

## **Race to the Top**

### **Progress Update – December 2012 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 2/1 (*Program Evaluation*) Utilization/Impact evaluation process revised, shared with project managers, and schedule created to complete stage 1 evaluation of each project by October 1, 2013. A complete report on this project will be shared on January 31, 2013
- Project 31/13 (*Building Leadership Capacity in Low Achieving Urban and Rural Districts*) – 10 of 25 members of the Lower Eastern Shore Leadership Initiative (LESLI), initiated in Fall 2011, have received promotions - 2 Principals, 1 Acting Principal, 5 Assistant Principals, 1 District Curriculum Coordinator, 1 Literacy Coach.
- Project 36/75 (*UTeach Maryland*) The UTeach Team conducted a successful site visit to Towson University. Both the University of Texas and Towson University are now engaged in making decisions about how to infuse the Maryland reading requirements into the new program.
- Project 4/3 (*Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development*) Worked with development vendor to itemize a deliverable schedule for the CyberSecurity and Environmental Science online high school STEM courses. Currently reviewing responses for the second issued RFP for the Introduction to Game Design & Development and Forensic Science. RFP for the third set of STEM courses for Computer Science was issued on December 18<sup>th</sup> for vendor review and response
- Project 43/21 (*Develop OnLine PD on Educator Instructional Improvement Content*) RFP for 5 online PD courses to be modified or developed was published in December.

Work has begun on creating course-specific content for the 7 online PD courses to be included in the next RFP. These specifications will replace the content language contained in the recently published RFP

Challenges:

- Project 4/3 (*Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development*) Working with vendor to compress the schedule to ensure timely delivery of project deliverables, despite delays encountered due to the long procurement process
2. Is the State on track to meet the goals and timelines associated with the activities outlined in its approved scope of work? If not, what strategies is the State employing in order to meet its goals?

Yes, the State is on track to meet goals and timelines.

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

Approval of amendments that have been submitted

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### **Progress Update – December 2012 Monthly Call**

**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:<sup>2</sup> (C)(3)

STATE's goals for this sub-criterion:

Goal 6: Develop and implement a high-quality Instructional Improvement System

Relevant projects:

- 14/31 Develop and Implement a State Curriculum System
- 15/7 Expand Instructional Toolkit
- 16/20 STEM Instructional and Career Support
- 17/32 Implement a Test Item Bank System
- 18/33 Implement a Computer Adaptive Test Delivery System
- 19/34 Complete and Item Load and Set Up for the Item Bank and CAT System
- 20/35 Adaptive Testing Units for High Schools
- 21/42 Implement a Statewide System to Support Student Instructional Intervention
- 22/6 Develop Online Instructional Intervention Models
- 23/55 Develop a Framework for Teacher Toolkit Portal
- 24/56 Develop and Implement a Course Registration System
- 25/10 MSDE-IHE Teacher Preparation Workgroup
- 26/43 Implement a System to Support E-Learning for Instructional Intervention, Enhancement, and Enrichment
- 27/46 Equating of MSA for Use on Growth Model

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?

*14/31 Develop and Implement a State Curriculum System*

Three Oracle WebCenter portal resources were acquired and developed the Curriculum Management System starting in late June 2012. A pilot of the Curriculum Management System (CMS), delivering a sample of approved curriculum resources in math and English Language Arts (ELA), was tested by over 50 teachers from nearly half of Maryland in October 2012. The CMS was updated based on pilot test results. STEM pages and initial content were added. CMS full

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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.

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

capability, as dictated in the requirements, is currently completed with the exception of advanced search. Advanced search, using a third party search capability, will be integrated into the CMS by February 2013. Additional content in ELA, math, and STEM is being added to the CMS. The system has been installed in a new test environment and the team is working with the Office of Information Technology to get CMS installed and tested in a production environment during Spring 2013. This will enable availability of resources for teachers prior to the 2013 Summer Educator Effectiveness Academies.

*15/7 Expand Instructional Toolkit*

Tech Correlations/Articulation of Thinkport Resources has been delivered to MSDE with over 300 resources provided. Currently, Maryland Public Television (MPT) is in the process of meta-tagging those resources according to the new State standards. New instructional resources for AL, STEM, and Algebra II is on track with delivery of Adolescent Literacy modules ready for MSDE evaluation and continuing work on a set of eight STEM modules. MSDE is also readying for evaluation of the delivered algebra professional development course. English 10 professional development course development is continuing and is on track. Kickoff activities have begun for production and broadcast of PSAs and Town Hall/Broadcast Meetings. The Online Instructional Toolkit (OIT) vendor RFP was awarded as of December 19, 2012 with a scheduled kickoff meeting within two weeks of award.

