
R00A02

MSDE Aid to Education

Maryland State Department of Education

Response to the Analyst's Review and Recommendations

Senate Education, Business and Administration Subcommittee –
February 17, 2012

House Education and Economic Development Subcommittee –
February 20, 2012



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Maryland Public Schools: ***#1 in the Nation Four Years in a Row***

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.

MSDE should discuss the status of its ESEA flexibility waiver and its expected effect on school, LEA, and State accountability structures for student growth.

The State Board of Education substantively approved Maryland's ESEA Flexibility Request at a special meeting on Monday, February 13, 2012. Maryland will submit the final Request to the U.S. Department of Education by February 28, 2012.

The U.S. Department of Education has offered states the opportunity to request flexibility on behalf of the State, the LEAs and schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This voluntary opportunity provides flexibility regarding specific requirements of NCLB in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction.

As required, Maryland must submit an application that addresses four principles to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student academic achievement in the State and LEAs. MSDE has conducted 38 meetings to date with stakeholder groups. The groups have included Local Superintendents, Title I Coordinators, Special Education Advocates, English Language Learner (ELL) Advocates and Directors, teachers, parents, students, higher education, the business community, and others. The application was also available on the MSDE website for public comment for two weeks.

The flexibility will allow Maryland to focus on rewarding schools that are making improvement while targeting funds to help all schools continue in their successful progress. It also supports Maryland's plan to redesign teacher and principal evaluation with a strong focus on incorporating student growth measures.

(See Appendix A for more information)

MSDE should comment on the status of discussions with USDE concerning the release of aggregated State and LEA level data to ensure that decisionmakers including the General Assembly have sufficient access to student outcomes data.

Over the last decade, increased attention on education has led to an expansion in the amount of information on students and their schools and school districts reported to parents and the general public (20 U.S.C. § 6311). States now report student outcomes based on assessments of student achievement in specific subjects and grade levels for all students, as well as for subgroups defined by gender, race and ethnicity, English proficiency status, migrant status, disability status, and economic status. Typically, the data are reported as the percentage distribution of students in a subgroup across achievement levels. These reports are issued at the state, district, and school levels. Additional outcome measures, such as data on attendance, dropout rates, and graduation rates, are also reported frequently.

These reports offer the challenge of meeting the reporting requirements while also meeting legal requirements to protect each student's personally identifiable information (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA]).¹ To this end, the reporting requirements for Title I state that disaggregating the data for specific subgroups may not occur if the number of students in a reporting group or subgroup is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or if the results would yield personally identifiable information about an individual student.²

Maryland has adopted the minimum group size of 10 for reporting rules. In order to be FERPA compliant Maryland has also adopted additional practices, as recommended by USDE, to protect personally identifiable information about its students in reported results. This practice includes various forms of suppression, top and bottom coding of values at the ends of a distribution, and limiting the amount of detail reported for the underlying counts. Suppression refers to withholding information from publication. Some information is withheld from publication in a table to protect data based on small counts because the release of the information would likely lead to a disclosure. Recoding refers to reporting values as being within a specified range rather than as a specific value. Maryland is not reporting data greater than or equal to 95% and less than or equal to 5%.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has made these changes to the data reported on its websites in order to ensure compliance with the federal FERPA, which prohibits the release of individually identifiable information to the public.³ The federal government requires significant reporting of student accountability aggregate data to the public. In some cases these two requirements conflict with one another.

Beginning in 2011, MSDE implemented necessary limits on the data reported on the website in accordance with FERPA guidelines. The changes to the website were designed to maximize the information provided to the public while also protecting the privacy of small identifiable groups of students.

MSDE is forming a FERPA workgroup to address agency-wide FERPA issues as we move further into the era of the Longitudinal Data Base. This exploration will include consultation with USDE. The real issue is protecting student privacy. Small sample sizes, especially, present the risk that students can be identified. To avoid that situation MSDE is proceeding with caution in this arena. The Department will continue to provide student outcome data while still protecting student privacy.

MSDE should comment on steps being taken by LEAs to further reduce the percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers, particularly in LEAs with large proportions of these classes.

