

Maryland State Department of Education
Headquarters
FY 2024 Operating Budget
Response to the Department of Legislative Services Analysis

House Education & Economic Development Subcommittee –
February 15, 2023

Senate Education, Business & Administration Subcommittee –
February 16, 2023



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) welcomes this opportunity to address questions raised by the analyst.

Operating Budget Analysis

Performance Analysis: Managing for Results

3. DORS Meets Pre-employment Transitions Target Before 2025 Deadline

The current MFR states that by June 30, 2025, DORS will assist 1,391 people with disabilities to obtain competitive, integrated employment and provide pre-employment transitioning services to 7,000 students with disabilities. In fiscal 2022, DORS assisted 7,051 students with disabilities with pre-employment transition services, which exceeded its goal by 51 students. DORS assisted 978 students in achieving an employment outcome, which is an increase of 53 students from fiscal 2021, but still falls short of the June 2025 target goal set by the agency. **The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends that MSDE comment on the division's plans to meet the June 2025 target for students with disabilities to achieve an employment outcome.**

MSDE Response:

The public Vocational Rehabilitation Program, which is operated by the Division of Rehabilitation Services is broken into two separate programs. The Vocational Rehabilitation program focuses on training and employment of individuals with disabilities, 18 and older and seeking training and employment. The second program, the Pre-Employment Transitioning Services (Pre-ETS) program, a subset of the adult vocational program, is only available to individuals who are identified as a student with a disability, between the ages of 14 and less than 22 years of age, currently enrolled in school – public, private, home school, vocational or postsecondary –and has a disability as documented by an Individual Education Plan, 504 Plan, or other support medical documentation. Pre-ETS is an exploratory work program through the five allowable services, Counseling on postsecondary educational opportunities, instruction on self-advocacy, job exploration counseling, work readiness, and work based learning experiences. There are no employment outcomes for this program.

MSDE and DORS implemented two strategic initiatives to increase employment outcomes. The first, a comprehensive review of DORS VR counselor position salaries, including a review of similar positions and salaries in comparable public organizations at the county, state, and federal level and in the private sector. MSDE developed a pay plan revision for VR counselor position classification that included a two grade and four step change equivalent to a 20% salary increase. The plan was reviewed and approved by DBM and went into effect in July 2022. MSDE's pay plan revisions had an immediate, positive impact on DORS' ability to retain existing counselors and to fill vacant counselor positions. The vacancy rate for these positions went from more than 25% to under 10% and is on the way to being completely closed pending federal clearances.

The second initiative was to increase the rates paid to Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Partners that provide the job development, search and placement of individuals in the VR program. A 16% rate increase went into effect in January 2023, and it is expected that the rate increase will assist CRP partners in stabilizing their workforce.

Together, these initiatives will stabilize the VR services workforce and in turn, increase the number of people with disabilities obtaining competitive, integrated employment and increase the number of students with disabilities receiving pre-employment transitioning services.

Fiscal 2022

MSDE Reversions and Cancellations

At fiscal 2022 closeout, MSDE's final spending totaled \$277.3 million, or 14.1%, less than the legislative appropriation of \$322.0 million. The majority of the \$44.7 million in unspent funds were federal funds, including \$23.6 million for personnel, of which \$13.9 million was in DORS.

Given the deficiency allocations and concerns about MSDE's accounting practices, DLS recommends the continued adoption of committee narrative directing MSDE to provide a detailed report on the department's fiscal 2023 closeout.

MSDE Response:

MSDE concurs. The Department has implemented a Core Services Team model approach to operations to tackle precisely this challenge – and more. Core Services Team roles represent the central Department functions and includes an IT partner (for information technology support), a talent partner (for human resources support), a business services partner (for support with procurement and contracts), and a planning and budget analyst (for budget and finance support). These teams are designed to work collaboratively together to provide hands-on customer service to MSDE program staff and proactively identify and resolve program needs related to human resources; contracts and procurement; information technology; and fiscal and budgetary matters. Core Services Teams are simultaneously designed to move work forward and serve as a failsafe, so operations workflows do not stall or fall through the cracks. This group of Department offices ensures MSDE programs and program teams can successfully execute their responsibilities and provide excellent service to Maryland's children and families.

Fiscal 2023

Federal Stimulus Funds

In fiscal 2020 and 2021, MSDE received approximately \$303.1 million in State Education Agency (SEA) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds.¹ Of this amount, \$137.3 million, or 45%, are mandates for federal or State programs; \$150.7 million, or 50%, is available for discretionary programs and purposes; and \$15.1 million, or 5%, is allocated for allowable administrative expenses. As requested in the 2022 JCR, MSDE reported that the agency has expended or obligated \$288.7 million of these funds with \$14.4 million remaining to be allocated.

Given the ongoing status of this grant, DLS recommends the continued adoption of committee narrative for a report on SEA ESSER fund expenditures.

MSDE Response:

MSDE concurs. The Department received Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) funds in three separate federal programs – the CARES Act, the CRRSA, and the ARP Act. Each program included a required 90% distribution to LEAs based on an LEA's share of Title I funds, and a maximum State set aside of 10%. States were allowed to reserve no more than one half of 1% of the

State set aside for administrative costs. Combining the three separate ESSER fund sources as one program, as shown in the Analysis, distorts the individual allocations required for each program.

Fiscal 2024 Overview of Agency Spending

Personnel Data

Vacancy Rate

MSDE Headquarters and its independent agencies have 196.5 vacant positions as of January 2022, with 123 vacancies above the fiscal 2024 budgeted turnover, prior to the addition of 13 new positions. MSDE's vacancy rate of almost 19% exceeds the fiscal 2023 budgeted turnover rate of 3%, providing the agency with \$3.1 million in potential vacancy savings. **MSDE should comment on how it plans to deploy the vacancy savings in fiscal 2023.**

MSDE Response:

The Department will use the vacancy savings realized in FY 2023 to forward fund recruitment and retention efforts that are sustained in the FY 2024 Allowance. These include employee parking, and paid advertising in specialized publications for available positions.

Contractual Positions

In fiscal 2023, 176 positions were abolished from Juvenile Services Education and transferred to the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) and are therefore not reflected in this position count.

- Vacancy data includes 67 vacant positions in DORS, 58 vacant positions in the Office of the State Superintendent, and 70 positions in other divisions and offices.
- MSDE gains 8 positions, which includes 2 positions in the Division of Academic Reform and Innovation, 5 positions in the Office of Information Technology, and 1 position in Major Information Technology Projects. MSDE also gains 23.5 contractual positions.

The allowance includes a net increase of 23.5 contractual positions. MSDE should explain the responsibilities of the additional contractual staff.

MSDE Response:

The additional contractual PINs are associated with the Maryland School Mental Health Program and the Expert Review Teams associated with both the COVID-19 ESSER Funds and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Issues

1. MSDE's Maryland Leads Grant Distribution Raises Potential Issues Regarding Program Funding for Learning Loss

This analysis indicates that MSDE's decision to allocate Maryland Leads funding for learning loss as noncompetitive grants to LEAs presents potential issues. Funds were not distributed using a previously vetted methodology, and 96% of funds are aimed at educators and LEAs, not students. This analysis also suggests that unlike State funding spent on student programs, except for funds for

high-quality tutoring, Maryland Leads programs may not be easily correlated with learning loss remediation because the programs do not directly impact students.

With these concerns in mind, DLS recommends that MSDE report on the Maryland Leads program and how the agency intends to measure program impacts on student learning loss.

