

RACE TO THE TOP

Maryland Report

Year 4: School Year 2013–2014



U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

April 2015

Executive Summary

Race to the Top overview

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. ARRA provided \$4.35 billion for the Race to the Top fund, of which approximately \$4 billion was used to fund comprehensive statewide reform grants under the Race to the Top program.¹ In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) awarded Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants to 11 States and the District of Columbia. The Race to the Top program is a competitive four-year grant program designed to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and improving high school graduation rates; and ensuring students are prepared for success in college and careers. Since the Race to the Top Phase 1 and 2 competitions, the Department has made additional grants under the Race to the Top Phase 3, Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge,² and Race to the Top – District³ competitions.

The Race to the Top program is built on the framework of comprehensive reform in four education reform areas:

- Adopting rigorous standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices;
- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and
- Turning around the lowest-performing schools.

Since education is a complex system, sustained and lasting instructional improvement in classrooms, schools, local educational agencies (LEAs), and States will not be achieved through piecemeal change. Race to the Top builds on the local contexts of States and LEAs participating in the State's Race to the Top plan (participating LEAs)⁴ in the design and implementation of the most effective and innovative approaches that meet the needs of their educators, students, and families.

¹ The remaining funds were awarded under the Race to the Top Assessment program. More information about the Race to the Top Assessment program is available at www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment.

² More information on the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html>.

³ More information on Race to the Top – District can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-district/index.html>.

⁴ Participating local educational agencies (LEAs) are those LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's Memorandum of Understanding with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

Race to the Top program review

As part of the Department's commitment to supporting States as they implement ambitious reform agendas, the Department established the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) in the Office of the Deputy Secretary to administer, among others, the Race to the Top program. The goal of the ISU was to provide assistance to States as they implement unprecedented and comprehensive reforms to improve student outcomes. Consistent with this goal, the Department has developed a Race to the Top program review process that not only addresses the Department's responsibilities for fiscal and programmatic oversight, but is also designed to identify areas in which Race to the Top grantees need assistance and support to meet their goals. Specifically, the ISU worked with Race to the Top grantees to differentiate support based on individual State needs, and helped States work with each other and with experts to achieve and sustain educational reforms that improve student outcomes. In partnership with the ISU, the Reform Support Network (RSN) offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to Race to the Top grantees. The RSN's purpose is to support Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other, and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.⁵ At the end of Year 4, the Department created the Office of State Support to continue to provide support to States across programs as they implement comprehensive reforms. The Office of State Support will administer programs previously administered by the ISU.

Grantees are accountable for the implementation of their approved Race to the Top plans, and the information and data gathered throughout the program review process help to inform the Department's management and support of the Race to the Top grantees, as well as provide appropriate and timely updates to the public on their progress. In the event that adjustments are required to an approved plan, the grantee must submit a formal amendment request to the Department for consideration. States may submit for Department approval amendment requests to a plan and budget, provided such changes do not significantly affect the scope or objectives of the approved plans. In the event that the Department determines that a grantee is not meeting its goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the Department will take appropriate enforcement action(s), consistent with 34 CFR section 80.43 in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).⁶

⁵ More information can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/index.html>.

⁶ More information about the Implementation and Support Unit's (ISU's) program review process, State Annual Performance Report (APR) data, and State Scopes of Work can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>.

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State-specific summary report

The Department uses the information gathered during the review process (e.g., through monthly calls, onsite reviews, and *Annual Performance Reports* (APRs)) to draft State-specific summary reports. The State-specific summary report serves as an assessment of a State's annual Race to the Top implementation. The Year 4 report for Phase 2 grantees highlights successes and accomplishments, identifies challenges, and provides lessons learned from implementation from approximately September 2013 through September 2014. Given that Delaware and Tennessee's initial four-year grant periods ended in June and July 2014, respectively, for Phase 1 grantees, the Year 4 report includes the beginning of the no-cost extension year (Year 5).

State's education reform agenda

In September 2010, the Department awarded Maryland a \$249,999,182 Race to the Top four-year grant to support comprehensive education reform efforts in the State. Under the terms of the Race to the Top grant, the State must distribute at least half of the award amount to participating LEAs to support their reform efforts. Maryland stated in its Race to the Top application that it aspired to become world class in public education through implementation of its Race to the Top initiatives. The State's reform goals include the adoption of clearer and more rigorous college- and career-ready standards based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and new aligned assessments, development of a pre-kindergarten through postsecondary (P-20) longitudinal data system, a redesigned human capital framework including a new teacher and principal evaluation system, and a more cohesive approach to turning around the lowest-achieving schools. In its Race to the Top application, Maryland considered the development of a high-quality instructional improvement system (IIS) composed of multiple systems to be the centerpiece of its reform agenda, dedicating more of its Race to the Top State funds to data systems to improve instruction than to any of the other Race to the Top education reform areas.

State Years 1 through 3 summary

Maryland's Race to the Top Year 1 accomplishments included critical capacity-building at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), with the establishment of a Race to the Top office within the Division of Academic Reform and Innovation under the direction of an Assistant State Superintendent. In Year 3, MSDE began holding Race to the Top State meetings to discuss the status of each project, successes, challenges, and the quality of implementation. The meetings provide MSDE leadership with a clear understanding of the status of each Race to the Top project and with the ability to determine which projects require additional intervention or support to ensure their success.

Building on its track record of implementing rigorous expectations for students, Maryland adopted the CCSS in June 2010 to ensure that all students are prepared for college and careers. In June 2011, the State developed the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards in mathematics and English language arts (ELA), which were based on the CCSS and created with the input of Maryland educators.⁷ To support educators, the State developed frameworks based on the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards to define the skills and knowledge that students must have in order to achieve the goals of the CCSS and guide the State's development of curriculum resources. Using these frameworks and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Model Content frameworks, Maryland educators developed model units and lessons in ELA and mathematics for each grade level for use across the State.

In Years 1, 2, and 3, Maryland hosted summer Educator Effectiveness Academies to provide professional development on the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. The Educator Effectiveness Academies were held at 11 regional sites across the State each year and included participation of more than 6,000 teachers and principals from every school in the State. In Years 1 and 2, participants were introduced to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and frameworks. In Year 3, participants explored the State's curriculum management system (CMS) and learning management system (LMS), developed transition plans for school year (SY) 2013-2014 to guide Maryland College and Career Ready Standards implementation, and participated in content-based school team sessions on ELA, mathematics, and the Next Generation Science Standards. Maryland also held two Teacher Induction Academies, reaching over 900 new teacher mentors and induction coordinators in an effort to ensure that all new teachers in Maryland public schools participate in a high-quality, supportive teacher induction program. Additionally, Maryland held its first Academy for School Turnaround for executive officers and principals from low-achieving schools around the State in summer 2012.

Maryland's Breakthrough Center continued to lead the State's efforts to turn around its lowest-achieving schools during Years 1-3 in Baltimore City Public School (BCPS) and Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), where all of the State's lowest-achieving schools are located. During Year 3, the Breakthrough Center provided instructional, leadership, and student services supports to those schools.

As part of its technology initiatives, Maryland set out to build a statewide technology infrastructure that links LEA, MSDE, institution of higher education (IHE), and workforce data systems; creates an instructional improvement system to give teachers more usable data about their students; and enhances its electronic resources to equip teachers with curriculum information, model lessons, formative assessments, and professional development opportunities. The State launched its P-20 Workforce Data Warehouse and Center

⁷ The Maryland College and Career Ready Standards were previously referred to as the Maryland Common Core State Standards (MCCSS).

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linking MSDE, IHE, and workforce data in January 2013, five months ahead of schedule. However, the State experienced delays in implementing upgrades to the technology infrastructure for the Maryland Longitudinal Data System, data dashboards, multi-media training modules to support implementation of the data dashboards, and in securing additional resources aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.

In SY 2011-2012, Maryland did not set clear expectations for the pilot of its new teacher and principal evaluation system, which occurred in select schools within seven LEAs. This led to significant variability among LEAs' pilot activities and posed challenges to the State's ability to gather meaningful and consistent data on the outcomes of the pilot. In response, the State developed a plan for implementation and evaluation of the SY 2012-2013 statewide field test of its evaluation system that included data collection and analysis, communication activities, and LEA capacity-building. From January to March 2013, all participating LEAs conducted a field test of the evaluation system. MSDE states that the purpose of this field test was to provide a collaborative and innovative platform for LEAs to develop and test components of their teacher and principal evaluation systems in preparation for full implementation of the system.

State Year 4 summary

Accomplishments

During Year 4, Maryland supported educators as they fully implemented the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards in SY 2013-2014 and field tested the PARCC assessments in preparation for implementation in SY 2014-2015. The State expanded its resources, including unit plans for every grade level in ELA and mathematics aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, Maryland High School Assessment (HSA) hybrid/blended courses, and resources focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and disciplinary literacy for each grade band, available to educators in its joint LMS and CMS. The State also created a new STEM certification for pre-service and existing teachers.

In summer 2014, the State held College and Career Readiness Conferences for educators across the State. The purpose of the conferences was to expand on the information provided in the previous Educator Effectiveness Academies, build leadership capacity, and examine differentiated instructional approaches to implement the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and prepare for the administration of the PARCC assessments. Although the sessions were voluntary, over 3,300 educators from across the State attended the two-day conferences.

The State provided comprehensive professional development to all participating LEAs as they implemented new teacher and principal evaluation systems. Data collected from these sessions helped MSDE assess LEA confidence in implementing the evaluation process and

informed subsequent professional development opportunities. Under the new evaluation systems, teachers and principals are evaluated on measures of professional practice, as well as student growth measured by State assessments and Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). Although teachers received a student growth rating based on State assessments in SY 2013-2014 this component was not included in the final rating of record.

In order to expand the number of STEM educators in the State, MSDE finalized the requirements for the undergraduate elementary STEM teacher certificate and passed a new regulation for existing teachers to be endorsed as instructional leaders in STEM. Twelve IHEs have worked to change their undergraduate and/or post-graduate programs to ensure teachers are prepared to teach integrated STEM content. Two IHEs and one alternative preparation program piloted the new Elementary STEM teacher certificate requirements in SY 2013-2014.

