

Race to the Top Progress Update – February 2013 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 42/17 (Expand Maryland Principals' Academy to Low Achieving Schools - Academy for Turnaround Schools) conducted full-day follow-up session for summer participants on February 6, 2013. Principals and Executive Officers from Prince George's, St Mary's, Dorchester, and Somerset counties participated. A successful turnaround principal from Prince George's County presented in the morning session focusing on leadership, instruction, and culture/climate. Educators from Virginia who have used *Indistar* shared their experiences during the afternoon session. Baltimore City has identified the schools they want to participate in this year's Academy for Turnaround Schools. Dates for the academy are being identified.
- Project 26/43 and 24/56 (Learning Management System Project): A number of pilots are being implemented as part of our socialization process with LEAs. The Linear Algebra Student pilot is underway with Anne Arundel County Public Schools in which four teachers and thirty-five students are actively participating in this pilot. The team has also developed an eCommunity for the Educator Effectiveness Academy that is scheduled to start on 4/1/13.
- Project 09/27 (Dashboards) is on track to rollout dashboards in July, when the P12 production system is ready. Design on 10 of 12 Year 3 dashboards have been approved and are in development and on track.
- Project 13/61 (Enhancement to LDS to develop P20 and Workforce Data Warehouse and Center) P20 production environment delivered 28 January. This milestone marks the completion of a key deliverable and provides a research analyst tool linked to PreK-12, Higher Education, and Workforce data. The public facing portal was designed with parents and students in mind, but can be accessed by anyone. The entire system is

currently planned to be turned over to Maryland's Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center 1 July 2013. The P20 system can be accessed at www.mldscenter.org

- Projects 17/32, 18/33, & 19/34 (Item Bank, Computer Adaptive Test System, and Items for Item Bank) are all in the final stages of procurement; internal procurement review conducted and complete, preparing final package for Board of Public Works review targeted for 4 April. Project 20/35 (Adaptive Testing for High Schools) is on hold until year 4.
- Department Public Safety and Correctional Services (general): MSDE, in partnership with our sister agencies, were able to resolve a critical resource shortage with our co-location vendor. An additional 1500 hours will be allocated by the co-location vendor to provide critical data center services. The addendum is currently under review with anticipated approval the last week in February.

Challenges:

- Project 1/78 (Office of Academic Reform and Innovation) The RTTT accountant will resign effective March 9, 2013. She has played an critical role in helping us to manage both State and LEA RTTT funds and is a significant loss. We are seeking to replace her as soon as possible.
- Project 53/44 (Charter Schools) Attempts have been made over the last two months to identify school systems and charter school operators that want to either replicate or expand successful charter school programs. After much discussion with school systems, Prince George's County has identified two charter schools they would like to replicate and a charter school program they would like to expand. However, the school system must receive local Board of Education approval to expedite their charter school approval process if the programs are to be replicated/expanded in fall 2014. Once we have confirmed a timeframe from Prince George's for expediting their approval process, we will submit a formal amendment to USDE.
- Project 21/42 (Student Instructional Intervention System): MSDE is still awaiting approval of its amendment. The team is very concerned about the time left in FY13 to complete the implementation since the amendment request, submitted in October 2012, is still outstanding, and is eager to address any remaining questions or concerns on the part of USDE.

- Project 14/31 (Curriculum Management System) The team is working with our co-location vendor to complete the move of 3 servers to complete the build out of the CMS production environment.
 - Staffing: In the last month two instructional technology project managers have resigned. Affected projects will need to initiate staffing procedures to backfill for affected positions.
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?

The State is on track to meet goals and timelines.

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

The assistance that would be of greatest benefit to us at this time would be the opportunity to respond to outstanding questions from USDE regarding any outstanding amendments that would enable us to move forward with those projects.

