

Update – Maryland’s Progress on Education Assurances Required under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

May 21, 2009

1. What is Maryland currently doing and what does Maryland plan to do to maximize receipt of “Race to the Top” Funds?

- **Multi State Consortium Discussions.**

The United States Department of Education (USDE) communications indicate preference toward states that are excelling in or making progress in the four priority areas described in ARRA: rigorous college- and career-ready standards; pre-k through college- and career data systems; teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution of qualified teachers; and intensive support and intervention for the lowest performing schools.

Current Actions:

- MSDE has been in discussions with Virginia, the District of Columbia, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and other Chief State School Officers about possible consortia and/or collaboration on parallel initiatives related to teacher quality, low performing schools initiatives, longitudinal data system work, and teacher development.

Future Actions:

- MSDE will continue to cultivate discussions with other states.
- MSDE will submit a “Race to the Top” application, either independently, or through a consortium of states and organizations related to a regional or national initiative. Maryland’s #1 ranking by Education Week, demonstrates Maryland’s leadership in many areas, including our work with low performing schools, teacher development, and assessment work. As the parameters for the grants become clearer, Maryland will be well positioned to make a strong case for “Race to the Top” funds.

- **Common Core Standards and Common Assessments.**

There is indication that the USDE may be interested in supporting and funding the development and administration of assessments in states that have joined the Common Core Standards consortium led by NGA and CCSSO, either through Race to the Top or some other federal funding source.

Current Actions:

- Maryland has agreed to join the multi-state Common Core Standards consortium led by NGA and CCSSO.

Future Actions:

- Maryland will be very interested in pursuing multi-state assessments based upon the Common Core Standards.

- **Low Performing Schools.**

Work with low performing schools continues in Maryland through a number of coordinated initiatives both through federal and state-funded initiatives.

Current Actions:

- Maryland is one of six states selected by the National Governor's Association to work on implementation of the Mass Insight model for turnaround schools. The planning grant permits the state to build out its fledgling Breakthrough Center initiative as a mechanism to better coordinate and intensify turnaround work with our lowest performing schools.
- Partnerships with the University of Maryland and Brown University as well as Mass Insight are helping the turn-around work with lowest performing schools.
- Currently, Breakthrough Center work focuses on school zones in two local school systems, with an eye to expansion in the 2009-2010 school year.

Future Actions:

- MSDE is looking to expand the work of its Breakthrough Center during the 2009-2010 school year.

- **Differentiated Accountability Pilot.**

Current Actions:

- Maryland is one of a small number of states implementing differentiated accountability systems that permit focus on schools with particularly complex and longstanding needs.
- Maryland's pilot is completing its first year of implementation and is helping guide work of the Breakthrough Center. Operation of the pilot

in Maryland adds to our ability to make the case that we have robust and creative efforts in place with low performing schools.

Future Actions:

- Maryland will continue to implement its differentiated accountability pilot which fosters robust and creative efforts in supporting low performing schools.

- **Master Planning Process**

Current Actions:

- Maryland has embraced strategic planning for over a decade. As part of a strong accountability system, all local districts are currently required to provide comprehensive five year master plans with yearly updates. These master plans include goals, objectives, strategies, performance measures and action plans related to college-and career-ready standards, assessments and data systems, teacher effectiveness and teacher quality, support and interventions for low performing schools, and innovative reform initiatives.

Future Actions:

- Maryland will require local school systems to include discussion of ARRA funding and reform initiatives as part of its master planning process.
- Maryland is interested in sharing its Master Planning process as a “best practice” for increasing student achievement as a model to be replicated in other states across the nation.

2. What has Maryland done to improve standards and assessments and what does Maryland plan to do in the future to improve standards and assessments?

- **Standards Review**

Current Actions:

- Maryland has been an American Diploma Project member state, along with 34 other states, which represent 85% of the students in the nation. Under this initiative led by Achieve, Inc., Maryland has initiated a complete review of its content standards at the high school level.
- In 2008, Achieve pronounced Maryland’s high school standards adequate to make a students “college and career ready” upon graduation.

- In 2008, Maryland contracted with Achieve in 2008 to conduct a review of kindergarten through grade 8 mathematics content standards, to determine the extent to which Maryland standards matched standards for NAEP and several other benchmarked nationally and internationally known standards. The State Board will receive a report at its May meeting on this work.