The Maryland State Department of Education uses the Master Plan process to document local school systems' strategies utilized to decrease the percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers (HQT). All school systems have made significant gains in hiring and assigning teachers who are HQT. Additionally, with the exception of Baltimore City and Dorchester

¹ 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99

² 20 U.S.C. § 6311(h); 34 CFR § 200.7

³ 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99

County, all local School Systems have over 90% core academic subject classes taught by highly qualified teachers, with half attaining over 95%. (Note that Prince George's County, which had previously been below 90%, has now exceeded that milestone). Baltimore City has progressed from 34.2% of classes taught by highly qualified teachers in 2003 to the current level of 72.9%. During the same time period, Dorchester County progressed from 63.9% to 88.8% of core academic subject classes taught by highly qualified teachers. Other school systems have also made substantial improvements on this metric over time. School systems, as part of their Master Plans, are expected to analyze the root causes of teachers not being highly qualified and document both the reasons and the remedies for not reaching 100%.

Strategies used by local systems to increase HQT include professional development for principals about scheduling and HQT requirements, working with Human Resources Directors to screen early in the hiring process for highly qualified teachers and to send only candidates who meet the criteria for HQT to be interviewed by school based administrators. Recruitment of highly qualified candidates is another strategy that all school systems have in place.

MSDE provides technical assistance and audits the percentage of classes taught by HQT yearly. Human Resources Directors and Master Plan liaisons are provided with strategies to increase the percentage of teachers who are highly qualified, and MSDE facilitates sharing of best practices among these school system leaders. Maryland can be proud of the continued improvement in percentages of HQT and the local school systems' efforts as they continue to strive for the target of 100% HQT.

MSDE should discuss whether LEAs are carrying a balance of federal Title I and special education grants to states to cushion a decline in federal support for these programs.

The potential for federal sequestration is a serious concern for Maryland's local school systems and for MSDE. Although it is difficult to predict at this point in time, MSDE does not believe Maryland LEAs are carrying sufficient balances of federal Title I and IDEA grants to offset the potential level of decline in federal support for these programs. MSDE recently sent written notification to Maryland's local superintendents advising them of the process and potential effects of sequestration. The Department has not received guidance from USDE for either program that addresses the potential reductions.

MSDE should discuss the potential impact of shifting 50.0% of combined Social Security and pension costs of local school systems to the counties on MOE.

The proposal would require local governments to directly pay a portion of the retirement costs. While the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA) does not specifically address how Maintenance of Effort should be handled, MSDE infers from the proposed payment process that the county-paid funds would not be appropriated to the local school system operating budgets. Since the MOE statute refers to "highest local appropriation," it appears that the funding would be outside of the MOE calculation. The amount paid annually by the county would be depend upon the funding structure and calculations noted in the BRFA.

In enacting Bridge to Excellence in 2002, Maryland took a strong stand to ensure that our students have adequate funding statewide. This establishes an inseparable interest in ensuring

adequate local support to schools. MSDE is very concerned about the limited growth or – in many cases – retraction of local funding for schools. Remember that meeting MOE means that a county is fulfilling its legal funding requirement; it does not necessarily mean that the county is providing adequate local support for its schools. Maryland’s educational system is #1 in the nation; there is severe risk in allowing local support for schools to be retargeted for other purposes.

MSDE should also discuss how school boards, which set teachers’ salaries, would share any portion of the retirement costs with the State.

Local school boards are currently responsible for a share of retirement funding as it is being defined in the current proposal. The proposal before the General Assembly recognizes the contribution that is already being made at the local level. That is, the Social Security contributions for teachers are already being paid by local school systems. Therefore, under the current estimates, about 33% of the overall combined costs of retirement and Social Security are already borne by local school systems.

The current proposal, in splitting the combined (Retirement and Social Security) costs in half, would require county governments to pay some portion of the teacher retirement contributions. This would then establish that the three parties (the State, the local school system, and the county government) each share in the retirement cost. In the current FY 2013 budget as proposed, the State would pay a 50% share, the school system would pay a 33.3% share and the county government would pay a 16.7% share.