MSDE Response:

The State Superintendent, eager to get started right away on the instructional and content support of LEAs (including Blueprint implementation), implemented Maryland Leads, one pathway of this work. The Department respectfully and strongly disagrees with the analysis' notes related to Maryland Leads, including the suggestion that Maryland Leads was not an investment in students and in learning loss. In the words of US Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona in uplifting Maryland as a leader in implementing research-driven programs with State set aside funding,

"It's exciting to see Maryland leading through this new program that aims to use American Rescue Plan funds in innovative ways. I'm heartened that Maryland Leads will help districts and schools both respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic and seize the opportunity our current moment offers to reimagine education. Maryland can build a better, stronger public education system for our students' future. I'm looking forward to seeing how these efforts—including using literacy strategies grounded in the science of reading, investing in supports for educators, diversifying the educator workforce, and developing high-quality community schools—can expand educational excellence and opportunity to more students in the state."

MSDE does not directly fund students. That is not how the State Education Agency works. MSDE funds local education agencies who then deliver programs and services to students. Service delivery to improve student performance takes many forms, including the training of teachers and other LEA personnel. Education research points to a host of factors in-school and, largely out-of-school, that contribute to a student's success. The evidence on classroom-level impact is clear – the biggest school-based factor influencing a student's outcomes is their teacher.

Take, for example, the Science of Reading – a national movement related to literacy and student outcomes for which Maryland is already behind. The strategy does fund training for all K-3 teachers to be trained in the science of reading. For context, there was one state who did not experience learning loss in early literacy – Mississippi. What makes Mississippi unique? A Statewide investment in the Science of Reading and ensuring that students are learning to read and are equipped to read by the time they complete third grade so that they can read to learn from there out. Likewise, if local education agencies are unable to recruit and retain high-quality staff, student outcomes suffer – now, and in the long-term. To suggest Maryland Leads investments are not investments in student outcomes mischaracterizes the program and the initiatives contained therein. Every research-based strategy included in Maryland Leads contains examples of the existing research on the topic, policy implementation examples, and other best-in-class materials related to the evidence of these programs' efficacy.

Moreover, the analysis makes the misplaced suggestion that funding students directly was the federal intent of the program, which is also not the case. USED guidance clearly states,

“The American Rescue Plan provides vital resources to hire additional educators and school staff and to improve compensation to recruit and retain educators and school staff. School districts should act with urgency to keep schools open for in-person learning and ensure they do not waste this opportunity to make critical investments.”

The guidance goes on to list strategies for hiring and retaining qualified and effective educators and evidence-based and promising short- and long-term strategies for addressing teacher and staff shortages that can be funded through ARP ESSER and examples of how ARP and previous relief funds are already being used to attract and retain teachers and staff. The guidance is included as Appendix A.

MSDE also disagrees that the program in any way underfunded a local education agency, particularly high-needs LEAs. First of all, these funds were state set aside funds and were not required to go to the local education agencies. MSDE could have retained the funds at the State directly for State-level work, but MSDE decided to identify research-based strategies to tackle student outcomes and passed the funds to LEAs. In so doing, MSDE gave a flat amount to all LEAs so that even small LEAs had resources necessary to make these programmatic investments. MSDE then allocated funds based on a combination of LEA enrollment and the enrollment of economically disadvantaged students. These funds were not subject to a single, Title I formula and MSDE set all LEAs up for success in utilizing these funds as all LEAs were impacted by the pandemic, not just LEAs with higher-proportions of high-poverty students. All other federal passthrough resources were allocated through the Title I formula leaving some LEAs without sufficient federal recovery resources.

MSDE, lastly, disagrees with the reporting language added to the analysis. MSDE has no issue reporting and sharing publicly the efforts and outcomes of Maryland Leads. However, the reporting suggests that somehow student outcomes will be fully realized by October 1, 2023. Or that MSDE would be able to make some sort of causal inference as to student outcomes on certain investments, which would require a control trial or other quasi-experimental research design, none of which could be completed by October 2023. Also, Maryland Leads funds are available for obligation until September 30, 2024 so the program will be only partly completed in October 2023. While some outcomes are demonstrable early, others take longer to take hold. Setting proper expectations that map to how actual policy implementation occurs and when programs realize student outcomes is important. The LEA quarterly reporting template, which requires LEAs to show investment by strategy and focus area mapped to program goals, baseline data, and the tracking of program goals is included in Appendix B.

Maryland Leads resources are designed to supplement and fill gaps in what and where local education agencies needed research-based intervention to ultimately drive student outcomes and pandemic recovery. These are supplemental to multi-billion dollar LEA pass through covid resources also aimed at tackling learning loss and recovery. These investments also do not occur in a vacuum and link to and seed LEA efforts related to Blueprint implementation and the policies and programs the Maryland Assembly has already deemed as those worth investment to drive outcomes. A comprehensive understanding of Maryland Leads is essential to properly understand on who and for what resources are being spent and MSDE encourages Assembly members to read, in full, Maryland Leads documentation and the many research articles, citations, and policy studies released with the

program that anchor the work to the most current, evidence-based strategies on the interventions available.

2. Despite Agency Reorganization, MSDE Personnel Vacancies Persist

The fiscal 2024 allowance for MSDE includes 13 additional regular positions and 23.5 contractual positions, which if not filled early in the fiscal year, would further increase agency vacancies.

With these concerns in mind, DLS recommends that MSDE report on continued personnel vacancies and details regarding positions that meet Chapter 36 of 2021 (Blueprint) requirements.

MSDE Response:

As the analysis notes, MSDE began reorganization efforts during the Superintendent's first year. Dating back to the previous administration, DLS and the General Assembly recommended updating the Department's chart of accounts and reorganizing and modernizing the structure of the Department as it was long overdue. MSDE had program codes active that corresponded to Race to The Top and other programs that have not existed in nearly a decade. MSDE systems and operations were in a dire state. MSDE staff remain committed as they navigate change, navigate the increase in work responsibilities associated with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, and navigate a department that lacked the systems and structures to set them up for success. MSDE's recruitment and staffing initiatives and its vacancy status were reported to the General Assembly in October 2022 as requested by the Joint Chairmen's Report.

The Department experienced an increase in vacancies over the last several years. Those vacancies do not come as a surprise. A State hiring freeze, persistently low State salaries, the abolishment of special appointment positions, the provision of contractual rather than permanent positions, and the attrition expected with new leadership and reorganization all generated an increase in MSDE vacancies. These vacancies are felt harder at MSDE given the year-over-year reductions in MSDE permanent positions overall in the decade leading to July 2021 and the increasing requirements and obligations, like the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

At peak, MSDE had 257 regular pin vacancies during FY 2022. As of the December 2022 State Board of Education meeting, MSDE had 169 vacancies (42 of which were in DORS). MSDE intends to be significantly below 100 vacancies by July 1, 2023, and subsequently close vacancies fully by fiscal year end 2024. The Department has implemented policy changes that will address staffing and vacancy issues in the short term and ensure sustainable practices in the long term.

As mentioned earlier, the State Superintendent designed a Core Services Team model approach to operations to roll out last year but hiring delayed full implementation. The initial Core Services Team members included the HR, IT, and Procurement and Contract Management members in some capacity (planning and budget analysts were not yet hired). It has taken and continues to take time and effort to implement the new HR structure and to begin to see the structure operate in the way and with the rigor and consistency envisioned. The Core Services Teams talent partners have become pivotal in reducing the MSDE vacancy rate.

