

**PLAN FOR IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, AND
SCHOOL, COLLEGE, AND CAREER READINESS
BY 25% IN MARYLAND BY END 2015**

Lead Agency: Maryland State Department of Education

March 2010

Plan for Improving Student Achievement, and School, College, and Career Readiness by 25% in Maryland by End 2015

Goal II

The Governor's overall strategic goal is to improve student achievement and school, college, and career readiness in Maryland by 25 percent by 2015.

Background

In 2010, *Education Week* ranked Maryland's public school system as first in the nation among all 50 states for the second consecutive year. This recognition serves as a tribute to the students, teachers, and parents who, in response to the increased investments made by all Marylanders, continue to achieve at unprecedented levels. Maintaining this first-in-the-nation education ranking despite the difficult economic challenges facing our state and country requires renewed and focused commitment on the part of the state, each education segment, and our private and nonprofit partners.

In February 2009, Governor O'Malley outlined an education vision that identified seven strategies that he believes Maryland must pursue to make further improvements to our public schools and to better prepare Maryland students for competition in the global economy. The Governor believes that pursuit of these strategies will help Maryland not only maintain our first-in-the-nation ranking but also elevate our public schools to among the world's best. This education policy framework aligns well with the extensive education reform underway at federal level. President Obama has outlined the five pillars of education reform that underpin the education provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA): (1) Early Childhood Education, (2) Standards and Testing, (3) Teacher Quality, (4) Innovation, and (5) Higher Education.

In addition to providing a framework for pursuit of education reform, the Governor's seven education strategies provide the roadmap for attaining his overall education goal – improving student achievement and readiness by 25 percent by 2015 – within the Governor's Delivery Unit structure.

The Governor's seven education strategies are as follows:

- I. Maximize ARRA Funding Opportunities
- II. Raise Standards and Adopt Internationally Benchmarked Assessments to Better Prepare Maryland Students for College and Careers in the Era of Global Competition
- III. Develop a Comprehensive Statewide Longitudinal Data System
- IV. Close the "Readiness Gap" and Improve Transitions into School, Higher Education, and the Workforce
- V. Enhance Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Education
- VI. Expand Career and Technology Education (CTE)
- VII. Provide Teacher and Principal Support

STRATEGY I: MAXIMIZE ARRA FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), provides a total of \$98.2 billion in funding for education programs, creating an unprecedented opportunity for States and school systems to make significant changes to strengthen and improve all levels of education. All parts of our education system must work together to secure Maryland's top-ranked public schools, make continued progress with the funds made available under ARRA, and to position the State to compete for discretionary grant funding.

Goal: Maximize the use of ARRA funds that have been awarded to the State.

Maryland received **\$589 million** in Phase I of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), a program designed to help stabilize state and local government budgets in order to minimize and

avoid reductions in funding for education and other essential public services. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) is awarding SFSF funds in two phases. The application for Phase I of the SFSF allocation required Maryland to provide: (1) assurances that the state is committed to advancing education reform in four specific areas; (2) baseline data that demonstrates the state's current status in each of the four education reform areas; and (3) a description of how the state intends to use its stabilization allocation.

Sub-goal: Work with Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to ensure that the funds are used in a manner consistent with the four assurances.

In the application for Phase I funding, Maryland assured that it will take actions to: (a) increase teacher effectiveness and address inequities in the distribution of highly qualified teachers; (b) establish and use pre-K-through-college and career data systems to track progress and foster continuous improvement; (c) make progress toward rigorous college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments; and (d) support targeted, intensive support and effective interventions to turn around schools identified for corrective action and restructuring.

Goal: Secure competitive grant funding available through ARRA.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has identified four areas of education reform that will be the primary criteria for evaluation in awarding competitive grants to states: (1) Standards, Assessments and College and Career Readiness; (2) Teacher Quality/Effectiveness; (3) Turning Around Low-Performing Schools; and (4) Longitudinal Data Systems.