DLS recommends that consideration be given to whether the local school boards should continue to share in the cost of teachers’ retirement by continuing to support the costs associated with retirement for federally funded positions.

Under the existing funding system the State is paying 100% of the retirement contributions. Therefore, it makes sense that any retirement costs associated with a federally funded position should be reimbursed to the State. Under the new proposal, however, the question becomes less clear. With retirement shifting to a shared State and Local responsibility, would it be appropriate for the State to claim access to the 100% level of funding associated with these positions? These funds would no longer be paid by local school systems. However, given that most federal grants to school systems are restricted funding, the school systems will need to focus the savings toward allowable program costs. The statutory and regulatory restrictions associated with these federal funds would limit the opportunities for use of these funds.

While SOAR data as it exists today has limitations, only one SOAR report is scheduled to be released (in 2012) before the implementation of PARCC assessments and MLDS, which are cited by MSDE as sources for improved data. Because no other source presently tracks the remediation rates of Maryland high school graduates entering State colleges and universities, DLS recommends that the 2012 SOAR report be produced in its existing form, with the understanding that changes will be made in future reports to address the concerns raised by MSDE and PSSAM, particularly regarding the lag between a cohort’s graduation and when data on the cohort’s subsequent college success is provided to the LEA. DLS also recommends that MSDE and PSSAM work with MHEC and the LDS Center to retool the

SOAR report so that it utilizes student- and transcript-level LDS data as soon as possible

MSDE concurs with the analysis in regard to the limitations of the SOAR report. The Department welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively to establish a valid and reliable tool to measure college readiness.

As a starting point for discussions on future iterations of this report, MSDE would suggest the following topics: identifying the differences between remedial and developmental education; defining an appropriate data set; the pros and cons of self-reported data; and, establishing reporting protocols.

MSDE believes that as the Maryland Longitudinal Data System continues to evolve, the quality of the SOAR Report will improve considerably. The Department looks forward to working with MHEC and PSSAM to assist in that effort.

MSDE should comment on what the agency, in partnership with the LEAs, are doing to move Maryland toward the goal that at least 55% of State residents aged 25 to 64 hold either an associates or a bachelor's degree by 2025.

The State Board of Education's mission is clear – create a world-class system that prepares students for college and career success in the 21st Century. This third wave of education reform in Maryland is being accomplished through our Race to the Top Grant and now also through the newly-awarded Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant. This new grant will take Maryland's highly-acclaimed early learning system and move the State to even greater heights. With our strong local education agency and higher education partnerships, these efforts will pave the way for accomplishing this ambitious goal.

The Maryland State Board of Education unanimously adopted the Common Core State Standards in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. These national education standards establish a set of shared goals and expectations for what students should understand and be able to do in grades K-12 in order to be prepared for success in college and the workplace. Common standards help ensure that students are receiving an equally rigorous, high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state.

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is developing new assessments that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards. PARCC is a consortium of 25 states working together to develop an assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Maryland is a Governing State in the PARCC consortium.

The new assessments will be anchored in college and career readiness; provide comparability across states; and be able to assess and measure higher-order skills such as critical thinking, communications, and problem solving. The PARCC assessments will be implemented in Maryland in the 2014-15 school year and will replace the Maryland School Assessments.

As evidenced in the analysis, Maryland also stands poised to make great strides in supporting and developing great teachers and leaders in our public schools.

Finally, MSDE should comment on its efforts to engage the postsecondary education community in work to develop the new Maryland Common Core State Curriculum and the PARCC assessments to determine college and career readiness.

MSDE has been diligent in ensuring that the Department has a strong connection with the postsecondary education community. These bonds have been woven through the work of the Governor’s P-20 Leadership Council, as well as multiple engagements with postsecondary education representatives.

Recognizing that providing graduates with the basic, critical-thinking, and technical skills they need, Maryland’s elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools play critical roles in preparing graduates to succeed in the competitive global economy. Further, improving student achievement and promoting workforce skills requires a statewide approach to ensure that every student has a chance to succeed in school and in the workplace. Toward these ends, the Governor established the P-20 Leadership Council: a partnership between the State, educators, and the business community to better prepare Maryland students for the jobs of the 21st Century while enhancing the State’s economic competitiveness by creating a workforce with 21st Century skills.