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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 (D) (2)

STATE's goals for this sub-criterion:

Goal 7: Develop a statewide growth measure to use in a statewide system of educator evaluation

Goal 8: Expand Educator Information System

Relevant projects:

Teacher/Principal Evaluation

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

29/48 Develop and Implement an Educator Evaluation System

30/49 Expand Educator Information System to Accommodate Additional Data

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

Teacher/Principal Evaluation (TPE) Monthly Update

Maryland's approach to TPE is intended to result in fair methods of educator evaluation across the state based on significant measures of student growth and are attributable to those teachers responsible for the instruction of the student. In Maryland's original Race to the Top application, elements of Teacher-Principal Evaluation (TPE) were embedded within numerous projects. While those elements of educator effectiveness could be found in piecemeal fashion across projects, the absence of a specific project to address TPE process and protocols was a design weakness. To that end, in late September 2012, the State Superintendent created an organization structure that could provide a unified response to TPE.

The State Superintendent authorized the formation of a TPE Action Team, around five project components: TPE in its entirety; communications; field testing; professional development; and Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). The State Superintendent identified a Project Leader who

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.

reports directly to her. The Project Leader's responsibilities are to manage the project and to deal with TPE in its entirety. The Project Leader selected four additional specialists, those most knowledgeable and familiar with each component of the project, to collaborate on the overall project while spearheading each component to full implementation.

All LEAs will fully implement a TPE system in 2013-2014 as outlined in the *Education Reform Act of 2010* and as reflected in Maryland's approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility Waiver. Twenty-two of Maryland's local education agencies (LEAs) are participating districts in Race to the Top. Frederick County Public Schools is not a participating district but has voluntarily submitted a field test for 2012-2013. Montgomery County Public Schools is also not a participating district but has committed to work with educators this year to develop a TPE plan for full implementation in 2013-2014.

Subsequently, the TPE Action Team developed a communication strategy to craft common messages across internal and external stakeholder audiences and to create platforms for the collection, maintenance, and sharing of information. The TPE Action Team designed the communication strategy to promote transparency while protecting the informational protocols of MSDE's RTTT Core Team, the "first to know" expectations of LEA superintendents, the subsequent "need to know" of internal MSDE and LEA personnel, and the eventual "benefit to know" of external audiences. Since October 2012, with each specialist contributing on-going feedback about the progress of their component parts, the TPE Communications Specialist has produced and distributed seven informational newsletters to inform internal and external readers of the progress of TPE and its component parts. In addition, the Communications Specialist created and launched a TPE website (<http://www.msde.maryland.gov/MSDE/programs/TPE/>) that includes resources related to TPE as well as a means to address frequently asked questions about TPE.

With three LEAs piloting the State's TPE models and with the potential for others to default to the state model before May 2013, the TPE Action Team recognized the need to immediately produce several instruments. State TPE evaluation instruments were completed under the direction of the Professional Development Specialist and published by mid-November 2012. Appendices explaining how to use the TPE Instruments to conduct and score the evaluations were then finalized by the Professional Development Specialist and her staff and made available by December 7, 2012. The availability of actual instruments and appendices initiated discussions between MSDE staff and LEAs about system and principal capacities to support such evaluation

processes. In response, the TPE Action Team produced demonstrations of methodologies for a tiered approach in facilitating the transition of school staff over time and for determining the impact on evaluators' work load.

Finally, with operational and communication structures in place, tools available for reference, and examples of how to conduct and distribute the work provided, the TPE Action Team finalized a TPE timeline. With consideration of the limited time and the need to retrieve information in time for LEAs and the state to make adjustments in models before implementation in June 2013, a compressed timeline that would bring all LEAs to operational field testing status by January 2, 2013, was presented by the TPE Action Team. The TPE Action Team had successfully moved the field test from a conceptual state that was six to ten months behind schedule in September 2012 to fully operational in eleven weeks.

In response to conditions within USDE's amendment letter of December 6, 2012, a plan was submitted and subsequently approved by USDE in January 2013. The plan demonstrated the timeline and the actions that will occur to fully implement TPE across all twenty-four LEAs in 2013-2014. It included exhibits to support the work of the TPE Action Team and the progress of the LEAs.