The Expand Instructional Toolkit project scope of work is progressing according to schedule for the MPT deliverables. The OIT vendor acquisition is now completed and steps will be taken to accelerate the vendor's work once they are brought onboard.

*16/20 STEM Instructional and Career Support*

The Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT) has designed and built the infrastructure and platform for both the STEMnet - STEM Instructional and Career Support - Teacher Hub and Student Hub. MBRT conducted a needs assessment for STEMnet involving 1,000 STEM teachers and MSDE staff. Reports have been produced and posted to the MBRT website - <http://mbrt.org/> and shared with MSDE staff. MBRT will submit to MSDE its 2012 annual report on January 31, 2013.

MBRT designed and conducted the pilot of the STEM Specialist in the Classroom program that offers teachers instructional support from workplace specialists with on-the-job expertise in math and science concepts. MBRT has recruited 90 biology and algebra volunteers for the Specialist in the Classroom program and trained 60 volunteers that included interested teachers and specialists. MBRT has introduced the Specialist in the Classroom program to Baltimore County, Harford County, Baltimore City, Prince George's County, Talbot County for participation during the 2012- 2013 school year. The sixth will be either Calvert or Washington County. The selection of the sixth county will be confirmed on January 6, 2013.

MBRT has reviewed and revised teacher feedback forms for the STEMnet Resource Clearinghouse. The STEM Resource Clearinghouse offers teachers a single on-line destination where they can find STEM resources to strengthen classroom instruction and improve student learning. Resources for the STEM Resource Clearinghouse have been and continue to be collected by MBRT. The Clearinghouse will launch on or before January 31, 2013.

The STEMnet Student Hub offers students an opportunity to explore a wide variety of STEM careers by using an interactive teen-oriented website that students can browse through to construct a plan to set and achieve their career goals. The initial phase of the Student Hub – Career Exploration component of STEMnet has been completed.

Challenges for the STEMnet project include meta-tagging of content and resources. A schema for meta-tagging has been provided to MBRT by MSDE. Another challenge faced by MBRT is finding opportunities to provide STEMnet orientation broadly to teachers/administrators. MBRT has scheduled meetings with supervisors from local school systems in Maryland to promote STEMnet. The MSDE Offices of STEM Initiatives, Science, and Mathematics invited representatives from MBRT to present information and provide an orientation to STEMnet to Maryland State STEM, Science, and Mathematics Coordinators from all twenty four Maryland LEAs.

MSDE staff is providing support in procuring Specialists for the Specialists in the Classroom program by holding a brown bag lunch event at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory and distributing promotional materials. In November 2012, MBRT held a STEMnet Strategic Retreat for four stakeholder groups including the STEMnet Advisory Board, STEMnet Content Committee, STEMnet Technology Committee, and MBRT Strategic Steering Committee met to

discuss potential opportunity to scale up STEMnet in 2014 and beyond. With proper planning, MBRT could build upon what has worked and bring greater support to all teachers, students, and parents across Maryland seeking STEM opportunities in education.

Communication between MBRT and MSDE occurs on a weekly basis. Formal project updates are provided on a monthly basis. This project is on track to meet its goals and performance measures. The budget for this sub-grant/sub-contract is on track. All contract requirements, expenses, and bills are reviewed by MSDE and monitored by MBRT's deputy director and accountant.

*17/32 Implement a Test Item Bank System*

*18/33 Implement a Computer Adaptive Test Delivery System*

Since May 2012, several milestones have been accomplished including: completing the development of a combined Request for Proposal with 18/33 Implement a Computer-Adaptive Test Delivery System; issuing RFP; receipt and completion of the evaluation process; successful pricing negotiation with selected vendor. The next steps are to seek approval to award vendor. The project is progressing as planned; an award is anticipated 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr 2013, system roll-out 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr 2013, system pilot test, training and operational in 2014.

These projects are considered by the State as a Major IT project, as such oversight is provided by the State Department of Information Technology (DoIT). As part of this oversight, DoIT requires that a strict system design life-cycle (SDLC) project management approach is required. This methodology ensures a means to monitor and control the project with respect to measures and quality of implementation.