Challenges

While Maryland made progress implementing its Race to the Top initiatives in Year 4, the State continued to struggle with activities related to its technology and IIS projects. As part of its goal to equip all teachers and leaders with a high-quality IIS, the State completed the development of its CMS and LMS in summer 2013. However, findings from the State's first CCSS survey and onsite visits indicated that many teachers were seemingly unaware of the web-based resources that are available through the State's IIS; according to a spring 2014 survey of teachers across the State, only one in five teachers had accessed the CMS and LMS during SY 2013-2014. Furthermore, those educators that were aware of the resources reported that they did not use them consistently.

In its application, Maryland committed to developing a comprehensive assessment system that helps educators improve classroom instruction. Due to capacity challenges and procurement delays, the State is significantly delayed in the development of formative assessments that will provide educators with a robust item bank to assess student progress, guide instructional planning, and support the transition to PARCC assessments. As a result, the State did not make performance tasks or formative items available to educators to assist in the transition to PARCC assessments during SY 2013-2014. Additionally, the State did not implement a centralized test item bank or computer adaptive testing system. In Year 4 the State finalized a plan for the design and implementation of a formative assessment system, including a formative assessment item bank that includes items aligned to PARCC.

Looking ahead

Although the State has made progress in meeting the goals outlined in its Race to the Top application, additional work remains to fully realize its original vision. Maryland will administer PARCC assessments statewide in SY 2014-2015. During a no-cost extension

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period of its Race to the Top grant in SY 2014-2015, MSDE will expand its communication efforts to ensure educators are aware of the resources that are available through the CMS and LMS and will continue to provide additional resources including online STEM courses and instructional intervention modules to support educators. Additionally, the State will develop formative assessment items and performance tasks aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and support LEAs with the implementation of the State's formative assessment educator professional development modules.

The State will continue to provide support to LEAs as they implement their teacher and principal evaluation system, drawing support from Maryland's key education organizations and providing subgrants to LEAs to support LEAs with implementation of

teacher and principal evaluation systems during a no-cost extension period of its Race to the Top grant in SY 2014-2015 (e.g., analysis of SY 2013-2014 evaluation data, refinement of local evaluation models, and professional development). In SY 2014-2015, MSDE will focus on aligning communications, streamlining teacher and principal evaluations, and developing the skills of current and future principals. The State will also continue to support new teachers through its Teacher Induction Academy and LEA onsite visits.

During Year 5, MSDE will continue to support the work of LEAs across the State. Of its 22 participating LEAs, four LEAs have been approved to continue work during the no-cost extension period including support for implementation of educator evaluation systems, formative assessments, and local curriculum development.

State Success Factors

Race to the Top States are developing a comprehensive and coherent approach to education reform. This involves creating plans to build strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain the reforms initiated by the Race to the Top grant program.

Building capacity to support LEAs

In order to manage the day-to-day implementation of its grant initiatives, Maryland established a Race to the Top office within the Division of Academic Reform and Innovation at MSDE in Year 1 to assess progress towards the goals outlined in its approved plan. In Year 4, Maryland continued to hold Race to the Top Stat meetings to discuss the status of each Race to the Top project and determine if projects required additional intervention in order to meet the State's goals. The meetings, facilitated by the MSDE Chief Performance Officer, Chief Operating Officer, and Assistant Superintendent for the Division of Academic Policy and Innovation, allowed the State to examine successes, challenges, and the quality of implementation, including supporting evidence, for each project. In Year 4, the Stat meeting discussions also included sustainability. In addition, MSDE revised its internal financial processes to ensure timely and accurate reporting of expenditures and available funds. MSDE continued to provide the State Board of Education an updated analysis of the status of each project, rated on a four-point scale. For those projects that are rated in the lowest two rankings, the State provides an explanation for the rating, as well as a plan to improve implementation of that project.

MSDE participated in the RSN's Sustainability Workgroup, designed to support State Education Agencies (SEAs) in sustaining their highest-priority reforms for improving student achievement

beyond the life of the Race to the Top grant. Participating SEAs worked to assess the current sustainability of their priority reforms against comprehensive criteria; took action to ensure those priority reforms can be sustained; empowered staff to manage progress on sustainability strategies using performance management systems and processes; and contributed learnings throughout the RSN and other States.

Support and accountability for LEAs

In order to ensure that Race to the Top was successfully implemented, Maryland focused on communication and support for its participating LEAs. MSDE is working across divisions to provide comprehensive communication and support to LEAs, while also ensuring that the LEAs are implementing Race to the Top reforms. MSDE began holding LEA Stat meetings with participating LEAs during SY 2013-2014 to assess local progress, identify areas where LEAs require additional support, and discuss sustainability of Race to the Top reforms. Although the LEA Stat meetings provided MSDE with helpful information regarding LEA progress with implementation and potential fiscal concerns, they did not consistently provide MSDE with information about the quality of implementation. In addition, both MSDE and LEAs indicated that the LEA Stat meetings have focused primarily on programmatic requirements such as amendments to help reduce reporting burden. Participating LEAs continued to submit monthly

State Success Factors

reports to State-level liaisons at MSDE, which allowed the State to assess an LEA's progress against its Scope of Work, identify strengths and weaknesses, and provide targeted support in areas of need. In June 2014, participating LEAs also submitted an end-of-year report on their progress for Year 4. In addition to reporting the status of project activities and budget, the State's mid-year reporting tool asked LEAs to describe progress against annual milestones, quality of implementation, and the impact of project activities on teacher and principals. MSDE also conducted onsite reviews to all participating LEAs in spring 2014 to gather information about implementation and how the State can provide targeted resources and supports to LEAs and schools.

In fall 2013 and spring 2014, MSDE, in partnership with the University System of Maryland's Center for Applications and Innovative Research in Education (CAIRE), conducted a survey of educators across the State to gather feedback on implementation of the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. The survey included questions about familiarity and readiness to teach the new standards, awareness of MSDE resources available to support curricular and instructional delivery, and expectations about student mastery as a result of the change to the standards and related changes to curriculum. The State used the survey results and information from onsite visits to better understand common challenges and ways in which educators need additional support or resources.

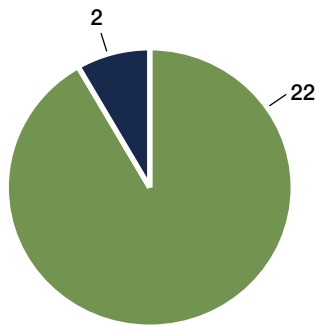
In fall 2013, the State developed a training plan designed to help MSDE staff better identify dependencies between reform efforts and Race to the Top projects and opportunities for collaboration in training and professional development for LEAs and educators. Through SY 2013-2014, Maryland continued to host professional development academies to support educators across the State (see *Standards and Assessments*). The conferences included sessions on instructional leadership, formative assessment, Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, transition to PARCC assessments, and educator evaluation. In summer 2014, the State held College and Career Readiness Conferences at eight locations across the State. Although the College and Career Readiness Conferences were optional for teachers and principals, over 3,300 educators chose to attend the conferences. Overall, participants found the conferences valuable and appreciated that they were able to choose sessions that were specific to their needs.

LEA participation

Twenty-two of Maryland's 24 LEAs agreed to participate in the State's Race to the Top plan and continued to participate throughout Year 4. Although the two remaining LEAs, Frederick County and Montgomery County, are not fully participating in Race to the Top, they are involved in some aspects of the work. For example, these LEAs participated in the College and Career Readiness Conferences during summer 2014.

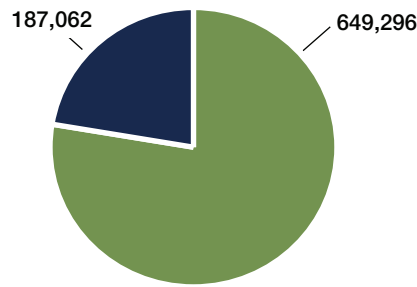
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LEAs participating in Maryland's Race to the Top plan



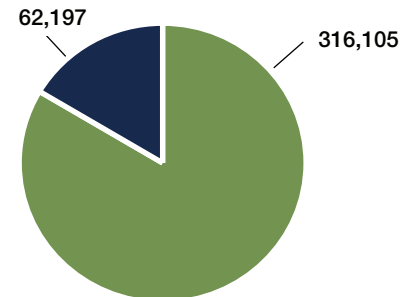
■ Participating LEAs (#)
■ Involved LEAs (#)

K-12 students in LEAs participating in Maryland's Race to the Top plan



■ K-12 students (#) in participating LEAs
■ K-12 students (#) in involved LEAs

Students in poverty in LEAs participating in Maryland's Race to the Top plan



■ Students in poverty (#) in participating LEAs
■ Students in poverty (#) in involved LEAs

The number of K-12 students and number of students in poverty statewide are calculated using pre-release data from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD). Students in poverty statewide comes from the CCD measure of the number of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch subsidy (commonly used as a proxy for the number of students who are economically disadvantaged in a school) under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program. The students in poverty statewide and number of K-12 students statewide counts are aggregations of school-level counts summed to State-level counts. Statistical procedures were applied systematically by CCD to these data to prevent potential disclosure of information about individual students as well as for data quality assurance; consequently State-level counts may differ from those originally reported by the State. Please note that these data are considered to be preliminary as of September 8, 2014.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

Stakeholder engagement

Key activities and stakeholders

In June 2014, Maryland's major education organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to help further strengthen educator evaluations, including coordinating resources and strategies in the development of SLOs. The MOU was signed by MSDE, the Maryland State Board of Education, Maryland State Educators Association, Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland, Maryland Association of Boards of Education, Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals, Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals, and the Baltimore Teachers Union.

Throughout SY 2013-2014, Maryland began sending frequent updates to LEA Superintendents, other LEA points of contact, MSDE leadership, and external stakeholders to ensure timely and informative communication on implementation of the teacher and principal evaluation systems.

The State also continued its partnership with IHEs and the business community as part of its Race to the Top work. For example, MSDE held meetings with Maryland IHEs to provide updates and resources on CCSS and PARCC implementation and continued to collaborate to enhance and develop new teacher preparation programs.