Executing the TPE plan requires the TPE Action Team to give consideration to combinations of supports, professional development, and accountability. Since the designs of the state and local models were completed in July 2012, MSDE has conducted professional development continuously on the components of TPE. Professional development sessions by experts at MSDE have ranged from information sessions to practice in the field. These sessions have been differentiated to serve the interests of regions, districts, schools, teachers, principals, and evaluators. Targeted training by MSDE and the Danielson Group focused on the "Professional Practice" half of the TPE models. The TPE Field Test Specialist provided support relative to methodologies for converting state reading and math scores into evaluative measures. MSDE psychometric professionals and the TPE Field Test Specialist have given similar training to LEAs interested in converting the School Progress Index into evaluation measures.

Most notably, a cadre of Student Learning Objective (SLO) specialists, under the direction of the TPE SLO Specialist, was trained and has provided LEAs an extensive amount of professional development around Student Learning Objectives. Phase One SLO training, prior to December 2012, focused primarily on the content and writing of high quality SLOs while Phase Two training now focuses on quality control and the scoring of SLOs. Phase Three SLO training is

being developed to address assurances with the auditing and monitoring of SLOs with further attention to quality controls. During the spring of 2013, the SLO Specialist will complete webinars and electronic modules to sustain the SLO content knowledge base and to maintain the capacity of future evaluators. Additionally, MSDE staff are working in concert with other states to develop rubrics to use with SLOs.

The TPE Action Team is also providing supports to LEAs using both the state and local models. The TPE Action Team is conducting monthly work sessions and briefings for all LEAs with professional development provided by MSDE and TPE staff. The Professional Development Specialist is developed debriefings for January 2013, February 2013, and March 2013, in response to LEA interest in opportunities to learn from each other's field test experiences. The Communications Specialist is developing interactive media forums in the form of topical blog sites for LEAs to conduct conversations outside of the monthly debriefings. Following completion of evaluation simulations by the LEAs, the Professional Development Specialist's staff will provide technical assistance with local analysis and guidance to LEAs with model modifications for final submissions in May. The Professional Development Specialist's staff will also conduct evaluation associated topical and procedural training for LEA Executive Officers; they are the individuals responsible for the evaluation of principals.

Collaborating with the TPE Action Team and LEAs, the Project Leader is repurposing funds to meet local needs and to maximize the impact of the resources for as many LEAs as possible. The Project Leader has prioritized the funds to be applied in priority order to first insure local quality controls and the refinement of local models and subsequently to deliver local professional development, to enhance evaluator skills, or to enhance system evaluative processes. It is MSDE's intent to repurpose these funds and to utilize future funds to build informational processes and data platforms that will sustain TPE beyond the life of RTTT.

To ensure LEA fidelity of implementation of the field tests, the TPE Project Leader and the Field Test Specialist have recommended that an independent Field Test Monitor be identified. The Field Test Monitor's team will provide independent assurance during the field testing that the twenty-four LEAs are actually using their models in the way they intended. The Field Test Monitor will also collate the qualitative data that will be collected at the end of the field test simulation on April 1, 2013. The TPE Field Test Specialist has advised LEAs in advance of the type of qualitative data that MSDE will be seeking and has solicited and invited LEAs to

contribute qualitative data inquiries and discoveries they believed to be of significance. A Field Test Monitor was identified and secured on February 12, 2013.

The TPE Action Team believes that the concurrent strategies of providing guidance and professional development through the Action Team, assuring field test implementation fidelity through the Field Test Monitor, and repurposing resources to support state interests and LEA needs has the greatest potential for facilitating a successful field test experience.

The TPE Action Team discovered a conundrum when addressing how the State planned to use data, including feedback from LEAs, to learn from the statewide field test of the TPE system. The lessons learned will be invaluable in refining the system prior to full implementation in school year (SY) 2013-2014. The TPE Action Team recognized that the competing interests of expediency with field test oversight and thoroughness of the project analysis were being exacerbated by the dynamics of credibility and time. On one hand, the Action Team believed that credibility would be best served through the use of third party resources; on the other hand, the TPE Team knew that field test oversight was needed in January 2013. The Action Team further concluded that MSDE lacked the technical capacity to conduct a full statistical analysis of the twenty-two LEA field tests.

