

Teachers' Top 10 Questions about Race to the Top

1

Why do we need a new statewide system of evaluation for teachers and principals?

Implementing a new statewide system of evaluation for teachers and principals will help Maryland move from being a national leader in education to world class. To be world class it is not sufficient to measure only qualitative measures (e.g., planning, preparation, instruction, and professional responsibilities) like most school systems currently do. Maryland must also be able to determine how much students grow as a result of instruction in the classroom, thereby aligning student growth to evaluation.

Student growth is the primary reason why we teach and why schools exist. We owe it to our stakeholders to show them we are committed to growth for each student and that taxpayer dollars are being well-spent.



2

Since student growth is counting for 50% of my evaluation, how can I be assured that the components of that measure will be transparent and fair regardless of my teaching assignment?

When Maryland committed to making student growth 50% of teacher evaluations, the Governor appointed an Educator Effectiveness Council, with broad stakeholder representation, whose charge was to develop a fair, transparent, comprehensive evaluation model.

After months of deliberation, the Council agreed to an initial framework for the evaluation of teachers and principals as well as to a set of general standards to guide the evaluation process. The Council will meet to refine these initial recommendations in December 2011 and June 2012.

The general standards give broad flexibility to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) as they work with their bargaining units to develop their own LEA-specific evaluation systems. These general standards also allow LEAs to select growth measures from a menu of options and provide for the use of multiple measures in the student growth component of the evaluation system.

For more information view [Initial Recommendations Statewide Educator Evaluation System](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/rttt), available at www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/rttt.



What kind of professional development experiences will I receive so that I can fully understand how I will be evaluated?



Professional development experiences will be built on what we learn through two years of pilot evaluation systems. The first pilot year, 2011-2012, will involve seven LEAs. The second pilot year, 2012-2013, will involve all LEAs.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will provide technical assistance to LEAs as they develop their evaluation systems and resulting professional development experiences. MSDE will also provide direct professional development to executive officers and principals in the implementation of the new statewide system of evaluation. Individual LEAs will deliver professional development to meet their local needs as determined by the design of their evaluation systems.

Additionally, the summer Educator Effectiveness Academies and Academy follow-up sessions during the school year will provide ongoing information and support for teachers and principals while the new evaluation system is piloted and implemented.



Will our new Curriculum be either a Maryland curriculum or a national curriculum?

Our new Curriculum will be a homegrown Maryland Curriculum, created by Maryland's own educators. Maryland is building its new Curriculum on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), national education standards that provide goals and expectations for students in grades K-12 that will prepare them for success in college and the workplace. Maryland educators are developing the new State Curriculum to help its students achieve these Standards.

Maryland voluntarily adopted the CCSS in 2010. Since that time hundreds of classroom educators, instructional leaders, administrators, and higher education representatives have assisted State officials in developing the new Maryland Common Core State Curriculum Frameworks in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. The Frameworks identify the essential skills and knowledge students must know and be able to do in order to master the Standards. Since the CCSS did not include Pre-K, Maryland created standards and developed the accompanying Frameworks to serve these students, as well.

The Frameworks form the foundation for the new State Curriculum in English/Language Arts and Mathematics and the development of the new State Curriculum in other disciplines will begin in fall 2011. Transition from our current State Curriculum to the new Curriculum will occur when the new Curriculum is fully in place in the 2013-2014 school year.

For more information view [Your Guide to the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/rttt), available at www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/rttt.

What am I expected to do this school year as part of this transition and what supports will I get?



The transition to the new Maryland Common Core State Curriculum is just beginning. This school year all teachers are expected to develop an understanding of the new Curriculum Frameworks in English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

Certain faculty members, identified by school principals, will be asked to implement various components of the new Curriculum Frameworks in their classrooms this year. The designated English/Language Arts faculty members will be asked to include explanatory, argument, and narrative writing products in their lessons this school year. The identified Mathematics faculty members will be asked to include the standards for mathematical practice in their lessons. Other faculty members, also designated by school principals, will work to develop integrated STEM lessons.

These expectations were crafted as part of a school curriculum transition plan developed by every school team that participated in this summer's Educator Effectiveness Academies. This transition plan will guide the faculty involved and provide support to all faculty members. Additional support will be provided by LEA staff and MSDE.



What will the new assessments look like, and when will they be used for accountability purposes?



Maryland has joined the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a national consortium of 25 states that are working together to design assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

The new assessments PARCC develops will be anchored in college and career readiness; provide comparability across states; and be able to assess and measure higher-order skills such as critical thinking, communications, and problem solving. The assessments will include a mix of constructed response items, performance-based tasks, and computer-enhanced, computer-scored items.