Continuous improvement

The State reported that the primary method it uses to assess the quality of implementation of grant activities is through the program evaluation conducted by CAIRE. In Year 3, MSDE performed an in-depth review of CAIRE's work and decided to shift its focus to the outcomes of each project, rather than the progress of each project against its Scope of Work. As a result, the State will now receive 11 summative evaluations, which assess the outcomes of 25 projects, and 13 case studies of the Breakthrough Center. Throughout Year 4, each project manager worked with CAIRE to develop measurable outcomes that can be used to assess the impact of each Race to the Top project. MSDE indicated that project managers must include

State Success Factors

information on their progress assessing the measurable outcomes through the State's Race to the Top Stat reporting process.

CAIRE completed the case studies of the Breakthrough Center in summer 2014 and provided a summary of their major findings in September 2014, which include: (1) teachers report that the Breakthrough Center has helped them introduce multiple innovations in their classrooms; (2) the Breakthrough Center was identified as a key party in providing professional development, ongoing mentoring and support for teachers, student service intervention support, and student behavior support; and (3) participants in the study identified the purpose of the Breakthrough Center as "helping schools perform to their best ability," and as a team that is "committed and experienced." CAIRE provided several recommendations for the Breakthrough Center, including creating opportunities for teachers to network with colleagues at other schools; supporting collaborations between instructional and non-instructional staff in order to increase capacity; and increasing opportunities for teachers to focus on data-based instruction in their classrooms.

Successes and challenges

In Year 3, MSDE recognized that it needed more robust routines to assess State-level progress towards meeting the goals outlined in its Race to the Top plan and the quality of implementation. In response, the State held Race to the Top Stat meetings to discuss the status of each Race to the Top project and determine where projects require additional intervention. As a result, the State was able to

provide targeted support and oversight and direct resources to those projects that were not progressing as expected. At the local level, the State held LEA Stat meetings to assess local progress, identify areas where LEAs require additional support, and discuss sustainability of Race to the Top reforms. However, throughout Year 4, the meetings continued to focus on programmatic issues and potential fiscal concerns, rather than the quality of information and the impact of State reforms at the local level.

To assess the needs of LEAs, Maryland collected formative feedback on LEA capacity and the quality of implementation of the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards through a survey administered in fall 2013 and spring 2014, as well as onsite reviews. In response to the surveys and onsite visits, MSDE tailored the content and sessions of the College and Career Ready conferences held in summer 2014 to meet the specific needs of educators across the State. During the no-cost extension period, the State will continue to administer the survey in partnership with CAIRE.

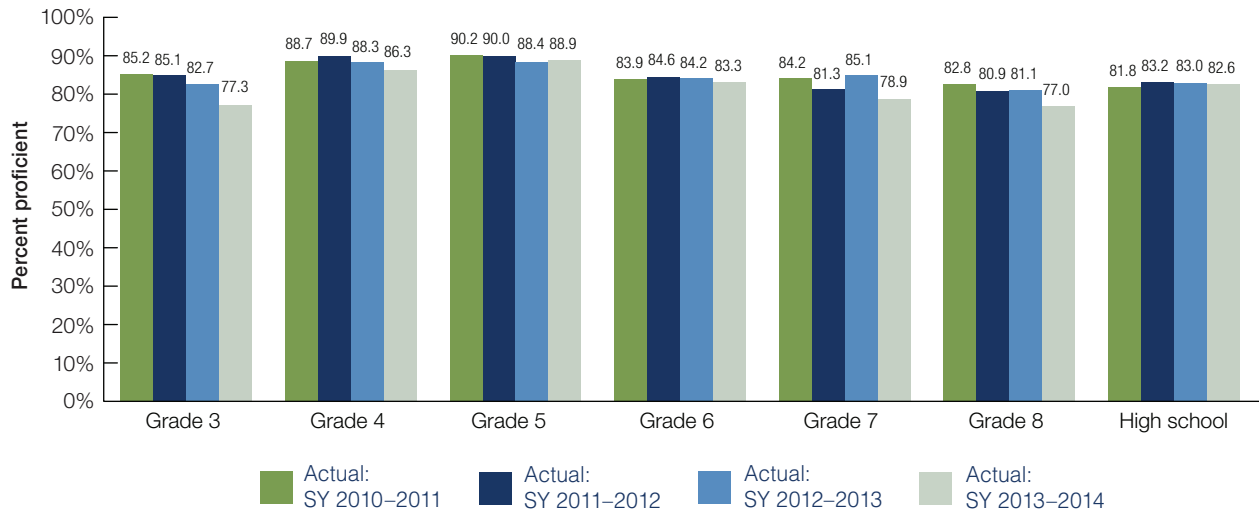
Throughout Years 1-3, the State did not receive timely evaluation information from CAIRE that could be used to inform implementation. Therefore, at the start of Year 4, MSDE worked with CAIRE to revise its Scope of Work and key deliverables. MSDE narrowed the number and scope of the evaluations CAIRE will complete in Year 4 to ensure it receives more timely feedback before the end of the grant period. MSDE reports that the State prioritized those projects requesting a no-cost extension to ensure that the State could implement any necessary mid-course corrections before Year 5. However, as of September 2014, the State had not yet received the results from CAIRE.

State Success Factors

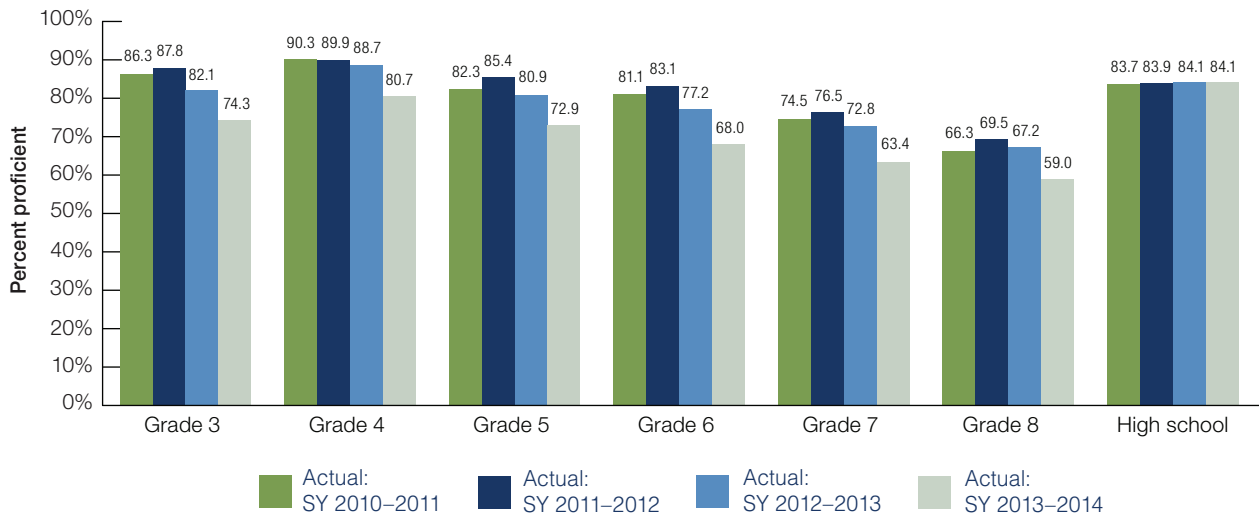
Student outcomes data

In SY 2013-2014, Maryland State Assessment (MSA) rates of proficiency generally decreased slightly in ELA in elementary and middle schools as the State continued to transition to the new College and Career Ready Standards. In mathematics, MSA rates of proficiency declined across grades three-eight and remained constant in high school.

Student proficiency on Maryland's ELA assessment



Student proficiency on Maryland's mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: October 10, 2014.

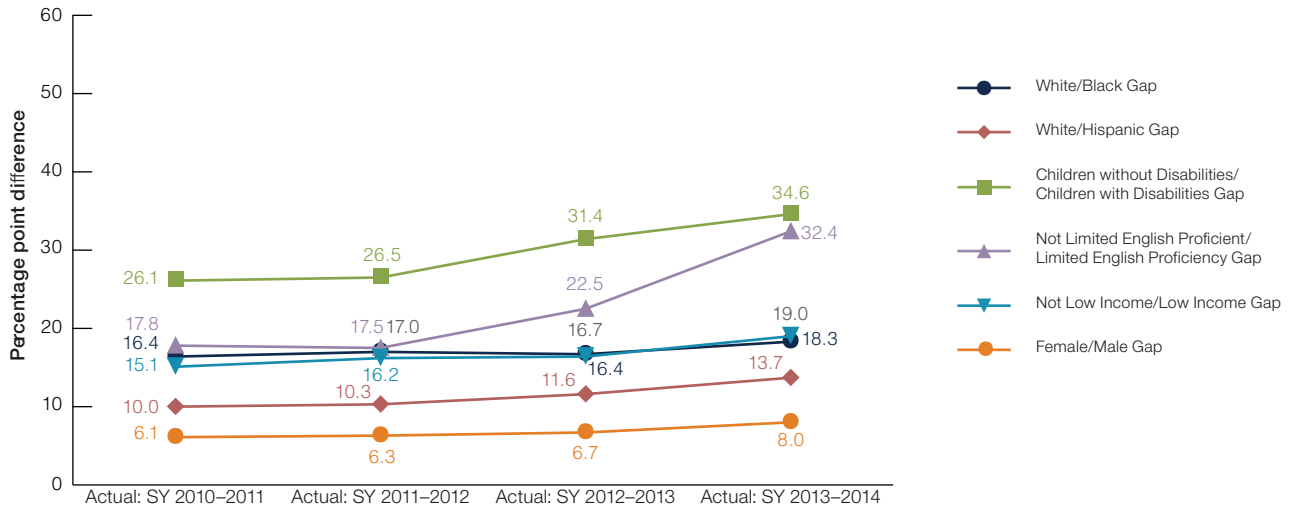
NOTE: Over the last four years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