To increase the credibility of the TPE system and the implementation processes, the TPE Action Team recommends that this analysis be accomplished by a large scale group with extensive statistical capabilities and independent of MSDE. The Action Team is recommending that the work of such a Statistical Analysis Team would extend beyond the field testing to include both an assessment of readiness to implement in August 2013 and additional statistical feedback at the end of the first operational year in June 2014. To overcome the previously cited conundrum, the TPE Action Team recommends a bifurcated process utilizing an external evaluator to facilitate immediate oversight of field test fidelity combined with the procurement of a Statistical Analysis Team of national reputation with experience in TPE, to conduct a thorough analysis of the TPE Project through June of 2014.

- To ensure the appropriate capacity for the external support, MSDE will work with USDE and other resources to identify possible partners to serve in the role of Statistical Analysis Team no later than February 2013. Once identified, the Statistical Analysis Team will collaborate with the MSDE Core Team, the TPE Action Team, and the LEAs to determine quantitative data outputs from the field test experience.

- By mid-April 2013, initial quantitative data will be provided to the Statistical Analysis Team and qualitative data will be provided to the Field Test Monitor.
- The Statistical Analysis Team will complete the field test analysis by mid-May 2013 for LEAs and MSDE to use in the re-tooling of their respective models 2013-2014.

Most significantly, the Statistical Analysis Team will be able to provide MSDE and USDE with the evidence and assurances that the decentralized evaluation processes are reliable, valid, and accurate in portraying the relationships of student measures attributed to teachers, the ratings of educators that correctly reflect performance, and the existence of reporting procedures that are efficient and maintainable. This aggressive plan assures a purposeful and productive field test experience and is critical to meeting the readiness of LEAs to fully implement TPE in August 2013.

The MSDE Core Team undertook the identification of a large scale group to conduct this statistical analysis in early January 2013 and immediately began the process of determining what quantitative data will be collected at the end of the field tests. WestEd was secured to serve in the role of Analysis Team and preliminary meetings were conducted. A full prospectus is being developed by WestEd with MSDE for approval. The TPE Action Team is reaching out to other states who have already addressed similar issues to learn from their experiences. The TPE Project Lead and Communication Specialist will inform LEAs of this information as soon as it becomes available.

This project is positioned for successful completion; however, there remain multiple elements that range from having quality concerns to requiring varying degrees of attention. Nine of the twenty-four LEAs are presently in full or partial default to the state model and working with MSDE to accomplish approvable local models. While the overall project plan and the timeline have been endorsed by USDE, there is much work that must be accelerated and accomplished during a compressed period. The recent addition of a Field Test monitor and an Analysis Team have greatly enhanced the potential for quality assurances and the delivery of measures to actually calculate a rating have elevated overall confidence in the process. Simultaneous attention to and technical assistance with the field tests, SLOs, and professional development are incrementally moving the LEAs toward full implementation of approved models in SY 2013-2014. Educator angst associated with the scope and pace of the project and the unknowns of Teacher Principal Evaluation remains the most significant issue. Thoughtful dialogue,

stakeholder outreach and transparency in communications will continue to be the best methods for managing such angst.

The outcome for this project is that by June 2014, every educator in Maryland will be evaluated using an MSDE-approved TPE Model.

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

Since the September 2012 report, the State Superintendent has established Project 28/47 as the repository of activities and funds directed at the full implementation of the new Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPE) system. The project was organized and unified under a team lead, David Volrath, and an action team was chartered to oversee the professional development, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), communications, and field test strands which compose the critical work. The project lead is a direct report to the State Superintendent.

The original work of Project 28/47, to develop a statistical model to measure student growth, is largely concluded; new tasks that pertain to ensuring SLO quality are on-task and future efforts have been detailed and scheduled.

A brief review of the project's history may be useful. In the original RTTT application, Maryland indicated an intention to review the Tennessee Model which relies on a Value Added Model (VAM) developed by the SAS Institute. This first approach was abandoned because Maryland felt it was inappropriate due to the psychometric structure of the Maryland School Assessments, which were criterion-referenced and had no vertical alignment. During the 2010-11 grant period, Maryland tested the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) model which is part of the Colorado Model and incorporated into that of other states. Concurrently, Maryland worked with the National Psychometric Council. By 2012, the Council had endorsed a Value or Transformation Matrix approach in preference to VAMs, SGPs, or other regression-based approaches.