The quality of implementation to date has been measured by the team's ability to produce a rigorous RFP that has been vetted through key stakeholders at Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs). The RFP process has ensured that Maryland's purchased system will not only be integrated with the Computer-Adaptive Test Delivery System but will have and offer many important features and tools to Administrators, Educators, and Students. The evidence of success will fully be realized as the tool is rolled out for initial pilot testing expected 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr 2013.

The next challenge for this project is to award a vendor. The award process is being actively managed to thwart any risk of delay due to a longer than expected timeline.

These projects are on-track to meet its goals and performance measures.

*19/34 Complete and Item Load and Set Up for the Item Bank and CAT System*

Project 19/34 Item Load and Integration Setup for Test Item Bank System is a follow-up project to Projects 17/32 and 18/33. These are the items that will populate the combined Test Item Bank and Computer-Adaptive Test Systems. As such there is a predecessor relationship limiting the ability to begin execution until a vendor for those other test system has been identified. As stated for 17/32 and 18/33, a likely vendor has been identified therefore the project team is currently developing a second RFP to initiate the purchase of items. The developing RFP is expected to be completed and ready for review during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr 2013 and award is expected 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr 2013. Once the items have been procured, they will be loaded into the Item Banks by the same vendor in Projects 17/32 and 18/33.

For this particular project, item quality and conformance to common core standards are but two critical factors. To monitor and measure quality, MSDE will seek feedback from the users of the Items. Additionally, MSDE is considering licensing versus purchasing of items so that Items can be returned and new items integrated should Items not be of sufficient quality.

This project has only just begun and is in RFP development. A lengthy RFP process could be an obstacle for completing as planned, therefore the project team will continue to work to complete milestones as planned and measure progress toward the goals.

This project is on track to meet its goals and performance measures.

*20/35 Adaptive Testing Units for High Schools*

Project 20/35 is a year 4 project and will commence 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr 2014.

*21/42 Implement a Statewide System to Support Student Instructional Intervention*

Three vendors responded to the request for proposal and were invited to MSDE to demonstrate their solutions (Pearson, Global Scholar and Performance Matters). All three solutions were found to be viable options for this Student Instructional Intervention Support (SIIS) system. Each vendor was asked to provide a best and final cost bid. The best offer was \$4.5 million dollars. This price far exceeded the funding that was allocated for this project. It was also determined that the level of resources that each LEA would have to devote to integrating with a centralized

MSDE SIIS system would be extensive. In order for the Student Instructional Intervention System to be effective, each LEA would need to have access to the most current student data available for the students who were being assisted through the system. Based upon all of this information, the project team decided it would be better to assist LEAs with enhancing, expanding or implementing their own local SIIS systems or processes. Of the 24 LEAs, only one LEA is not utilizing some type of student instructional intervention system or process with their students. The project team is proposing that the funding provided for this project be made available to the LEA to help them with their SIIS systems or processes. An algorithm to distribute the funding equitably to LEAs based upon their level of need has been developed. This approach would provide 15% of the remaining funding to LEAs that do not have a system or process in place. This accounts for one or two LEAs. Sixty percent (60%) of the remaining funding would be allocated to assist approximately 15 LEAs and the remaining 25 % of the funding would be allocated across the 7 other LEAs. This would result in the LEAs receiving between \$42,000 and up to \$90,000 each to improve their SIIS systems or processes. Each LEA will have to apply for this funding stating what they are currently doing with regard to SIIS, how they will utilize this funding, and what the results will be after they have utilized the funds. Subject to USDE approval, the project team is preparing a list of materials to support the Notice of Grant Award process for distribution to the LEAs. LEA responses will be due in February 2013. A panel of reviewers will coordinate NOGA project approvals. Once the NOGA have been approved, the project team will work with each LEA to review progress reports to make sure that the funding is being utilized to improve their SIIS systems and processes. We are on track to meet the goals and timelines associated with the scope of work.

#### *22/6 Develop Online Instructional Intervention Models*

A kick-off meeting was held with Pearson on December 10, 2012. Twelve members of Pearson's team, ten MSDE representatives from math and ELA, and project managers were in attendance. Pearson introduced their goals and encouraged discussions about the schedule and timeline planned. Due to the summer Educator Effectiveness Academies, adjustments were made to the timeline. Module template and sample modules content reviews were demonstrated. The math team and ELA teams split into two groups to discuss their specific prototypes and requirements. Six math prototypes and six ELA prototypes were approved.