The \$56 billion State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) contains \$4.3 billion in discretionary "**Race to the Top**" funds to be awarded to those states who demonstrate progress in the four areas of reform outlined above. Governor O'Malley convened a Race to the Top Executive Steering Committee to guide the development of Maryland's Race to the Top proposal. The Steering Committee is dedicated to pursuing a reform agenda that will secure the continued long-term success and achievement of Maryland's Public Schools in a manner that embraces input from all of the key stakeholders. The Steering Committee includes representatives from business, public and private higher education institutions, parents, teachers, administrators, local superintendents, local boards of education, the State Board of Education, the State

Department of Education, and the Governor's Office. Maryland is applying for Race to the Top funding in Phase II. Phase II applications are due in June 2010 with Phase II awards made in the fall of 2010.

In addition to the "Race to the Top," ARRA also contains several other discretionary grant opportunities for which Maryland is eligible to apply. There is \$100 million in "Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants" to help states improve teacher preparation and licensing; \$350 million has been set aside for the creation of internationally benchmarked assessments to accompany the development of the Common Core of Standards; and \$250 million in "P-16 Data Alignment" grants will be awarded for the development of statewide educational data systems that include postsecondary and workforce information.



STRATEGY II: RAISE STANDARDS AND ADOPT INTERNATIONALLY BENCHMARKED ASSESSMENTS TO BETTER PREPARE MARYLAND STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREERS IN AN ERA OF GLOBAL COMPETITION

To meet the demands of the 21st global economy, Maryland must be prepared to compete with from around the world. USDE's and assessments reform agenda states to take the necessary steps to quality of their academic including: (1) collaborating with and organizations to enhance the reliability of state academic (2) utilizing multiple measures of achievement from multiple charting student progress over evaluating student academic using comprehensive instruments, performance and technology-based



century students students standards calls upon enhance the assessments, other states validity and assessments; academic sources; (3) time; and (4) achievement such as assessments.

Goal: Develop and adopt college and career ready “Core Standards” so that all Maryland public school high school graduates obtain a college- and career-ready diploma by 2012.

Forty-nine states and territories have joined the Common Core Standards Initiative. The Initiative is focused on developing a common core of standards that are internationally benchmarked, aligned with the expectations of employers and post-secondary education institutions, and inclusive of the higher order skills necessary to prepare our students for global competition. The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) have created an expert validation committee to provide an independent review of the common core state standards, as well as grade-by-grade standards.

If the State Board of Education determines the Common Core of Standards to be at least as rigorous as current standards, the State will develop and pursue adoption of revisions to the State Curriculum based upon the Common Core.

Additionally, the Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force has been charged with examining current Maryland policies and practices related to the alignment of secondary and postsecondary expectations, standards, and student learning outcomes, with particular attention to be paid to reading, writing, and mathematics. The task force was to identify gaps between standards for high school exit and for entrance to college, identify national benchmark educational achievement standards, and make recommendations for appropriate governing boards aimed at ensuring a smooth transition for students moving from 12th grade to the first year of college. The Governor also asked that the task force move beyond issues of preparation to look more broadly at strategies for students to be successful in college. The task force will submit its report to the Governor at the May meeting of the P-20 Leadership Council.

Goal: Begin testing students on core standards using internationally benchmarked assessments.

In an era of globalization, Maryland students are competing not just with students from New Jersey and New Mexico, but students in New Dehli and New Zealand. International benchmarking – the benchmarking and comparison of student achievement across different countries – is critical to ensuring that we are providing a world-class education and 21st Century skills. Secretary Duncan has indicated that the best path to international benchmarking is the new assessment that will be developed as part of the Common Core Initiative described above. Maryland is poised to use the internationally benchmarked assessments that are to be developed as part of the Common Core Standards Initiative. Adoption of those assessments in Maryland is contingent on the progress of the multistate effort to develop the Common Core Standards and assessments.