The assessment system will be computer-based and will measure student progress at key times during the school year, rather than on one test at the end. These “through course” assessments will allow for instructional adjustment and extra support to students who need it. The PARCC assessments will be implemented in Maryland in the 2014-15 school year and will replace the Maryland School Assessments.

For more information go to www.parcconline.org



How will we help ensure that all schools have equitable access to technology and online resources?

Embracing meaningful education reform in the 21st Century must include the expanded use of technology. We need it to enhance our efficiency, to access abundant online resources, and most of all, to successfully engage the “digital natives” in our classrooms by meeting them where they are.

As a State and a nation, we must work together to integrate technology into all aspects of education, whether it be in administration, using student data at the teacher level, or using technology in everyday student instruction and assessment. The PARCC assessments are planned to be administered online, but the use of technology cannot be merely “test prep.”

Race to the Top will provide some resources to shore up the infrastructure in our LEAs and achieve equity among systems. Conversations continue at the State and national level to find additional resources to assist school systems in providing the technology required to prepare students for their 21st Century world. All of us must acknowledge that this is a major priority and work together to provide these resources to Maryland’s teachers and students.

How does a Longitudinal Data System benefit the classroom teacher?



Classroom teachers will benefit from a Longitudinal Data System in a number of ways. A Longitudinal Data System links student data across years including major transitions (such as middle school to high school and high school to college), giving each educational level access to feedback concerning the adequacy of preparation of students for success in the next phase of their education career. This information is also essential to policy makers to inform them in a systematic way of what changes need to be made.

The Data System will also provide teachers with a full history of a student’s education record. This will allow for more efficient and accurate placement of students who transfer between schools.

Additionally, the Longitudinal Data System will be the foundation for the Instructional Intervention System, which provides data on student strengths and weaknesses, along with the resources and supports to assist teachers to address those needs. Teachers will also receive progress reports and automatic screenings (called “alerts”) to notify them when a student is in need of intervention or additional challenges.

For more information view [May 2011 issue of Maryland Classroom](#), available at www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/rttt.





I've heard a great deal about the Online Instructional Toolkit. What is it and how can it help me with my students?

Maryland's Online Instructional Toolkit is a one-stop-shop for resources that will assist educators in teaching the content and skills contained in the new State Curriculum.

The Toolkit will include model units, model lessons, formative assessments, multimedia resources, interventions, enrichments, and much more to assist educators in designing instructional programs that are aligned with the new State Curriculum and the new assessments.

The resources included in the Toolkit will allow teachers to pull video to include in lessons; use the model lessons and units as guides to develop their own; choose interventions for students who are experiencing difficulty with a particular skill or concept; and choose enrichments for students who are learning material quickly.

For more information go to www.mdk12.org.

What is the Breakthrough Center, and how does it serve the lowest-achieving schools?



The Breakthrough Center is Maryland's statewide system of support for the lowest-achieving schools. The Breakthrough Center is dedicated to coordinating, brokering, and delivering support to districts and schools across the State.

Maryland's lowest-achieving schools are determined by a strict formula provided by the U.S. Department of Education. Schools on that list must look at the whole school to determine barriers to student achievement. To that end, the Breakthrough Center works to build the capacity of individuals and entire school systems to turn around these low-achieving schools. It also provides direct support and guidance to teachers and principals during the turnaround process.

The Breakthrough Center coordinates many Race to the Top services, including Restructuring Implementation Technical Assistance (RITA) needs assessments; guidance and health services; primary talent development; physical activity; extended student learning; and school culture.

For more information go to http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/leadership/programs/breakthrough_center.htm

VIDEO ON TEACHERS' TOP 10 QUESTIONS ABOUT RACE TO THE TOP

For additional insight into these questions, download and view the companion video at

<http://media.msde.state.md.us/2011/TOP/TEN.wmv>

A Publication from the Maryland State Department of Education

Maryland Classroom

.....

Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed.D. *Interim State Superintendent of Schools*
James H. DeGraffenreidt, Jr., *President, State Board of Education*
Martin O'Malley, *Governor*

The contents of this flyer were developed under a grant from the U. S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Maryland State Department of Education,
 200 W. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201.
 Phone: 410.767.0425 • TTY/TTD: 410.333.6442 • Fax: 410.333.2226

If you have any questions or comments about this publication, please contact 410.767.0484.



MarylandPublicSchools.org

This information is provided as an example for the viewer's convenience at this convening and is not generated nor endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education. No endorsement by the U.S Department of Education of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in these presentations is intended nor should be inferred.

In addition, the instructional practices discussed or shown in the presentations are not intended to mandate, direct, or control a State's local educational agencies' or schools' specific instructional content, academic achievement system and assessments, curriculum or program of instruction.