Last spring, MSDE held multiple regional meetings across the state – involving over 300 members of the higher education community – to inform, engage and collaborate on implementation of the Common Core Standards and Maryland’s efforts in developing the new curriculum based on the new standards.

Nearly 200 postsecondary systems and institutions across the country have committed to participate with PARCC in the development of the new college-ready assessments in mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy and to ultimately use these tests as college placement tools. Postsecondary faculty representing all relevant disciplines have joined K-12 professionals in designing and developing PARCC’s high school assessments. PARCC will assemble postsecondary leadership teams in each state to address policy and practice issues critical to the success of the transition to common assessments in each state.

ANALYST’S RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Provided that the Maryland State Department of Education shall notify the budget committees of any intent to transfer funds from program R00A02 Aid to Education to any other budgetary unit. The budget committees shall have 45 days to review and comment on the planned transfer prior to its effect.

Explanation: The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) should not transfer any funds from Aid to Education until the transfer is reviewed by the budget committees.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on any transfer of funds from R00A02	MSDE	45 days prior to transfer

MSDE concurs with this recommendation.

Recommendation 2

Concur with the following language to the general fund appropriation:
, provided that \$1,867,000 of this appropriation shall be reduced contingent upon the enactment of legislation transferring Video Lottery Terminal revenue from the Small, Minority, and Women-Owned Business Investment Account to the Education Trust Fund. Authorization is hereby provided to process a Special Fund budget amendment up to \$1,867,000 to recognize the new revenue in the Education Trust Fund.

Explanation: This action concurs with the Governor’s proposal to reduce the general fund appropriation to the State Share of the Foundation Program and authorize a budget amendment transferring special fund video lottery terminal revenues into the program.

MSDE supports full funding of the education formulas by whatever fund sources are available to the State.

Recommendation 3

Add the following language to the general fund appropriation:
Further provided that \$950,000 of this appropriation shall be reduced contingent upon the enactment of legislation transferring video lottery terminal fee revenue from the Problem Gamblers Fund to the Education Trust Fund. Authorization is hereby provided to process a Special Fund budget amendment up to \$950,000 to recognize the new revenue in the Education Trust Fund.

Explanation: This language reduces the general fund appropriation in the State Share of the Foundation Program, contingent on legislation transferring \$950,000 in unspent fiscal 2012 video lottery terminal fee revenue from the Problem Gamblers Fund to the Education Trust Fund.

MSDE supports full funding of the education formulas by whatever fund sources are available to the State.

Recommendation 4

Add the following language to the general fund appropriation:
Further provided that the appropriation made for the purpose of the State Share of the Foundation Program for Montgomery County shall be reduced \$26,235,817 and Queen Anne’s County shall be reduced \$455,696 to reflect the fiscal 2012 maintenance of effort penalties for these counties.

Further provided that \$3,857,268 of this appropriation made for the purpose of the State Share of the Foundation Program for Anne Arundel County may not be expended for any purpose and shall revert to the general fund on June 30, 2013, except if:

1. the Maryland State Board of Education submits a report to the budget committees certifying that Anne Arundel County met the fiscal 2012 maintenance of effort requirement and is thus eligible to receive these funds; and
2. the budget committees shall have 45 days to review and comment from the date of receipt of the report.

These funds may not be transferred by budget amendment or otherwise to any other purpose.

Explanation: The penalty for failing to meet maintenance of effort is that any increase in State funding for the foundation program is withheld in the following fiscal year. This language reduces the fiscal 2013 State Share of the Foundation appropriation for Montgomery and Queen Anne’s counties, which the State Board of Education has already certified as not having met maintenance of effort in fiscal 2012. The language restricts \$3,857,268 of the fiscal 2013 State Share of the Foundation appropriation for Anne Arundel County pending the submission of a report to the budget committees certifying that Anne Arundel County met the fiscal 2012 maintenance of effort requirement. The budget committees shall have 45 days to review and comment on the report.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report certifying that Anne Arundel County met the fiscal 2012 maintenance of effort requirement	Maryland State Department of Education	45 days prior to the expenditure of funds

MSDE concurs with the language with one suggested change: MSDE notes that there is legislation before the General Assembly that would waive these penalties. The Department suggests that the language be amended with a contingency to recognize this possibility.