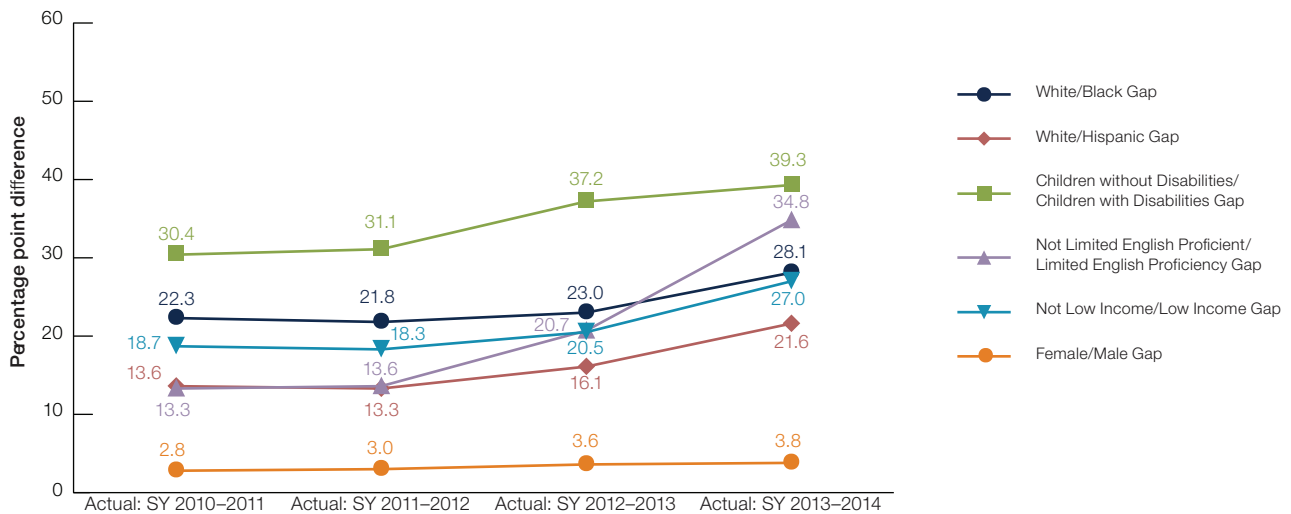
State Success Factors

Between SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014, achievement gaps on Maryland's ELA and mathematics assessments increased slightly across all sub-groups. The gap between limited English proficient and non-limited English proficient students increased by approximately 10 percentage points in ELA and mathematics.

Achievement gap on Maryland's ELA assessment



Achievement gap on Maryland's mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: November 10, 2014.

Numbers in the graph represent the gap over four school years between two sub-groups on the State's ELA and mathematics assessments.

Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing sub-group from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing sub-group to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two sub-groups.

If the achievement gap narrowed between two sub-groups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two sub-groups, the line will slope upward.

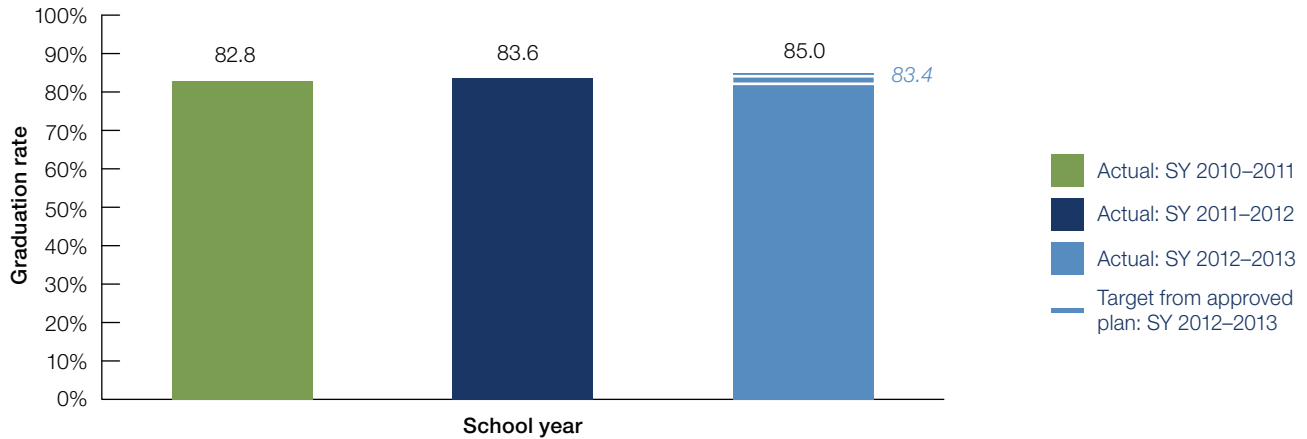
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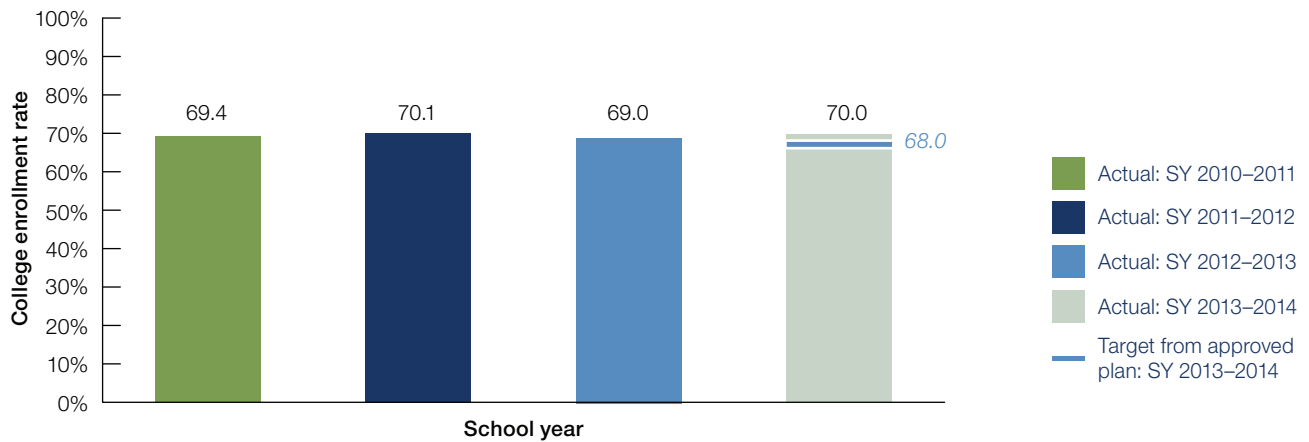
High school graduation performance increased slightly in SY 2013-2014. Finally, the State showed a slight increase in college enrollment.

High school graduation rate



Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data reported as of: September 15, 2014.
 For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

College enrollment rate



Preliminary SY 2013-2014 data reported as of: September 10, 2014.
 For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.
 The Department provided guidance to States regarding the reporting period for college enrollment. For SY 2013-2014 data, States report on the students who graduated from high school in SY 2011-2012 and enrolled in an institution of higher education (IHE).

Standards and Assessments

Implementing rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career is an integral aspect of education reform in all Race to the Top States.

Supporting the transition to college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments

In June 2010, the Maryland State Board of Education adopted the CCSS for ELA and mathematics for kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12). All public schools in the State fully implemented the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards in classrooms in SY 2013-2014. Maryland is also a governing member of PARCC, and is committed to administering PARCC assessments statewide in SY 2014-2015 as outlined in its Race to the Top plan. In SY 2013-2014, MSDE piloted the PARCC assessment in one grade-level in every school in the State to prepare for implementation across the State in SY 2014-2015.

To support the transition to PARCC assessments, the State finalized development of a plan for the design and implementation of a formative assessment system, including a formative assessment item bank that includes items aligned to PARCC. Due to capacity challenges and procurement delays, the State is significantly delayed in the development and implementation of this project; as a result, the formative assessment system was not available for use by LEAs until SY 2014-2015. To inform its revised plan, MSDE spoke with all LEAs in the State who expressed a great need for formative assessment items and performance tasks. In spring 2014, MSDE piloted five online professional development modules as part of its Formative Assessment for Maryland Educators (FAME) initiative. FAME is a yearlong collaborative professional learning initiative that consists of five online professional development modules, classroom application activities, and building level focus groups designed to support formative assessment implementation in schools. The State plans to make the modules available to educators through its CMS and LMS in all LEAs in SY 2014-2015. In summer 2014, MSDE conducted leadership training for principals, facilitators, and central office staff participating in FAME during SY 2014-2015. In addition, the State secured a suite of formative assessment items that will be made available to all LEAs through the CMS and LMS. The State also conducted summer leadership institutes for educators from 36 schools in 12 LEAs on utilizing formative assessments in the classroom.

Dissemination of resources and professional development

To support educators as they implement new standards and transition to new assessments, MSDE provided professional development opportunities and created new resources. In summer 2014, the State hosted College and Career Readiness Conferences for over 3,300 educators across the State. During the three-day

conferences, educators attended sessions of their choice on topics including the transition to Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, PARCC assessments, formative instruction, and instructional leadership. Overall, participants found the conferences valuable and appreciated that they were able to choose sessions that were specific to their needs, unlike the previous Educator Effectiveness Academies.

In order to bolster the resources available to educators and support the transition to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, the State added over 1,000 resources and lesson seeds – ideas for specific indicators or objectives that can be used to build a lesson – to the State’s CMS and LMS in mathematics, ELA, high school fine arts, and social studies. The State also worked to expand its instructional toolkit that includes professional development modules and courses for teachers, as well as intervention modules for students (see *Data Systems to Support Instruction*).

Literacy Design Collaborative in Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS)

To support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, BCPS has focused on literacy across all grades and subjects, including science, social studies, and technical subjects. BCPS provided professional development on the diagnostic assessments, instructional resources, and Literacy Design Collaborative modules. Specifically, in pre-kindergarten, BCPS enhanced its online scripted curriculum to include ten literacy units aligned to the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards. BCPS provided schools with four Literacy Design Collaborative modules that were developed in partnership with the Aspen Institute’s Urban Literacy Leaders Network for English and social studies teachers in grades six through twelve. BCPS has continued to implement literacy diagnostic assessments to make data-driven instructional decisions.

