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MSDE Headquarters

Maryland State Department of Education

Response to the Analyst's Review and Recommendations

House Education & Economic Development Subcommittee –
February 9, 2017
Senate Education, Business & Administration Subcommittee –
February 17, 2017



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The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) welcomes this opportunity to share with the Committee some of its success stories and to address questions raised by the analyst.

Performance Analysis: Managing for Results

Teacher Effectiveness Results

The State Superintendent should comment on the latest evaluation results and what MSDE is doing to increase teacher quality.

MSDE continues to review the data collected from the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) as they implement their Teacher Principal Evaluation models. MSDE is collaborating with higher education on teacher preparation programs and is working to improve and expand induction and mentoring programs. Additionally, MSDE is working to develop personalized professional development based on teacher's needs, including cultural proficiency, universal design for learning, and restorative practices.

In June 2016, the Teacher Induction, Retention, and Advancement Act of 2016 Workgroup began exploring ways to increase and improve teacher recruitment, preparation, induction, and retention. The workgroup's November 1, 2016 interim report included preliminary recommendations in five areas: certification restructuring, quality teacher incentives, professional development for teachers and leaders, revision of the Institutional Performance Criteria, and mentoring. The workgroup continues to research best practices as it develops final recommendations.

MSDE has also developed a system of support to improve teacher effectiveness. The system of support includes targeted professional learning experiences, evidence-based resources, and purposeful follow-up. Listed below are examples of support that MSDE provide to educators.

School Leaders

The system of support begins with strengthening the competencies of school leaders to create conditions for effective teaching and learning. MSDE's Promising Principals Academy and Aspiring Leaders Institute are a series of professional learning experiences that cultivate leaders who can foster the growth of effective teachers.

Teacher Mentors

MSDE has partnered with the New Teacher Center and local school systems to create a workshop focused on mentoring skills. The target audience is new teacher mentors. Workshop participants are provided skills, techniques, and strategies to improve coaching and dialogue with teachers.

Teachers

MSDE offers several professional learning opportunities for teachers based on the result of an annual needs assessment survey completed by teachers and central office staff. Based on survey results, MSDE has planned:

- College and Career Conferences
- Content specific webinars to reduce teacher knowledge gaps
- Regional workshops in assessment literacy, PARCC data analysis, and formative assessment
- Edcamp/Maryland PLAYDATE - provides the time and space for teachers to share effective practices
- Teacher Leader Summit - teacher teams collaborate to develop solutions to school-specific problems.

Proposed Budget

Other Significant Changes

MSDE should update the committees on the costs of PARCC assessments for fiscal 2016 through 2018, including high school end of course tests, and how these costs compare with previous estimates. MSDE should also comment on how the percentage of students taking assessments as CBTs affects these costs. Finally, MSDE should comment on the potential for increased costs for assessments in fiscal 2018 and beyond, and whether it anticipates needing a deficiency to pay for assessments in fiscal 2018.

The total cost for PARCC, including high school end of course tests in FY 2016 was \$12,863,313. The total cost in FY 2017 is expected to be \$13,106,206, and is estimated to be \$13,750,000 in FY 2018. These costs, when compared to original estimates, are between 22% and 26% less than anticipated. The decrease in costs is largely due to the larger-than-anticipated number of computer-based tests. The contract costs in 2016 and 2017 were based on 50% paper test and 50% computer based test. In 2016, 92% of tests were computer based.

At this time, MSDE does not anticipate needing a deficiency. However, the current contract ends after the 2018 administration. MSDE continues to work with the PARCC Consortium and within procurement processes to ensure continuity of the State's K-12 assessment program.

ISSUES

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Assessments

MSDE should update the committees on the latest timeline for presenting a final draft CSP and submission of the CSP to ED. MSDE should also comment on the balance between academic and school quality/student success indicators in the draft CSP.

The United States Department of Education (USED) changed the deadline for submitting Consolidated State Plans to April or September, 2017. MSDE plans to submit Maryland's Consolidated State Plan (CSP) on or before September 18, 2017. The final draft will be submitted to the State Board at their June 27, 2017 meeting. By June 30, 2017, MSDE will post the plan on the marylandpublicschools.org website for public comment, submit to the Governor for review, and submit to the Legislative Policy Committee for review.

Maryland's accountability system continues to be under development. The system will include measures for each of the following indicators: (1) achievement and gap narrowing goals; (2) progress/growth (at the elementary/middle school level) or graduation (at the high school level); (3) English learner proficiency; and (4) school quality/student success. Specific weights of the indicators have not been finalized but all indicators will be included in the system.