MSDE is doubling down on its recruitment efforts structurally and in the tools the Department uses with its recruitment teams. Prior to the current MSDE Administration, the Department relied on posting vacancies on the State of Maryland recruitment platform (JobApps) that has limited features to promote or highlight MSDE positions. The jobs posted on JobApps automatically transfer to online platforms. However, MSDE did not adopt any additional strategic recruitment and promotion strategies to attract candidates. Instead, the Department was waiting for candidates to find us. MSDE also relied on in-person job fairs that stopped for nearly 18 months during the pandemic. During this time, MSDE had limited success with virtual hiring fairs. Since the end of the hiring freeze in December 2021, MSDE commenced an aggressive recruitment outreach using LinkedIn, Twitter, Zip Recruiter, and EdWeek (a leading platform for education jobs) in addition to the Maryland State recruitment portal and Indeed.com. MSDE has utilized specialty job posting platforms for hard-to-recruit positions, such as architects and accessibility specialists. Many in-person job fairs have resumed since March 2022. MSDE is participating in as many job fairs as possible.

MSDE has also adopted targeted approaches to recruit and retain in particularly hard-to-staff areas. As mentioned earlier in this response, the MSDE-requested compensation study of DORS VR Counselor positions. Hiring in DORS after the study was not as immediate as MSDE wanted due, in part, to changes in the type of federal clearance associated with these positions and the new, two-to-three-month clearance time once MSDE has identified a candidate for hire. MSDE reached out to and met with our federal congressional delegation and those candidates are now moving through the federal process more quickly. Communication with the State's Congressional Delegation is attached in Appendix C.

Thanks to the off-cycle compensation study of DORS positions and a new grant partnership with the University of Maryland to investigate a fee-for-service model while allowing the University to directly qualify and serve families, the initial programmatic data in DORS are promising: The DORS waitlist has stabilized; and DORS has actively reopened its category 2 waitlist for the first time since 2018 and has have pulled all individuals off the waitlist from 2017.

Moreover, these talent efforts are moving us forward. For example, as of August 22, 2022, MSDE had 115 DORS vacancies. MSDE now has 39 DORS vacancies including the twenty-seven positions in DORS awaiting final federal clearance. Zero of the remaining thirty-nine vacancies will be in rehabilitation specialist positions. Is it as fast as I want or as we need? No. But one-and-a-half years into my term, MSDE is moving in the right direction and the data support that progress.

Similarly, as MSDE discussed in its early childhood hearing, the Department identified licensing specialists as a source of higher-than-average turnover. Licensing specialists in DEC are responsible for inspecting, credentialing, and providing assistance to child care providers to ensure safe child care. These positions currently have a ratio as low as 56:1 and as high as 78:1 providers per specialist. A comprehensive comparative analysis of child care licensing positions indicates that low compensation as well as restrictive and outdated minimum qualifications are the biggest issues impacting the hiring and retention of DEC child care licensing specialists. The Department proposed converting contractual positions to permanent positions, and a two-grade pay increase (about 12%) to employees in the licensing job series, which increases the starting salary for trainees to \$60,000 starting July 1, 2023. This proposal has been approved by DBM and is included in the FY 2024 allowance. That is having an effect already. For example, MSDE's most recent DEC recruitment that concluded last week resulted in 246 *qualified* candidates scheduled to be interviewed for 18 licensing

specialist vacancies during the last week of February. The interviews will take place in 5 regions around the state over multiple days with multiple interview panels interviewing candidates.

Hiring challenges are not unique to MSDE, and the Department understands that personnel challenges are not a reason for falling short of expectations or failing to get the work done. The Department's responsibility to level up student achievement, close gaps for historically underserved children, and successfully implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future relies on high-quality, efficient, and successful business operations and continuity. MSDE is unwilling to allow rigid staffing guidelines and position availability to slow down the work of the Department. MSDE is growing, on the move, and leading the charge; and MSDE is continuing to raise the bar on performance while seeking ways to reinforce and strengthen Department personnel structures.

3. Recent Audit Documents Continued Concerns with MSDE Accounting Practices

A January 31, 2023 audit by OLA documented continuing concerns regarding MSDE accounting practices. Although MSDE had resolved some matters from the previous audit, OLA found nine additional concerns that warrant agency action, including four concerns that are redacted because they are cybersecurity related. Of particular concern in this audit is that MSDE did not ensure LEAs used Blueprint for Maryland's Future funds in accordance with State law. **Exhibit 12** provides details of the five publicly released findings. **MSDE should be prepared to discuss what corrective actions have been implemented to remedy the identified concerns. DLS recommends restrictive language for a report to continue to monitor progress toward the resolution of these audit findings.**

MSDE Response:

The Office of Legislative Audits (OLA) provided a brief background comment regarding MSDE's Information Technology (IT) operations, it did not clearly present the significant level of responsibility that lies within the Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT) over the agency's IT functions. It is important to note that those responsibilities within DoIT impact the agency's ability to adequately and quickly resolve the IT findings identified by the auditors. Specifically, three of the four IT findings identified require corrective actions by DoIT. The MSDE's Office of Information Technology has been collaborating with DoIT to resolve the information technology findings and will monitor progress for completion.

With regard to Blueprint Grant monitoring, OLA did not take issue with MSDE's monitoring of grants but requested that MSDE sample local supporting documentation to ensure that reported expenditures have supporting documentation at the LEA level. MSDE concurred and is in the process of issuing a solicitation for audit services.

In addition, MSDE requests that DLS note the lag between fiscal years analyzed given that, under the current administration, MSDE takes seriously its role as fiduciary agent.

4. MSDE Continues Development of Virtual Learning for Students and Teachers; Continued Updates and Enrollment Data Advisable

In response to a 2022 JCR request on virtual learning, MSDE reported on efforts to rethink how virtual learning can support daily instruction and college and career readiness. This action involved three strategies: enhance digital teaching and supports; increase access to the Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities Program; and assist LEAs in coordinating virtual learning for students. **DLS recommends that MSDE continues to report on virtual learning, including enrollment numbers by LEA.**

MSDE Response:

MSDE concurs. The Department's Virtual Learning JCR, prepared in December 2022, provides a full description of Virtual Learning in Maryland. To summarize, as of December 2022, 6,724 students in 19 LEAs participated in virtual learning programs. For SY 22-23, LEAs modified and updated their enrollment requirements based on the data collected from the previous school year. MSDE is currently collecting and analyzing data from the first semester of the 22-23 school year to determine if the modified enrollment procedures have been successful. The findings from the collected data will then be used to make recommendations and to provide further assistance in helping the LEAs to refine their programs to ensure student success.

5. MSDE Experiences Delays Submitting Required Data and Reports

As part of mandated reporting requirements and JCR reports requested by MGA, in calendar 2022 and 2023, MSDE Headquarters was responsible for 57 annual reports and 21 JCR reports, not including monthly reports, back of the bill requests with other agencies, and reports written by independent agencies within MSDE. Out of 78 reports due between July 1, 2022, and January 15, 2023, MSDE turned in 49 reports, or 63%, within 30 days of the deadline; 16 reports, or 21%, between 30 to 90 days late; and 13 reports, or 17%, over 90 days late. **Exhibit 14** shows this information.

As part of a four-year cycle of identifying and checking annual mandated reports, in summer 2022, DLS attempted to work with MSDE to identify annual reports that might be outdated. Although this work could have potentially decreased MSDE's annual reporting requirements, the agency responded that no action was required. **MSDE should be prepared to comment on the reasons for delays in submitting JCR and mandated reports.**

MSDE Response:

MSDE acknowledges that it was behind in many Joint Chairmen Reports and Maryland State Agency Reports, including some reports that were due from the previous administration. MSDE has subsequently resolved all of the outstanding reports and has a new internal tracking system where MSDE has already identified and mapped the next twelve months of reports, deadlines, and assignments to ensure timely and proper submission.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Add the following language to the general fund appropriation:

, provided that \$100,000 of this appropriation may not be expended until the Maryland State Department of Education submits a report by November 1, 2023, addressing concerns from a January 2023 audit conducted by the Office of Legislative Audits. This report should provide details on actions taken by the

agency to resolve all five unredacted audit findings. The budget committees shall have 45 days to review and comment from the date of receipt of the report. Funds restricted pending the receipt of a report may not be transferred by budget amendment or otherwise to any other purpose and shall revert to the General Fund if the report is not submitted to the budget committees.

