

Race to the Top Monthly Update

Race to the Top Program News

Earlier this month, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) submitted its first Race to the Top Annual Performance Report to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). The 88-page document describes the progress Maryland has made to date on the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant. It provides detailed status updates, performance measures, and achievement data for each of the State's 54 RTTT projects. Data from the Annual Performance Report will be used by USDE to inform State-specific and comprehensive annual reports, which will be posted on the USDE website, <http://www.ed.gov/>.

Higher Standards

Maryland has been selected to help lead the development of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These new standards will strengthen science education for all students by clearly defining the content and practices that students will need to learn from kindergarten through high school. As one of the 20 states leading this effort, Maryland will guide the standards writing process, gather and deliver feedback from state-level committees, and work to address common issues and challenges.

The NGSS will be based on the "Framework for K-12 Science Education," developed by the National Research Council, the staffing arm of the National Academy of Sciences, and online at http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13165. NGSS leaders hope to complete their work by December 2012.

Robust Data

MSDE is working with the Maryland Business Roundtable (MBRT) to develop and deploy the STEM Innovation Network (STEMnet), a virtual and physical network to promote communication and share resources among all of Maryland's STEM stakeholders. STEMnet allows educators and students to connect directly with STEM experts and industry leaders and provides a repository of information and resources to support teacher enrichment and student learning in STEM fields. MSDE and MBRT are also preparing to conduct a limited pilot of STEMnet, focusing on biology.

Effective Educators

Seven Maryland school systems (Baltimore City, and Baltimore, Charles, Kent, Prince George's, Queen Anne's and St. Mary's Counties) are currently piloting a new model evaluation system for teachers and principals, developed by the Governor's Educator Effectiveness Council. During the 2011-2012 pilot year, these seven school systems will work to identify various ways to measure student growth in all subject areas and for all teachers. Under this new system, student growth accounts for 50% of a teacher's or principal's evaluation. The results and feedback from this pilot year will inform the no-fault, statewide pilot that will be implemented in the 2012-2013 school year. The evaluation system will be fully operational in fall 2013.

Strategic Help for Struggling Schools

MSDE's Breakthrough Center has begun providing leadership development to principals and their instructional leadership teams in Maryland's lowest-achieving schools. Over the past month, the Center has worked with leadership teams in three Prince George's County high schools to build their capacity to improve classroom instruction.