STRATEGY III: BUILD A COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM

State longitudinal data systems allow for low-cost, efficient production and transfer of student electronic transcripts. Maryland must have a single, comprehensive, longitudinal data system that connects student data as students move from elementary school, through secondary education, and finally into higher education and the workforce. The America Competes Act contains a list of twelve (12) essential elements that must be a part of any state data system for the USDE to consider it a robust and effective system. Maryland is using the 12 elements as a framework to organize the priorities for the development of the statewide longitudinal data system.

Goal: Develop and implement the Maryland Longitudinal Data System to track the progress of students from pre-kindergarten to higher education and into the workforce.

The data system should be designed to build upon existing organizational structures and current technological capabilities while adding additional capabilities that address the 12 essential elements.

Sub-goal: Create the Maryland Longitudinal Data Center.

The Maryland Longitudinal Data Center is a P-20 LDS Center that will house data collected from state agencies (MHEC, MSDE, and DLLR). An RFP process will be used to determine the specific location and affiliation of this center.

Sub-goal: Incorporate data exchange with the Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) and other research institutions to track graduate participation in higher education, apprenticeship, and employment.

Sub-goal: Incorporate the capacity to link student outcomes to classrooms.

MSDE plans to make enhancements to its Educator Information System (EIS) to further improve identification and tracking of highly qualified teachers, as well as provide public access to these data. Moving forward, the development of a longitudinal data system and a unique teacher identification number, coupled with the EIS, will offer enhanced capability to identify teacher movement and employment patterns, promising teacher preparation programs, effective professional development, and other elements that can help identify distribution trends and factors.

STRATEGY IV: CLOSE THE “READINESS GAP” AND IMPROVE TRANSITIONS INTO SCHOOL, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND THE WORKFORCE



Maryland has a history of strong collaboration between the K-12 and higher education segments regarding the alignment of the curricula for mathematics and English composition. Nevertheless, gaps remain. Governor O’Malley and the P-20 Council have focused on closing the “college readiness gap,” by working to provide our high school students with the skills they need to succeed in higher education and to access jobs in high demand throughout the State.

Additionally, early childhood initiatives in Maryland provide early learning opportunities to children so that they enter kindergarten and elementary school “fully ready.”

Research indicates that the first years in a child's life are the foundation for school success, so we must continue to improve early learning programs and extend access to all Maryland children.

Goal: Increase Elementary and Secondary School Readiness through Early Learning Programs by increasing the number of children participating in Pre-K programs by 12 percent and increasing the number of children entering kindergarten as “fully ready” to 74 percent by 2010.

The Maryland Model for School Readiness defines school readiness as the state of early development that enables an individual child to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences. As a result of family nurturing and interactions with others, a young child in this stage has reached certain levels of social and emotional development, cognition, language development, and motor development. School readiness acknowledges individual approaches to learning as well as the unique experiences and backgrounds of each child. Research on how and when children learn demonstrates that children begin learning well before kindergarten; thus, we must provide our children with early care and learning opportunities.

Sub-goal: Improve workforce qualifications in early childhood programs by increasing the number of child care teachers at levels 5 or 6 of the Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program by 15 percent by December 2010.

The Maryland Child Care Credential Program recognizes child care providers who go beyond the requirements of State licensing and registration regulations. There are six credential levels and four administrator levels, each one recognizing a child care provider's attainment with respect to a specified number of training hours, years of experience, and professional activities related to quality child care. Participating providers complete training in topic areas to develop the knowledge and skills they need to provide the highest quality care for the children and families they serve. Though the Maryland Child Care Credential Program is voluntary, all regulated family child care providers and child care center staff are eligible and encouraged to participate.

Sub-goal: Expand the number of nationally or state-accredited child care programs by 20 percent to increase enrollment options for low-income families by December 2010.

A 20 percent increase will result in approximately 160 additional programs.

Goal: Fully implement Maryland's career development standards and provide every Maryland student with a career path that is reviewed on an annual basis.