Recommendation 5

Concur with language to the general fund appropriation: , provided that \$229,866,394 of this appropriation shall be reduced contingent upon the enactment of legislation requiring local jurisdictions to contribute fifty percent retirement and Social Security costs for teachers and librarians.

Explanation: The language is required for the General Assembly to reduce the budget.

MSDE concurs that this language would be appropriate upon passage of the noted legislation.

Recommendation 6: Reduce the Maryland Meals for Achievement program. The remaining appropriation will provide funds sufficient for 1.1 million additional school breakfasts. \$280,000 GF

MSDE respectfully disagrees with this recommendation.

In Maryland in 2007-2009, 14.3 percent of households with children were food-insecure, representing 106,000 households each year; about 210,000 children lived in these food-insecure households. To address this unconscionable problem, the O’Malley-Brown Administration has set a goal and is implementing a plan to become the first state in America to eliminate childhood hunger within its borders by 2015.

A study performed in 2002⁴ supports the strong link between nutrition and learning; children who eat breakfast at school are more likely to attend school, arrive on time, and achieve higher

⁴ Kleinman, R.E., Hall, S., Green, H., Korzec-Ramirez, D., Patton, K., Pagano, M.E., & Murphy, JM. (2002). Diet, breakfast, and academic performance in children. *Annals of Nutrition & Metabolism*, 46, 24-30.

test scores. Further, this research shows that participation in the School Breakfast Program enhances psychosocial well-being and decreases aggressive behavior. School breakfast is one key to our academic excellence in Maryland and will continue to play a role in our #1 national ranking.

Furthermore, in this challenging economic climate, Maryland needs to maximize potential federal reimbursement. The appropriation of \$560,000 would leverage approximately \$2,818,000 in additional federal dollars and reach an additional 20,000 Maryland children in 46 additional schools. Put another way, the proposed reduction of half of this new funding will result in a loss of approximately \$1,409,000 in federal dollars and 10,000 fewer Maryland children receiving school breakfast.

UPDATES

1. The Council for Educator Effectiveness Recommends Initial Teacher and Principal Evaluation Frameworks

The analysis reflects the major steps forward that Maryland is making in this process. The purpose of the Educator Professional Growth Evaluation System is to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and classroom practices of educators to improve student achievement. As partners in effective teaching and learning, the following tenets are critical to the new evaluation system:

- Collaboration – Local School Systems, local teachers associations, MSDE, and MSEA are partners in the process of determining fair, transparent, rigorous, and valid educator professional growth evaluation systems and are equally committed to these efforts.
- Multiple measures – Set the stage for improved teaching and learning by offering more complete evidence about student learning and growth.
- Professional Development – High quality, targeted professional development must be available to every teacher and principal. Support systems to hone effectiveness of teacher practice and student learning must be present at the individual, school and district levels.

The system is designed to include both qualitative and quantitative measures. These are delineated in the “Principle 3 – Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership” portion of the application for ESEA Flexibility (Appendix A). For more detail on the Frameworks to Evaluate Principals and Teachers, see Appendix B.

2. MSDE Recommends Dedicating a Portion of Existing “Bridge to Excellence” Funds to Early Childhood Programs for Pre-kindergarten Aged Children with Disabilities

MSDE would like to clarify this statement from the report. Maryland’s state-of-the-art education finance system was developed, in large part, on the work of the Thornton Commission which was guided by four major principles, not the least of which was flexibility, meaning that local boards of education and local school superintendents best know the needs of their students and should be making decisions on how to allocate resources to meet those needs. The Commission expounded from this guiding principle only once – to emphasize the research-supported benefit of early childhood education to states and school systems and to students. The final recommendations of the Commission included mandatory full-day kindergarten for all students funded through the increased FTE associated with these students, and half-day pre-K for all economically disadvantaged students funded through the additional resources included in the compensatory education formula.