MSDE shared their calendar with Pearson for the purpose of planning important project milestones and deadlines. A prototype design review meeting is scheduled on January 24/25 2013 to review thirty additional planned modules. Pearson is working with MSDE to develop a process for module review once modules are delivered to MSDE. Leads for both the MSDE ELA team and the math team were identified so that communication can be streamlined. MSDE's accessibility rubric was shared with Pearson. Pearson has had a Learning Management System discussion with MSDE to better understand the type of environment where their modules will reside. Both the ELA team and the math team are working with the vendor to have some materials available for the upcoming Educator Effectiveness Academies for the summer of 2013. Pearson will participate in training some of the Master Teachers on how to utilize the newly developed modules in May of 2013. We are on track to meet the goals and timelines associated with the scope of work.

*23/55 Develop a Framework for Teacher Toolkit Portal*

Since the last reporting period, May 2012, progress has been achieved on the goals established for the project.

In June and July 2012, the staff from the Division of Certification and Accreditation was consulted to refine and review the professional development protocol. As a result of this meeting, the following actions took place:

- A final draft of the review protocol for Professional Development (PD) was completed and vetted with the original stakeholder group
- Drafts of the following were completed:
  - Online Application Workflow for the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) approval process
  - PD Portal Prototype of main pages
  - Workflow and prototype of the Educator Information System (EIS)

During August 2012, after several reviews and revisions with PD specialists, the professional development application prototype was completed. This was a first step to defining the workflow for the PD protocol, to be later created in SharePoint 2010. In September 2012, a template was selected as the front end of the Educator Information System (EIS), which includes the PD portal. At this time, long-term collaboration and cooperation among other departments that are critical to

the creation of the PD portal, was established. As a result of this collaboration, the following occurred: a preliminary identification of the online PD courses was completed - these were housed in Desire 2 Learn (D2L); a collaborative review of online PD courses to be migrated from D2L to Blackboard (Bb) was conducted by multiple departments within the Division of Instruction.

In October 2012, the EIS template was purchased and more extensive meetings within the Division of Certification and Accreditation and the Division of Instruction took place. As a result of these meetings, the CPD database and its contents were migrated to the Learning Management System (LMS), which will be based upon a Bb platform. This database includes all of the face-to-face courses offered for professional development by the Local Education Agencies (LEAs). The planning began for the November 2012 PD briefing. This briefing was held to obtain information about current LEA PD processes and their Informational Technology (IT) infrastructure. In preparation for the PD briefing, the LEA PD Coordinators, PD Stakeholder Group, and CPD Liaisons were sent a survey. The survey results provided MSDE with data about the: ways the LEAs inform staff of PD offerings; format used by LEAs to offer PD courses; platform used by LEAs to list courses; use of outside PD vendors by LEAs; most popular PD resources used by LEAs; types of PD resources that LEAs would like to see on the portal.

In November 2012, the PD briefing took place at Stephenson University. The results of the survey were compiled before the meeting and distributed to the LEAs for feedback. In addition, team members attended a 4-day training on the LMS.

In December 2012, the team continued the collaborative review of online PD courses that were migrated from D2L to Bb. In addition, a meeting with PD coordinators and IT points-of-contact took place with Montgomery County, the largest LEA in the state, to gather information and fact-finding, which will inform the review process for including LEA professional development offerings onto the portal. Currently, the team is in the process of planning a PD briefing for January 15, 2013 for CPD liaisons and IT points-of-contact. The purpose of this meeting is to solicit information from the LEAs regarding needs and the impact of the PD portal. A final decision remains to be made regarding the extent of the PD offerings, not leading to certification, MSDE wishes to capture in its EIS system.

Various methods have been/will be used to determine our progress and the assess the quality of our work: utilized one LEA to create a new PD course for credit using the new protocol; will hold pilots with selected LEAs once the PD briefings in January 2013 are complete; LEA PD

coordinators have been surveyed to gather information on current processes and protocols they are using; feedback from surveys, briefings, and focus groups will be used to inform future development of the portal.

This project is on track to meet its goals and performance measures. We do not envision any obstacles and/or risks that could impact our ability to meet our goals and performance measures.

