTT programs. During the 2012-2013 school year, the project team will schedule site visits and address questions related to implementation.

Project 52/77 Primary Talent Development

This project supports academic achievement in the identified elementary feeder schools of the lowest performing schools. Primary Talent Development (PTD) is a higher order thinking skills curriculum implemented with all PreK – Grade 2 students. The program is offered through the Breakthrough Center as an intervention that principals may choose to meet their schools' goals.

Initial challenges with the project design were addressed in the approved project amendment which calls for a pilot of five schools from which 20 teachers from two grades per year will participate in high quality, job-embedded professional development.

Accomplishments to date include the identification of three schools in Prince George's County (Capitol Heights, Judge Sylvania Woods, Robert Gray) and two schools in Baltimore City (Commodore John Rodgers, Samuel Coleridge Taylor) that committed to implementing the program in 2011-2012. Professional development sessions for teachers of PreK and

kindergarten began in January, 2012 with follow-up sessions in March and student portfolio reviews May-June, 2012. In addition, the Early Talent Development online course was offered again in winter 2012 with representation from two pilot schools.

MSDE has begun to collect evidence of the effectiveness of the Primary Talent Development curriculum and professional development through the 2012 PTD student portfolio reviews. Student portfolios house documentation of student responses to the open-ended lessons designed to target one or more of the seven essential learning behaviors (perceptive, communicative, inquisitive, persistent, resourceful, creative, leadership). The documentation also informs the end-of-the year PTD behavior ratings that teachers supply on each student's Primary Talent Development Cumulative Scale.

Each teacher's portfolios were scored on a continuum from 1-4, with a score of "3" indicating satisfactory program implementation; teachers' scores are averaged for a school composite. The 2012 PTD Student Portfolio Review indicates that four out of the five schools meet standards for implementation in the PreK and K classrooms. Among the five pilot schools, one scored a "4" (exceeds standards), three schools scored a "3" (meets standards), and one scored a "2" (incomplete documentation). Commodore John Rodgers ES in Baltimore City has decided that, although the school benefited from exploring the PTD program this year, they will not be moving forward with it in 2012-2013.

Next steps for 2012-2013 will be to implement the PTD program in Grades 1 and 2 in the four remaining pilot schools in order to achieve full implementation across four grades, PreK-2.

Project 53/44 Charter Schools

Project Goals:

- Convert Low Performing Traditional Schools to High Performing Charter Schools
- Create charter school quality standards to develop a framework for charter schools to conduct self-assessments to help guide improvement and development efforts
- Strengthen the Charter School Authorizing Processes by ensuring that local education agencies adhere to the *Maryland Charter School State Law* and the *Maryland Charter School State Policy* and implement best authorizing practices.

The foci of this project are three-fold: (1) encourage the use of charter schools as a strategy for restructuring low performing schools, (2) ensuring that only high-quality charter schools exist and

thrive statewide by adopting the federal definition for high performing charter schools and implementing quality standards to guide improvements, (3) improving the charter school authorizing processes in Maryland by developing models of best practices such as the charter school approval process. To date, Maryland has made successful strides towards achieving each of the project goals as follows:

The State's Office of School Innovations (OSI) has refocused its work to convert low performing traditional schools to high performing charter schools. In its initial scope of work, the State targeted the two lowest performing LEA's in Maryland- Prince George's County and Baltimore City. However, Prince George's County has decided to not use the restart model as a restructuring tool; instead, it opted to utilize the turnaround model to reform its low performing schools. To that end, the Office of School Innovations (OSI) has worked with Baltimore City to continue to strengthen the partnership between the first restart charter school, Furman L. Templeton Academy, and an existing high performing charter school, Midtown Academy. In May 2012, Baltimore City requested to amend its initial project plan from the partnership model to directing resources to convert three (3) additional low performing schools to charter schools without the partnership. Last month, OSI met with representatives from Baltimore City to discuss the amendment process and provide them with the requirements for selecting eligible schools for the project. Baltimore City has requested to utilize its standard process to determine which schools will participate in the project. The school system has also requested that it be allowed to expand this opportunity to schools that have previously received funding to support school improvement efforts. The State recently submitted a letter to Superintendent Alonso (Baltimore City) with the steps involved and requirements needed to include the three (3) additional schools in the project.