Maryland's Career Development Framework is designed to provide information to individuals, Pre-K through adult, about choices for their education and career paths. The framework, driven by standards from the National Career Development Guidelines, provides a developmental process for schools to give students an understanding of their individual traits, career aspirations, motives, and learning styles and imparts life-long skill sets

Goal: Double the number of Maryland Scholars from 25,000 to 50,000 by 2011.

The Maryland Scholars Program, a project of the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT), is designed to increase the number of students who complete rigorous coursework and are well-prepared to succeed in college and in the workplace. These students complete coursework that exceeds State requirements and must maintain a specific grade point average. The program uses business volunteers in the classroom setting to communicate to students the connection between achievement in school and success in life. This connection is reinforced throughout middle school and high school through teachers, counselors, parents, and the program website: www.bewhاتيwanttobe.com.

Goal: Continue to annually increase the number of students taking Advanced Placement (AP) exams and the number of exams with scores of 3 or higher.

With more than 35 courses and exams across multiple subject areas, participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses offer secondary students the opportunity to earn college credit, stand out in the college admissions process, gain skills for

college, and broaden intellectual horizons. Research indicates that students who do well on the tests are more likely to graduate with a bachelor's degree in four years. For the second consecutive year, Maryland has led the nation in both the percentage of students taking the exam and the percentage scoring at the college mastery levels (scores 3-5). Maryland students continue to outpace students in other parts of the nation on AP assessments.

In 2009, nearly 25 percent of Maryland's graduating class had achieved an AP Exam score of 3 or higher during their high school years – the highest percentage of any state in the nation and well above the national rate of 15.9 percent. The percent of high school graduates scoring 3 or higher in Maryland grew from 19.4 percent in 2004 to 24.8 percent in 2009, an increase of 5.4 percent. In the class of 2009, 40 percent of Maryland's students took at least one AP Exam during their high school careers – compared to the national rate of 26.5 percent.

In order to maintain progress in AP participation and performance, we urge local school systems to increase the number of pre-AP and AP offerings in every school. Inclusive PSAT/NMSQT testing for grades 10 and 11 will increase the pool of students likely to be successful in AP courses, while simultaneously preparing students for the SAT. Because offering more AP courses will require more qualified teachers, this expansion will necessitate an expansion of AP teacher training and professional development programs, including the use of online training courses.



Goal: Develop and implement a comprehensive financial literacy curriculum for Maryland public schools.

Research indicates that the average recent high school graduate lacks basic skills necessary to manage his or her personal finances. The recent financial crisis has demonstrated that every American needs a basic financial education. This should happen at the K-12 level so that by the time students enter college or the workforce they have sufficient knowledge to make financial decisions and establish good financial management habits. *The Task Force to Study How to Improve Financial Literacy in the State* is examining the issue in Maryland and has released a preliminary report listing several recommendations. The final report

of the Task Force is complete and will be presented to the Governor and the General Assembly shortly.

Sub-goal: Create a statewide clearinghouse of public-private partnerships (including financial institutions and nonprofit coalitions) and model curricula relating to financial literacy education.

Goal: Increase the number of associate and bachelor's degrees awarded by colleges and universities in Maryland by 6,500 degrees, or 17 percent, by 2015.

For many years, education policy and reform agendas have focused on increasing access to college with far less attention paid to the numbers of students who actually complete their degree programs and graduate. According to recent figures released by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, "college graduates with a four-year degree can expect to earn roughly \$17,000 more per year than a similarly-aged worker who has only a high school diploma."

Where the United States once led the world in percentage of residents who have completed postsecondary education, it now ranks tenth. In a recent speech to Congress, President Obama emphasized how low graduation rates threaten our nation's competitiveness. He challenged colleges and universities to improve, promising that, "by 2020 America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world."

Sub-goal: Narrow the gap in attainment rates between underrepresented minority groups and others by 50 percent by 2015.

Goal: Increase the high school graduation rate (4-year cohort) by 3 percent by 2012.

Nearly 60,000 students graduated in the Class of 2009, while the dropout rate for the senior class fell to 2.6 percent. Additionally, the 2008-2009 senior class was the first one for whom passing the High School Assessments (HSAs) was a graduation requirement.

