Issue Papers

2011 Legislative Session

Education

Maryland Receives $250 Million in Federal Race to the Top Funds

Maryland is 1 of 12 states to receive a Race to the Top grant from the federal government. The grant will be used to support State education reforms focused on improving college and career readiness, primarily through curriculum standards and assessments, greater linkage and use of data from prekindergarten into the workforce (P-20), and improved instruction and school leadership. The Maryland State Department of Education will use half of the $250 million grant to implement reforms, with the other half allocated to 22 school systems that agreed to participate in the grant.

Education Reforms to Be Implemented with Race to the Top Funds

On August 24, 2010, Maryland was awarded a federal Race to the Top (RTTT) grant in the amount of $250 million over four years. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will receive $125 million to support school reform, and the 22 participating local school systems will collectively receive $125 million distributed over four years. Maryland received the full amount of funds requested in its application and is 1 of only 12 states and the District of Columbia to receive RTTT funding. RTTT is a competitive grant program for states to improve education and was approved as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

MSDE will use its $125 million from the RTTT fund to implement 54 projects specified in the State's RTTT application as shown in **Exhibit 1**. Maryland's primary RTTT reforms are to (1) revise the PreK-12 Maryland State Curriculum, assessments, and accountability system based on the Common Core Standards to assure that all graduates are college- and career-ready; (2) build a statewide technology infrastructure that links all data elements with analytic and instructional tools to monitor and promote student achievement; (3) redesign the model for preparation, development, retention, and evaluation of teachers and principals; and (4) fully implement the innovative Breakthrough Center approach for transforming low-performing schools and districts.

$17.8 Million for the Development of Standards and Assessments

The RTTT grant provides a total of $15.7 million for two projects associated with developing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The National Governors Association in association with many nonprofit education policy centers established the CCSS Initiative to develop college- and career-ready standards for K-12 English, language arts, and math. The CCSS are intended to replace the current state-by-state standards and serve as a basis for common assessments that will replace the Maryland State Assessments and the High School Assessments. The State Board of Education adopted the Common Core Standards in June 2010, and in the summer of 2010, MSDE and representatives from local school systems and higher

education institutions used an online tool to determine the alignment of Maryland's State Curriculum with the CCSS. A State curriculum aligned with the CCSS will be presented to the State Board of Education in June 2011 for adoption. Although this is a state-led national effort, a national assessment will not be developed. However, states are pooling resources and expertise to develop assessments based on the Common Core Standards. It is expected that the development of the assessments will result in a final product by the 2014-2015 school year.

In addition, $2.1 million will be used for science, technology, and math (STEM) initiatives: $1.8 million to develop STEM modules in world languages, and $0.3 million to develop the curriculum and assessments for two STEM programs.

Exhibit 1
Distribution of State RTTT Grant
($ in Thousands)

Project Type	Projects	Funding	FTE Staff
Program Evaluation and Administration	2	$5,741	2.0
Development of Standards and Assessments	5	17,789	22.0
Data Systems to Support Instruction	20	47,284	13.0
Great Teachers and Leaders	16	40,651	9.5
Turning Around the Lowest-achieving Schools	9	9,075	8.5
Charter Schools	1	3,323	1.0
Statewide Centralized Student Transcript System	1	1,137	0.0
Total	**54**	**$125,000**	**56.0**

FTE: Full-time equivalent
Source: Maryland State Department of Education

$47.3 Million for Data Systems to Support Instruction

The RTTT grant provides a total of $47.3 million for the State to develop its data systems to support instruction, of which $8.7 million will be used to develop the overall technology infrastructure necessary to support the RTTT grant initiatives. Implementation of the Maryland longitudinal data system (MLDS) will receive $15 million, including $10.0 million for four projects that will enhance the MLDS capabilities and train staff to use the data. MLDS was established by Chapter 190 of 2010 to serve as a data warehouse to link P-12, higher education, and workforce data. These MLDS projects will address many of the same needs as a $13.1 million federal grant that Maryland applied for but did not receive. However, the RTTT grant does not cover approximately $1.0 million for MLDS projects administered by the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the Department of Labor, Licensing, and

Regulation. MSDE will use an additional $1.0 million to develop a centralized student transcript system, which will facilitate the linking of P-12 and higher education data.