During summer 2012, a standard setting panel was convened, and the particular weighting scheme called Transformation/Growth/Status (TRSG) was preferred because it best exemplified the State's values which preferred high performance over low performance and which rewarded improving the status of struggling students. The TRSG matrix has been subjected to proof-of-

concept testing in a few LEAs, and preliminary results indicate that it aligns with local expert judgment.

At present, MSDE is preparing the various deliverables to LEAs which include mapping each eligible student to a TRSG cell “address,” providing cut scores for transforming TRSG values into the correct proportional contribution to the TPE models, providing summary measures for building administrators, and providing technical assistance to LEAs to apply these materials to teachers while maintaining local control over the validity of the teacher-student rosters.

Under the newest strand of work within project 28/47, project staff assists the TPE SLO team to operationalize the quality assurance aspects of the State model. These efforts include helping LEAs to prioritize standards, appropriateness of assessments and measures, alignment of SLOs, and consistency of scoring.

Coordinating and controlling this work and that of 29/48 is an “Extended Timeline for Completing and Evaluating Field Testing.” This timeline encompasses the work of the Independent Monitor and Statistical Analysis Team (described below), LEA responsibilities, MSDE supports, repurposing of resources, communication plans and public engagement strategy. As of February 2013, all work is on schedule according to the timeline.

Among the most critical activities that have occurred are the waves of training which have reached LEA staff at all levels. A third wave will occur in April 2013, at which time quality assurance issues will predominate.

In addition to intensive site-based trainings mentioned above, there has been an investment in an online training delivery system which can be customized to reflect local requirements.

SLOs constitute one of the four key strands of the TPE Action Team. The SLO lead participates in the weekly Action Team Meeting which precedes the weekly presentation at the MSDE Core Team Meeting. SLOs are presented at monthly meetings with all LEAs participating in the field test. There are frequent on-site technical assistance meetings, professional development training sessions, and customized consultations provided to the LEAs as requested.

The Independent Field Test Monitor will confirm the LEAs adherence to the SLO approach indicated on their 2013 field test plan. The Statistical Analysis Team will further review the

quality assurance of the LEAs SLO work, and the team will review the SLO measures submitted by the LEAs to better understand the SLOs performance as a student growth measure within the larger TPE Model.

The quality of project implementation to date has been particularly strong. SLO training represents one of the most concentrated efforts by MSDE since the inception of RTTT.

The qualitative data to confirm success has been mentioned above and includes continuous feedback loops, surveys after trainings, and face-to-face dialogue. Project 28/47 also receives feedback from CAIRE and within the next reporting cycle will have the double dose of evaluation from the independent monitor and from the Statistical Analysis Team.

Project 28/47 is at low risk. The statistical model is set and gaining acceptance. The SLO work is advanced, and there is now a widening pool of talent within LEAs to further disseminate this work. The greatest challenge is the immensity of the task which requires a new paradigm from all educators. However, the work of other states indicates that SLOs, among other student growth measures, has become more routine and stronger, especially as repositories of quality SLOs are developed.

The outcome for this project is that by June 2014, every educator in Maryland will be evaluated using an MSDE-approved TPE Model, and in virtually all models, SLOs are a significant part.

Project 29/48: Develop and Implement an Educator Evaluation System

Since the September 2012 report, the State Superintendent of Schools has focused the work of various projects to support the overarching efforts of the Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPE) system. Project 29/48 is a direct contributor to this work.

The original intent of Project 29/48 was as a technology initiative tasked to build a centralized calculation engine. Local Education Agency (LEAs) would load the data elements of their TPE system, and the centralized system would house these data, aggregate them, and report them. Under that mandate, the project developed detailed business and functional requirements and developed a complete request for proposal. However, it was the universal consensus of Local Education Agency (LEA) superintendents that a state-controlled centralized system was not a

desirable solution. LEAs would be obliged to maintain their own calculation systems, and a state system would be a burdensome redundancy to be maintained. Preferred was a redirection of project 29/48 resources and efforts to support local calculation systems that could provide MSDE with the data it needed. This work is reflected in the January 2013 TPE plan submission to USDE which described: a comprehensive plan exists to implement TPE across all LEAs; that MSDE has the ability to execute the plan appropriately; that valid methodologies will be in place to analyze the field test experiences; and, that findings will be translated into improvements to State and Local Models.

