

Race to the Top Progress Update – July 2013 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:

In their effort to provide effective oversight of the State's Race to the Top (RTTT) grant, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) RTTT program leadership – Penelope Thornton Talley, Chief Performance Officer, Steve Brooks, Chief Financial Officer, and Mary Gable, Assistant State Superintendent for the Department of Academic Policy and Innovation – have continued to hold monthly RTTT Stat meetings with project managers and executive sponsors. However, to increase the value of these meetings for all involved, their format has been changed – now calling for all projects within each sub-criterion (as described in Maryland's RTTT application) to come together and share their progress, challenges, and updates not only with MSDE RTTT leadership, but with those project managers who's RTTT projects are in the same sub-criterion and working towards the same overarching goals. This new meeting format has proved to be very beneficial to all involved – allowing those managing related projects to share strategies, provide input and advice, and consolidate efforts when applicable (project 1/78). A new member has also been added to the management team. Heather Lageman will now be responsible for overseeing the management and monitoring of the LEAs. Heather's Title II Part A monitoring experience will be extremely valuable as we work with our auditing team and Title I monitors to revamp our current monitoring process. Additionally, MSDE's new Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Jack Smith, will work with the State's RTTT leadership to provide guidance and advice on the best ways to communicate changes and major initiatives to the LEAs.

Part of Maryland's plan for supporting the statewide transition to and implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) calls for the development of curriculum resources aligned to these new, more rigorous academic expectations. Over the past month, new curriculum resources have been loaded onto the State's curriculum and learning management systems, and these resources are being shared with teachers at this summer's Educator Effectiveness Academies (project 4/3 and 41/24). Additionally, Maryland has made great strides towards the statewide implementation of the Foundations of Technology (FoT) course – a standardized technology education course developed by the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA) and aligned to the CCSS. Currently, 21 school systems use the FoT online curriculum and participate in the ITEEA assessment process, impacting more than 40,000 students and 650 teachers throughout the State. These teachers are currently participating in regional professional development sessions that are offered every summer, which help prepare educators to teach the FoT course in the upcoming school-year (project 5/4).

Several RTTT projects that support Maryland's goals to use data systems to support instruction and make that data accessible to stakeholders, have successfully met and completed all their project objectives, as outlined in the RTTT application. These completed projects provide for assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in acquiring hardware and/or software to support RTTT education reforms (project 11/29); a system for collecting and distributing data from the LEAs, MSDE, and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (project 12/60); the development of the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (project 13/61), and the development and implementation of a Curriculum Management System (project 14/31).

A number of Maryland's data system projects have also played a valuable role in supporting the instruction that teachers and principals are receiving at this summer's Educator Effectiveness Academies (EEAs). Twelve online instructional intervention module resources are being used during this summer's Academies, which provide teachers with the tools to enrich classroom instruction or remediate student skill

weaknesses (project 22/6). Additional professional development resources directly related to the work being done at the EEAs were also recently uploaded to the Learning Management System (project 23/55). The EEA Professional Learning Community was also launched recently and is currently being utilized to support teachers as they participate in this summer's Academies and beyond (projects 24/56 and 26/43).

Maryland is committed to developing and supporting great teachers and leaders and, to that end, is constantly working to improve and validate its plan for evaluating teachers and principals in a fair and consistent manner. Based on the outcomes of the field test of Maryland's Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPE) system during project year 3, MSDE has gained some valuable insight into how to proceed in its efforts to successfully implement the TPE system in project year 4. The data provided by the participating LEAs at the end of the field test (22 out of 24 LEAs – those that signed on to RTTT) allowed the project manager to perform intensive stress testing of the State Evaluation Plan. Based on the results of this testing and the outcomes of the field test, clarifications have been made to the State Plan to ensure that it is stable and fair to teachers and principals. The TPE project team has also completed a comprehensive plan for delivering professional development to a variety of stakeholders at the LEA and school levels over the next year (project 29/48). Additional accomplishments for projects that develop and support great teachers and leaders are detailed in Part B of this document.

