



Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

200 West Baltimore Street • Baltimore, MD 21201 • 410-767-0100 • 410-333-6442 TTY/TDD • MarylandPublicSchools.org

TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools
DATE: May 24-25, 2011
SUBJECT: Race to the Top Strategic Communication Framework

PURPOSE

To provide Board members with information about the Department's Race to the Top (RTTT) Strategic Communication Framework and its strategies for stakeholder outreach and engagement.

BACKGROUND

RTTT is a \$4.35 billion competitive federal grant program designed to encourage and reward states that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform. The unprecedented program is aimed at boosting student achievement, reducing gaps in achievement among student subgroups, turning around struggling schools, and improving the teaching profession. RTTT is part of the Federal Government's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act program.

On August 24, 2010, Maryland was awarded one of the coveted RTTT grants in the amount of \$250 million over four years. With this grant, the State's objective is to move from national leader to world-class status. Maryland's goal is to continue implementing strategic reforms that will allow the State's students to not only compete with their peers across the nation but compete globally as well.

Maryland's RTTT program specifically focuses on the following areas of reform:

Higher Standards

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

Robust Data

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

Effective Educators

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

Strategic Help for Struggling Schools

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

STEM Education

Increasing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) resources for elementary through high school students

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maryland's Race to the Top program will touch many areas of the State's education system and affect many people. It is for these reasons that developing a comprehensive communication framework is vital.

In order to keep all RTTT stakeholders informed and engaged through the four-year RTTT grant, the Department has drafted a comprehensive RTTT Strategic Communication Framework. The Framework serves as a guide for the communication and outreach efforts throughout the duration of the project. It is a living and working document and is updated periodically as audience needs change.

The Strategic Communication Framework defines and describes goals and methods for communicating with stakeholder and includes two appendices (see attached documents):

The RTTT Communication Tools (Appendix 1)

This document catalogues the outreach tools that will be used to communicate with various audiences.

The RTTT Communication Project Activities (Appendix 2)

The Communication Project Activities utilizes Microsoft Project software to maintain a schedule of communication tasks and milestones, which the Department will use to identify and track the progress of its communication work.

MSDE's goals in communicating about the RTTT program are to inform and engage all stakeholders in the implementation, progress, and outcomes of the State's RTTT program.

In order for these reforms to take root in the day-to-day operations in Maryland's Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, and classrooms, all stakeholders must understand and embrace them. This will require the State to provide stakeholders with timely, accurate information and engage stakeholders as these reforms are developed, implemented, and take root in the classroom.

To reach these goals, MSDE will employ a variety of communication tools and strategies. To inform stakeholders, MSDE will use approaches such as media outreach, various publications, social media, videos, and website updates. To engage stakeholders, MSDE will employ outreach strategies such as meetings with stakeholders, events, educator outreach programs, presentations, webinars, and other such engagement activities.

MSDE hopes to achieve several outcomes from the implementation of its Communication Framework. One desired outcome is to give all stakeholders access to timely and accurate information about the program. MSDE will also strive to gain feedback and insight from stakeholders through its engagement outreach. Additionally, MSDE will work to create an archive of high-quality communication tools and products and garner positive media attention for RTTT.

ACTION:

For information only.

NSG:sks