MSDE contends that the work of the Thornton Commission is the rock-solid foundation to Maryland’s consistently successful standards-based education reform model and supporting finance structure. MSDE also clarifies that the language included in the October, 2011 Joint Chairman’s report on funding for Special Education pre-Kindergarten included the framework for further dialogue on supporting the additional needs of special education students and not a recommendation that this major, guiding principle of the work of the Thornton Commission be weakened.

Summary: Maryland's Application to the U.S. Department of Education for ESEA Flexibility

Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

Principle 1 requires Maryland to adopt college- and career-ready standards for all students with a focus on English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Maryland adopted the Common Core Standards in June 2009 and immediately conducted a gap analysis to identify what changes needed to be made to the Maryland State Standards. Since the completion of the gap analysis in August 2010, MSDE's Division of Instruction and Division of Assessment, Accountability, and Data Systems staff have been working with hundreds of educators all over the state to write the new Maryland CCSS Curriculum Framework. Special attention has been given to incorporating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies throughout the frameworks.

Additionally, in June 2011 Maryland joined the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium that provides English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards and an ELP assessment. As a result, the State is in the process of implementing these standards and the ACCESS for ELLs® ELP assessment. The focus of the standards is teaching academic language within the context of content area instruction. Model Performance Indicators have been developed that align with the Common Core Curriculum across grade levels. The result of this focus on academic language in a content context and the alignment with the Common Core State Curriculum will support English Language Learners in accessing the college- and career-ready standards on the same schedule as all students.

Finally, Maryland has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), an assessment consortium facilitated by Achieve. Twenty-four states are in this College and Career Readiness consortium, which is focused on summative assessments that will measure each student's readiness for college and careers and will be sufficiently reliable and valid for student and school accountability.

Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

Maryland's approach to differentiated recognition, accountability, and support builds upon the differentiated accountability structure that Maryland has been using for the last four years with renewed attention to achievement, equity, growth, and attainment. Through ownership of this change and collaborative thinking Maryland will build district capacity and thereby build school capacity through data sharing and analysis to improve teaching and learning.

The proposal begins by incorporating the opportunity under Option A in the Flexibility Guidance to reset **Annual Measurable Objectives** (AMOs) for the coming six years on a trajectory toward 2017, the time by which each individual school is expected to reduce its percent of non-proficient students for each of its subgroups and overall by half. The reconfiguration of annual targets and the 2017 goal itself will be instrumental in driving school improvement work for all schools and all students. The AMOs will be calculated for each school for the "all students" category and for all of the subgroups. Further, the progress of each school toward those targets provides valuable information over time on the effectiveness of instructional strategies, the inherent needs of the students and the extent to which the school is fulfilling those needs.

Summary: Maryland's Application to the U.S. Department of Education for ESEA Flexibility

To help Maryland's lowest performing schools and recognize those schools that are excelling, the ESEA Flexibility application also requires Maryland to identify Reward, Focus and Priority schools.

Maryland will identify **reward schools** as Title I schools that meet all AMOs for ALL students for two consecutive years. Maryland believes that education is one of the keys to overcoming poverty and the devastating effects it can have on our State's youth. Because of this basic reason for the existence of Title I, Maryland seeks to not only reward all schools that are high achieving but to also offer an additional recognition for those schools that achieve with additional challenges.

Priority schools are the lowest 5 percent of Title I Schools and are defined based on achievement of "all students" in proficiency on statewide assessments that are part of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. Maryland is coordinating enormous resources and efforts across all levels of government in a way that is unprecedented in recent times to make real differences in schools that have struggled for years under the challenges of low expectations and high poverty and all of the additional baggage that brings. Priority schools will be identified every three years.

Focus schools are Title I schools that over two years had the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup(s) and the lowest-achieving subgroup(s); or at high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in graduation rates; or is a school that has a subgroup(s) with low achievement or, at the high school level, low graduation rates. These are schools that do not require a school-wide, systemic change but rather need to focus on the services to only one or two subgroups. Because performance in the other subgroups and at the "All Students" level are maintaining and improving, the low achievement of one subgroup contributes to the overall gap within the school, the LEA and the SEA. Maryland has 41 focus schools. Focus schools will be identified every three years.

