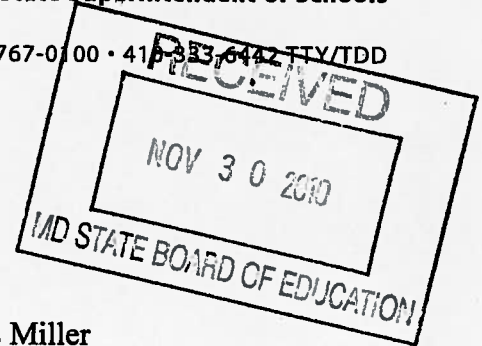




**Nancy S. Grasmick**  
State Superintendent of Schools

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November 22, 2010

The Honorable Martin O'Malley  
State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Thomas Miller  
State House  
H-107 State House  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Mr. James DeGraffenreidt  
Maryland State Board of Education  
200 W. Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

The Honorable Michael Busch  
State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor O'Malley, President Miller, Mr. DeGraffenreidt and Speaker Busch:

Executive Order 01.01.2010.12, signed on June 1, 2010, established the Maryland Council for Educator Effectiveness. The Executive Order identified specific responsibilities of the Council which included:

Not later than December 31, 2010, the Council shall submit to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Maryland State Board of Education recommendations for the development of the model evaluation system for educators required by Chapter 1989 of the 2010 Laws of the General Assembly of Maryland - Educator Reform Act of 2010.

The recommendations shall address:

- (a) The definitions of "effective" teachers and principals; and
- (b) The definitions of "highly effective" teachers and principals; and
- (c) The relationship between the student learning component of educator evaluations and the other components of the evaluations.

The Council's recommendations should seek to ensure that every educator is:

- (a) Evaluated using multiple, fair, transparent, timely, rigorous, and valid methods;
- (b) Afforded a meaningful opportunity to improve their effectiveness; and
- (c) Provided the means to share effective practices with other educators statewide.


Governor O'Malley, President Miller, Speaker Busch, Mr. DeGraffenreidt  
November 22, 2010  
Page 2


Not later than December 31, 2011, the Council shall submit to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Maryland State Board of Education any recommendations for corrections or adjustments to the overall design of the model evaluation system – including guidelines, tools, and measures – based on the experience in the field.

The Council, consisting of twenty-one very committed educators, legislators and representatives of the business community, has had four very productive meetings since its first meeting on August 26, 2010. However, the enormity of determining educator effectiveness requires that we respectfully request more time to advance this important work. We will need, at a minimum, a six month extension for the submission of our initial recommendations for the model evaluation system.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

  
Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools

  
Betty Weller  
MSEA Vice President

NSG:BW:dry

## **Executive Summary**

### **Maryland's Race to the Top Application**

#### **Section A: State Success Factors**

##### ***Articulating the State's Reform Agenda***

In this section, the State lays out its reform agenda. It serves as the guidepost for the rest of the application. Maryland describes how it will move from national leader to world-class and this theme is carried throughout the application.

##### ***Participating LEAs***

This section requires the State to describe its participating LEAs; 22 of 24 LEAs have chosen to participate. Montgomery County and Frederick County have chosen not to participate. Without Montgomery County and Frederick County, Maryland will still reach 79% of its students, 77% of its minority students, 94% of its high poverty schools, and 85% of its students in poverty. The Prince George's County Educators' Association (the only NEA affiliate of the 23 in the State) and the Baltimore Teachers' Union (the sole AFT affiliate in the State) both signed the MOU.

##### ***Eliminating the Achievement Gap***

Maryland describes its current status and goals in relation to the elimination of the achievement gap.

##### ***Statewide Capacity***

Maryland describes its organizational and grant management capacity to deliver on the promises of the grant, how it will evaluate the grant and how it achieved broad stakeholder involvement.

##### ***Demonstrating Significant Progress***

In this section, Maryland shares a wide variety of data showing steady progress on a number of different measures (NAEP, MSA, HSA, Achievement Gap, AP, graduation rate, and dropout rate).