*24/56 Develop and Implement a Course Registration System*

*26/43 Implement a System to Support E-Learning for Instructional Intervention, Enhancement, and Enrichment*

The MSDE Learning Management System (LMS) has been made available to various MSDE personnel. A testing, staging, and production environment has been established. MSDE has been working with two vendors, Blackboard and Learning Mate, to convert both student and teacher on-line courses from their Desire2Learn environment to move them into their new Blackboard environment. As of the date of this report, 40 of these courses had been converted and moved to the Blackboard system. The LMS is also being configured to allow teachers to register for courses. The historic catalog of MSDE approved courses have been loaded into this system. The converted on-line courses will be added to the catalog in January 2013. The credit card payment processing component is also being configured and should be completed in January 2013. MSDE is working closely with some of the LEAs to test both student and teacher courses on the LMS. A pilot of an on-line student course and an on-line teacher course are scheduled to start in February 2013. The pilot on-line student course has been set-up in the Blackboard environment during the December 2012 and will be tested during January 2013. MSDE is also establishing a public component of their LMS that will be available for users. This portion of the system should be configured in January 2013. A training plan for educating teachers, students, and the general public about MSDE's LMS has been developed and will begin to be implemented in January 2013. Additional Blackboard course developer training is scheduled for January 2013 where MSDE staff, LEA staff, and other personnel will be trained on developing courses in the Blackboard Learning Management System. A Blackboard System Administrator has been hired and will begin to work on the project in January 2013. MSDE's LMS will be utilized to house some of the materials utilized for the upcoming Educators Effectiveness Academies for the summer of 2013. An environment for the EEA, to be housed on the LMS, will be established in March 2013. We are on track to meet the goals and timelines associated with the scope of work.

*25/10 MSDE-IHE Teacher Preparation Workgroup*

This project is designed to inform higher education faculty regarding the Common Core State Standards and to address the implications for teacher preparation as it relates to the new Maryland Common Core curriculum. Further, participants are exposed to the formative and summative assessment expectations and the ongoing development of PARCC. In the previous year, we found that two of the five workshops held in the adjacent counties of Howard and Anne Arundel were redundant. Therefore, we decided to address both mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy in one semester. There are four workshops scheduled for each content area in four geographic areas: Central, Eastern Shore, Western, and Southern. These workshops will address the subject matter covered in the 2012 summer Educator Effectiveness Academies. Much of that material is now available online, enabling participants to access the information following participation in the workshops. We are also making the presentations available to other higher education groups such as the Alternative Teacher Preparation Network, the Educational Administrators Network, and the Professional Development School College/University Liaisons.

The first mathematics workshop was conducted in early December 2012 and evaluations were very positive. Most participants rated the elements of the workshop as a “4” on a 1 (Not Relevant) to 4 (Very Relevant) scale. We will continue to use this instrument. We utilized the data base that was developed last year to contact potential participants. We later learned that the IHEs in the Western area of the state were in the midst of final examinations and end of semester activities. The workshop for that area will be rescheduled, most likely in the spring 2013. We will need to complete the remaining sessions on mathematics before assessing our overall success and effectiveness.

The implementation of this project is directly dependent on the summer Educator Effectiveness Academies. The same personnel must plan, deliver, evaluate, and analyze those experiences before they can provide the IHE workgroups with synthesized versions of the content. Therefore, the current series of workgroups are just beginning and will continue into Spring 2013. There will be ample opportunity to complete this round of experiences during the 2012-13 school year. However, because the IHE workshops are derivative in nature, dependent as they are on the summer Educator Effectiveness Academies and the post-academy analysis, etc., we may find that next year’s workshops will also not begin until near the end of the first semester or early in the second semester of 2013-14. The project is on track to meet its goals and performance measures.

*27/46 Equating of MSA for Use on Growth Model*

Work on this project has been completed.

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?

In addition to the ongoing and continuous efforts to monitor projects ( i.e. project schedules, regularly scheduled meetings between project managers and project directors, monthly status reports, CAIRE evaluation reports, DoIT reviews) project managers have utilized a variety of methods to determine progress and quality of implementation that include: surveys, focus groups (i.e. “brown bag lunch”), feedback from training, scheduled meetings with “users” of products/services, and a pilot process.

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

To date, the quality of implementation is excellent. Despite obstacles and adjustments in strategies/activities, these projects are on target.

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?

Projects in sub-criterion (C)(3) are on track. Adjustments needed to be made in budget allocations and/or project plans to enable these projects to remain on track.

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?

At this time, there are no obstacles or risks that would prevent MSDE from meeting its goals and performance measures in sub-criterion (C)(3).

*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>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

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