STRATEGY V: ENHANCE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH (STEM) EDUCATION



The strength of Maryland’s education and research programs in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines is critical to sustaining and enhancing the State’s status as a leader in the knowledge-based, innovation economy. Recognizing the importance of STEM education and research for Maryland’s future, Governor O’Malley created a STEM Task Force under the umbrella of the P-20 Leadership Council. The Task Force brought together a broad range of education and business representatives to analyze the State’s STEM assets and needs, to develop a plan to better prepare Maryland learners to compete in the emerging economy, and to expand efforts to build a highly skilled workforce in the State. The STEM Task Force presented its final report to the Governor in August 2009. The goals outlined below reflect key recommendations from that report.

Goal: Create a comprehensive Maryland STEM Innovation Network, with both a strong physical and virtual statewide presence, to promote the delivery of high quality STEM education at all levels throughout the State.

Routine communication between employers, educators at the K-12 and post secondary levels, and other STEM innovators is necessary to promote the development of Maryland’s STEM workforce. The most effective way to institutionalize this communication is by creating “communities of practice” that can interact regularly through events, physical activities, and virtual media.

Goal: Triple the number of teachers prepared in Maryland for high-need STEM disciplines, increase their five-year retention rate from an estimated 50 percent to 75 percent, and enhance the basic STEM skills of more generalist teachers, especially those in elementary and early childhood classrooms.

Sub-goal: Implement “STEM-Teach,” the Maryland version of the UTeach Program developed at the University of Texas.

The UTEACH program has doubled the number of qualified STEM teachers graduating from Texas institutions by developing higher education partnerships between colleges/programs of natural science and education. USM has proposed the “STEM-Teach” program to recruit STEM majors into teaching and to provide professional development for teachers. Programs will involve colleges of mathematics, engineering, and sciences in collaboration with colleges of education. Collaboration between MSDE and LEAs providing additional professional development opportunities for STEM teachers will also assist in increasing retention rates.

Goal: Increase the number of STEM college graduates by 40 percent to 6,160 by 2015.

For the approximately 6,000 STEM job openings in Maryland each year, only about 4,000 students are graduating with STEM degrees from the State’s institutions of higher education. The State needs to build a pipeline of STEM education that begins in the early grades, with elementary and middle school teachers who are trained in high quality teacher preparation programs that integrate STEM into the curriculum. By extending this pipeline into the State’s highly regarded public and private two- and four-year colleges and universities, the State can provide Marylanders with the training necessary to fill the State’s existing and emerging high-tech jobs.

Sub-goal: Expand STEM programs at Maryland’s two- and four-year colleges and universities with the goal of increasing STEM enrollment by 5,000 students per year.

This growth should focus on high-demand disciplines, including engineering, information technology, bioscience, and environmental sciences.

Sub-goal: Expand statewide associate degree programs to include high-demand fields including engineering, life sciences, and information technology.



Goal: Institute public-private partnerships to support STEM internships, co-op, or lab experiences for high school and college students to pave the way for successful transitions to the workplace.

The participation of high school or undergraduate students in professional internships or in research has immediate and demonstrable benefits. For students, it provides work experience to complement theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom, provides opportunities to apply that knowledge in the context of daily work in the field, and in some cases permits the student to begin establishing credentials for work in specialized positions. For the employer, these partnerships provide an opportunity to meet and assess

prospective employees and to share information on current industry practices with higher education institutions. MSDE should coordinate with higher education institutions, the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR) and the Maryland Business Round Table (MBRT) to institute or expand these partnerships.

Goal: Expand Enrollment in Project Lead the Way by 10 percent by 2010.

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is a national, not-for-profit educational program that partners with schools to provide middle and high school students with rigorous science and pre-engineering coursework, based in real-world experience. We need to expand enrollment in PLTW courses to prepare a larger and more diverse group of students to be successful in science, engineering, and engineering technology.