Future Actions:

- Maryland will adopt revisions to its standards based on the output from the Common Core of Standards work from NGA and CCSSO. Assuming that a critical mass of states agree to those standards, then the Maryland curricular revisions will incorporate that work into its curriculum. By agreement, participating states will be permitted to augment the Common Core of Standards by no more than 15% of additional content. Because Achieve is intimately involved in the Common Core work, Maryland feels the Achieve reviews will place Maryland ahead of the curve in anticipating the next implementation steps of the multi-state standards.

- **Assessments**

Maryland was one of the first states to receive full approval for its assessments and standards from the United States Department of Education, and it has worked consistently since then to improve and upgrade its assessment system.

Current Actions:

- **Modified Maryland School Assessment.** The most recent additions to Maryland’s assessment system include the Modified Maryland School Assessment—a form of the state assessments designed to meet the needs of two percent of the student population - students with significant disabilities and who have received successive interventions. An openness to creative approaches to student assessment mark the work in Maryland over the past two decades.
- **High School Graduation Tests.** This year, Maryland graduates its first class under a state regulation requiring the passage of high school exit exams of all graduates. The assessments, in four core academic courses—algebra, biology, government, and English—help to assure that all students receive a rigorous high school education. This is further reinforced by the fact that the Maryland high school program has been deemed adequate for making students college- and career-ready by Achieve, Inc.
- **On-Line Testing.** Maryland is currently in the process of phasing in on-line testing with both the modified assessments and high school assessments. The on-line testing is opening up avenues for the state to

pursue more rapid score turnaround, artificial intelligence scoring for constructed response items, and later diagnostic assessments linked to the assessments.

- Algebra II. Maryland piloted its first year's administration of Achieve's Algebra II test—a multi-state end-of-course test that is designed around a consistent set of standards adopted by several states. Maryland has participated in the development of the Algebra II test.
- International Benchmarking. The State Superintendent has had discussions with Andreas Schleicher (PISA) about Internationally Benchmarking Maryland Standards. The State Superintendent and the State Board of Education have discussed the feasibility of International Benchmarking.

Future Actions:

- Maryland is poised to participate in multi-state testing efforts, should they develop from the Common Core Standards work.
- Maryland will continue to consider for adoption internationally benchmarked standards and assessments. It is currently proposed that the work on Common Core Standards will include International Benchmarking. Assuming the Common Core Standards work moves forward, and Maryland adopts the Common Core Standards, the need for Maryland to independently Internationally Benchmark its standards and assessments would be unnecessary.

3. What is Maryland currently doing to improve educator effectiveness and the equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers and what will Maryland do in the future to improve educator effectiveness and the equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers?

• **Principal Effectiveness:**

Current Actions:

- MSDE offers the Maryland Principals' Academy for approximately 130 principals each year who are in their first five years of a principalship and who are nominated by their superintendents.
- Approximately 500 principals engaged in research-based workshops offered by MSDE during the 2008-2009 school year. These workshops link leadership to student achievement
- New Leaders For New Schools, a nationally recognized non-profit that recruits and trains principals for urban schools, has entered into a

unique statewide partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools, Prince George's County Public Schools, and MSDE to provide high quality instructional leaders in those districts.

Future Actions:

- Maryland will continue to administer the Maryland Principal Academy. Through the summer of 2009, 1,000 principal participants will have attended the Academy – a milestone for Maryland.
- The Governor's Principals' Task Force recently recommended comprehensive mentoring programs for all newly assigned principals and assistant principals. A statewide committee is being formed to develop guidelines for the establishment of mentoring programs for new principals and assistant principals.

- **Professional Development:**

Current Actions:

- MSDE is the only state department of education that has a division devoted to leadership development.
- Maryland's teacher professional development work is recognized by national professional associations and the US Dept of Education as exemplary practice
- Maryland has recently been approached by the National Council of Staff Developers concerning disseminating Maryland's *Teacher Professional Development Evaluation Guide* nationally as state-of-the-art Professional Development practices.
- In 2003, Dr. Grasmick established the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council which developed a set of standards, Planning Guide and Evaluation Guide to define high quality teacher learning experiences and provide guidance to local school systems to implement the standards.
- The Advisory Council has issued three reports on the state of teacher professional development.

Future Actions:

- The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council will issue a fourth status report on the state of teacher professional development in June 2009. The report will address new actions that will be included in the master planning process:
 - Refinements to teacher induction programs;

- Adjustments in school system calendars and school master schedules to address the need for professional development time;
- Refinements in school system and institutions of higher education partnerships focusing on graduate classes as professional development; and
- Creating school system and state professional development committees to coordinate and link teacher learning opportunities within districts and between districts and MSDE.

