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MSDE Headquarters

Maryland State Department of Education

Response to the Analyst's Review and Recommendations

House Education & Economic Development Subcommittee –
February 6, 2014

Senate Education, Business & Administration Subcommittee –
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Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) welcomes this opportunity to share with the Committee some of its success stories and to address questions raised by the analyst.

Percentage of Students Demonstrating Reading and Math Gains Increases in the Juvenile Services Program

The State Superintendent should comment on MSDE's role in improving educational outcomes for youth at the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) Facilities.

MSDE is pleased that its priority to improve achievement in reading and math continues to yield increasing percentages of students recording gains in these critical academic areas. This is especially important given that students' average reading and math achievement scores at intake have been at the sixth grade level. JSE also seeks to provide targeted instruction for students who, based upon an overall lack of credits, age, and interest, sought to obtain their Maryland High School diploma by examination. These efforts resulted in the notable gain in the numbers of students earning a high school diploma while in the JSE program.

With the program shift now completed, the JSE program is re-directing its energies and resources to ensuring effective implementation of the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS), expanding Career and Technology Education offerings, and exploring additional postsecondary offerings – all designed to ensure that JSE students are readied for return to their communities and to be successful in their next educational and career preparation steps. Accelerating student achievement in mathematics and reading will continue as a priority as the program works to keep its students on track to earning high school diplomas and earning industry certifications

Trends in Online Services at Maryland Public Libraries Decline

While trends in online services show a decline, public libraries are increasingly developing and improving the self-service components of their websites. Local libraries are using limited resources to support the growing e-book trends.

Public libraries have participated in a statewide e-book consortium since 2003. The Division of Library Development and Services has used federal grant funds to support this partnership through development of a statewide collection (including both e-book and eReaders), staff training, programs such as an e-book conference and the development of a statewide E-books Task Force.

Employment Success Rates Among Rehabilitation Clients Fluctuates

The employment success rate dropped in FY 2007 and FY 2011 as a result of efforts to manage the total open caseload and the waiting list of clients seeking DORS services.

For budgetary reasons, in late FY 2007, DORS closed services to all categories of individuals with disabilities. Due to the limitation of available services, a smaller percentage of the cases closed that year had successful employment outcomes.

In an effort to keep Category I (persons with most significant disabilities) open in FY 2011, DORS conducted a review of the entire open caseload, targeting cases that had no activity with the client for an extended period of time. In those cases where the client did not want any further services or did not wish to seek employment, DORS closed those cases. This enabled DORS to keep Category I open and to begin providing services to individuals who had been on the waiting list for over a year.

Common Core and Elementary and Secondary Education Act Waiver Request

The State Superintendent should discuss how MSDE will ensure it meets the deadlines for implementing the PARCC tests fully online by the 2016-2017 school year, while reconciling the fact that the local education agencies (LEA) have asked for millions of dollars in information technology infrastructure upgrades in order to meet that deadline.

The PARCC field test will be administered in every school district in the state in virtually every single school. This will serve as an initial test of the readiness of individual schools for online testing which should be conducted 100% in every school by 2016-2017.   The Education Superhighway, the non-profit group charged with conducting bandwidth and internet speed tests in every school in Maryland, will provide results and analysis of the performance tests with MSDE and with LEAS by the end of February, 2014.

MSDE will begin meeting with each LEA to determine actual needs as cited in the Joint Chairmen's Report on "Preparedness to Implement New Computer-Based Assessments" related to the full administration of PARCC assessments online by 2016-2017. Technical assistance around the infrastructure issues identified by the LEAs and included in the Education Superhighway Report will be provided to the 24 LEAs on an individual basis prior to the end of the current school year in preparation for the first operational assessment in the 2014-2015 school year.

Teacher Professional Development in Preparation for MCCRS

The State Superintendent should comment on the adequacy of its work in preparing teachers across Maryland in the new curriculum and what MSDE's future plans are for helping teachers adjust to these standards.

Ongoing, extensive and innovate professional learning has been offered to teachers since the fall of 2010. Site visits continue to be conducted in all 24 LEAs by MSDE content specialists, who are gathering information to inform ongoing support and professional learning needs.

