

Race to the Top Monthly Update

April 2011

Welcome!

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is proud to provide this monthly update designed to keep you informed about Maryland's Race to the Top (RTTT) progress. In this publication you will receive the latest news about the State's programs and initiatives to bring Maryland's education system from national leader to world-class status.

Scope of Work Update

The U.S. Department of Education has recently approved Maryland's State and local RTTT Scopes of Work. These documents detail how the State and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) will spend their grant dollars to further education reform over the next four years. With this approval Maryland's \$250 million RTTT grant is now fully available!

The Breakthrough Center

In the reform area of providing strategic help for struggling schools, Maryland's Breakthrough Center program has made progress in several key areas.

- The Breakthrough Center's Cross-Functional Team has been established to coordinate the services being offered by the Breakthrough Center to low-performing schools. Team members work together to provide Maryland's lowest performing schools with the services they need in order to improve student performance.
- Monitoring visits to learn their baseline needs have been performed in schools designated to receive support from the Breakthrough Center.
- The Cross-Functional Team provided professional development for teachers in four of the lowest achieving middle schools and seven feeder schools in Prince George's County, and created a pathway for teachers and leaders to excel in these schools. Additionally, technical assistance has been provided to other school and central office staff to ensure a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for learning.

Educator Effectiveness Academies

Beginning this summer and continuing through 2014, MSDE will be conducting Educator Effectiveness Academies. These professional development programs are intended to build educators' knowledge of the State's new reform initiatives. Much has been accomplished in preparation for this summer's Academies.

- The content of these Academies has been developed and will be presented to 6,000 teachers and principals at 11 regional sites. The content focus for this summer will be the new Maryland Common Core State Curriculum.
- Master Teachers, who will facilitate the delivery of the Academy content, have been identified and selected.
- Input on the structure and content of the Academies was gathered from statewide stakeholders.

Maryland's Common Core State Curriculum

Maryland is currently developing a new State curriculum with guidance from Maryland teachers, administrators, and higher education representatives.

- Maryland's new curriculum is being built upon the foundation of the Common Core State Standards, national education standards that establish a set of shared goals and expectations for what students are expected to learn.
- This new State curriculum will be tailored specifically to the needs of Maryland's students, relying on insight from teachers about how best to help students reach those shared standards.