Turning around Maryland lowest achieving schools takes commitment and support from all levels of our education system – the State, the LEAs, and the individuals working in the troubled schools. It is imperative that representatives from these communities meet and communicate regularly to share strategies, provide guidance and help, and implement the plans to improve these schools. Over the past month, staff from MSDE's Breakthrough Center met with U.S. Department of Education officials and Maryland stakeholders to discuss strategies for instructional improvements in turnaround schools (project 44/41). Project managers also worked with central office staff in Prince George's County to discuss needs and identify goals and strategies to improve student services at

the LEA's low achieving schools (project 47/45), assisted with the implementation of a large attendance/dropout prevention project (project 48/69), and worked with staff in Dorchester County to implement the STEM Project Lead the Way Gateway to Technology program for the spring 2014 semester (project 51/71).

Challenges:

Maryland has committed to utilizing the expertise of an outside organization, the Center for Application and Innovation Research in Education (CAIRE) at Towson University, to provide the State with a comprehensive evaluation of its RTTT program throughout the life of the grant. However, MSDE is reevaluating the scope of CAIRE's evaluation process to ensure that their work is providing the State with valuable information and insight *during* the implementation of the State's projects and reform initiatives. Having this formative information will allow MSDE RTTT leadership and individual project managers to make any necessary mid-course corrections to their work and/or focus on those outcomes, as identified by CAIRE, that are most helpful to achieving Maryland's RTTT goals. CAIRE's evaluation work is currently on hold while the project scope of work is revised. However the project is estimated to be back on track by November 2013, at which point CAIRE will move forward with evaluations based on the revised scope of work (project 2/1).

In its effort to develop a comprehensive formative assessment system, the State continues to face ongoing issues that are causing the project to be delayed, including staffing shortages and the need to submit an approvable amendment to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). To bring the project back on track, over the past month the project manager and MSDE RTTT leadership have worked to revise the USDE amendment for this project to address necessary changes to the project budget. The revised amendment is in the final review process at MSDE and will be submitted to USDE shortly.

Additionally, the development of test items has been delayed because of difficulties in finding viable candidates to fill three open positions on the project team as well as assessment experts who will lead teachers in item development. Recently, three

candidates for the open team member positions have been selected for interviews. However, the project manager will be utilizing a new strategy to find qualified candidates for the assessment expert positions – drafting a Task Order Request for Proposal after an unsuccessful attempt to find candidates through the Request for Quotation process. The project manager has already taken steps to realign the project schedule, and work to procure assessment modules and items continues to move forward. Once the USDE amendment is approved and staff are hired to fill the vacant positions, this project will be fully on track (project 3/2).

A number of projects that are an integral part of Maryland's plan to access and use data to improve instruction are facing delays due to difficulties in the procurement process through Maryland's Department of Information Technology (DoIT). While these projects await approval from DoIT for vital resources, such as equipment and contractual support, project managers are working to ensure that their project schedules are aligned and up to date, that any amendments to projects budgets are drafted, and any other work that can continue during this time does so. During a recent RTTT Stat meeting, which brought together all projects within the same sub-criterion, project managers shared their strategies for attempting to move the procurement process forward and offered to assist others with similar issues.

Challenges for projects related to ensuring the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals and providing effective support to teachers and principals are detailed in Part B of this document.

Improving school culture, climate, and support is critical to the school turnaround process. Success in this area often requires specialized strategies and support aligned to the need to each school. While the project manager is able to provide some training to larger groups of staff members from the State's turnaround schools, the project is extremely understaffed and therefore unable to provide the level of individualized service

to each school that is needed to fully implement targeted improvement strategies. The project manager is working to fill several open positions to create a school culture and climate team which will provide the necessary services and training to staff at each turnaround school. Candidates are currently being interviewed to fill these positions and the project manager continues to work to fulfill the needs of the turnaround schools, to the best of their ability, during the hiring process (project 46/57).

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?