Explanation: In a recent audit by the Office of Legislative Audits (OLA), the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) had eight new findings and one repeat finding, with four redacted cybersecurity findings. These findings involved the use of Blueprint for Maryland's Future special funds, enrollment audits of local education agencies, appropriate monitoring of fiscal management practices, and State procurement procedures. This language directs MSDE to submit a report regarding actions taken to resolve these findings.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on OLA audit findings	MSDE	November 1, 2023

MSDE Response:
MSDE concurs.

2. Adopt the following narrative:

Report on Accounting Practices: Due to ongoing concerns about accounting practices, the budget committees request that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) submit a closeout report by October 1, 2023. This report should include an explanation for encumbrances and reversions for all general, special, federal, and reimbursable funds for any amount that does not equal zero.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on accounting practices	MSDE	October 1, 2023

MSDE Response:
MSDE concurs.

3. Adopt the following narrative:

Report on State Education Agency Federal Stimulus Funds: Due to school closures prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) received approximately \$303.0 million in State Education Agency (SEA) federal stimulus funds. To ensure proper monitoring of the use of these funds, the budget committees request that MSDE report by September 1, 2023, on all SEA program expenditures distributed as part of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. This report should include:

- grant expenditures by school and program for State-mandated funds allocated to the Maryland School for the Blind, the Maryland School for the Deaf, and the School for Educational Evolution and Development;
- grant procedures, allocations, and expenditures by program for all discretionary allocations;
- expenditures by MSDE department and object for administrative costs; and

- unexpended funds by program, reasons that funds were not allocated or expended, anticipated expenditures of those funds by program for future years, and funds that may have been canceled.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on SEA ESSER funds	MSDE	September 1, 2023

MSDE Response:

MSDE concurs.

4. Adopt the following narrative:

Report on the Maryland Leads Program: The American Rescue Plan Act requires State agencies to spend a designated percentage of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds to address learning loss. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) applied these funds to a new noncompetitive grant program for local education agencies (LEA), Maryland Leads. However, analysis of this program indicates potential issues with how funding was distributed and whether the program will directly impact student learning loss. To ensure proper oversight of this program and funding, the budget committees request that MSDE report by October 1, 2023, on the Maryland Leads program. The report should include the following information:

- a summary of progress on Maryland Leads objectives to date, including program materials or guidance for LEAs;
- LEA actions to address learning loss by subprogram;
- expenditures by LEA and subprogram for fiscal 2022, 2023, and 2024, including expenditures on personnel;
- summative assessments or measures, by LEA and program, implemented to remediate student learning loss;
- documentation of measurable gains to date, specifically in reading and math, in all grades as the result of Maryland Leads initiatives; and
- any other measures implemented by LEA to address student learning loss that did not involve student assessment including, but not limited to, educator professional development, tutoring, small group instruction, summer school, afterschool programs, outreach services, and mental and behavioral health initiatives, and how MSDE will assess the efficacy of these measures.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Reports on Maryland Leads	MSDE	October 1, 2023

MSDE Response:

MSDE respectfully disagrees. Please see the Department's response to the Maryland Leads program beginning on page four.

5. Adopt the following narrative:

Report on Virtual Learning: Due to COVID-19 school closures in March 2020, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) allowed local education agencies to implement virtual learning in place of in-person learning. To understand the impact and monitor the continued expansion of virtual learning across the State, the budget committees request that MSDE provide an updated report by December 1, 2023, on actions taken in calendar 2023 to facilitate virtual learning for teachers and students across the State. This report should have:

- costs for State virtual learning in fiscal 2022 and 2023 and anticipated expenditures in fiscal 2024 and 2025, by fund source and program;
- detailed information on the status of virtual learning programs and activities including, but not limited to:
 - State Learning Management System implementation, including additional licenses, migration of courses, training, and information technology services;
 - Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities courses and vendors;
 - professional development courses, training, and vendors;
 - development and implementation of e-communities and their anticipated impact on virtual learning; and
- development and implementation of a State virtual school.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
Report on virtual learning	MSDE	December 1, 2023

MSDE Response:

MSDE concurs.



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

December 16, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

As schools work hard to provide safe, in-person learning and address the social, emotional, mental health, and academic impact of COVID-19, we have heard directly from chief State school officers, superintendents, educators, and families about the harmful impacts of shortages of educators and other school staff. These impacts include difficulty providing student transportation, interrupted access to meals and critical services such as mental health services, larger class sizes, a greater number of students being taught by substitute teachers and teachers who are not certified in the area assigned to teach, and, in the most extreme cases, disruptive school closures.¹ Preexisting teacher shortages in critical areas such as special education; bilingual education; science, technology, engineering, and math; and career and technical education have been further exacerbated by COVID-19—directly impeding student access to educational opportunity. According to a recent Ed Week Research Center survey,² one in four district leaders and principals are reporting severe staffing shortages; and according to a recent survey conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 68 percent of principals surveyed are concerned about teacher shortages and report it has been more difficult to hire qualified teachers since COVID-19.³ History has shown that shortages disproportionately impact students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, students with disabilities, and often rural communities.⁴

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is committed to supporting districts and schools across this country in addressing teacher and staff shortages, minimizing disruption to in-person learning, and meeting student needs. That is why we are urging you to use resources from the \$122 billion made available through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) (Pub. L. 117-2) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund and a portion of the \$350 billion made available through the ARP's Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to ensure that students have access to the teachers and other critical staff they

¹ St. George, D., and Strauss, V. "The Principal is Cleaning the Bathroom: Schools Reel with Staff Shortages." *The Washington Post*, 5 Dec. 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/school-staff-shortages-bus/2021/12/03/05b88a0e-4cab-11ec-a1b9-9f12bd39487a_story.html.

² Lieberman, M. "How Bad Are School Staffing Shortages? What We Learned by Asking Administrators." *Education Week*, 22 Oct. 2021, <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/how-bad-are-school-staffing-shortages-what-we-learned-by-asking-administrators/2021/10>.

³ "NASSP Survey Signals a Looming Mass Exodus of Principals from Schools." *National Association of Secondary School Principals*, 8 December 2021, <https://www.nassp.org/news/nassp-survey-signals-a-looming-mass-exodus-of-principals-from-schools/>.

⁴ Goldhaber, D. & Gratz, T. (2021). *School District Staffing Challenges in a Rapidly Recovering Economy*. CEDR Flash Brief No. 11082021-1. University of Washington, Seattle, WA.; Sutchter, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S.* Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute; and Cardichon, J., Darling-Hammond, L., Yang, M., Scott, C., Shields, P. M., & Burns, D. (2020). *Inequitable opportunity to learn: Student access to certified and experienced teachers*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

need to support their success during this critical period. This includes moving quickly to implement short-term strategies while also considering longer-term investments.

Let us be clear: ARP provides vital resources to hire additional educators and school staff and to improve compensation to recruit and retain educators and school staff. School districts should act with urgency to keep schools open for in-person learning and ensure they do not waste this opportunity to make critical investments.

To this end, this letter describes (1) evidence-based and promising short- and long-term strategies for addressing teacher and staff shortages that can be funded through ARP ESSER and (2) examples of how ARP and previous relief funds are already being used to attract and retain teachers and staff. These strategies can help to fill currently open positions and add and fill new roles, such as providing one-time initial hiring incentives, or short-term investments in additional staff to support students and educators and increased needs. The current needs of our students, families, and educators call on us to act and use the Federal resources made available to respond to this crisis. We must do everything we can right now to support our students during this critical year by addressing the impact of the last few years on their social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs.