In partnership with CAIRE, MSDE conducted a survey of educators across the State to assess the transition to Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. In addition to the survey, MSDE staff conducted onsite visits to all LEAs to assess implementation of the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and gather feedback on the effectiveness of the resources provided in the CMS and LMS. Although the State made progress with developing web-based resources, findings from the first survey in fall 2013 indicated that more than one-third of teachers reported being “not at all familiar” with the resources available through Maryland’s CMS and LMS; moreover, in spring 2014, nearly four out of five teachers reported not having accessed the CMS and LMS. However, teachers reported substantial familiarity with the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, especially in those content areas for which they are

Standards and Assessments

responsible for instruction. The State plans to administer the survey again in fall 2014 to determine where educators need additional support.

Successes and challenges

To ensure that all students in Maryland are prepared for college and careers, the State set out to: (1) adopt more rigorous standards, (2) implement common high-quality assessments, (3) ensure that the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards are translated into a challenging and engaging curriculum in all classrooms, and (4) support implementation of new standards and assessments through a technology infrastructure and longitudinal data system that can identify student progress and help educators differentiate instruction. Maryland will fully implement the PARCC assessments across the State during SY 2014-2015. As noted above, findings from the first CAIRE survey in fall 2013 indicated that all teachers were not aware of the resources that MSDE made available through its CMS and LMS to support implementation of the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. To address the needs of educators, as well as feedback from the Educator Effectiveness Academies in Years 1-3, the State offered College and Career

Ready Conferences in summer 2014 that allowed educators to attend sessions based on their specific needs. Feedback from the College and Career Ready Conferences was overwhelmingly positive. During Year 5, MSDE will once again administer the CAIRE survey to educators across the State to assess the transition to Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and identify where the State can provide additional support.

Through SY 2014-2015, the State will implement the FAME initiative, including development of performance-based items for grades 1 and 2. Building on its summer leadership institute, educators from 32 schools in 12 LEAs will participate in a year-long collaborative professional development program to support teachers in their use of formative assessment practices in instruction. Although significantly delayed, the project will provide 4,900 selected response items and 984 performance-based tasks aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and PARCC assessments by June 2015. The items will be made available to LEAs through the CMS and LMS; LEAs will be able to upload the items to their local assessment systems for use by educators. MSDE will also work with LEAs to develop sustainability plans for integrating formative assessment practices into existing professional development plans.

Data Systems to Support Instruction

Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) and instructional improvement systems (IIS) enhance the ability of States to effectively manage, use, and analyze education data to support instruction. Race to the Top States are working to ensure that their data systems are accessible to key stakeholders and that the data support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system

As of June 30, 2011, Maryland reported that its SLDS met all 12 elements identified in the America COMPETES Act. In January 2013, the State completed the development and implementation of the P-20 Workforce Data Warehouse and Center, including a public-facing portal and secure dashboards.

Accessing and using State data

In Year 4, Maryland continued to expand and upgrade its data systems to support Race to the Top initiatives. Although delayed from its original timeline, MSDE completed the infrastructure for its K-12 longitudinal data system, which will allow the State to aggregate

data and make it publicly accessible through data dashboards. MSDE finalized production of 34 of its 36 data dashboards that accompany the K-12 LDS in Year 4; these dashboards include information on student outcomes, early childhood, educator certification, educator preparation programs, and school finance. To support stakeholders in using the dashboards, MSDE created 40 multi-media training modules. Although the State has been developing dashboards and training modules for the past three years, the State has experienced continued challenges and significant delays due to capacity and technology issues. As a result, stakeholders were not able to access the dashboards and training modules until SY 2014-2015. Through September 2014, the State continued to build a decentralized security model that will allow LEAs to control access to the data dashboards, in alignment with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). MSDE worked with LEA LDS data coaches in September 2014 to support the integration of data with

Data Systems to Support Instruction

instruction; MSDE originally planned to train the LEA data coaches in Years 2 and 3.

Participating LEAs continued to implement data system upgrades and improve local data infrastructure using subgrants from the State. For example, LEAs chose to enhance wireless connections, upgrade security systems, or purchase upgraded equipment.

Using data to improve instruction

In its Race to the Top application, Maryland considered the development of a high-quality IIS composed of multiple systems to be the centerpiece of its reform agenda. For teachers and leaders, the IIS would include access to student-performance data, curriculum resources, assessment item banks, and professional development resources. The State dedicated more of its Race to the Top funds to its IIS than to any of the other Race to the Top education reform projects.

To meet its goals, the State launched its joint CMS and LMS at the Educator Effectiveness Academies in summer 2013, one year later than originally planned.⁸ The purpose of the joint CMS and LMS is to create a standardized curriculum management system that provides teachers with a rich bank of instructional resources to support the transition to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and improve and differentiate instruction. Additionally, the LMS component provides professional development to improve teacher practice. MSDE provided professional development on its CMS and LMS for over 400 LEA Content Coordinators throughout Year 4. During SY 2013-2014, MSDE expanded the resources in the CMS and LMS, including unit plans for every grade level in ELA and mathematics aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, adolescent literacy modules, and STEM and disciplinary lessons for each grade band. As part of its instructional toolkit, MSDE also worked with a vendor to expand its repository of high-quality online resources (*e.g.*, lesson seeds, simulations, print and video resources) aligned with Maryland's content standards for students and teachers. Throughout Year 4, the State selected and disseminated over 3,300 resources. MSDE also developed and piloted online professional development modules, housed in the CMS and LMS, in ELA, algebra, government, STEM, and biology. The majority of instructional resources are available to the public, in addition to Maryland educators. However, findings from the first CCSS survey and MSDE's LEA onsite visits indicate that many teachers were unaware of the web-based resources available through the CMS and LMS during Year 4; in spring 2014, nearly four out of five teachers reported not having accessed the CMS and LMS (see *Standards and Assessments*).

Due to delays in the procurement process, the State was unable to develop 375 online enrichment modules for instructional intervention in ELA and mathematics during Years 3 and 4 as

⁸ The Learning Management System (LMS), a component of the State's Instructional Improvement System (IIS), will include the functionalities expected of both the Course Registration and E-Learning System within one system instead of two separate systems.

outlined in its approved plan. Throughout Year 4, MSDE developed 115 student modules for both ELA and mathematics, as well as three professional development modules in ELA and four in mathematics. Each student module includes a satisfaction survey which the State plans to analyze monthly. The State will complete development of the remaining disciplinary literacy modules with corresponding professional development in Year 5.

During SY 2013-2014, LEAs received subgrants to implement technology systems to support student instructional development. Under its original plan, MSDE planned to build a statewide system. However, after consulting with LEAs, the State determined that offering LEAs subgrants to enhance existing systems and processes that support student instructional intervention, instead of developing a statewide instructional intervention system was a more efficient and effective solution. LEAs used the funds to: (1) help subsidize local procurements for new intervention systems, (2) subsidize the expansion or enhancement of existing intervention systems, or (3) subsidize custom development to support more robust system integration between LEA data systems. Several LEAs utilized the grant funds to purchase software to implement new Response to Intervention programs.

In its original application, MSDE proposed to develop a centralized formative, interim, and benchmark test item bank and computer adaptive testing system. However, given significant delays and feedback from LEAs, MSDE provided funds to LEAs in September 2014 to procure, enhance, or expand local assessment systems instead of procuring a centralized system. LEAs will utilize these funds throughout Year 5. MSDE reports this strategy will avoid duplication of local systems and allow LEAs flexibility to expand or enhance systems already in use. As part of the subgrant process, LEAs submitted a sustainability plan that details how they will maintain their local assessment systems beyond the Race to the Top grant period.

Successes and challenges

Throughout Year 4, MSDE continued to experience delays and technological challenges in implementing upgrades to the technology infrastructure for the LDS, data dashboards, multimedia training modules to support implementation of the data dashboards, and securing additional resources aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards to meet the goals outlined in its Race to the Top application. In particular, implementation of a decentralized security model that would allow LEAs to control access to data dashboards in alignment with FERPA has been an ongoing issue, resulting in continuous delays across several related projects. As a result, the availability of many resources was delayed and resources were made available for use by educators for the first time in SY 2013-2014 or will be made available in SY 2014-2015, rather than during the first three years of the Race to the Top grant as originally anticipated.

Data Systems to Support Instruction

Although the State developed a performance management strategy for identifying dependencies between technology projects and other reform initiatives, communicating with stakeholders, training educators to ensure they know how to use and benefit from the State's technology projects, and ensuring an understanding of the linkages between the technology work and other education reform initiatives remains an ongoing challenge. The State will continue working with LEAs in Year 5 to address this challenge. Additionally, the State is just starting to track usage data of the CMS and LMS. As a result, the State was unable to determine if specific resources are meeting the needs of educators.

In Year 5, the State will continue to support stakeholders as they use the new technology systems and resources. To track usage of the data

dashboards and ensure they are meeting the needs of stakeholders, MSDE will employ a web-based tool to track the frequency each dashboard is accessed. In the CMS and LMS projects, the use of data analytics could help to determine what resources are most helpful to educators, and where additional resources are necessary to support the transition to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.

Finally, the State will work with LEAs as they utilize subgrant funds to procure, expand, or enhance their local assessment systems. LEAs will be able to upload the formative assessments items that the State is creating in their local assessment systems as they become available (see *Standards and Assessments*).

Great Teachers and Leaders

Race to the Top States are developing comprehensive systems of educator effectiveness by supporting high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals, ensuring equitable access to effective teachers and principals, improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs, and providing effective supports to all educators. As part of these efforts, Race to the Top States are designing and implementing rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals; conducting annual evaluations that include timely and constructive feedback; and using evaluation information to inform professional development, compensation, promotion, retention, and tenure decisions.

Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

During Year 4, Maryland supported participating LEAs as they implemented new teacher and principal evaluation systems. Under the new evaluation systems, teachers and principals are evaluated on measures of professional practice, as well as student growth measured by State assessments and SLOs. Although teachers received a student growth rating based on State assessments in SY 2013-2014, this component was not included in the final rating of record. In preparation for implementation in SY 2013-2014, the State approved all 22 participating LEA teacher and principal systems in fall 2013.