Overall, Maryland is on track to meet the goals and timelines associated with the activities outlined in its approved scope of work. Many of the projects that are behind schedule or facing challenges are in that position because of issues related to communication of the interconnectedness of projects and/or connectivity to overall goals, the hiring of new staff, or delays in the procurement process. While these challenges have caused some projects to fall behind, every effort is being made to get them back on track, move forward with other work not impacted by these issues, and to adjust program schedules to reflect these delays. Additionally, MSDE's RTTT Stat program continues to be a valuable tool for project managers to gain insight from similar projects and for MSDE RTTT leadership to stay apprised of the projects that need additional attention and support.

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

USDE continues to provide valuable insight and assistance to Maryland. Currently, the need for action resides within MSDE and actions have been and continue to be taken to move the State's RTTT projects forward successfully. MSDE appreciates the continued support from USDE.

**Race to the Top
Progress Update – July 2013 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)).¹ All responses in this section should be tailored to the goals and projects associated with this sub-criterion.*

Application sub-criterion:²(D)(3) & (D)(5)

STATE's goals for this sub-criterion:

- Increase the equitable distribution of teachers and principals in high-poverty, high-minority, and hard-to-staff schools;
- Ensure that all teachers effectively transition into the profession;
- Give all teachers and principals the opportunity to become effective or highly effective educators.

Relevant projects:

(D)(3)

- 31/13 Building Leadership Capacity in Low-Achieving Urban and Rural Districts
- 32/73 Teach for Maryland
- 33/50 Compensation to Teachers and Principals in Lowest 5% Schools
- 34/51 Compensation for Teachers in Shortage Areas
- 35/26 Elementary STEM Certification
- 36/75 Maryland Approved Programs (MAP) Cost for LEAs, Providers, and IHEs (UTEACH Maryland)
- 37/54 International Partnerships to Recruit Teachers in Critical Areas
- 38/53 Incentives for Teachers who obtain ESOL Certification

(D)(5)

- 39/25 Teacher Induction Academies
- 40/15 Professional Development for Executive Officers
- 41/24 Educator Instructional Improvement Academies
- 42/17 Expand Maryland Principals' Academy to Target Low-Achieving Schools
- 43/21 Develop Online PD on Educator Instructional Improvement Content

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?

The first goal in this sub-criterion is to increase the equitable distribution of teachers and principals in high-poverty, high-minority, and hard-to-staff schools. The projects dedicated to this

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.

goal are all progressing on track. More than 48 principals have been trained through New Leaders Maryland (the urban component), exceeding the goal of 40 and 25 “leaders in training” from the five Eastern Shore School systems (the rural component) by the Lower Eastern Shore School Leadership Institute (LESSLI), a partnership between Salisbury University and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (31/13). Candidates from both programs have already been promoted to leadership positions and more will be as principal positions open. The Teach for Maryland project (32/73) has approved an additional partnership for the final year resulting in ten Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) participating in the Consortium; participants from all ten partnerships participated in the three-day Summer Institute held the weeks of July 10-12. The work focused on incentivizing and compensating teachers to work in the lowest 5% of schools and in shortage areas is progressing as planned with grant applications distributed to eligible Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Notice of Grant Award (NOGAs) issued to two LEAs (33/50 and 34/51). The sub-grant applications for project year 2013-2014 have also been sent to the eligible LEAs (Baltimore City and Prince George’s County for project 33/50, and Baltimore City, Prince George’s County, Baltimore County, and Kent County for project 34/51). The workgroup developing the elementary STEM Certification for practicing teachers (35/26), a shortage area, has made significant progress and will meet on July 31, to finalize requirements for the certification to be presented to the Professional Standards for Teaching Education Board (PSTEB). Representation from all twelve project partners participated in the two day Elementary STEM Certification held last week. Additionally, all secondary STEM courses have been revised to reflect all UTeach requirements. Eighty-six students are enrolled in UTeach courses for fall 2013 with 33 scheduled to enter the professional program in fall 2013, as well (36/75). The final number for fall 2013 does not include transfer students from community colleges which total 45% of Towson’s total student body. Simultaneously, the project for English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (38/53) certification has approved 18 additional content teachers for preparation in Year 4, recognized 12 additional teachers who have completed all requirements for certification, and is now working with one more additional LEA for participation in the project. Together these projects are progressing as planned to contribute to the equitable distribution of quality teaching in high-poverty schools.