Project 29/48 will support LEAs through sub-grants according to a methodology under discussions with USDE. The distribution of 29/48 funds will be specifically targeted to ensure that each LEA has a quality system that will meet all the intended functionalities of a centralized State system. MSDE has already prepared preliminary detail data records to support the student growth calculations required of all LEAs. Further supports to LEAs include partnering with LEA staff to conduct dry runs and simulations of their local calculation systems. Through the work of the independent monitor, LEAs will receive mid-course assurances that their systems will be adequate to conclude the field test successfully. Once the budget distribution plan is approved, LEAs will be able to augment their systems purchasing resources such as psychometrics, improved or new data platforms, software or licenses, and professional development that directly supports components of the LEA's TPE system.

It is essential that the project align to the original theory of action. That theory was to allow each LEA to implement a system of fair evaluations that use student performance measures, assemble and combine multiple data elements to calculate an evaluation rating, conduct and track evaluation outcomes, and use the evaluations for educator incentives and career planning. This implies that the ultimate outcome of project 29/48 is not to provide a personnel tool but to use the detailed information drawn from an actionable evaluation system to inform an array of targeted professional development intended to elevate the State's cadre of educators to drive improved student growth and learning.

By using 29/48 resources to buttress existing LEA systems, to create necessary system components that may not have existed, and to help create the capacity for quality assurance, the original goals of the project are met.

Project 29/48 relies heavily on continuous and intensive engagement with LEA stakeholders. Every month, the State Superintendent meets with LEA superintendents and TPE and Project 29/48 issues are on every agenda for this executive group. The superintendents' Fall 2012 Retreat was devoted almost entirely to TPE-29/48 and related accountability issues.

There is an intensive internal and external communication strategy around TPE. Every week there is an Action Team meeting which precedes the weekly presentation at the MSDE Core Team meeting. There are monthly meetings with all LEAs in the field test. There are frequent on-site technical assistance meetings and ad hoc consultations. Beginning now, project staff will also engage with LEAs to conduct dry run simulations of educator effectiveness data using real student performance information.

Also, two entities have joined MSDE to monitor the work of the Educator Evaluation System. A Request For Qualification (RFQ) was released to hire an independent monitor to conduct on-site visits to confirm that LEAs are implementing their field test plans as submitted. This work will result in a formal report in mid-Spring 2013. MSDE is in discussion with WestEd to partner with MSDE to provide the services of an Analysis Team. The intent is that WestEd will perform work in its comprehensive center capacity and will anchor the Maryland work within a national context, will assist MSDE and LEAs to formulate critical outcomes and measures, will assist LEAs to produce essential data, and will assist with the ex-post facto analysis of field test results. The Analysis Team will meld the Independent Field Monitor's report with their own, and will issue a summary report to confirm the assurances in the January 2013 submission to USDE and will provide the formative data to inform and improve the State and LEA models.

Of specific important for Project 29/48, the Analysis Team is intended to address two USDE questions: Do LEAs have quality systems that replicate what a unified state system would have provided; and, has the State addressed all implications in devolving the calculation systems from MSDE to the LEAs?

The quality of implementation to date has been strong. As with any project of such complexity with so many moving parts, conceptual and practical understanding by all key players has been an evolution. Moreover, as concepts and strategies become unpacked, new issues must be analyzed and resolved. The project operates in an environment of continuous learning, and this learning is accelerating, especially now that LEAs are fast approaching certain hard stops.

At present, every LEA has submitted a plan with schematic diagram of their TPE system and its implied calculation. Supporting narrative indicates their preferred method for the “consequential” TPE system to commence in school year 2014. By consequential it is meant the evaluation system that will become the new personnel evaluation system, whereas the 2013 field test is still “no fault.” These plans for 2014 have been reviewed by MSDE, and LEAs have received approval or have been alerted to default status. LEAs can continue to revise submissions through late winter and into spring in order to preserve desired aspects of the local model with proviso they are able to correct identified deficiencies.