To support LEAs throughout SY 2013-2014, Maryland developed a strategic professional development plan centered on five sequential topic areas, including planning and pre-evaluation requirements, maintaining the annual evaluation workload, scoring the component pieces of the evaluation systems, and developing and aligning school improvement plans, meant to build LEA capacity to support implementation of the evaluation systems. At the end of each topic area, MSDE convened a quality control group that serves as a feedback loop to gauge the impact of the professional development activities. Data collected from these sessions helped MSDE assess LEA confidence in implementing the evaluation process and inform

future professional development opportunities. Several LEAs spoke highly of the support offered by MSDE in SY 2013-2014.

MSDE also held five summits for Executive Officers to provide practical support as they moved through the annual evaluation cycle. Unlike previous years, MSDE developed a specific set of outcomes to serve as the basis for all Executive Officer training to ensure consistency across LEAs. Topics included SLO creation; analyzing relevant data and evidence to assist in goal setting; conducting a meaningful mid-year principal evaluation; and ensuring readiness for the evaluation process.

In June 2014, Maryland's major education organizations signed an MOU dedicated to help strengthen educator evaluations by, among other things, coordinating resources and strategies in the development of SLOs. The MOU was signed by MSDE, the Maryland State Board of Education, Maryland State Educators Association, Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland, Maryland Association of Boards of Education, Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals, Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals, and the Baltimore Teachers Union. Representatives from all organizations will participate in professional development and communication activities, including the quality control sessions, throughout SY 2014-2015.

Great Teachers and Leaders

Throughout Year 4, Maryland participated in the RSN SLO Workgroup that provides States with structured resource sharing, targeted consultation, and field-advancing knowledge creation. In the first phase, the RSN produced several deliverables at the request of the group, including a library of annotated SLOs and a *Quality Control Toolkit* that outlines a framework to help States implement high-quality SLOs and links to existing State resources and tools. In the second phase, the RSN structured the activities of the workgroup around three topics identified by States as urgent needs: educator engagement, monitoring and assessment development and procurement. For phase three, the RSN assembled a workgroup of State/LEA partnership teams comprised of State leaders and leaders from up to three of their LEAs to develop strategies for implementing and sustaining systems of high quality SLOs.

Ensuring equitable access to effective teachers and principals

In Year 4, Maryland continued to work toward its goals of increasing equitable access to effective teachers and principals in high-poverty, high-minority, and hard-to-staff schools. Through its Teach for Maryland Consortium, MSDE partnered with 10 IHEs that focus on: (1) preparing teacher candidates to meet the requirements for teaching in a high-poverty/high-minority context, (2) developing and implementing a research project relevant to teaching in high-poverty/high-minority schools, and (3) instituting a clinical experience in a high-poverty/high-minority school. MSDE reported that over 250 teacher candidate interns have completed a teacher preparation program aligned to these requirements.

The State made awards again in September 2013 to BCPS to establish LEA-specific programs to reward effective teachers and principals serving in the State's lowest-achieving five percent of schools. PGCPs chose not to participate in Year 4. In SY 2012-2013, 139 teachers and principals in BCPS and 55 teachers and principals in PGCPs met the LEA's eligibility criteria and received an incentive. In order to receive the award, teachers and school administrators must work in one of Maryland's lowest-achieving five percent of schools. Three LEAs, Kent County, Baltimore County and Baltimore City Public Schools, also received subgrants to provide incentives for teachers in shortage areas, such as STEM, English language learners, and special education, in SY 2013-2014. The State, in partnership with CAIRE, plans to conduct an evaluation to determine if the incentives influenced teacher retention. CAIRE surveyed a number of the teachers who received stipends and their principals, and conducted interviews with several principals in participating schools. CAIRE found that when the stipends were used to attract teachers to work in eligible schools, both teachers and principals reported positive results. CAIRE stated that principals reported that "the teachers hired through the program were successful and impactful in their schools." In addition, through a program offering incentives to teachers who obtain English for Speakers of Other

Languages (ESOL) certification, the State certified 267 ESOL teachers in 18 LEAs in Year 4.

Through its partnership with New Leaders for New Schools, MSDE recruited and placed 69 aspiring school leaders in BCPS and PGCPs in the New Leaders for New Schools Aspiring Principals program. In addition, five rural LEAs, with support from Salisbury University and New Leaders for New Schools, selected and trained 25 principal candidates. At the end of the grant period, all 25 candidates received the Educational Administration certificate and 15 were placed in leadership positions including Superintendent, Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean, and Supervisor.

Providing effective support to teachers and principals

In Year 4, the State held College and Career Ready Academies to support educators in implementing the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and utilizing the State's technology systems (see *Standards and Assessments* and *Data Systems to Support Instruction*). The College and Career Ready Conferences offered sessions that were differentiated based on the needs of educators, rather than the standardized approach of the previous summer academies. Maryland also hosted webinars throughout SY 2013-2014 for educators, covering topics such as formative assessments, Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for mathematics, and targeted sessions for Master Teachers. Over 3,500 educators participated in the live sessions or accessed the recorded versions through the State's CMS and LMS.

As part of its Race to the Top plan, Maryland committed to developing 12 professional development courses in Year 4 to provide virtual training to educators and offer long-term access to the content and information offered through the previous Educator Effectiveness Academies. In Year 4, the State completed development of the first five professional development courses, including: middle school mathematics; English 10; English 11; elementary mathematics; and middle school ELA. Those courses will be made available to educators in fall 2014. The State will procure the remaining courses in Year 5.

In summer 2014, Maryland launched the Governor's Principal Pipeline initiative. Based on feedback from superintendents and needs identified by the State, the Principal Pipeline initiative will include a year-long leadership development program for promising principals, with the goal of increasing LEA capacity to implement and sustain Maryland's reform agenda. The Principal Pipeline initiative included a summer Governor's Principals' Academy. Throughout SY 2014-2015, the State will hold three additional meetings, which current principals may also attend, that will focus on content and needs identified by LEA superintendents.

Since the beginning of the grant, Maryland has held two Teacher Induction Academies, reaching over 900 new teacher mentors

Great Teachers and Leaders

and induction coordinators in an effort to ensure that all new teachers in Maryland public schools participate in a high-quality, supportive teacher induction program. Following the 2013 Teacher Induction Academy focused on “Mentoring for the Common Core: Reaching All Students,” Maryland held two webinars for Induction Coordinators and Mentors and continued to hold quarterly meetings for all 24 LEAs. After Race to the Top, the State plans to continue holding quarterly meetings and online communities for induction coordinators and mentors to ensure that all teachers have the opportunity to participate in a high-quality, supportive teacher induction program.

Successes and challenges

Throughout SY 2013-2014, MSDE provided professional development and ongoing support to participating LEAs as they implemented the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and new teacher and principal evaluation systems. In summer 2014, the State modified its approach to providing professional development on the new standards by holding College and Career Ready Conferences. Unlike the Educator Effectiveness Academies held in Years 1-3, the College and Career Ready Conferences were optional and allowed educators to choose from over 152 unique sessions tailored to their individual needs and interests. Over 3,300 educators participated in the academies that were held across the State.

Maryland worked closely with LEAs as they prepared for SY 2013-2014 to ensure that LEA teacher and principal evaluation models aligned with State guidance and had the technical elements in place to complete the process. Additionally, the State implemented a strategic professional development plan, including quality control groups and LEA onsite visits, to support LEAs and gather information about the implementation of evaluation systems across the State. However, information about educator confidence levels and readiness to implement the evaluation system collected through the quality control sessions did not always align with survey data collected by MSDE’s external evaluator. As a result, the State is including more stakeholders in the quality control sessions during SY 2014-2015 to have a better representation and gather more robust data on implementation. The State will also provide subgrants to LEAs to support LEAs with implementation of teacher and principal evaluation systems in SY 2014-2015.

At the end of SY 2013-2014, the State collected over 16,000 educator evaluation ratings, including all component ratings that can inform future implementation. In Year 5, a timely analysis of the data collected from SY 2013-2014 implementation of the teacher and principal evaluation system could help to inform professional development and support for LEAs in SY 2014-2015.

Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

Race to the Top States are supporting LEAs’ implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of four school intervention models.⁹

Support for the lowest-achieving schools

MSDE created the Breakthrough Center in 2008 to provide a coherent strategy for leveraging and coordinating the State’s services to build the capacity of schools and LEAs to lead and sustain student achievement gains. The Breakthrough Center leads Maryland’s efforts to support and turn around lowest-achieving schools, and serves as a liaison among MSDE, LEAs, and schools. The State continued to utilize its Cross Functional Team, comprised of members from across MSDE, to ensure a coordinated effort in supporting the lowest-achieving schools.

In SY 2011-2012, a total of 16 schools in Maryland implemented one of the four school intervention models for the first or second consecutive year. Of this group, eight implemented the restart model and eight implemented the turnaround model. Throughout Year 4, the Breakthrough Center continued to work with the 16 schools, as well as their feeder schools, to improve student performance by providing instructional and leadership support, as well as other student support services. Based on feedback from SY 2012-2013, MSDE specialists provided between four and five job-embedded CCSS-aligned professional development trainings for teachers and leaders during SY 2013-2014. In order to assess the quality and impact of the professional development provided by

⁹ Race to the Top States’ plans include supporting their LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- **School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- **Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

the Breakthrough Center, MSDE continued to conduct mid-year and end-of-year observations to measure professional development effectiveness and inform planning for the subsequent school year. MSDE provided support to health services teams in BCPS and PGCPs to help address school attendance issues and create intervention plans. Health centers in schools in BCPS and PGCPs continued to use the technology provided through Race to the Top to increase their capacity track student records and utilize data to provide more effective student interventions.

Hillside Turnaround Schools Initiative

Through a partnership with Hillside Family of Agencies, Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) implemented the Hillside Work Scholarship Connection which provided long-term, one-on-one mentoring, academic counseling and tutoring, college preparation, and job training and job placement for select middle and high school students. The program provided wraparound services to high-risk students in selected low performing schools, and created cohesive partnerships between schools and partner agencies. During school year (SY) 2013-2014, 40 of 41 seniors graduated.