Specifically, these opportunities include collaboration with teachers to develop curricular frameworks, model units and lesson seeds based on the MCCRS, Educator Effectiveness Academies in each of the last three summers, content-specific webinars, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) webinars, disciplinary literacy videos, and numerous other materials all available through Maryland's Learning Management System.

The State Superintendent should discuss how the evaluations will be implemented between now and 2016-2017.

From inception, it was recognized that the transition to the MCCRS and PARCC Assessments would create a two year hiatus on student growth measures attributed to state testing and this disruption in data would require an interim solution for applying student growth to educator effectiveness. Maryland's Teacher and Principal Evaluation system reflects a 50% measure of Professional Practice and a 50% measure of Student Growth; including a 20% application of Student Growth that is attributed to state tests.

Maryland's current Flexibility Waiver includes allowance for not using state test-associated measures in making personnel decisions. Test measures from 2014-2015 will serve as baseline data and that subsequent data from 2015-2016 will facilitate the norming of the test measures for application in 2016-2017 evaluation processes. Similar norming will occur annually as additional test data is acquired and analyzed. Annual analysis will further support the review and reconsideration of component measures and values within State and Local evaluation models.

Race to the Top Annual Performance Report and Wrap-up

The State Superintendent should comment on RTTT progress to date and on the use of State resources beyond the grant period to complete or sustain RTTT project activities. The State Superintendent should discuss the major impacts the RTTT projects have had in improving Maryland education and school systems, the timeline for completion of the off-track projects, reasons for the delays for the 21 no-cost extension projects, and how MSDE plans to use the work done by the RTTT projects in the future.

The Race to the Top grant has allowed Maryland an enormous opportunity to plan and implement major reforms in four areas:

Revise the PreK-12 Maryland State Curriculum, assessments, and accountability system based on the MCCRS to assure that all graduates are college- and career-ready; build a statewide technology infrastructure that links all data elements with analytic and instructional tools to monitor and promote student achievement, redesign the model for preparation, development, retention, and evaluation of teachers and principals, and fully implement the innovative Breakthrough Center approach for transforming low-performing schools and districts.

Maryland has expended 61.3 percent or a total of $153 million of its grant as of December 31, 2013. Through project year three and into project year four, Maryland has been committed to preparing and supporting educators to fully implement the MCCRS in the 2013-2014 school year and administer the PARCC assessments in the 2014-2015 school year. All RTTT participating local school systems participated in the field test of the Teacher/Principal Evaluation System in the 2012-2013 school year and are fully implementing all components of the system in the 2013-2014 school year, however Maryland has requested a waiver from using this data to make personnel decisions. These and other projects will be sustained beyond the life of the RTTT grant.

With the 2013-2014 school year, Maryland has requested approval to provide grants to LEAs to specifically support the implementation of their Teacher Principal Evaluation program. Maryland is ensuring that data from the State's statewide longitudinal data system is accessible to and useful to inform and engage our key stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, principals, business community members). To support this Maryland will ultimately release 36 data dashboards that will be available to the public. Additional initiatives include our work with our Higher Education Partners to prepare teachers to teach in high poverty/high minority schools. Through the Breakthrough Center, Maryland is providing instructional, leadership, climate and parent support to our LEAs. Through a partnership with the Maryland Business Roundtable, Maryland is supporting educator effectiveness and student engagement in delivering STEM instruction to all students.

The U.S. Department of Education provided all states with the opportunity to request a No Cost Extension. The purpose of a no cost extension is to, as necessary, provide additional time for a state to further its reform goals and deliverables it committed to in its RTTT application and approved Scope of Work. Maryland took this opportunity to conduct a thoughtful and strategic review of all 54 projects and put forward 21 No Cost Extension requests. Approval of these requests will allow Maryland to provide additional support to teachers through the Education Effectiveness Academies, provide additional support to new teachers through the Teacher Induction Academy, provide additional support to LEAs in implementing their Teacher Principal Evaluation systems, and provide additional support to Executive Officers those who supervise principals responsible for the implementation of MCCRS and PARCC, and further development of Maryland's Comprehensive Training Plan.

Five of the No Cost Extensions submitted were to allow additional time for projects to complete their original deliverables. The state is designing an alternative plan to address the IT projects that provide benchmark testing and formative assessments to measure student performance and growth and has developed the infrastructure to support technology projects that will benefit all of Maryland's educators.