**STRATEGY VI:
EXPAND CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION (CTE)**

Expanded access to Career and Technology Education (CTE) will help Marylanders acquire the skills they need to prepare them for jobs in the State's high-demand industries like bioscience and technology. In health care alone, Maryland is facing a shortage of 10,000 nurses by 2016. At the same time, more than 7,400 of the projected positions in the health care sector could be filled by Marylanders with an Associates Degree – or in many cases a high school diploma – if they have the necessary specialized skills and training. And as we make the largest per-capita investment in U.S. history in our biosciences sector, our industry partners tell us of a need for more skilled workers in these fields

Goal: Launch a marketing program to promote CTE to students and parents.

An effective CTE marketing campaign would help distinguish today's CTE programs from the vocational education programs of the past that were not always academically rigorous. Maryland's current CTE programs are comprehensive educational tracks designed to advance the academic, career, and technical skills of participating students.

Goal: Increase the number of CTE graduates prepared for college *and* careers by 10 percent by 2015.

The students who complete a CTE program of study and meet the course requirements for University of Maryland admission are referred to as "dual completers."

Goal: Fully implement Maryland's 48 CTE Programs of Study, so that preparation programs for a full complement of careers is offered in each of the 24 local school systems. Update and realign these programs as necessary to reflect changes in high demand careers as identified by the Governor's Workforce Investment Board.

Maryland leads the nation in the redesign of CTE programs required by the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006. CTE programs of study include at least one foundation course, two or more specialty courses, and a capstone course that provides workplace experiences. The curriculum of each program is aligned to industry standards, and instruction enhances academic skill and requires use of applied knowledge. Because of the high quality assessments, successful students receive an industry certification or college credit, or both. This systemic expansion of CTE programs of study will provide for consistent instruction across the state, efficient involvement of industry partners, and targeted, cost effective professional development for teachers.



Sub-Goal: Secure at least one affiliate partner for each of the Maryland CTE Programs of Study to provide ongoing professional development by 2012.

Maryland is establishing new state-wide postsecondary and industry partnerships aligned to each Maryland CTE Program of Study. Affiliate partners will take a lead role in offering state-wide professional development, updating program curriculum, articulating college credit, and identify options for industry certification.

Goal: Assess every CTE school and classroom and prioritize funding to bring equipment and technology to the level of industry standards by 2012.

CTE programs of study are resource intensive. Equipment, software, and instructional materials must be continuously upgraded to allow teachers to provide students with current and relevant learning experiences.

Goal: Increase the number of CTE graduates earning industry certifications and/or licenses related to their program of study.

Sub-goal: Develop a public-private funding system for payment of CTE industry exam and credentialing fees.

Leveraging private funds to pay testing fees for CTE students who are near the completion of their program would facilitate student access to the technical assessments that lead to industry certification or licensure. In 2009, an estimated 29 percent of CTE graduates met this goal. A public/private funding system is one of many strategies that may contribute to achieving this goal.

Goal: Increase the number of statewide articulation agreements for Maryland CTE Programs of Study to allow CTE students to move into apprenticeships and early college programs. Increase the number of students applying for and receiving articulated credit.

Early access to postsecondary education provides substantial benefits school students and their families, for those who may not have initially college. New research reveals that enrollment programs can help complete college faster and improve performance, especially when the standards are available to high school programs. In 2009, five of the forty-Programs of Study had state-wide agreements in place for that year's class. Governor O'Malley aims to statewide articulation agreement for Program of Study so that every CTE seamless path to postsecondary and/or apprenticeships with advanced standing.



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Sub-goal: Establish common criteria for weighted and honors CTE courses.

Sub-goal: When the longitudinal data system is fully operational, report the number of Maryland CTE graduates accessing early college credit.

Goal: Promote the hiring of industry-certified adjunct faculty as CTE teachers by developing a statewide recruitment and a support system for CTE teachers who come to the teaching profession from business and industry.