Strategies for Hiring and Retaining Qualified and Effective Educators

1. Increase Educator and Staff Compensation⁵

The most common reason educators have cited for leaving school employment in the last year is stress, followed by insufficient pay.⁶ Many school leaders are increasing wages by offering hiring and retention bonuses, working towards permanent salary increases, or providing premium pay that help educators receive the compensation they deserve and keep them in the profession, and we encourage others to continue to work towards increasing compensation. Hiring and retention bonuses may provide additional relief from some of the stresses caused by COVID-19. While some districts have expressed concern about investing in increasing compensation with short-term recovery funds, our nation's children need support now, and many states and districts are already choosing to use ARP ESSER funds to address immediate shortage needs. For example, West Contra Costa County Unified School District is providing \$6,000 signing bonuses for teachers.⁷ Districts in Oklahoma, North Carolina, New Jersey, and elsewhere are offering a range of cash incentives for new teachers, particularly in struggling and underserved schools.⁸

⁵ Ulrich Boser and Chelsea Straus, "Mid- and Late-Career Teachers Struggle with Paltry Incomes" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2014), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k12/reports/2014/07/23/94168/mid-and-late-career-teachers-struggle-with-paltry-incomes/>; and Linda Darling-Hammond, Roberta Furger, Patrick M. Shields, and Leib Satcher, *Addressing California's Emerging Teacher Shortage: An Analysis of Sources and Solutions* (Palo Alto: Learning Policy Institute, 2016).

⁶ Diliberti, Melissa Kay, et al. "Stress Topped The Reasons Why Teachers Quit, Even Before COVID-19." RAND Corporation, 22 Feb. 2021, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1121-2.html.

⁷ Klapper, Rebecca. "To Fill Teaching Vacancies, Some Districts Offer Thousands in Signing Bonuses." *Newsweek*, Newsweek, 22 Sept. 2021, <https://www.newsweek.com/fill-teaching-vacancies-some-districts-offer-thousands-signing-bonuses-1631724>.

⁸ Gecker, Jocelyn. "Covid-19 Creates Dire US Shortage of Teachers, School Staff." *AP NEWS*, Associated Press, 23 Sept. 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/business-science-health-education-california-b6c495eab9a2a8f1a3ca068582c9d3c7>.

Indiana plans to launch a program to provide more than \$2.5 million in ARP ESSER funds and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B funds to support licensure in high-need areas, and the Indianapolis Public Schools plans to provide a three percent pay raise.⁹

Flexibilities can also be used by states and districts to bring retired educators back into the school for the next year or two. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has issued FAQs clarifying that, in some instances, retirees can return to work and still receive their pensions.¹⁰ As an added incentive to retain current staff eligible for retirement, employees can in some cases begin receiving pension payments while still working. And where it is not currently allowed, pension plans can be amended to permit these benefits. For example, Kentucky passed legislation to temporarily allow retired teachers to be rehired and keep their pensions to help with teacher shortages, and increased ten-fold the percentage of retired teachers who can be rehired by a district.¹¹ In addition to retired educators, mobilizing retired social workers and psychologists can help meet our schools' needs to provide additional social, emotional, and mental health support to students as they recover from the impact of the pandemic on their well-being.

States and districts are also providing additional compensation to address staff shortages in critical areas in addition to teacher shortages. For example, the Jordan School District in Utah has raised the bus driver starting pay to more than \$21 per hour and will pay for the required training and commercial driver's license fees.¹² Waco Independent School District in Texas will give custodians and cafeteria workers up to \$1,000 in bonuses.¹³ Custodians and cafeteria workers will also receive retention bonuses based on years served with the district. North Carolina is using federal COVID-19 recovery funds to help local school nutrition operations across the state recruit and retain needed staff.¹⁴ Additional examples of state and local efforts to address teacher and staff shortages are included in the joint two-part ED and Treasury Webinar: "Using American Rescue Plan Funds and Other Federal Supports to Address State and Local Teacher Labor Shortages"¹⁵ and "Using American Rescue Plan Funds and Other Federal Supports to Address State and Local Staff Labor Shortages."¹⁶

⁹ Indiana ARP ESSER State Plan Highlights. <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/08/Indiana-ARP-ESSER-State-Plan-Highlights-v2-081121.pdf>.

¹⁰ "Coronavirus-Related Relief for Retirement Plans and IRAs Questions and Answers." Internal Revenue Service. Accessed December 2, 2021. <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/coronavirus-related-relief-for-retirement-plans-and-iras-questions-and-answers>.

¹¹ WDRB.com "Kentucky's retired teachers can be rehired and keep their pensions to help with teacher shortage", 15 Sept. 2021, https://www.wdrb.com/news/kentuckys-retired-teachers-can-be-rehired-and-keep-their-pensions-to-help-with-teacher-shortage/article_71957ad0-1681-11ec-8bc3-6b6924dcf3b5.html.

¹² Vaughn, Kelly. "Staffing Shortages Impacts Schools across Utah, Big Need for Bus Drivers in Most Districts." KUTV, KUTV, 20 Aug. 2021, <https://kutv.com/news/local/staffing-shortages-impacts-schools-across-utah-big-need-for-bus-drivers-in-most-districts>.

¹³ Hoover, Carl. "Waco ISD Teachers to Get Bonuses up to \$10k; Custodians, Cafeteria Workers to Get up to \$1K." WacoTrib.com, 17 July 2021, https://wacotrib.com/news/local/education/waco-isd-teachers-to-get-bonuses-up-to-10k-custodians-cafeteria-workers-to-get-up/article_ce11760e-e65e-11eb-8e2a-030f026747c9.html.

¹⁴ "\$10 Million in Additional Support Approved for NC School Nutrition Programs." North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2 Sept. 2021, <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/news/press-releases/2021/09/02/10-million-additional-support-approved-nc-school-nutrition-programs>.

¹⁵ Part 1: Using ARP Funds and Other Federal Supports to Address State and Local Teacher Shortages. YouTube. U.S. Department of Education, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bF3ZXjfdumc>.

¹⁶ Part 2: Using ARP Funds and Other Federal Supports to Address State and Local Teacher Shortages. YouTube. U.S. Department of Education, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBr6hIrJ4cw>.

2. Build and Maintain a Cadre of High-Quality Substitute Teachers

States and districts can use ARP funds to recruit and train high-quality substitute teachers.¹⁷ To create some stability and certainty, substitute teachers could be assigned to a school for an entire school year. This strategy would help substitute teachers be more prepared to step into the classroom and support continuity for students when educators need to take time off. These substitute teachers can also co-lead small group learning and provide support during release time for educators to allow for teacher professional development. For example, a school district in San Diego, California,¹⁸ signed an agreement with the union to create a “Resident Visiting Teacher” position at every school providing standby substitute teachers. Another example is the Colorado Substitute Stipend¹⁹ program, which was instituted to encourage qualified individuals to apply for a substitute teaching certificate, offering a \$300 bonus for obtaining a license, undergoing training, and working a minimum of one day. The California Department of Education also increased its hourly rates for the school year and introduced a new level of licensed substitute teachers.

3. Support Educator and Staff Well-Being, Including Improved Working Conditions

Now, more than ever, supporting educator well-being is critical for retaining our current educators and staff. As previously mentioned, stress is the most common reason educators have cited for leaving school employment in the last year, followed by insufficient pay.²⁰ As educators continue working during a global health crisis, educator well-being and support continue to be essential to school and district success.