- **Financial Incentives**

Current Actions:

- The Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) are currently completing Year Two of a five-year federally-supported financial incentive program (Pay for Performance) for teachers and administrators, supported by a \$17.1 million grant award through the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) program of the USDE. The PGCPS financial incentive program is operational in 12 schools. Teachers under this program are eligible to receive a bonus of up to \$10,000 based on criteria related to student achievement, evaluation, subject matter, and professional development. Principals are eligible to receive a bonus of up to \$12,000 and Assistant Principals up to \$11,500 based on criteria related to student achievement, evaluations, professional and leadership development.

Future Actions:

- The PGCPS financial incentive program will expand to 42 schools during the five year grant period. The 42 schools in the program were selected from a group of underperforming schools that were in corrective action or restructuring, and serve a high percentage of students eligible for free and reduced price meals (FARMS)
- Extensive professional development will be conducted during the summer months prior to the next ten schools entering the program in Year III.
- The first monetary awards under the PGCPS financial incentive program are scheduled for November 2009.

- **Highly Qualified Teachers**

Current Actions:

- The equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers continues to be an essential component of Maryland’s Highly Qualified Teacher Plan
 - Alternative preparation programs offer pathways to teaching for non-traditional candidates and career changers. Currently, there are 19 such programs serving 11 of Maryland’s 24 school systems. Significantly, our most urban school systems that represent a majority of Maryland’s high poverty schools are utilizing these programs to the greatest degree. Last year, over 500 teachers – all highly qualified – entered classrooms through alternative preparation programs. Programs include national organizations such as Teach for America, Troops to Teachers and The New Teacher Project as well as programs in colleges and universities.
 - Maryland’s traditional baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate teacher preparation programs include a required intern experience of 100 days in a Professional Development School. These learning communities provide a rigorous and extensive experience shown to have a significant impact on teacher retention and improved faculty stability in high-needs schools.
 - MSDE, the University System of Maryland, and the Maryland Independent College and University Association are collaborating to increase the pipeline for STEM teachers, exploring the development of a program modeled on the very successful Texas UTEACH model.
 - The Quality Teacher Incentive Act (QTIA) offers stipends to teachers holding Advanced Professional certification (teachers with advanced degrees and experience) who teach in comprehensive needs schools, serving as an incentive to highly qualified teachers serving these schools. This year, QTIA stipends paid to National Board certified teachers were restructured to offer similar incentives for these teachers to work in comprehensive needs schools.
 - Regulatory reform has added direct routes to “highly qualified” status through recognition of tests and academic majors as means by which certificated teachers can add additional content area endorsements to their teaching credential. This serves to expand the potential for teachers to earn “highly qualified” status in multiple subjects.
 - The Educator Information System (EIS) provides streamlined certification processing online for MSDE and local school systems. The web-based application serves to eliminate certification barriers to teachers seeking employment in Maryland
- **Equitable Distribution of Highly Qualified Teachers**

Current Actions:

- The Quality Teacher Incentive Act (QTIA) offers stipends to teachers holding Advanced Professional certification (teachers with advanced degrees and experience) who teach in comprehensive needs schools, serving as an incentive to highly qualified teachers serving these schools. This year, QTIA stipends paid to National Board certified teachers were restructured to offer similar incentives for these teachers to work in comprehensive needs schools.
- EIS provides enhanced data management for MSDE and local school systems and provides improved capability to track teachers' credentials and qualifications.

Future Actions

- Enhancements to the EIS are planned that will further improve identification and tracking of highly qualified teachers, as well as public access to these data.
- Moving forward, the development of a longitudinal data system and unique teacher ID, coupled with the EIS, will offer enhanced capability to identify teacher movement and employment patterns, promising teacher preparation programs, effective professional development, and other elements that can help identify distribution trends and factors.

4. How is Maryland currently supporting low-performing schools and what will Maryland do in the future to support low-performing schools?

• Schools in Need of Improvement

- In the spring of 2008, MSDE applied for, and received permission from the USDE to pilot a differentiated accountability system which allows Maryland to tailor interventions and support for schools in need of improvement. The Differentiated Accountability pilot helps MSDE better manage the changing profiles of schools entering the School Improvement process.
- MSDE administers a unique Breakthrough Center, dedicated to coordinating, brokering, and delivering support to districts and schools across Maryland. It aims to maximize the State's comparative advantage by partnering with local school districts to determine needs and necessary supports; identify, target, and maximize resources in education, business, government, and research centers; and to create

cross-district and cross-sector access to people, programs, and resources. Currently, The Breakthrough Center is being piloted in two Maryland districts

- Additionally, Maryland recently received a grant from the National Governors Association that will provide the State with up to \$150,000, plus assistance in research and development of new strategies to increase academic achievement in underperforming schools.