To be a highly effective as a teacher in Maryland's CTE Programs of Study, a teacher requires not only pedagogical knowledge, but also specialized skill and content knowledge for the specific program. Because the specialized skill and content knowledge needed in the classroom is also needed by industry, schools seeking highly effective CTE teachers

often find themselves in competition with business/industry for the same candidates. Maryland should expand the number of highly skilled CTE teachers by developing a focused statewide system to recruit and support new teachers who come from business and industry.

STRATEGY VII: PROVIDE TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL SUPPORT TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN QUALIFIED AND EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS



Academic research suggests that teaching and leadership are the two most important school-based factors influencing student achievement. We know that effective teachers and principals have high expectations for all students, contribute to positive academic outcomes for students, differentiate instruction as needed, monitor student progress, use multiple strategies and resources based on the information and data that they gather about their students, and collaborate to promote student success. Therefore, investing in and supporting teachers and principals will result in an equally effective investment in our students. Recognizing this, Governor O'Malley has emphasized commitment to improving the teaching and learning environment in Maryland by investing in and supporting teachers and principals.

Goal: Increase the percentage of highly qualified and effective teachers in core academic subjects by 3 percent each year.

Maryland has made steady and consistent progress in reducing the number of classes not taught by a highly qualified teacher. In 2009, 88.5 percent of core academic classes were taught by a highly qualified teacher. The percentage of highly qualified teachers in core academic subjects ranges from 69 percent in Baltimore City Public Schools to 98.4 percent in Allegany County. To continue the steady and consistent progress in this area, we are working with school systems to promote strategies to attract and retain highly qualified teachers.

Sub-goal: Provide highly qualified and effective teachers to that poor and minority students at the same rate as their more economically advantaged peers.

Equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers continues to be an essential component of Maryland's Highly Qualified Teacher Plan. MSDE will continue to provide technical assistance to the two local school systems which contain more than 90 percent of the state's first quartile of high-poverty elementary classes and more than 80 percent of the state's first quartile of the high-poverty secondary classes.

Goal: Complete the TELL Maryland Statewide Educators' Survey Final Report.

In March 2009, more than 43,400 educators from across the State participated in the first TELL Maryland survey. Data is now available for more than 1,000 schools. This data provides critical information for making decisions at the school and district level to improve Maryland schools. By hearing directly from educators who intimately understand teaching conditions, the state has the opportunity to make evidence-based decisions to establish policies and practices that make all schools great places to work and learn. The survey results are now being released to coalition partners prior to the official public release online. The final report is scheduled for public release in early 2010. Governor O'Malley has indicated that Maryland should conduct the statewide educator's survey every two years. State education leaders will soon collaborate with the New Teacher Center to evaluate and improve the survey instrument prior to the second survey administration in 2011.

Goal: Expand strategies to recruit and retain teachers and principals, including alternative training and placement programs.

Sub-goal: Develop a web portal dedicated to teaching and teacher recruitment.

A single web portal containing employment opportunities for teachers across the state would assist in recruiting new teachers to Maryland schools. In addition, a Maryland Digital Network could build capacity and enhance communications across all education stakeholders in the state. The Digital Network would provide the backbone for communication and dissemination, linking business, K-12 and higher education to develop college and career-ready diploma standards; establish sustainable professional communities of faculties and teachers to develop ideas and share best practices; and disseminate the latest research on teacher recruitment, retention, professional development and other issues.

Sub-goal: Develop and implement alternative pathways and retraining programs to bring experienced administrators from other fields to principal positions.

These retraining programs would increase the pool of qualified leaders by bringing seasoned administrators into the school system. Examples include programs such as "Officers to Principals" or "CEOs to Principals."

Sub-goal: Promote successful models for the reorganization of the responsibilities of school leadership teams to include a "building manager" position.



If a school's leadership team includes a building manager who is responsible for non-instructional, day-to-day management, the principal has more time to focus on the most critical aspect of the job, that of instructional leader. Talbot County Public Schools – where a building manager position has been integrated in the schools using existing resources – can serve as a potential model for other districts.