#### **Section B: Standards and Assessments**

##### ***Common Standards***

In this section, Maryland describes its commitment to and plan for adoption of the Common Core Standards.

##### ***Common, High-Quality Assessments***

In this section, Maryland describes the consortium it has joined for the development of high-quality summative assessments. Members of the consortium were listed as well as the benefits of this consortium's approach. Maryland is part of one consortium – the PARCC consortium facilitated by Achieve.

### ***Transitioning to Enhanced Standards and Assessments***

Maryland describes how it will transition to the new Common Core Standards and assessments including stakeholder involvement with higher education and local school district staff.

Maryland will be revising its State Curriculum as a result of the new standards, and it will significantly expand its Online Instructional Toolkit, e.g., increased curricular supports, multi-media resources, assessment items, and formative assessments. New assessments based on these standards will follow. Partnerships with Maryland Business Roundtable (MBRT), Maryland Public Television, and the College Board will enhance this effort. The STEM and World Languages curricula will get particular attention in this regard. Maryland will host academies to assist teachers and administrators in moving towards these new standards and assessments.

## **Section C: Data Systems**

### ***Longitudinal Data System***

Maryland describes its current status and movement towards a P-20 Longitudinal Data System. Maryland has met 10 of the 12 America COMPETES Act requirements.

### ***Accessing and Using State Data***

In this section, Maryland describes 10 integrated initiatives to guide the expansion of the Longitudinal Data System. It will consist of expanding the reporting system, implementing a security system, designing a P-20 data warehouse, implementing over 32 dashboards to serve a variety of purposes, establishing a training program, creating a governance structure, and linking teacher and principal evaluations with student growth performance.

### ***Using Data to Improve Instruction***

This section describes Maryland's vision for how it will use data to improve instruction. A schema is provided with a 9-step process for strengthening classroom instruction and the various elements of the technology infrastructure that will be implemented in all LEAs and the State system. Support systems will be put in place and guidelines for the access and use of data will be developed. Training on the use of this system is included in the academies (noted above in section B) which will reach an administrator and three teacher leaders in each of Maryland's 1400 schools.

## **Section D: Great Teachers and Leaders**

### ***Alternative Routes to Certification***

The legal and statutory provisions that allow for alternative routes to certification, a description of the alternative routes that are in place, and a process for monitoring and evaluating teacher and principal shortage are described in this section.

### ***Teacher and Principal Evaluation System***

The evaluation system must have a clear approach to individual student growth that is rigorous, transparent, and fair. It must use multiple rating categories and take into account student growth as a significant factor (Education Reform Act of 2010). MSDE conducted 35 focus groups with teachers and principals and has developed the general parameters for the evaluation system. Many of the details will be worked out by an Educator Effectiveness Work Group (through and Executive Order by the Governor) Council over the next 7 to 8 months. The draft evaluation



system will be piloted in 7 school districts that have already agreed to participate and the final system will be implemented statewide in the 2012-13 school year. Maryland will propose the following in its grant application:

- Student growth will be 50% for teachers and principals.
  - 30% will be determined by the State (e.g., MSA, HSA or other measures for non-tested areas).
  - An additional 20% for student growth will be decided at the local level for both teachers and principals
- The other 50 percent for teachers will be based at a minimum (but as supplemented by the LEA) on the planning and preparation; classroom environment; instruction; and professional responsibility.
- The other 50% for principals must include as 25% the outcomes in the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework, with LEAs determining the weightings. For the other 25%, LEAs can include whatever other measures they choose.
- In other words, LEAs have flexibility for 70% of the evaluations for both teachers and principals.
- There will be a defined state model that will go into place in the event the LEA and local bargaining unit cannot agree on the components where there is LEA flexibility.