Surveys show educator well-being is tied to feeling supported, valued, and heard by school and district leaders, as well as peers.²¹ Many educators may also be struggling as they watch the students they serve and care deeply about going through challenging experiences. ED’s COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 2: Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students’ Needs²² includes detailed strategies and practices for stabilizing and supporting the educator workforce and their well-being. Key strategies include:

¹⁷ See Liu, Jing. “American Faces a Substitute Teacher Shortage- and Disadvantaged Schools are Hit the Hardest.” Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2020/10/21/america-faces-a-substitute-teacher-shortage-and-disadvantaged-schools-are-hit-hardest/>; NEA, “Substitute Teachers.” <https://www.nea.org/substitute-teachers>. Heubeck, E. “This District Built a Better, More Reliable Supply of Substitute Teachers. Here’s How.” <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/this-district-built-a-better-more-reliable-supply-of-substitute-teachers-heres-how/2021/09>.

¹⁸ Nakano, Rina. “San Diego County School Districts Face Serious Substitute Teacher Shortage.” KGTV. KGTV, October 5, 2021. <https://www.10news.com/news/local-news/san-diego-news/san-diego-county-school-districts-face-serious-substitute-teacher-shortage>.

¹⁹ Mullen Special, David, and O'Dell Isaac. “Colorado School Districts Battling Diminished Substitute Teacher Numbers.” Colorado Springs Gazette, October 11, 2021. https://gazette.com/cheyennedition/colorado-school-districts-battling-diminished-substitute-teacher-numbers/article_fb2a3468-261a-11ec-ae95-6797d5664caf.html.

²⁰ Diliberti, Melissa Kay, et al. “Stress Topped The Reasons Why Teachers Quit, Even Before COVID-19.” RAND Corporation, 22 Feb. 2021, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1121-2.html.

²¹ “The Causes of Teacher Burnout and Attrition.” Digital Commons@CSP, 12 July 2019, https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=teacher-education_masters.

²² U.S. Department of Education. “ED COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 2,” U.S. Department of Education, August 2021. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf>.

- **Building intentional systems that support educator and staff well-being.** Efforts to prioritize communication and collaboration between staff and leadership nurture, and model, a sense of connectedness that is crucial to supporting educators and keeping them in the profession.²³ Efforts can include:
 - Developing school leader-to-educator support systems. For example, leaders can build in time for recurring debrief sessions with all staff members and, when necessary, hold debrief sessions after stressful days.
 - Establishing peer-to-peer support systems. For example, school leaders can prioritize educator mentoring programs to prevent burnout.
 - Reducing educator workloads. For example, school leaders can schedule staff planning time into work hours.
 - Communicating established district and school mental health supports (e.g., who to contact and what supports are available).
 - Supporting educators in recharging, including providing designated space, while ensuring students have continuous access to in-person learning. School leaders may consider providing peer-to-peer support networks and other strategies for supporting adult well-being.
 - Providing paid-time for educators and staff to get vaccinated if states or school districts are not providing on-site vaccination opportunities, and sick leave to recover from any side effects that keep them from working.

- **Increasing the availability of qualified adults and personnel to support educators, students, and staff.** For example, districts can partner with institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to provide additional supports to educators and students through the use of teaching candidates and well-trained volunteers. Districts could hire AmeriCorps members to serve as tutors or mentor students, assist with additional administrative responsibilities brought on by the pandemic, and provide creative enrichment support for students. ED funds can be used to meet AmeriCorps matching requirements to support these efforts.²⁴ Districts should also hire the staff needed to support increased student mental health needs—providing educators and students with the additional staff they need to succeed. A number of states are already using ARP funds for these purposes. For example, the Oklahoma State Department of Education hired new school counselors, mental health professionals, and recreational therapists.²⁵ Nevada is reserving \$7.5 million of ARP ESSER funds to hire 100 school-based mental health professionals.²⁶ Minnesota will use ARP ESSER funds to support districts and charter schools in hiring licensed school counselors, school nurses, school social workers, and school psychologists to help provide early responses to support students’ social, emotional, and mental health.²⁷

²³ “The Causes of Teacher Burnout and Attrition.” Digital Commons@CSP, 12 July 2019, https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=teacher-education_masters.

²⁴ For additional information, please see <https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/Leveraging-National-Service-in-Your-Schools.pdf>.

²⁵ Oklahoma ARP ESSER State Plan Highlights. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/arp-essser-ok-plan.pdf>.

²⁶ Nevada ARP ESSER State Plan Highlights. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/arp-essser-nv-plan.pdf>.

²⁷ Minnesota ARP ESSER State Plan Highlights. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/arp-essser-mn-plan.pdf>.

- **Implementing flexible and creative scheduling to support students for full-week in-person learning while providing planning and collaboration time for teachers.** For example, districts could hold entire days focused on a single core academic subject; offer all “special” subjects (e.g., music, art, physical education) on the same day so grade-level teams can plan together; and hold shorter learning cycles, with more frequent breaks, some of which educators can use for planning. Districts should ensure that continuous in-person learning and enrichment opportunities are available for all students, and that days of in-person programming are not reduced.

4. Make Investments in the Educator Pipeline

As states and districts work to stabilize their educator pipeline, a variety of strategies have been identified that can both support the preparation and development of new educators and encourage them to work in high-need schools. Evidence-based approaches to addressing pre-existing and ongoing teacher shortages include:

- Providing loan forgiveness, grants, or service scholarship programs that significantly underwrite the cost of postsecondary education in exchange for a commitment to teach in a high-need field or school for a minimum number (e.g., four) of years (e.g., the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program²⁸);²⁹
- Developing and implementing high-quality comprehensive teacher residency programs that provide extensive clinical experience, which have been shown to increase teacher retention and effectiveness;³⁰ and
- Developing and implementing professional development programs and mentoring models, particularly for newer teachers, that emphasize building effective instructional strategies and provide time for ongoing collaboration.³¹

Schools across the country continue to implement these evidence-based and promising strategies in an effort to address these challenges. ED strongly encourages you to use funding under ARP to respond to the urgent needs resulting from the pandemic while beginning to plan for the investments needed to ensure that every student has access to the qualified educators and staff they need.

²⁸ “North Carolina Teaching Fellows.” *NC Teaching Fellows*, <https://myapps.northcarolina.edu/ncteachingfellows/>.

²⁹ Podolsky, A. & Kini, T. (2016). *How Effective Are Loan Forgiveness and Service Scholarships for Recruiting Teachers?* (policy brief). Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

³⁰ Institute of Education Sciences, “New Findings on the Retention of Novice Teachers From Teaching Residency Programs.” August 2015, <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20154015/pdf/20154015.pdf>; and Papay, J. P., West, M. R., Fullerton, J. B., and Kane, T. J. (2012). Does an urban teacher residency increase student achievement? Early evidence from Boston. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 34(4), 413–434.

³¹ Ingersoll, R. M., & Smith, T. M. (2004). Do teacher induction and mentoring matter? *NAASP Bulletin*, 88(638), 28–40.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership to address teacher and staff shortages and ensuring high-quality, safe, in-person educational experiences for students across this country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Miguel A. Cardona". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Miguel A. Cardona, Ed.D.

Overview and Instructions

Local education agencies (LEAs) should complete all enclosed sheets in this workbook, including all focus-area specific information in this workbook for which the LEA has an approved Maryland Leads program. LEAs can utilize this workbook to track implementation progress over time. Future reporting will be cumulative and build on the data (including spending data) submitted with each semi-annual report (every six months).