The CCSS will receive an additional $6.8 million for four projects to develop data systems and provide support for aligning CCSS with the State curriculum. Five projects associated with developing test questions aligned with the CCSS that can be used for adaptive testing will receive a total of $6.6 million. Teachers will be able to access the test bank to produce multiple equivalent paper test forms in a variety of formats. Alternatively, students will be able to take the tests on a school computer. These computer-based tests will be able to adapt to a student's level, thus making the test shorter and more accurate. The computer tests can also be individually paced to accommodate for learning and test taking styles.

Student instructional intervention projects, including the development of online instructional modules, will receive $5.6 million. The development and implementation of a centralized professional development course registration system, which will also track professional development history, will cost $2.6 million. A project linking teachers and principals to STEM professionals will receive $2.0 million from the RTTT grant.

$40.7 Million to Support Great Teachers and Leaders

A total of $40.7 million will go to teacher and principal development, incentive programs designed to retain highly qualified teachers and principals in high-need areas, and the evaluation of teachers and principals. The teacher development projects range from a teacher induction program for new teachers to professional development programs to recruitment programs for shortage areas. The new model educator evaluation system is currently being developed by a group appointed by the Governor and will go into effect during the 2012-2013 school year (see Education Reform Act and Council for Educator Effectiveness of this *Issue Papers – 2011 Legislative Session* for more information).

$9.1 Million for Turning Around the Lowest-achieving Schools

The RTTT grant will provide $9.1 million to support nine projects aimed at turning around the lowest-achieving schools. The largest project is the expansion of the Breakthrough Center, which MSDE established in 2008 to provide intensive technical support to schools that "feed" students into a low-performing middle or high school in a school system (collectively called a Breakthrough Zone). With $4.3 million from the grant, the center will be able to serve an additional 10 low-achieving feeder schools. The remaining $4.7 million will be used to support eight projects, including $1.4 million to build the system's capacity for the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Initiative to address disruptive students and $1.1 million to evaluate and improve student services teams at existing Breakthrough Zone schools.

The State will also use $3.3 million to partner with the two school systems that have the greatest number of low-performing schools (Baltimore City and Prince George's County) and

provide an incentive for these systems to convert two of their schools in restructuring to charter schools and provide incentives for existing charter schools to pilot a new self assessment process aimed at measuring school quality.

Allocation of $125 million to Local School Systems

The 22 participating local school systems will receive a share of the $125 million that is proportionate to their Title I participation as shown in **Exhibit 2**. Local school officials had to endorse the State's RTTT application in order to participate in the grant. Montgomery and Frederick counties chose not to participate in the State's RTTT application; therefore, those two counties will not receive any of the $125 million that will be distributed to the local school systems. However, MSDE reports that the U.S. Department of Education has agreed to allow MSDE to permit those two counties to apply for certain grants that will be supported by MSDE's portion of the grant. The funds allocated to the local school systems will be used to implement the reforms identified in the State's RTTT application and the detailed scopes of work submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on November 22.

Exhibit 2
Allocation of RTTT Funding to Local School Systems
($ in Thousands)

Local School System	Allocation	Local School System	Allocation
Allegany	$1,715	Harford	$2,905
Anne Arundel	6,851	Howard	823
Baltimore City	52,790	Kent	334
Baltimore	17,403	Prince George's	23,572
Calvert	847	Queen Anne's	479
Caroline	780	St. Mary's	1,603
Carroll	521	Somerset	1,029
Cecil	1,960	Talbot	490
Charles	1,831	Washington	3,106
Dorchester	925	Wicomico	3,082
Garrett	833	Worcester	1,121
		Total	**$125,000**

Source: Maryland State Department of Education