

Race to the Top Monthly Update

Race to the Top Program News

Maryland was named one of the winners of the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top (RTTT) Early Learning Challenge. The State was awarded \$50 million over four years to strengthen early childhood programs and close school readiness gaps. View Maryland's application at www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge.

The U.S. Department of Education has given Maryland's RTTT program a positive report card for its progress over the past year. The "[Year One Report on Race to the Top](#)," concludes the State is on track with its ambitious reform goals. View the report at www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/performance.html.

Higher Standards

Maryland is entering the transition phase of its move to the new Maryland Common Core State Curriculum and assessment system for English Language Arts and Mathematics. At schools statewide, teams of educators who attended last summer's [Educator Effectiveness Academies](#) are implementing the transition plans they developed to provide information and understanding of the new Curriculum to their entire school staff. Those transition plans will be updated and expanded upon during this summer's Academies. As schools transition to the new Curriculum, the [Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers \(PARCC\)](#), in which Maryland is a governing state, is developing new assessments, which will be piloted in all Maryland schools in the second semester of the 2012-2013 school year.

Robust Data

Through RTTT, Maryland will create 32 new, easy-to-use online dashboards that provide an accessible, real-time snapshot of data from the Maryland Longitudinal Data System to teachers, parents, leaders, policymakers, and other key stakeholders. The 12 dashboards that were developed over the first year of the RTTT grant are now being tested and reviewed and the design process of four new dashboards to be completed in year two is already underway.

Effective Educators

The [Council for Educator Effectiveness](#) met in December to review the progress to date from the seven Local Education Agencies (LEAs) currently piloting the new educator evaluation system (Baltimore City, and Baltimore, Charles, Kent, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's Counties). Many of the pilot LEAs reported that they are using the Framework for Teaching developed by Charlotte Danielson, or a variation of this model, for evaluating Professional Practice. One challenge faced by many of the LEAs was evaluating teachers in non-tested areas. The Council will reconvene in February to hear once more from the pilot LEAs and begin discussions on their final recommendations for the new evaluation system, which will be presented to the State Board of Education this June.

Strategic Help for Struggling Schools

The Maryland State Department of Education's [Breakthrough Center](#) is the recipient of a \$725,000 grant from the Jack Cooke Foundation to increase the number of high-achieving students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds attending [Maryland's Summer Center Programs for Gifted and Talented Students](#). This summer middle school students who attend Breakthrough schools in Baltimore City and Prince George's County will have the opportunity to attend the newly created Maryland Summer Center for Marine Biology at the National Aquarium in Baltimore or the Center for Space Engineering: Robotics supported by NASA in Prince George's County.