In September 2013, over 60 Executive Officers, principals, aspiring principals, and leadership teams from BCPS, PGCPS, and Baltimore County attended MSDE's Academy for School Turnaround. The Academy focused on instruction, leadership development, and school culture and climate. The State reports that more than 93 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the sessions were valuable to their professional practice.

In summer 2013, the State held a five-day Summer Staging Institute with more than 80 educators from 10 of its 14 School Improvement Grant schools from BCPS and PGCPS. The training focused on empowering school-based teams to develop and implement action plans to enhance school culture and climate. Due to staffing challenges early in the grant period, the State has struggled to provide individualized support and direct services to school-based culture and climate teams in target LEAs. Although the State held its Summer Staging Institute, through which LEAs developed action plans, the State has not had the staff capacity to provide follow-up monitoring and technical assistance to these schools. The State plans to continue to support this work after the Race to the Top grant period.

The State continued its partnership with CAIRE to design an evaluation plan to assess the outcomes and impact of all Breakthrough Center projects. During Year 4, CAIRE completed 13 case studies that analyzed the services and work of the Breakthrough Center. Findings indicate that: (1) teachers stated that the Breakthrough Center helped them introduce multiple innovations in their classrooms; (2) the Breakthrough Center was identified as a key party in providing professional development, ongoing mentoring and support for teachers, student service intervention support, and student behavior support; (3) the purpose of the Breakthrough Center is to help schools improve performance; and (4) that MSDE staff is committed and experienced. CAIRE provided several recommendations for the Breakthrough Center, including creating opportunities for teachers to network with colleagues at other schools; supporting collaborations between instructional and non-instructional staff in order to increase capacity; and increasing opportunities for teachers to focus on data-based instruction in their classrooms. MSDE will continue providing supports through the Breakthrough Center in Year 5.

BCPS was featured in a *PROGRESS* blog post, *Parent and Community Engagement is Key Driver of School Transformation in Baltimore*, highlighting the achievement and growth made by Commodore John Rogers Elementary/Middle School. Commodore John Rogers Elementary/Middle School is one of many schools in BCPS where positive change is evident.¹⁰ *PROGRESS* is a Department blog that highlights innovative ideas, promising practices, lessons learned and resources informed by the implementation of K-12 reforms to improve education for all students.

Successes and challenges

In Year 4, Maryland continued to provide high-quality support to its lowest-achieving schools in PGCPS and BCPS. The State provided job-embedded professional development for teachers and leaders, and held two summer academies for educators on instruction and leadership development. In addition to instructional support, the State prioritized school climate and culture and health services to improve school performance. Based on success in previous years, the State will continue to provide services to its existing Priority and Focus schools identified for improvement under the State's approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility request, and newly identified Priority schools during SY 2014-2015 in Year 5.¹¹

¹⁰ The *PROGRESS* blog post is available at <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/progress/2014/05/parent-and-community-engagement-is-key-driver-of-school-transformation-in-baltimore/>.

¹¹ On September 23, 2011, the Department offered each interested State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility ("ESEA flexibility") on behalf of itself, its LEAs, and its schools, regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (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. For more information on ESEA flexibility, see www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility. Maryland's request for flexibility from some Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provisions was approved on May 29, 2012. An extension of Maryland's request for flexibility was approved on July 18, 2014.

Charter Schools

Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools

In fall 2013, the State finalized the “Maryland Quality School Standards for Charter Schools.” The purpose of the Quality Standards is to develop a framework for charter schools to conduct self-assessments and to help guide improvement and development efforts. During Year 4, the State created and disseminated multiple publications for LEAs and charter schools to facilitate implementation of the “Maryland Quality School Standards for Charter Schools.” These publications include a model charter application to assist LEAs to complete an initial charter school application and a charter school self-assessment to provide schools support in analyzing performance of all facets of the charter schools. In January 2014, the State conducted a survey to gather information regarding the usefulness of the new resources and tools and inform technical assistance plans for charter schools moving forward. Preliminary data suggest that the majority of stakeholders surveyed agreed that they have a strong comfort level for using charter school publications on the MSDE website; however they would like additional technical assistance on implementing the resources. In response, MSDE contracted with a vendor to create a webinar series

that provided an in depth review including how to utilize the tools available to charter school stakeholders.

Although the State opened Furman L. Templeton Academy as a restart charter school in August 2011, it has continued to struggle to identify additional restart charter schools in BCPS and PGCPs as outlined in its approved Race to the Top plan. As a result, the State will expand and replicate a high-performing charter school in PGCPs in SY 2014-2015. The State will continue to provide direct support to its low-performing schools through the Breakthrough Center.

Successes and challenges

In Year 3, the State finalized its “Maryland Quality School Standards for Charter Schools,” an important milestone in the State’s project plan. Throughout SY 2013-2014, the State provided resources to LEAs and charter schools to implement the new quality standards. In response to a survey conducted in January 2014 that indicated stakeholders needed additional technical assistance, the State partnered with a vendor to create a series of webinars to support charter school stakeholders.

In SY 2014-2015, the State will expand and replicate a high-performing charter school in PGCPs to meet its original goal of expanding the number of charter schools offered in the State.

Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

Race to the Top States are committed to providing a high-quality plan with a rigorous course of study in STEM. In doing so, each State must cooperate with STEM-capable community partners in order to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students. A focus on STEM furthers the goal of preparing more students for an advanced study in sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including among underrepresented groups such as female students.

State’s STEM initiatives

In Year 4, the State finalized the requirements for the undergraduate elementary STEM teacher certificate that enables IHEs to produce more STEM educators for Maryland’s schools. If an undergraduate student meets all pre-service elementary or early childhood requirements and has a concentration in STEM education, this certificate is included as part of the candidate’s transcript. Four IHE partners and one alternative preparation program piloted the elementary STEM pre-service concentrations in SY 2013-2014.

On June 5, 2014, the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board adopted a new regulation for practicing teachers with existing elementary or early childhood certificates to receive an endorsement as an Instructional Leader in STEM. In winter 2014, one IHE had already submitted its program for approval under this new regulation.

In order to prepare graduates who are skilled in STEM and proficient in languages other than English, Maryland provided subgrants to eight LEAs to plan and implement elementary school STEM programs as part of its World Languages project. In SY 2013-2014, the State funded an additional four language programs (each

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of which is a Chinese language program) with a STEM focus, for a total of 12 world language programs. MSDE also translated five STEM curriculum modules for grades 4-5 into Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish. The State completed the fourth online professional development course on world languages and STEM content and made it available to all elementary teachers. Maryland's World Languages project was also featured on *PROGRESS*.¹²

Across the State, there are 49 STEM Innovation Schools in Race to the Top participating LEAs. STEM Innovation Schools pilot and provide feedback on the State's new STEM resources before they are released statewide. The STEM Innovations Schools are implementing the STEM Career Exploration program, the STEM Challenge Program, and STEM Workplace Exposure Opportunities. On the STEMnet Teacher Hub, STEM specialists can post information about their areas of expertise, and teachers can view profiles and choose specialists to visit their classrooms. Through this initiative, volunteer STEM professionals recruited by the Maryland Business Roundtable support teachers with on-the-job expertise in STEM concepts and practices. Over 250 volunteers are participating in the program and over 150 have been trained to co-teach lessons with teachers to demonstrate real-world application of course content for students. Maryland's Elementary STEM Network was featured in a *PROGRESS* blog post.¹³

In SY 2013-2014, 6 schools in PGPCS, 2 schools in BCPS, and 2 schools in Dorchester County implemented the Gateway to Technology (GTT) program, meeting the State's goal of providing grants to 10 low-achieving middle schools to provide STEM-focused education to increase student achievement in mathematics and science. MSDE conducted site visits to GTT schools to ensure fidelity of implementation, document best practices, and make recommendations for program improvement.

Throughout SY 2013-2014, 20 LEAs, including 223 schools and 710 teachers, participated in the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association's Foundations of Technology course. In fall 2013, teachers administered the pre-assessment, which provides teachers with a measure of their students' technology skills and allows them to better differentiate instruction. The post-assessment, administered in spring 2014, showed that on 30 of 31 benchmarks, students had an average gain of nearly 15 percent. Although the project was delayed in Years 2 and 3, MSDE completed the final two courses in the four-part Career and Technical Education course in Construction Management and Design in August 2014 in collaboration with the Southern Regional Education Board consortium.

Maryland piloted the first two of eight planned online STEM courses in spring 2014. The courses, Cyber-security and Forensics

¹² The *PROGRESS* blog post is available at <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/progress/2014/01/maryland-pairs-world-languages-with-stem-to-increase-21st-century-skills/>.

¹³ The *PROGRESS* blog post is available at <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/progress/2014/03/race-to-the-top-boosts-stem-in-maryland-early-grades/>.

and Administration of Justice II, were made available for LEAs in fall 2014. The next four courses (Environmental Science, Video Game Design, Foundations of Computer Science, and Computer Science Concepts and Practices) will be piloted in fall 2014, and will be made available to LEAs throughout spring 2015 as they are completed. The final two courses, Foundations of Technology and Financial Literacy, will be piloted in February 2015 and made available to LEAs in SY 2015-2016. The State originally anticipated that the courses would be available to LEAs in Years 3 and 4, but experienced delays in developing and receiving approval of the request for vendor proposals.

Successes and challenges

Maryland's additional performance measures for STEM

Performance Measure	Actual: SY 2012-2013	Actual: SY 2013-2014	Target From Maryland's Approved Plan: SY 2013-2014
AP STEM Exams — Students receiving 3, 4, or 5	20,900	20,954	19,976
AP STEM Number of Exams	33,021	33,109	33,725

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

During Year 4, Maryland met two important milestones for ensuring there is an adequate supply of trained STEM educators across the State. MSDE finalized the requirements for the undergraduate Elementary STEM teacher certificate and passed a new regulation for existing teachers to become Instructional Leaders in STEM.