The State Superintendent should discuss plans to continue Educator Effectiveness Academies and other successful RTTT initiatives.

MSDE has implemented a number of initiatives, including the Educator Effectiveness Academies, to provide support to teachers and principals as we fully implement College and Career Readiness Standards in the 2013-2014 school year. Extensive and innovative professional learning has been offered for teachers starting in the fall 2010 and is ongoing. During this 2013-2014 school year, site visits are being conducted in all 24 state LEAs where MSDE content specialists are gathering information for ongoing support and professional learning.

Feedback from these site visits to LEAs and meetings with teachers, principals, and Executive Officers (those who supervise principals) has indicated that educators want the continuation of face-to-face meetings in the summer 2014. They have indicated that this type of gathering will be far more effective than a virtual academy as originally planned. Additionally, plans are underway to again offer Teacher Induction Academies to support our new teachers and their mentors in the summer of 2014 and through the 2014-2015 school year.

College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013

The State Superintendent should comment on how MSDE plans to implement transition courses for students in grade 12, the timeline for implementation of the transition courses, and how the potential receipt of a federal grant will impact the development of transition courses. The State Superintendent should also discuss the status of Early College grant programs and MSDE's plan on expanding dual enrollment into the future.

MSDE, in collaboration with the local school systems of Maryland and institutions of higher education, and other stakeholders, has been developing resources, and professional learning opportunities aligned to college and career ready standards. Maryland students must be prepared to succeed in a global marketplace. It is through the implementation of more rigorous academic standards, and instructional programs such as the transition courses, and Early College initiatives that Maryland students will be able to meet this goal.

MSDE has awarded six Early College Grants that provide access to STEM pathways. Many of these programs provide students the opportunity to earn dual credit. The programs include STEM medical programs, information technology and cyber security programs, and pathways to associate degrees or industry-recognized credentials.

MSDE is collaborating with the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to review existing regulations that may need to be repealed, amended, or established in order to encourage dual enrollment. We anticipate ongoing collaboration with MHEC and the State's Institutions of Higher Education to identify other ways in which we jointly can lead efforts to expand use of this important opportunity for Maryland students.

MSDE has convened a broad group of state agency and college representatives to ensure consistent communication on the provisions of the College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act (CCR-CCA). The Department has disseminated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) related to the implementation of the (CCR-CCA) of 2013 with secondary and postsecondary stakeholder groups and developed and presented a PowerPoint presentation on the CCR-CCA to a variety of affinity groups to provide information on provisions of the law regarding dual enrollment. We have also established a point of contact for technical assistance and information regarding dual enrollment.

Anticipated Deficiency Appropriations Continue for Assessments

The State Superintendent should comment on why the original appropriation for assessments has significantly understated the actual costs in recent years and should provide an estimate of the total assessment costs that will be required in fiscal 2015.

The state assessment contract work typically spans 3 calendar years to fully deliver a test in one school year. This results in an overlap of 2-3 test editions being worked on within one fiscal year. In past practice when the work was beginning on a new test edition funding was

encumbered for the entire test edition, this led to encumbrances from prior fiscal years to be carried forward into a subsequent fiscal year until the work was completed.

Beginning with the FY 2008 Budget, state assessments are budgeted on a cash only basis, this resulted in a decrease of original appropriations and annual requests through the deficiency funding process to provide the actual dollars needed for the respective fiscal year assessment contract expenditures. This practice has continued through the current budget cycle.

The state assessment contracts costs are projected in the spring of each calendar year for the upcoming and subsequent fiscal years. However, changes can occur to the testing program after those initial projections that result in changes to the actual contract costs. Changes in assessment contract costs will continue to be fluid as the state transitions to the PARCC assessments and begins to phase out the HSA over the next several years. The current projection for the FY15 deficiency request is $21.7M, assuming general and federal appropriations remain consistent with appropriations received in recent years.

Recommendations

1. Add the following language to the general fund appropriation:

   , provided that $50,000 of this appropriation made for the purpose of incentive payments for the State Superintendent based on the attainment of specified performance goals may be expended only for that purpose. Funds not expended for this restricted purpose may not be transferred by budget amendment or otherwise to any other purpose and shall revert to the General Fund.