Future Actions:

- A Policy Board is being developed, with representatives from education, business, and local and state government, to advise on policy revisions or adoptions that will advance the work of the Breakthrough Center.
 - Plans are underway to scale the operations of the Breakthrough Center in 2009-2010 to support a larger number of low-performing schools.
- **State School Improvement Funds Used to Support Low Performing Schools (2008-2009 school year)**

Current Actions:

- \$8,301,102 was distributed to 17 school systems with schools in improvement.
 - 67% (\$5,576,924) was distributed to Non-Title I schools in all 17 districts.
 - 33% (\$2,742,179) was distributed to Title I schools in 7 districts.
 - Funding was provided for the following activities in local school systems: staffing, technology, instructional materials, professional development, extended day/year programs, interventions, co-curricular programs, consultants, administrative expenses, high school assessment supports.
- **Title I 1003 (a) School Improvement Funds Used to Support Low Performing Schools (2008-2009 school year)**

Current Actions:

- \$7,305,098 was distributed to Title I schools in 3 districts
- Funding was provided for the following activities in local school systems: development of a professional development plan that is designed to build the capacity of the school staff and is informed by student achievement and outcome-related measures; seeking

partnerships among external entities to obtain technical assistance, professional development, and management advice; and, incorporating strategies to increase parental involvement.

Future Actions:

- 50% of Title I ARRA funds, \$65,126,565, will be released to school districts in July 2009, the remaining 50% will be released in early October.
 - School districts will be completing their Title I ARRA applications between May 22 and July 1. The first 50% of the funds will be released to LEAs upon approval of their application beginning on July 1, 2009.
 - School districts and schools may use these funds for any allowable purpose under Title I, Part A, to improve achievement through wise investments and reform.
- **Title I 1003(g) School Improvement Funds Used to Support Low Performing Schools (2008-2009 school year)**

Current Actions:

- \$6,675,461 was available in SY 2008-2009 of which 17 identified Baltimore City Public Schools that have been in improvement for 5 or more years received \$1,714,028. The 17 identified schools did not compete for the funds.
- The remaining funds were issued on a competitive basis to Prince George's County and Baltimore City schools in grant awards of not less than \$50,000 to not more than \$500,000 per school

Future Actions:

- Approximately \$40,000,000 will be available to Title I schools in improvement. (Currently there are 87 Title I schools in improvement.)
- Maryland plans to use these funds to directly support the Title I schools that are in improvement through the Breakthrough Center

5. What actions has MSDE taken to develop and implement a longitudinal data system and what future actions will MSDE take to enhance its longitudinal data system?

Data Quality Campaign (<http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/>) has developed ten essential components of state data systems. (USDE is using these components as their basis for ranking) These essential components are being used to direct the priorities for the development of the longitudinal data system.

Current Actions:

- MSDE has been awarded 2 federal grants relating to its longitudinal data system: \$8M for 2005-2008 and \$6 M for 2009-2014.
- Through 2007-2008, 34 states had completed 6 to 10 of the components; Maryland currently has completed 3 components: *Component 2 - Student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information, Component 8 - Student-level graduation and drop out data, and Component 10 - State data audit system assessing data quality, validity and reliability.*
- The Governor, State Board of Education, and MSDE have included the completion of the longitudinal data system as a priority
- Three bills were submitted to the legislature in 2009 to authorize capture of information related to Teacher ID, Course codes, and Class size.

Future Actions:

- MSDE will complete *Component 4 – Information on untested students and the reasons they were not tested* in 2009.
- MSDE is on target, with the new federal grant, to complete *Component 1 - A unique statewide student identifier that connects student data across key databases across years, Component 3 – Ability to match individual student test records from year to year to measure academic growth, and Component 6 – Student level transcript information including courses completed and grades earned over the next 5 years.*
- MSDE is hoping to be able to complete *Component 5 – A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students and Component 9 - Ability to match student records between the P-12 and higher education systems and workforce* with ARRA State Data System funds or “Race to the Top” funds.
- MSDE will continue to study feasibility of accomplishing *Component 7 - Student level college readiness test scores.*