

# ISSUE PAPERS 2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES 2011

## Education

### Race to the Top Prompts Redesign of State's Educator Evaluation Systems

**The Maryland Council for Educator Effectiveness, which the Governor established to recommend new performance evaluation systems for school-level educators, released its initial recommendations in June 2011. The group endorsed frameworks for evaluations of teachers and principals, and seven school systems are testing the frameworks in the 2011-2012 school year in preparation for implementation by all systems next year. Redesigning evaluation systems was a major component of Maryland's successful application for federal Race to the Top funds, and a portion of the federal funds will be used to put the revamped systems and processes in place.**

### Maryland Council for Educator Effectiveness

Maryland was awarded a \$250 million federal Race to the Top (RTTT) grant in August 2010. Initially approved in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, RTTT funds are awarded to states competitively to encourage specific educational reforms that include improving instruction, especially in low-performing schools. Competition for RTTT funds spurred legislative reforms around the country, including changes to educator evaluation procedures that require school systems to link the evaluations with student growth measures. Maryland followed suit with the passage of the Education Reform Act of 2010 (Chapter 189). The Act requires the State Board of Education to adopt regulations establishing general standards for performance evaluations of certified teachers and principals and requires student growth to be a significant component in the evaluations. The redesign of teacher and principal evaluations was one of the primary reforms identified in Maryland's RTTT application.

Recommendations for the new educator evaluation systems are being developed by the Maryland Council for Educator Effectiveness (MCEE), which the Governor established by executive order on June 1, 2010. MCEE is co-chaired by the State Superintendent of Schools and the vice president of the Maryland State Education Association and is comprised of representatives of educators, school boards, the business community, State agencies, and legislators.

### Seven School Systems Are Piloting Evaluation Systems This Year

On June 21, 2011, MCEE issued its initial recommendations for a Statewide Educator Evaluation System. The recommendations endorsed frameworks for evaluations of teachers and principals that will result in ratings of ineffective, effective, or highly effective. MCEE highlighted the importance of educator improvement as the primary goal of any evaluation, and believes that the local school systems and the State share responsibility for providing high-quality, effective, and relevant professional development. As such, the frameworks give

local school systems responsibility for defining processes for providing support to teachers and principals rated as ineffective.

Seven local school systems (Baltimore, Charles, Kent, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's counties and Baltimore City) are conducting pilot performance evaluation systems during the 2011-2012 school year under the frameworks established by MCEE. These systems will select teachers at multiple grade levels and subject areas representing a broad spectrum of experience. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will provide technical assistance and professional development to teachers, principals, and their respective evaluators on the new evaluation process. Local school systems and bargaining units will enter into agreements under the frameworks between January 2012 and June 2012 so that all 24 school systems can implement new performance evaluation systems during the 2012-2013 school year.

MCEE plans to reconvene in December of this year to evaluate early implementation of the local pilots and again in June 2012 to make any recommendations based on a full year of experience in the seven pilot systems.

### **Teacher Evaluation Framework**

The framework for the evaluation of teachers has two parts, each of which constitutes 50% of the evaluation. Part one incorporates qualitative measures, including the following four observable measures: planning and preparing; instruction; classroom environment; and professional responsibilities. In addition, the framework enables local school systems to designate local priorities for which they would like to hold teachers accountable and allows school systems to establish weighting policies to indicate the percentage the system will assign to each of the qualitative measures. Part two is a quantitative component that measures student growth using State assessments, specified State measures, and specified local measures. Part two also permits the consideration of "complexity factors," such as instructional diversity, an unusually high number of transient students, and specific unusual facility issues. Complexity factors are defined as "factors recognized by the local school system that do not diminish student expectations but have an extraordinary impact on student growth."

### **Principal Evaluation Framework**

Similar to the teacher evaluation framework, the framework for principal evaluations has qualitative and quantitative measures, each of which constitutes 50% of the evaluation. The qualitative measures incorporate skills specified in the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework: facilitate the development of a school vision; align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning; monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers; ensure the regular integration of appropriate assessments into daily classroom instruction; use technology and multiple sources of data to improve classroom instruction; provide staff with focused, sustained, research-based professional development; and engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success. Local school systems may also include local priorities for which they would like to hold principals responsible. The

quantitative student growth measures are categorically aligned with teacher evaluation measures and include local, State, and norm referenced tests, as well as local school system data points.

### **Teacher/Principal Evaluation System: State Default Model**

The Education Reform Act requires a local school system and a local bargaining unit to implement a State Board of Education model performance evaluation system if the sides are unable to mutually agree on one. The initial recommendations of MCEE include a default performance evaluation model in which evaluations are equally divided between qualitative (professional practice) and quantitative (student growth) measures, as required by the teacher and principal frameworks. The quantitative section will be divided so that 20 percent will be based on local school system student growth measures and 30 percent will be based on statewide student growth measures. MCEE will further develop the details of the default model after the 2011-2012 pilot year.

### **State Board of Education Must Adopt Evaluation Regulations**

The Education Reform Act requires the State board to adopt regulations establishing general standards for performance evaluations of certified teachers and principals. In November 2010, the Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review Committee voted to oppose an early set of proposed regulations submitted by the board on this subject. The State board has placed the regulations on hold and will restart the process of promulgating draft regulations in June 2012, consistent with the Education Reform Act of 2010 and the RTTT application. Based on lessons learned from the pilot local evaluation systems, MSDE will develop a list of acceptable options for the components of a statewide system of evaluation. This list will guide local school systems when they draft their final evaluation systems and will provide flexibility for local school systems within the parameters ultimately established by State board regulations.

### **Race to the Top Funds Will Support Evaluation Systems and Processes**

Of the \$250 million Maryland received from RTTT for use over four years, \$125 million will be distributed to MSDE, and the participating local school systems will collectively receive the other \$125 million. MSDE will use its \$125 million from the RTTT fund to implement 54 projects specified in the State's RTTT application, including building a statewide technology infrastructure that links all data elements and redesigning the model for preparation, development, retention, and evaluation of teachers and principals. Specifically, \$2.3 million is dedicated to the technology costs associated with implementing a centralized educator evaluation system. Local school systems are likewise devoting portions of their RTTT funds to needs relating to the new evaluation process, such as data systems (including computer hardware) to link educators to State and local measures of student growth, evaluation tool design, professional development, mentoring and induction programs, and teacher and principal academies.