Maryland's collaboration with its partners—parents, educators, business, and the general public—has produced consensus on a set of Core Values that will drive the identification of schools for intervention and similarly the recognition of schools making exceptional progress and achieving at high levels. Components from the traditional Adequate Yearly Progress data set will be incorporated into a **Maryland School Performance Index** – a school appraisal instrument that more comprehensively reflects the Core Values Marylanders have regarding their schools.

The premise of an Index is that schools are evaluated on a continuous scale based on variables the Maryland State Department of Education deems important indicators of adequacy: Achievement, Growth, College & Career Readiness, and Reducing Gaps. Through a standard setting process, a committee of stakeholders has made recommendations on the value of each of the measures of the Index. Following application of the weights of the values to the Index, schools will be organized and divided into strands for the purpose of expectations, targets, and support needed.

Summary: Maryland's Application to the U.S. Department of Education for ESEA Flexibility

Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

If Maryland is going to ensure that all students are college and career ready, every school — especially those where students need the most support — must have teachers and principals who are effective at increasing student achievement. Although Maryland has worked diligently and successfully over the past decade to increase the number of Maryland teachers designated as Highly Qualified under federal definitions, State leaders also understand that this measurement is imprecise and considers only inputs into good teaching and not actual performance. Maryland is committed to taking bolder, more aggressive steps to develop an evaluation process for teachers and principals and use that information to help develop the strongest educator corps in the country.

Following the initial work of the Maryland Educator Effectiveness Council, the internal MSDE Teacher/Principal Evaluation Committee, representatives of MSDE and the Maryland State Educators Association (MSEA) Committee, the pilot group and the ESEA Flexibility committee, with input from local superintendents and other stakeholders developed a draft **Teacher and Principal State Default Evaluation Model**. In the event that an LEA and its bargaining unit cannot agree on general standards for the teacher and principal evaluation within the state framework, the state default model must be adopted.

Professional Practice (50%) - For teachers, the evaluator uses a combination of the four domains (planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities) from the Framework for Teaching by Charlotte Danielson. For principals, the evaluator uses a combination of the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework. The evaluator assigns Highly Effective, Effective, or Ineffective on the Professional Practice rubric.

Student Growth (50%) - Student growth will be determined based on the courses and grade levels a teacher teaches. The state model incorporates the draft index and Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) to define student growth for the evaluation. Wherever a Statewide assessment exists, it must be used as one of the multiple measures (per Race to the Top). State assessments, if available, will be combined with SLOs and MSDE's approval to yield ratings of Highly Effective, Effective, or Ineffective.

Simultaneous to the development of the teacher evaluation model, MSDE and its stakeholders have been working on a state default model for the **principal evaluation system**. Similar to the teacher evaluation model, the principal model will be based 50% on growth measures and 50% on Professional Practice Measures. Professional practice measures for principals will make up the remaining 50% of the evaluation. These measures will have two main components: providing effective instructional leadership and providing a safe, orderly, and supportive learning environment.