Additionally, the State exceeded its goal of 24 STEM Innovation Schools; across the State, Maryland has identified 49 STEM Innovation Schools that piloted and provided feedback on STEM teacher and student resources. In Year 5, the State plans to expand the number of STEM Innovation Schools, create new resources for the middle grades, and continue to provide professional development for educators.

Progress Updates on Invitational Priorities

Expansion and adaptation of statewide longitudinal data systems

One of Maryland's Race to the Top goals is to develop and implement a statewide centralized student transcript system. The purpose of

the project is to connect all 24 Maryland LEAs to the University of Maryland's electronic transcript system. This system will allow for direct links between K-12 and higher education data and will reduce costs for student transcript preparation and transmission to colleges. All LEAs utilized the centralized student transcript system during summer 2014 in preparation for SY 2014-2015.

Looking Ahead

Most Race to the Top States developed plans to continue their comprehensive reform efforts for an additional year (through the no-cost extension) and are developing plans to sustain many of their projects beyond the grant period.

During Year 5, MSDE will continue to support the work of LEAs across the State. Of its 22 participating LEAs, 4 LEAs have been approved to continue work during the no-cost extension period including support for implementation of educator evaluation systems, formative assessments, and local curriculum development.

Maryland will continue supporting the transition to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. The State will administer the PARCC assessments to all students in SY 2014-2015. In preparation, MSDE will continue to expand the resources that are available to educators through its CMS and LMS including online STEM courses and instructional intervention modules. To ensure the resources are meeting the needs of educators, MSDE will survey educators again in fall 2014 to determine what resources they need and how best to support them with implementation of the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. MSDE will also continue to support STEM instruction by identifying additional STEM Innovation Schools, creating new resources for the middle grades, and providing professional development for educators.

In SY 2014-2015, the State will develop formative assessment items and performance tasks aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards to help meet its goal to implement a comprehensive assessment system to support Maryland's transition to college- and career-ready standards and more rigorous summative assessments as part of a no-cost extension amendment. The State will also support LEAs with the implementation of the State's formative assessment educator professional development modules. MSDE staff will work with LEAs to develop sustainability plans for integrating formative assessment practices into existing professional development opportunities in Year 5. Additionally, MSDE will provide subgrants to LEAs to procure, enhance, or expand local assessment systems

instead of procuring a centralized test item bank and computer adaptive testing system as originally proposed. As part of this subgrant process, LEAs must also submit a sustainability plan that details how they will maintain their local assessment systems beyond the Race to the Top grant period.

Throughout the Race to the Top grant period, Maryland experienced significant delays with its technology projects. As a result, the State will finish development of its decentralized security model and data dashboards for educators in SY 2014-2015. To ensure the technology investments are utilized and providing educators with valuable information to improve student outcomes, the State will provide support to LEAs on the data dashboards, multi-media training modules, as well as the CMS and LMS.

The State will continue to provide support to LEAs as they implement their teacher and principal evaluation systems, drawing support from Maryland's key education organizations. MSDE will collect feedback from additional stakeholders to gauge LEA quality of implementation for the evaluation systems. As a follow up to the summer 2014 Governor's Principal Pipeline initiative, Maryland will hold three sessions for current and aspiring principals to build leadership capacity across the State as part of a no-cost extension amendment. In Year 5, the State will hold a 2014 Teacher Induction Academy and follow-up meetings to support participants who have yet to attend a Teacher Induction Academy as part of the State's efforts to ensure a high-quality induction experience for new teachers. Additionally, the State will continue to conduct LEA site visits to identify lessons learned and inform future professional development. Of its 22 participating LEAs, 4 will continue work into Year 5.

Budget

For the State's expenditures through June 30, 2014, please see the APR Data Display at <http://www.rtt-apr.us>.

For State budget information, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html>.

For the State's fiscal accountability and oversight report, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/performance-fiscal-accountability.html>.

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Alternative routes to certification: Pathways to certification that are authorized under the State's laws or regulations that allow the establishment and operation of teacher and administrator preparation programs in the State, and that have the following characteristics (in addition to standard features such as demonstration of subject-matter mastery, and high-quality instruction in pedagogy and in addressing the needs of all students in the classroom including English learners and students with disabilities): (1) can be provided by various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education (IHEs) and other providers operating independently IHEs; (2) are selective in accepting candidates; (3) provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support such as effective mentoring and coaching; (4) significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses; and (5) upon completion, award the same level of certification that traditional preparation programs award upon completion.

Amendment requests: In the event that adjustments are needed to a State's approved Race to the Top plan, the grantee must submit an amendment request to the Department for consideration. Such requests may be prompted by an updated assessment of needs in that area, revised cost estimates, lessons learned from prior implementation efforts, or other circumstances. Grantees may propose revisions to goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, provided that the following conditions are met: the revisions do not result in the grantee's failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this award and the program's statutory and regulatory provisions; the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal; and the Department and the grantee mutually agree in writing to the revisions. The Department has sole discretion to determine whether to approve the revisions or modifications. If approved by the Department, a letter with a description of the amendment and any relevant conditions will be sent notifying the grantee of approval. (For additional information, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/index.html>.)

America COMPETES Act elements: The twelve indicators specified in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act are:

(1) a unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system; (2) student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information; (3) student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs; (4) the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems; (5) a State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability; (6) yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)); (7) information on students not tested by grade and subject; (8) a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students; (9) student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned; (10) student-level college-readiness test scores; (11) information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and (12) other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA): On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the ARRA, historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. The Department of Education received a \$97.4 billion appropriation.

Annual Performance Report (APR): Report submitted by each grantee with outcomes to date, performance against the measures established in its application, and other relevant data. The Department uses data included in the APRs to provide Congress and the public with detailed information regarding each State's progress on meeting the goals outlined in its application. The annual State APRs are found at www.rtt-apr.us.

College- and career-ready standards: State-developed standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time students graduate from high school.

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Common Core State Standards (CCSS): Kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) English language arts and mathematics standards developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including governors, chief State school officers, content experts, teachers, school administrators, and parents. (For additional information, please see <http://www.corestandards.org/>).

The **education reform areas** for Race to the Top: (1) Standards and Assessments: Adopting rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career; (2) Data Systems to Support Instruction: Building data systems that measure student success and support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement; (3) Great Teachers and Great Leaders: Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and (4) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools: Supporting local educational agencies' (LEAs') implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing school intervention models.

Effective teacher: A teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (*e.g.*, at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance.

High-minority school: A school designation defined by the State in a manner consistent with its Teacher Equity Plan. The State should provide, in its Race to the Top application, the definition used.

High-poverty school: Consistent with section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA, a school in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level, using a measure of poverty determined by the State.

Highly effective teacher: A teacher whose students achieve high rates (*e.g.*, one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles (which may include mentoring or leading professional learning communities) that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

Instructional improvement systems (IIS): Technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data

to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as instructional planning; gathering information (*e.g.*, through formative assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), interim assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student's risk of educational failure.

Invitational priorities: Areas of focus that the Department invited States to address in their Race to the Top applications. Applicants did not earn extra points for addressing these focus areas, but many grantees chose to create and fund activities to advance reforms in these areas.

Involved LEAs: LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement those specific portions of the State's plan that necessitate full or nearly-full statewide implementation, such as transitioning to a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Involved LEAs do not receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that it must subgrant to LEAs in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA, but States may provide other funding to involved LEAs under the State's Race to the Top grant in a manner that is consistent with the State's application.

No-Cost Extension (Year 5): A no-cost extension provides grantees with additional time to spend their grants (until September 2015) to accomplish the reform goals, deliverables and commitments in its Race to the Top application and approved Scope of Work. Grantees made no-cost extension amendment requests to extend work beyond the final project year, consistent with the Amendment Principles (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/grant-amendment-submission-process-oct-4-2011.pdf>) as well as the additional elements outlined in the Department Review section of the Amendment Requests with No Cost Extension Guidance and Principles document (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/no-cost-extension-submission-process.pdf>).

Participating LEAs: LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year at the time of the award, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating

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LEA that does not receive funding under Title I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC): One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. (For additional information, please see <http://www.parcconline.org/>.)

Persistently lowest-achieving schools: As determined by the State, (1) any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and (2) any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years. To identify the lowest-achieving schools, a State must take into account both (1) the academic achievement of the "all students" group in a school in terms of proficiency on the State's assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and (2) the school's lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group. (For additional information, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.)

Qualifying evaluation systems: Educator evaluation systems that meet the following criteria: rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that: (1) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (2) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

Reform Support Network (RSN): In partnership with the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU), the RSN offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to grantees of the Race to the Top education reform initiative. The RSN's purpose is to support the Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.

The School Improvement Grants (SIG) program is authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the ESEA. Funds are awarded to States to help them turn around persistently lowest-achieving schools. (For

additional information, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.)

School intervention models: A State's Race to the Top plan describes how it will support its LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- **School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- **Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

Single sign-on: A user authentication process that permits a user to enter one name and password in order to access multiple applications.

The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced): One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college- and career-readiness. (For additional information, please see <http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER/default.aspx>.)

The State Scope of Work: A detailed document for the State's projects that reflects the grantee's approved Race to the Top application. The State Scope of Work includes items such as the State's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures. (For additional information, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html>.) Additionally, all participating LEAs are required to submit Scope of Work documents, consistent with State requirements, to the State for its review and approval.

Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS): Data systems that enhance the ability of States to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student

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records. The SLDS help States, districts, schools, educators, and other stakeholders to make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes, as well as to facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. (For additional information, please see http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/about_SLDS.asp.)

Student achievement: For the purposes of this report, student achievement (1) for tested grades and subjects is (a) a student's score on the State's assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (b) other measures of student learning, such as those described in number (2) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms; and (2) for non-tested grades and subjects, alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-tests and end-of-course tests; student

performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

Student growth: The change in student achievement (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) for an individual student between two or more points in time. A State may also include other measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

Value-added models (VAMs): A specific type of growth model based on changes in test scores over time. VAMs are complex statistical models that generally attempt to take into account student or school background characteristics in order to isolate the amount of learning attributable to a specific teacher or school. Teachers or schools that produce more than typical or expected growth are said to "add value."