Public input has been a critical component of MSDE's work in developing the State's accountability system. MSDE's outreach activities include convening an external stakeholder group, focus group meetings, an online survey and statewide listening tours. The input from these activities informs the State's accountability system and the federal ESSA Consolidated State Plan.

The external stakeholder group comprised of more than 30 member from over 20 statewide education groups representing educators, principals, parents, various community service organizations, English Learner and Special Education advocates, and local school systems, meets bi-monthly and has met regularly for the past year. An online survey, in English and Spanish, has been available since early December 2016. The survey provides opportunity for public reaction and comment on the State's plan. To date, 2,871 responses have been recorded. Of the total respondents, 63% are teachers, 15% are parents, and the remaining 22% is comprised of community activists, special interest advocates, the business community and local education staff.

Five listening tour sessions were held throughout the state last month. Over 500 constituents provided feedback on the individual components of the state plan. Staff have had monthly discussions with the State Board, and facilitated more than 65 focus group meetings with individual interest groups like family involvement coordinators, Military Special Education Coalition, and English Learners Coordinators, among many others.

MSDE should comment on how it is responding to concerns over testing and how the administration of future assessments may be affected.

MSDE is developing an additional survey that will be released to Local School Systems soon. The purpose of this survey is to capture the type of assessments administered locally as well as the time involved for each locally-administered assessment. The results will be reported to the State Board for future discussion.

MSDE should provide an update on the administration of PARCC for the 2016-2017 school year, particularly for any tests that are no longer optional. MSDE should also provide an update on the implementation of transition courses for students who are not determined to be college and career ready.

The PARCC administration for the 2015/2016 school year went smoothly. All students in grades three through eight took the PARCC Reading and PARCC Math assessments. All students enrolled in Algebra I took the PARCC Algebra I assessment and all students enrolled in English 10 took the PARCC English 10 assessment.

The PARCC assessments are used to address three sets of requirements: federal requirements, Maryland graduation requirements, and Maryland College and Career Ready requirements. All students are required to take Algebra I and English 10. Other high school PARCC assessments are considered 'optional' for they are available to districts for addressing individual student needs in order to comply with the various requirements. As an example, for those students that complete Algebra I in middle school, a high school measure is still needed for federal compliance. For these students, districts can choose to administer either Geometry or Algebra II (optional PARCC tests). In order to meet the requirements outlined within the Maryland College and Career Ready Act, districts may choose from the PARCC 'optional' College and Career Ready Determining (CCRD) tests including English 11 and Algebra II or they may elect to pay for other proprietary tests such as the SAT, ACT, and ACCUPLACER. Districts are utilizing, in varying degrees, PARCC 'optional' tests to meet these requirements.

Transition courses are being implemented for the first time during the 2016-2017 schoolyear. The data related to these courses will be collected late summer 2017 and will be available for reporting late fall 2017.

Improving Juvenile Services Education

MSDE should comment on the operation of its recruitment/retention incentive and whether it has been successful in filling the positions that were added for fiscal 2017.

MSDE focused its recruitment efforts on those positions with direct instructional impact. Currently, all of the school-based positions have either been filled or are expected to be filled by the end of the month. MSDE is currently engaged in the recruitment and screening process for the three headquarters support positions provided and expects to have all three positions filled by late spring 2017.

MSDE has had positive response to the sign-on incentive and retention bonus. All of the new hires receive \$1,500 after 90 days of employment and the remaining \$1,500 after 180 days of employment. The \$3,000 retention incentive has also been implemented, and it is connected to the annual performance appraisals for each credentialed JSES teacher or principal who is rated as satisfactory or better. Those eligible educators with at least 1 year of service in JSES who received their annual performance appraisal in December 2016 have already received the incentive. The remaining group of teachers and principals whose annual performance appraisals are scheduled for June 2017 will receive the incentive after this cycle is completed.

We are very optimistic that with continued funding the retention incentive will help reduce vacancy rates.

DLS Recommended Actions:

- 1. Reduce special funds for the Division of Business Services for the administration of the Aid to Non-Public Schools Program and the Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) Program. The agency is authorized to process a reimbursable**

fund budget amendment in conjunction with authorization to utilize a portion of both the Aid to Non-Public Schools Program and BOOST Program funds for administration.

Total Special Fund Reduction: \$ 240,812

MSDE respectfully disagrees and requests that the funds remain in the Headquarters budget. Costs in Headquarters for the BOOST and Nonpublic Textbook programs would have to be charged to another division until the funds are moved through an amendment, causing an unnecessary administrative burden and risking a deficit if sufficient Special Fund appropriation and funds are not available before the amendment is processed.