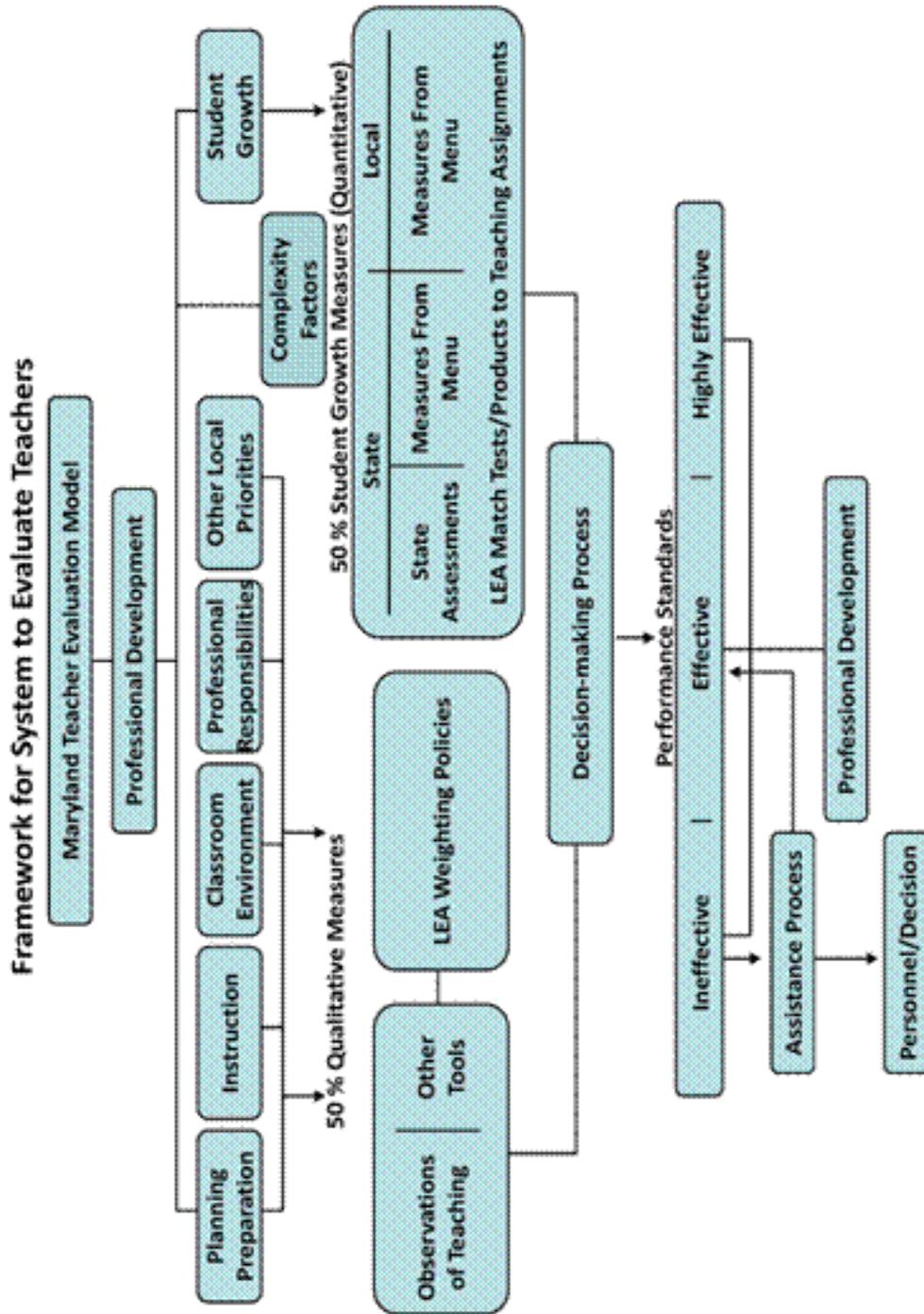
Finally, **new regulations** are being developed and will be presented to the State Board of Education. These regulations will address much of what has been and is being learned by the pilots. The State Superintendent and MSDE will rely heavily on the Maryland Educator Effectiveness Council to identify and develop any further policies needed.

Summary: Maryland's Application to the U.S. Department of Education for ESEA Flexibility

Principle 4: Reducing Duplication and Unnecessary Burden

Beginning in the early 1990's, MSDE produced the School Accountability Funding for Excellence reporting compendium of all Federal Programs. MSDE embarked, in 2003, on the Master Planning Process. Master Plans consist of the ESEA goals, Race to the Top goals, and additional State goals. With each goal there is an explanation of milestones; tracking and analyses of data against these milestones; an evaluation of the successes and challenges; and then a clear path forward to attaining each and every goal including the resource allocation. As the External Advisory Panel meets this year and prepares for the next Master Plan Update, MSDE will ask the Panel to pay particular attention the Principle 4: "Reducing Duplication and Unnecessary Burden."

Educator Effectiveness – Teacher / Principal Evaluations



Educator Effectiveness – Teacher / Principal Evaluations