The qualitative data to confirm success has been mentioned above and includes continuous feedback loops, surveys, and face-to-face dialogue. 29/48 also receives feedback from CAIRE and within the next cycle will have the double dose of evaluation from the independent monitor and from the Statistical Analysis Team, a level of scrutiny applied to no other RTTT project.

Quantitative data will be drawn from the submitted results of the 2013 field test. These data will confirm that pilot participants were rated, that there is meaningful correlation between professional practice and student growth, and that there is acceptable consistency across LEAs.

In a broad context Project 29/48 through its participation in TPE has challenges rather than obstacles. Obstacles have been overcome through legislation—the Education Reform Act of 2010 and COMAR Title 13A—and through negotiated agreements between LEAs and their exclusive bargaining units. LEAs which cannot achieve consensus default to the State TPE Model which is fully thought through and reflects the consensus of best practice in the current literature. The MSDE TPE Model balances qualitative and subjective outcomes, uses multiple measures, incorporates State assessments, and has controls for fairness such as ensuring that only students with a reasonable exposure to an academic program are included in aggregations. As evidence of the strength of the State model, most local models are more similar to the State model than dissimilar from it. Project 29/48 is well positioned to assist LEAs to meet their responsibilities to form the requisite calculations.

The main risks to Project 29/48 are traceable to the variability in systems already in use in Maryland LEAs and the internal capacity of these LEAs to conduct this work. Some LEAs have matured data systems, fully staffed information technology, and research and development departments, onboard psychometric capacity, and entire units devoted to professional development. In some small districts, few staff wear many hats, as it were; nevertheless, the

challenges faced by these districts to fully implement their TPE systems are essentially the same. Only the magnitude of scale is different.

This means that there needs to be twenty-four custom agreements between the State and the LEAs. The situation is somewhat less complex than the preceding sentence suggests because there is deep penetration by few vendors among most Maryland LEAs. Many LEAs are using common data platforms and record and store their data in consistent forms. Data extraction and two-way sharing is long established between MSDE and LEAs. Therefore, providing TPE ratings to the State, either in summary form or unpacked, should not be a problem.

At present, MSDE knows no specific challenge within any LEA that rises to the level of a risk.

This project is on track to meet its goals and performance measures. The outcome for this Project is that by June 2014, every educator in Maryland will be evaluated using an MSDE-approved TPE Model. The State model will be fully operational by August 31, 2013.

Project 30/49: Expand Educator Information System to Accommodate Additional Data

The Educator Information System (EIS) was created to reengineer the educator certification processes for the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Certification and Accreditation (C&A) and to implement an information system to support those processes.

The project will expand the data and reporting capabilities of EIS. The expansion will include: (1) New educator data sets; (2) Data import programs; and (3) Data analysis reports that support the RTTT reform initiatives. Maryland's education reforms for RTTT implement a number of educator professional development, credentialing, evaluation, and assignment initiatives that require the collection, tracking and reporting of additional educator information. This project supports the additional data collections and reporting to meet those reforms.

The current system is already being used to perform the work of the Certification and Accreditation division and by educators seeking certification. The development team will upgrade the system in parallel to the current system to ensure that there is no downtime or work interruption. The project calls for the upgrade and expansion of the application, which would provide the ability to store quality data and produce quality reports according to the spirit of the grant.

The application and hardware, on which the current system is built, has not been upgraded since 2006. To facilitate this expansion, the development team is upgrading the current application to new versions of the application and improved hardware. The project team has procured new versions of the software that will be used for the upgrade and expansion. This includes Microsoft CRM 2011, SQL Server 2008, Microsoft SharePoint 2010 and Microsoft BizTalk Server 2010. During the development phase, the team has installed and configured the mentioned software within the development environment and is currently in the process of performing version upgrades. This involves the stepwise upgrade from Microsoft CRM version 3.0 to Microsoft CRM 4.0 then to the latest version. The team is currently in the first phase of the upgrade, which is 3.0 to 4.0. Since the system is already been used, all the custom code and workflows that was built into the old system will be ported into the new. The design process required the stakeholders to be part of the workflow design.

