

Race to the Top Monthly Update

Race to the Top Program News

Maryland has a new Interim State Superintendent of Schools, Bernard J. Sadusky. Dr. Sadusky took over the reins of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on July 1, 2011, following the retirement of State Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick. Dr. Sadusky served as Superintendent of the Queen Anne's County school system from 1994 to 2007, after which he joined the staff at MSDE, serving as a policy liaison with local school systems. The State Board of Education is conducting a national search for Dr. Grasmick's permanent replacement.

Higher Standards

The largest professional development program in State education history is wrapping up for the summer. Since June 27th, MSDE has held nine of its 11 scheduled regional Educator Effectiveness Academies. The 3-day Academies bring teams of educators from all 1,450 Maryland public schools together to learn about the new Maryland Common Core State Curriculum Standards and Framework. The Academies have even received national recognition, garnering a front page article in the July 13th issue of *Education Week*. This summer's last two Academies will be held July 25-27 at Northwest High School in Montgomery County and August 1-3 at Towson High School in Baltimore County.

Robust Data

Work is currently underway to develop the State's Longitudinal Data Warehouse. The new Data Warehouse will collect and analyze statewide data from MSDE, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), and the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) on how well Maryland students transition out of high school and into college and the workforce. The information provided by the Data Warehouse will help the State identify the programs and policies that improve student success during these transitions. Development of the Warehouse is a collaborative effort between MSDE, MHEC, and DLLR, with additional support coming from the University System of Maryland.

Effective Educators

The Race to the Top Performance Compensation Workgroup held its first meeting on July 12, 2011. The Workgroup was established to investigate best practices for creating a performance compensation model for teachers and principals. The Workgroup's members include superintendents, human resources officers, and union leaders from the five local school systems that currently have or at one time created alternative compensation systems. The members are working to compile information on ways of compensating teachers and principals differently based on performance/evaluation results, career and leadership roles, and subject areas. With this information, the Workgroup will share model compensation system(s) that local school superintendents could implement as part of their collective bargaining process. The Workgroup plans to meet two more times.

Strategic Help for Struggling Schools

One way MSDE's Breakthrough Center provides support to low-achieving districts and schools is through intensive professional development efforts. This summer the Breakthrough Center provided professional development to educators from the four middle schools in Prince George's County that are currently undergoing the school turnaround process. The Center also conducted the first session of an Aspiring Leaders Institute for teacher-leaders in these Prince George's County schools. The Aspiring Leaders Institute is a professional development program designed to train the next generation of school principals and leaders. In addition to building attendees' leadership capabilities, this program focuses on teaching the best practices and necessary skills for attaining success in low-achieving schools.