

Maryland's Reform Plan & the Race to the Top (RTTT) Grant Proposal

Maryland's public education system is ranked as the nation's best for one simple reason: it does not stand still. Education reform efforts began in the State more than 20 years ago, following a philosophy that viewed high standards and strong accountability for all schools and all students as essential to improving classroom performance. Our State was one of the first to assess students on state learning standards and was at the vanguard of a national movement to strengthen low-performing schools.

As Maryland enters a new decade and its accompanying challenges, the State looks to further improve its schools. Race to the Top (RTTT), the federal government's \$4.3 billion education initiative, provides an excellent opportunity for Maryland to seek federal funds that match Maryland's vision for building upon its school reform efforts. Maryland is using the Race to the Top guidelines as the backdrop for its next wave of reform.

The unprecedented RTTT federal program is aimed at boosting student achievement, closing gaps in achievement between student subgroups, turning around struggling schools, and improving the teacher/principal professions through a highly competitive grant proposal process. Maryland did not receive the No. 1 ranking as the best State system of public education in the nation for the second straight year by being satisfied with the status quo. Consequently, Maryland will move forward with its ongoing vision for school reform with or without the infusion of additional RTTT funds.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has been working with multiple stakeholder groups, including a broad-based steering committee that meets weekly, to help frame the State's RTTT grant proposal. In addition, MSDE will have held over 75 briefings across the State to obtain input from various stakeholders before the June 1, 2010 grant submission deadline.

Maryland's new vision for education

Revise the Maryland State Curriculum PreK-12, assessments and accountability system based on the Common Core Standards to assure that all graduates are college and career ready:

- Adopt Common Core Standards by Summer 2010
- Agree with higher education on college-ready standards
- Revise high school graduation requirements
- 4 years of mathematics, including Algebra II
- Develop interdisciplinary STEM curriculum
- Begin work on new assessments based on Common Core Standards (as part of assessment consortia)

Build a statewide technology infrastructure that links all data elements with analytic and instructional tools to monitor and promote student achievement:

- Accelerate and fully implement the longitudinal data system
- Develop online instructional toolkit to support new standards and assessments
- Align data systems with higher education and workforce
- Provide high quality professional development on the access and use of data systems

Redesign the model for the preparation, development, retention, and evaluation of teachers and principals:

- Define effective and highly effective teachers and principals
- Develop teacher and principal evaluation frameworks with student growth being a significant component
- Revise teacher preparation programs to meet the demands of the 21st century
- Develop programs to prepare teachers and principals for the challenges of working in low-achieving schools
- Expand professional development opportunities for teachers and principals
- Link to student achievement
- Revise tenure statutes
- Differentiate compensation for teachers and principals working in chronically low-achieving schools and/or critical shortage areas
- Provide for equitable distribution of teachers and principals to low-achieving schools

Fully implement the innovative Breakthrough Center approach for transforming low-achieving schools and districts:

- Cross-divisional, statewide system of coordinating, brokering, and delivering support for low-achieving schools
- Builds upon Title I program success
- Helps maximize resources in education, business, government, and research centers
- Currently in a limited number of schools and districts