The expansion will also include an upgrade to the current educator certification site. The current site is on old versions of the application. The new certification site will use Microsoft SharePoint as its foundation. The design process involved getting stakeholder input in the selection of the portal theme to develop the site. This will ensure the quality of the implementation and the success of the outcome. This new educator portal will make it easier for those individuals seeking certification to apply and track the status of their applications. The introduction of SharePoint ensures that there is seamless integration with the Microsoft CRM product that facilitates the certification application process. The SharePoint site will also act as a repository for documents and provide further expansion possibilities. One other aspect of stakeholder involvement is the decision to add an educator search to the redesign of the Educator Portal. Currently, individuals seeking information on any certificated educator will have to call into the certification department. The stakeholders want to ensure that any publicly available information can be retrieved from the site. The educator search will provide the means to search for any publicly available information on any certificated educator. After reviewing how other states implemented the educator search, the stakeholders settled on a design which will be implemented by the development team.

This project is on track to meet its goals and performance measures. The development phase of the project has begun, which includes the development of the new educator portal and the upgrade of the system. The project team tracks the project through the project schedule, status reports to management and stakeholders and through status meetings. The stakeholders have been

part of the requirements and design phase of the project and will be involved during the development phase to ensure that the implantation of the project meets their expectations.

The main risk or obstacle to the successful completion of this project is the complete testing of the system to ensure that the function of the current system is ported over to the new. To mitigate this risk, the testing team will be comprised of the current users of the system.

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

As detailed in the preceding section of this report, a variety of methods, tools, and processes are being used to determine progress toward goals, performance measures, and quality implementation of project activities. The designation of a Project Leader and the creation of a TPE Action Team and associated specialists, all of whom are well-versed in all aspects of the TPE project, has enabled continuous communication, monitoring, technical assistance, deliberation, and immediate resolution of issues ensuring consistency of purpose and actions as we work with our stakeholders to design and implement a fair and equitable teacher/principal evaluation system throughout the state. Communication is now transparent, immediate, and substantive to all internal and external stakeholders. The TPE Action Team is in continuous contact with LEAs; thereby, becoming instantly aware of any issues or needs that are addressed immediately. Lessons learned can be shared with all LEAs helping to ensure that time, energy, and expertise are being used effectively and efficiently. The Statistical Analysis Team and field test evaluation will provide invaluable data and analysis regarding readiness and the degree to which resources need to be redirected to support LEAs as they prepare for full implementation in 2013-14, helping to enable quality implementation.

Stakeholders have been directly involved in design and development phases of the expansion of the Educator Information System helping to ensure that the expanded system responds to the needs of the intended users.

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

After initial challenges and obstacles, the implementation of these projects has been very good attributable to or evidenced by: creation of a project team structure to conduct the collective work around TPE; implementation of a comprehensive communication plan; development of a detailed TPE Implementation Plan along with support exhibits; completion of an analysis of LEA TPE Plans and rendered determinations; correctives and direction provided to defaulting LEAs; monthly informational and problem solving meetings with LEAs; identification and securing an independent Field Test Monitor; identification and securing an Analysis Team to craft and conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of the TPE Project in its entirety; development of the data deliverables required for LEAs to conduct evaluation ratings; providing the direct technical assistance to the three State Field Test LEAs; and providing the technical assistance and professional development as requested to the LEAs

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?

Yes, the State is on track to meet its goals. We are very much aware of the various issues and challenges that lie ahead and are prepared to address those issues.

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?

To date, there are no obstacles that we have been unable to overcome. However, we are cognizant of these continuing challenges: repurposing of project funds to support the approved implementation plan for the TPE Project; developing the prospectus for the Analysis Team (WestEd) to evaluate the TPE Project; working within the constraints of a compressed timeline; helping LEAs to manage the angst created by concurrent requirements of CCSS, PARCC, and TPE; shepherding remaining 9 LEAs to approvable local TPE models; and, managing the competing forces of local autonomy and state oversight. We are now well prepared to successfully address each of these challenges.

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.