#### ***Equitable Distribution of Effective Teachers and Principals***

MSDE presented a detailed plan for the equitable distribution of teachers and principals and a plan for increasing the number and percentage of effective teachers in hard-to-staff subjects (including STEM areas). Maryland plans to create a Teach for Maryland Consortium (a preparation program for high-needs schools); expand the New Leaders for New Schools Program; put in place an Officers to Principals program; create an Elementary STEM certificate; begin a minimum of two UTeach programs (a STEM teacher preparation program); provide incentives for teachers and principals to work in low-achieving schools; implement succession planning strategies to replace the anticipated principal retirements; and publicly report progress on teacher distribution gap

#### ***Improving the Effectiveness of Teacher and Principal Preparation Programs***

Maryland will link student achievement and student growth to teachers and principals, as well as to the in-state programs where they were prepared, and publicly report these data. This plan expands preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals. The State will publicly report on the effectiveness of preparation programs

#### ***Support for Teachers and Principals***

Data will inform professional development decisions and Maryland will step up its evaluation of professional development programs. Maryland will do the following:

- Provide training to district staff on comprehensive teacher induction programs
- Develop a principal mentor certificate program with an IHE
- Expand the Aspiring Principals Institute

- Provide Educator Instructional Improvement Academies to train administrators and lead teachers in all 1,400 schools on the Common Core State Curriculum, the new assessment, and the use of the State data system and online instructional toolkit
- Provide training to all 58 executive officers on the new evaluation systems for teachers and principals and the Common Core standards and assessments
- Provide an additional principals' academy (in partnership with IHE) for principals in the 200 schools in school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring
- Deliver targeted professional development for teachers in low-achieving schools through the Breakthrough Center

## **Section E: Low-Achieving Schools**

### ***Legal Authority***

Maryland describes the legal authority it has to intervene in low-achieving schools and districts.

### ***Turning Around the Lowest Achieving Schools***

Maryland identifies its persistently lowest-achieving schools according to a strict definition (bottom 5%). Sixteen schools and their 20 feeder schools have been identified

MSDE will use its Breakthrough Center to drive turnaround in these schools with five key strategies:

- Ensure robust needs assessments
- Build pipelines for effective teachers and principals
- Create Breakthrough networks to help build capacity
- Use technology as an accelerator
- Improve school culture, climate, and school supports

## **Section F: General**

### ***Making Funding a Priority***

Maryland describes its funding, including the Bridge to Excellence funding and the continued funding of public schools in spite of severe economic downturns in the economy. This description also includes the additional funding provided to high-need LEAs and high-poverty schools.

### ***Charter Schools and Other Innovative Schools***

Maryland describes the conditions that allow for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools. It provides details on the charter school law and the number of charter schools in operation across the State. This section also shares information on accountability for charter schools and the history of charter schools in Maryland. There are 42 charter schools operating in Maryland with 4 more scheduled to open during 2010. Maryland will be working with LEAs to:

- Assist with converting schools in Restructuring to charter schools

- Develop a framework for charter schools to conduct self-assessments
- Strengthen the charter school authorizing process

Maryland must also describe the laws, regulations, and policies that create conditions for education reform.

## **Competitive and Invitational Priorities**

### ***STEM***

Maryland describes its many STEM initiatives, including the STEM employment overview in the State and the Governor's STEM Task Force, with particular attention to the STEM Innovation Network partnership with MBRT. STEM activities are integrated in all sections of the application.

### ***Early Learning Outcomes***

In this priority, the State describes work underway in the area of early childhood education. Maryland describes its early access to Pre-kindergarten for economically disadvantaged youth, Judy Center partnerships, the Maryland Model for School Readiness, accreditation standards, mental health consultation program, and full-day kindergarten for all children.

### ***Expansion of Statewide Longitudinal Data System***

In this priority, Maryland is proposing a centralized P-20 transcript system as the next step in advancing its LDS. A description of the LDS is found in Section C.

### ***P-20***

In this priority, Maryland describes its robust P-20 system, including the Governor's P-20 Council and a history of the work of that Council. This section also describes the various Task Force reports that have emanated from the Council and the Governor's Workforce Investment Board.

### ***School-level Conditions for Reform***

This section describes the number of tools and innovations that LEAs have at their disposal to help drive reform (e.g., financial incentives, extended day, distributed decision-making, tutoring and mentoring, and 1003(g) grants).