   Explanation: The State Superintendent's contract includes incentive payments for the attainment of specified performance goals. This language restricts $50,000 in general funds to that use only.

2. Add the following language to the general fund appropriation:

   Further provided that $50,000 of this appropriation made for the purpose of incentive payments for the State Superintendent may not be expended until the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) submits a report to the budget committees identifying baseline data for each performance goal. The report shall be submitted by August 1, 2013, and the budget committees shall have 45 days to review and comment. Funds restricted pending the receipt of a report may not be transferred by budget amendment or otherwise to any other purpose and shall revert to the General Fund if the report is not submitted to the budget committees.

   Explanation: The language restricts $50,000 in general funds made for the purpose of incentive payments to the State Superintendent until MSDE submits a report identifying the baseline data for each performance goal. The report is to be submitted by August 1, 2014.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on incentive payment baseline data	MSDE	August 1, 2013

MSDE concurs.

3.   Add the following language to the general fund appropriation:

Provided that it is the intent of the General Assembly that no individual loaned educator be engaged by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for more than 6 years. For loaned educators engaged in fiscal 2010, the time already served at MSDE may not be counted toward the 6-year limit.

Further provided that it is the intent of the General Assembly that all loaned educators submit annual financial disclosure statements, as is required by State employees in similar positions.

MSDE concurs.

Maryland's Plan for Transitioning Teacher Evaluation from MSA to PARCC Assessments

Teacher Measures			SY 2013-2014	SY 2014-2015	SY 2015-2016	SY 2016-2017
Professional Practice *Four Component measures* *1. Planning & Preparation* *2. Instruction* *3. Classroom Environment* *4. Professional Responsibilities*	**Counts for personnel decisions**	50%	Professional Practice *Four Component measures* 1. Planning & Preparation 2. Instruction 3. Classroom Environment 4. Professional Responsibilities *(Counts for personnel decisions)*	Professional Practice *Four Component measures* 1. Planning & Preparation 2. Instruction 3. Classroom Environment 4. Professional Responsibilities *(Counts for personnel decisions)*	Professional Practice *Four Component measures* 1. Planning & Preparation 2. Instruction 3. Classroom Environment 4. Professional Responsibilities *(Counts for personnel decisions)*	Professional Practice *Four Component measures* 1. Planning & Preparation 2. Instruction 3. Classroom Environment 4. Professional Responsibilities *(Counts for personnel decisions)*
Student Growth • *Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)* • *Approved Local measures* • *State Assessments*		30%	Student Growth • *One or more SLO* • *Approved Local measures* *(Counts for personnel decisions)*	Student Growth • *One or more SLO* • *Approved Local measures* *(Counts for personnel decisions)*	Student Growth • *One or more SLO* • *Approved Local measures* *(Counts for personnel decisions)*	Student Growth • *One or more SLO* • *Approved Local measures* *(Counts for personnel decisions)*
	Does not count for personnel decisions	20%	• *Translation of 2013 MSA assessments to a growth measure by applying MTAI in Sept 2013 for application to Spring2104 evaluations.* *(Does not count for personnel decisions)*	• *Use of 2014 MSA assessments to inform district or school level SLO for application to Spring 2015 evaluations* *(Informs personnel decisions)*	• *Use of 2015 PARCC assessments to inform district or school level SLO for application to Spring 2016 evaluations* *(Informs personnel decisions)*	• *Translation of 2015 & 2016 PARCC assessments to a growth measure for application in Sept. 2016 as lag measure to Spring 2017 evaluations* *(Counts for personnel decisions)*

ESEA Extension Request and Transition Amendments

Per USDE offer 6/13, amendment pending within ESEA Extension Request that allows LEAs, for the purpose of making personnel decisions, to extract MSA dependent measures from evaluations for one year.

Per amendment pending within ESEA Extension Request that allows LEAs, for the purpose of making personnel decisions, to extract MSA dependent measures from evaluations for this year and to use available MSA state assessments to inform the SLO process in SY 2014-2015.

Per amendment pending within ESEA Extension Request that allows LEAs, for the purpose of making personnel decisions, to extract PARCC dependent measures from evaluations for this year and to use available state PARCC assessments to inform the SLO process in SY 2015-2016.

Per ESEA Extension Request.