Sub-goal: Expand stipends offered for teachers in high needs schools.

The Quality Teacher Incentive Act (QTIA) offers stipends to teachers holding Advanced

Professional certification (teachers with advanced degrees and experience) who teach in comprehensive needs schools. This serves as an incentive to highly qualified teachers to work in schools where their skills are most needed.

Goal: Expand mentoring and professional development opportunities for teachers and principals by 10 percent.

Sub-goal: Launch an annual statewide Principals' Academy available to all principals based on the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework. Coordinate with Johns Hopkins School of Education, New Leaders for New Schools, and other partners to implement multiple academies to scale up this capacity-building initiative.

The Principals' Academy will focus on the MSDE Framework outcomes and will provide the opportunity for all principals to interact in both formal and informal venues with state and national experts in the field of instructional leadership. Attendees will also be able to network with other principals in regional and topic-specific forums as well as update their knowledge and skills.

Sub-goal: Expand mentoring programs for principals, assistant principals, and aspiring principals at state, district, and school levels.

In a manner that is consistent with its comprehensive professional development plan for principals, there should be a mentoring program in each district for each newly assigned principal and assistant principal. Schools should also provide opportunities for aspiring principals to engage in instructional leadership in order to prepare them for principalship. Each district should be encouraged to develop such programs so that selected teachers can devote full time and energy to becoming a school leader.

Sub-goal: Expand professional development opportunities by matching teachers with workplace professionals who can share expertise.

Continuous, embedded, standards-based professional development for teachers includes interaction with industry practitioners. To that end, coordination with the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education and corporate partners to match teachers with workplace professionals, particularly in the STEM fields, is essential.

Sub-goal: Expand training for district leaders, principals, and school improvement committee chairs to help them design effective school-based professional development for teachers.

Training, with ongoing electronic learning community support, will provide the technical assistance necessary to embed the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards and six components of the planning framework in all Maryland schools' professional development programs.

Sub-goal: Improve induction opportunities for new teachers.

The acculturation and transition process for new teachers is often difficult. New teachers need substantial support and should not be left isolated in their new schools with the expectation that they will acclimate themselves to their new position and surroundings. Attrition rates among new teachers are five times higher than those among more experienced teachers. Improved induction programs would provide new teachers with additional models and tools for beginning their teaching careers. Furthermore, mentors and support groups would guide new teachers through curriculum planning and transition process. Special attention should be given to teachers at the beginning of their career in an effort to link their performance to high standards.

CHALLENGES

Funding. Even during these tough economic times, the O'Malley-Brown Administration has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to preserve our first-in-the-nation education system and has continued to invest in our skilled workforce. With the support of the General Assembly, Governor O'Malley froze tuition at public universities for in-state undergraduates for four years in order to make college more affordable for Maryland students. Despite tremendous budget reductions in recent fiscal years, the Governor has preserved K-12 education funding. Even with this level of commitment to education, there is no new State funding to launch new or expanded programs at this time. Local education agencies are also facing strained budget conditions and, in some cases, substantial budgetary shortfalls. While some of the activities described in this plan may be funded through ARRA or through reallocation of existing resources, those that require additional resources may be more difficult to achieve in the short-term.

Local Authority. Governor O'Malley recognizes Maryland's historical commitment to local authority and discretion in the administration of public education. Respecting the role of local education authorities makes the implementation of any comprehensive, statewide reform, including every element of this plan that requires the direct action of local districts or individual schools, more challenging. Fortunately, Maryland also has a long history of successful collaboration between the State and local education agencies. The Governor is committed to continuing collaboration with all education segments to improve our education system for the benefit of all Marylanders.

Interagency Coordination. Helping Marylanders achieve in our education system requires strong commitment from multiple agencies and organizations and coordination of their efforts. This plan is meant to serve as an important guidepost to State agencies and our partners in the education, private, and nonprofit sectors. It is around this guidepost that we will coordinate our efforts.