Maryland's Quality Standards for the Charter Schools Symposium was held on May 8, 2012. The focus was on Standard C: Student Learning and Achievement (Part 1 – ELA Standards and Curriculum). Participant feedback was positive and included a request for a 2nd symposium to be held with a focus on mathematics. This session is scheduled to take place in October 2012. Site visits to all of Quality Standards Pilot Schools have been completed. Feedback from schools about the impact of the Quality Standards has been positive and resulted in the schools completing an action plan with areas that the schools team felt they needed to improve upon. The pilot assessment was completed by the project evaluator. Highlights include feedback from participants that it was valuable for them to complete the process and reflect on different aspects in the Quality Standards. Completing the process of alignment with the Quality Standards helped

participants to recognize the areas where they are being effective and prompted them to think about how they can continue to implement model practices. Some participants said it highlighted areas that they felt they need to focus on for growth and development. Others thought of the Quality Standards review process in term of their school improvement/strategic plan and how their action plan priorities resulting from the Quality Standards review fit in with their School Improvement Plan. The initial draft of the Quality Standards Self Assessment Tool has been completed. Schools have been selected to participate in the Quality Standards Self-Assessment Pilot. Two (2) new charter schools that piloted the Quality Standards and two (2) previously established charter schools that have demonstrated student achievement growth were chosen. Training for the self-assessment process will begin in mid August. The feedback and observations obtained from the pilot will help to finalize the final assessments tools and publications.

Maryland continued to conduct is monthly LEA liaison meetings with the Authorizer representatives and LEA Charter School Liaisons. May's LEA Liaison Meeting took place in St. Mary's County at Chesapeake Public Charter School. The meeting consisted of a tour of the school and a presentation made by the Superintendent of Schools. Using the draft self-assessment, for Indicator E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures, LEA Liaisons applied the draft self-assessment items by discussing the application to Chesapeake Public Charter School. This discussion included the school's operator, principal and the governing board. There were discussions around when and how the self-assessment would be used by charter schools and LEAs. Suggestions were made regarding examples of evidence. The final meeting of SY 11 -12 was held on June 8, 2012. Attendees were offered the opportunity to review and provide feedback regarding the changes made to the draft Charter School Model Application, and a draft of the Quality Standards for Charter Schools Self-Assessment Tool. Participants were also presented with an overview of the five year cycle of authorizing practices which incorporates the use of the self assessment results to support charter school oversight and inform charter school evaluation for renewal. Authorizers' comments and recommendations will be used to inform further development of the documents and processes. Additionally, the LEA Charter School Liaison Job Description was developed and approved by the LEAs. A first draft of the Charter School Accountability Framework that will be embedded into the revised performance contract has been completed. All documents will be aligned to ensure that they provide a seamless transition from one to the other and articulates best practices in charter school authorizing to support high performing charter schools. The RTTT Project 53-44 Project Manager attended the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools conference from June 19 –

June 22, 2012. Research, current trends, and best practices will be shared with charter school stakeholders in Maryland. This information will be disseminated in August via newsletter.

Maryland continues to advance toward achieving all three (3) goals. A significant amount of attention continues to be directed to the further development of the initiative in Baltimore City to identify the final three (3) schools that will convert to charter schools. An RFP and project amendments to support the changes being requested by the school system are being drafted. Upon receipt of formal acknowledgement and agreement from the superintendent of schools, OSI will move forward with the next steps of the project. It is expected that the schools will be selected and scheduled for their first training by the Office of School Innovations in September 2012.

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 utilize 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 projects with specific activities planned for years two, three, and four. The project managers review their project schedules with their program director monthly to ensure that project activities, issues, risks, and concerns are resolved. 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 the project manager.

The RTTT Leadership Team meets weekly to discuss progress and address any risks that have arisen. Working with the Office of Budget, we have also developed a process for monthly reviews of project budgets involving our finance manager, program directors, and project managers. Project managers meet with program directors bi-weekly or monthly to discuss progress, identify risks and discuss strategies that have been or will be taken to address obstacles, review budgets, and identify actions that will be taken to move the project forward. The Core Team also meets bi-weekly to discuss progress and address risks by deciding upon actions that need to be taken to resolve any concerns or issues. LEAs submit monthly progress reports to the

LEA liaisons. Any needs or issues that arise are addressed immediately by the LEA liaisons. Site visits to 22 LEAs occurred between April 30, 2012, and May 31, 2012.

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

The quality of implementation for this series of projects 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?

The State is on track to meet the goals, performance measures, timelines and quality of implementation.

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?

The most significant obstacle has been building relationships with BCPS leadership and gaining their trust. Constant changes in leadership positions in BCPS pose a challenge in building positive and productive relationships. The patience and persistence of Bob Glascock and the project managers has resulted in slow but steady progress with BCPS.

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

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 74 hours (annually) per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (34 CFR 75.720, 75.730-732; 34 CFR 80.40 and 80.41). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0011.

³ Red – substantially off-track and/or has significant quality concerns; urgent and decisive action is required; Orange –off-track and/or there are quality concerns; many aspects require significant attention; Yellow –generally on-track and of high or good quality; only a few aspects require additional attention; Green – on-track with high quality.