The second goal, ensure that all teachers effectively transition into the profession, is the exclusive focus of Project 39/25, Teacher Induction Academies. The goal of this project is to make sure that

teachers at every Maryland Public School participate in a high quality program of induction into the teaching profession. The Induction Academies provide instruction and guidance for new and experienced teacher mentors. This year's academy was held June 25-27 and infused teaching to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) into the mentoring program, allowed daily LEA time for program planning, and incorporated an Induction Coordinators' meeting on data analysis and action planning based on data from each LEA's Mentor and TELL Surveys. The MSDE staff running the academies coordinated with Stonebridge and the New Teacher Center to tape portions of the academies and conduct interviews. This footage will be used to create a video and clips summarizing the Race to the Top Teacher Induction Academies Project. The continued success of this project, measured through the evaluations and follow ups with mentors and teachers, indicate that success is being met on this goal.

The third goal in this sub-criterion, give all teachers and principals the opportunity to become effective or highly effective educators, is the focus of four projects (40/15, 41/24, 42/17, and 43/21). Each of these projects is generally on track and meeting its milestones; however, Project 43/21 has encountered procurement related delays due to staffing challenges at the State's Department of Information Technology (DoIT). Executive officers, the focus of Project 40/15, have received a professional development calendar and will attend upcoming regional summits. The first session was held at regional sites on July 9 and 10. The Educator Effectiveness Academies (EEAs) (41/24) are underway, having now been completed in four LEAs. In preparation for the academies, MSDE staff completed the placement of academy content on the MSDE Learning Management System (LMS). Access was then given to all Master Teachers, principals, teacher participants, PD Coordinators, and Assistant Superintendents in LEAs scheduled to attend the June academies. The limited feedback from the evaluations of these academies indicates that this year's EEA is better organized and more informative than years past. Please note that this fall, the EEA Instructional Team will be going into each LEA and visiting schools to support best instructional practices in the Common Core as presented in the academies. The Priority Schools Academy (42/17) is finalizing the content for the second cohort of school leaders who will participate in this year's academy, focused on the distinct needs of turnaround schools. Finally, the EEAs will be presented in a virtual format for 2013-2014. Project 43/21 will be a primary focus of the 2014 virtual EEAs and the information presented will be available to teachers through online modules. The project management team and content

specialists have approved the course outlines for the first five professional development courses and work on these courses is underway. Overall, projects within this sub-criterion are on target and progressing as MSDE envisioned- many new opportunities are available to help teachers and principals become more effective.

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 ongoing processes (e.g. project manager/program director meetings, monthly status reports, weekly RTTT leadership meetings, and MD RTTT Stat review), there are multiple means used to determine progress and quality of implementation that include: pre- and post-assessments of products and/or services provided; formal and informal surveys; feedback from “attendees”; and, involvement of stakeholders in design and development of services/products. Additionally, CAIRE has been tasked with developing measurable objective outcomes that each project can be analyzed against to determine progress and success. As these measurable objectives are developed and the formative analysis is provided, MSDE will use this information to continue determining progress towards the goals and to adjust projects and activities as and where needed.

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

The quality of implementation of these projects is good as evidenced by: positive feedback from “attendees” of academies; achieving milestones and projects are on track; meeting and/or exceeding performance measures; and, there are no significant obstacles/risks at this time.

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?

RTTT Leadership is working with MSDE and DoIT procurement teams to accelerate review and issuance of outstanding solicitations.

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?

With the exception of Project 43/21, no obstacles or risks have prohibited project teams from meeting project related goals.

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

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.

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.