The completed file is due to Justin Dayhoff at justin.dayhoff@maryland.gov, in .xlsx format by email no later than February 22, 2022

Please download save this file using the following naming convention (LEA IDs are available in the sheet '1_LEA Award Amounts', cell B3, after selecting the LEA name in the dropdown):

LEA ID_MDLEADS_REPORTING_Q1

For example: 02_LEA ID_MDLEADS_REPORTING_Q1

The completed file is due to Justin at justin.dayhoff@maryland.gov, in .xlsx format by email no later than February 22, 2022

Sheet 1 LEA Award Amounts					
LEA Name		LEA ID	LEA Award	LEA Related Partner Award	Total
					\$ -

Sheet 2a Strategy 1: Grow Your Own

Report any expenditure ONLY ONCE in the table below; All cells in each column should sum to the total expended by the LEA in this reporting period. Please use the most appropriate and most specific applicable expenditure category/object for each expenditure.

Total Amount Expended by Focus Area			
Activities	LEA Spending	Partner Spending	Total
Focus Area 1: Establish a year-long, paid residency program for teachers and other professional support staff (e.g., social workers, speech language pathologists, etc.).	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
a. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
b. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
c. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -		\$ -
d. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
e. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
f. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
g. Property	\$ -		\$ -
h. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
i. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 2: Enable teaching assistants to become teachers.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
j. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
k. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
l. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -		\$ -
m. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
n. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
o. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
p. Property	\$ -		\$ -
q. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
r. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 3: Develop programs to diversify the teaching corps (underrepresented groups).	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
s. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
t. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
u. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -		\$ -
v. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
w. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
x. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -

y. Property	\$ -		\$ -
z. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
aa. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 4: Create programs for high school students to pursue careers in education.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
bb. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
cc. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
dd. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
ee. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
ff. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
gg. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
hh. Property	\$ -		\$ -
ii. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
jj. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 5: Design opportunities to build pipelines for hard-to-fill areas such as math, science, special education, bilingual, CTE, etc.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
kk. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
ll. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
mm. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
nn. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
oo. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
pp. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
qq. Property	\$ -		\$ -
rr. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
ss. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 6: Build programs to support individuals in changing careers and entering the education field.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
tt. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
uu. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
vv. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
ww. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
xx. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
yy. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
zz. Property	\$ -		\$ -
aaa. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
bbb. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -

Sheet 2b -Strategy 2: Staff Support and Retention

Report any expenditure ONLY ONCE in the table below; All cells in each column should sum to the total expended by the LEA in this reporting period. Please use the most appropriate and most specific applicable expenditure category/object for each expenditure.

Total Amount Expended by Focus Area			
Activities	LEA Spending	Partner Spending	Total
Focus Area 1: Pay retention incentives for key groups of staff in school years 2021-22 and 2022-23.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
a. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
b. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
c. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
d. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
e. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
f. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
g. Property	\$ -		\$ -
h. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
i. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 2: Increase job-embedded planning time for teachers.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
j. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
k. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
l. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
m. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
n. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
o. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
p. Property	\$ -		\$ -
q. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
r. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 3: Launch initiatives to support and promote positive organizational climate and culture designed to increase staff retention.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
s. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
t. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
u. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
v. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
w. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
x. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -

y. Property	\$ -		\$ -
z. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
aa. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 4: Establish programs to support employee's health and wellness.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
bb. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
cc. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
dd. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
ee. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
ff. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
gg. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
hh. Property	\$ -		\$ -
ii. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
jj. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 5: Develop co-teach and/or mentorship programs.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
kk. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
ll. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
mm. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
nn. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
oo. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
pp. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
qq. Property	\$ -		\$ -
rr. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
ss. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 6: Redesign professional development models to increase job-embedded coaching and implementation.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
tt. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
uu. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
vv. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
ww. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
xx. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
yy. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
zz. Property	\$ -		\$ -
aaa. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
bbb. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 7: Establish systems to ensure meaningful feedback occurs among peers and/or during the appraisal process.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
ccc. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -

ddd. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
eee. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
fff. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
ggg. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
hhh. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
iii. Property	\$ -		\$ -
jjj. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
III. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 8: Redesign induction experiences for early career teachers.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
mmm. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
nnn. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
ooo. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
ppp. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
qqq. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
rrr. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
sss. Property	\$ -		\$ -
ttt. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
uuu. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 9: Launch a cohort model to support teachers in obtaining National Board Certification.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
vvv. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
www. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
xxx. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
yyy. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
zzz. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
aaaa. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
bbbb. Property	\$ -		\$ -
cccc. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
dddd. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -

Sheet 2c Strategy 3: The Science of Reading

Report any expenditure ONLY ONCE in the table below; All cells in each column should sum to the total expended by the LEA in this reporting period. Please use the most appropriate and most specific applicable expenditure category/object for each expenditure.

Total Amount Expended by Focus Area			
Activities	LEA Spending	Partner Spending	Total
Focus Area 1: Contract with a service provider to provide training.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
a. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
b. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
c. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
d. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
e. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
f. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
g. Property	\$ -		\$ -
h. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
i. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 2: Identify and implement high-quality, content-rich instructional materials and as	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
j. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
k. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
l. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
m. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
n. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
o. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
p. Property	\$ -		\$ -
q. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
r. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 3: Create systems for progress monitoring to ensure all students are reading by the end of third grade and have the appropriate supports if still struggling with reading beyond third grade.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
s. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
t. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
u. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
v. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
w. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
x. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -

y. Property	\$ -		\$ -
z. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
aa. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -

Sheet 2d -Strategy 4: High-Quality School Day Tutoring

Report any expenditure ONLY ONCE in the table below; All cells in each column should sum to the total expended by the LEA in this reporting period. Please use the most appropriate and most specific applicable expenditure category/object for each expenditure.

Total Amount Expended by Focus Area			
Activities	LEA Spending	Partner Spending	Total
Focus Area 1: Prioritize school-day tutoring for students who experienced learning loss as a result of the pandemic.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
a. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
b. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
c. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -		\$ -
d. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
e. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
f. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
g. Property	\$ -		\$ -
h. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
i. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 2: Restructure the schedule or redesign the school day to embed more opportunities for high-quality tutoring during the school day.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
j. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
k. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
l. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -		\$ -
m. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
n. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
o. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
p. Property	\$ -		\$ -
q. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
r. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 3: Build a high-quality pipeline for tutors (college students, paraeducators, teachers, non-teaching professionals, volunteers, tutoring providers, etc.) to implement school-day tutoring.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
s. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
t. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
u. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
v. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -

w. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
x. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
y. Property	\$ -		\$ -
z. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
aa. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -

Sheet 2e Strategy 5: Reimagining the Use of Time

Report any expenditure ONLY ONCE in the table below; All cells in each column should sum to the total expended by the LEA in this reporting period. Please use the most appropriate and most specific applicable expenditure category/object for each expenditure.

Total Amount Expended by Focus Area			
Activities	LEA Spending	Partner Spending	Total
Focus Area 1: Restructure the schedule to allow for more occurrences of tutoring, mentorship, service learning, career and college exploration, or social-emotional supports.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
a. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
b. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
c. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
d. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
e. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
f. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
g. Property	\$ -		\$ -
h. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
i. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 2: Develop a schedule that supports additional time for students to pursue their own interests and passions.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
j. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
k. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
l. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
m. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
n. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
o. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
p. Property	\$ -		\$ -
q. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
r. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 3: Modify the calendar year to include summer programming or add intersessions to support historically underserved students and those who have experienced learning loss.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
s. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
t. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
u. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

v. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
w. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
x. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
y. Property	\$ -		\$ -
z. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
aa. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 4: Provide students opportunities to learn in real-world settings by incorporating field work, field trips, project-based learning, resident experts, etc.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
bb. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
cc. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
dd. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
ee. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
ff. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
gg. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
hh. Property	\$ -		\$ -
ii. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
jj. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 5: Partner with afterschool providers and out-of-school-time organizations to provide opportunities for extended learning time throughout the school year.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
kk. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
ll. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
mm. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
nn. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
oo. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
pp. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
qq. Property	\$ -		\$ -
rr. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
ss. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 6: Partner with organizations for intensive and/or long-term support (6 - 10 years) of the most at-risk and underserved high school students.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
tt. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
uu. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
vv. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
ww. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
xx. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -

yy. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
zz. Property	\$ -		\$ -
aaa. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
bbb. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 7: Partner with organizations that support high-performing, underrepresented high school students and their families in accessing, attending, and graduating from Tier 1 colleges and universities across the nation.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
ccc. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
ddd. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
eee. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
fff. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
ggg. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
hhh. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
iii. Property	\$ -		\$ -
jjj. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
lll. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 8: Create opportunities for accomplished teachers to expand their reach and support the development of other teachers as well as work directly with students who have the highest needs.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
mmm. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
nnn. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
ooo. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
ppp. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
qqq. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
rrr. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
sss. Property	\$ -		\$ -
ttt. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
uuu. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 9: Redesign parent-teacher conferences to increase student and parent engagement as well as provide both groups with opportunities to take more active roles in teaching and learning at home and at school.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
vvv. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
www. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
xxx. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
yyy. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
zzz. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
aaaa. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -

bbbb. Property	\$ -		\$ -
cccc. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
dddd. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 10: Develop and implement a program with a targeted set of systems and supports for 9th grade students.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
eeee. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
ffff. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
gggg. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
hhhh. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
iiii. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
jjjj. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
IIII. Property	\$ -		\$ -
mmmm. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
nnnn. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -

Sheet 2f Strategy 6: Innovative School Models

Report any expenditure ONLY ONCE in the table below; All cells in each column should sum to the total expended by the LEA in this reporting period. Please use the most appropriate and most specific applicable expenditure category/object for each expenditure.

Total Amount Expended by Focus Area			
Activities	LEA Spending	Partner Spending	Total
Focus Area 1: Design school models anchored in Career and Technical Education (CTE).	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
a. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
b. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
c. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
d. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
e. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
f. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
g. Property	\$ -		\$ -
h. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
i. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 2: School systems partner with an intermediary or launch an intermediary in collaboration with industry leaders to provide students with opportunities for career awareness, career exploration, and work-based learning.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
j. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
k. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
l. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
m. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
n. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
o. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
p. Property	\$ -		\$ -
q. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
r. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 3: Create early/middle college models in collaboration with institutions of higher education to provide students with opportunities to earn college credit and/or degrees with specific degree plans while concurrently enrolled in high school.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
s. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -

t. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
u. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
v. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
w. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
x. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
y. Property	\$ -		\$ -
z. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
aa. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 4: Implement a school transformation model for low performing schools that includes strategic staffing, instructional excellence, extending the school day, social and emotional learning, and deep engagement with parent and community organizations.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
bb. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
cc. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
dd. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
ee. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
ff. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
gg. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
hh. Property	\$ -		\$ -
ii. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
jj. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -
Focus Area 5: LEAs are encouraged to develop school models that seek to establish socioeconomically diverse and integrated learning environments.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
kk. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -		\$ -
ll. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -		\$ -
mm. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
nn. Purchased Property Services	\$ -		\$ -
oo. Other Purchased Services	\$ -		\$ -
pp. Supplies	\$ -		\$ -
qq. Property	\$ -		\$ -
rr. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -		\$ -
ss. Other Items	\$ -		\$ -

Sheet 2g Strategy 7: Transforming Neighborhoods through Excellent Community Schools

Report any expenditure ONLY ONCE in the table below; All cells in each column should sum to the total expended by the LEA in this reporting period. Please use the most appropriate and most specific applicable expenditure category/object for each expenditure.

Total Amount Expended by Focus Area		
Activities	LEA Spending	Partner Spending
Focus Area 1: Create systems of intensive support that leverage and align community partnerships and resources to ultimately impact a student's academic success.	\$ -	\$ -
a. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -	
b. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -	
c. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -
d. Purchased Property Services	\$ -	
e. Other Purchased Services	\$ -	
f. Supplies	\$ -	
g. Property	\$ -	
h. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -	
i. Other Items	\$ -	
Focus Area 2: Introduce strategic staffing and data initiatives to support the launch of foundational structures needed to support high-quality implementation of coordinated case management and care.	\$ -	\$ -
j. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -	
k. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -	
l. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -
m. Purchased Property Services	\$ -	
n. Other Purchased Services	\$ -	
o. Supplies	\$ -	
p. Property	\$ -	
q. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -	
r. Other Items	\$ -	
Focus Area 3: Connect families with social services, educational and job training opportunities, and health and wellness resources.	\$ -	\$ -
s. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -	
t. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -	
u. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -
v. Purchased Property Services	\$ -	

w. Other Purchased Services	\$ -	
x. Supplies	\$ -	
y. Property	\$ -	
z. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -	
aa. Other Items	\$ -	
Focus Area 4: Design and implement a comprehensive family engagement model.	\$ -	\$ -
bb. Personnel Services – Salaries	\$ -	
cc. Personnel Services -- Benefits	\$ -	
dd. Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$ -	\$ -
ee. Purchased Property Services	\$ -	
ff. Other Purchased Services	\$ -	
gg. Supplies	\$ -	
hh. Property	\$ -	
ii. Debt Service and Miscellaneous	\$ -	
jj. Other Items	\$ -	

[illegible]

Total Amount Expended by Fund Type	
General Fund	100.00
Special Fund	0.00
Capital Fund	0.00
Debt Fund	0.00
Other Fund	0.00
Total	100.00

[illegible]

Sheet 3b - Implementation Progress Staff Support and Retention

Total Amount Expended by Fund Type	
General Fund	100.00
Special Fund	0.00
Capital Fund	0.00
Debt Fund	0.00
Other Fund	0.00
Total	100.00

[illegible]

Total Amount Expended by Fund Type	
General Fund	100%
Special Fund	0%
Capital Fund	0%
Debt Service Fund	0%
Other Fund	0%
Total	100%

[illegible]

Total Amount Expended by Fund Type	
General Fund	100.00
Special Fund	0.00
Capital Fund	0.00
Debt Fund	0.00
Other Fund	0.00
Total	100.00

[illegible]

Sheet 3d - Implementation Progress High Quality School Day Tutoring

Total Amount Expended by Fund Type	
General Fund	100.00
Special Fund	0.00
Capital Fund	0.00
Debt Fund	0.00
Other Fund	0.00
Total	100.00

[illegible]

Total Amount Expended by Fund Type	
General Fund	100.00
Special Fund	100.00
Capital Fund	100.00
Debt Fund	100.00
Other Fund	100.00
Total	500.00

[illegible]

Total Amount Expended by Fund Type	
General Fund	100.00
Special Fund	0.00
Capital Fund	0.00
Debt Fund	0.00
Other Fund	0.00
Total	100.00

[illegible]

						0
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[illegible]



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

September 16, 2022

The Honorable Dutch Ruppersberger III
2206 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable John P. Sarbanes
2370 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Anthony Brown
1323 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable David Trone
1110 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Kweisi Mfume
2263 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Jamie Raskin
2242 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Andrew Harris
2334 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Re: Division of Rehabilitation Services

Dear Congressman Ruppersberger, Congressman Sarbanes, Congressman Brown, Congressman Hoyer, Congressman Trone, Congressman Mfume, Congressman Raskin, and Congressman Harris:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is requesting your assistance in a critical component to the transformative work being conducted across the State.

Social Security Administration (SSA) Background Check Process Length:

The Disability Determination Services (DDS) is a program that is operated by the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) within MSDE. DDS is funded by the SSA to adjudicate claims for individuals who apply for either Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

In 2004, Homeland Security Presidential Directive - 12 (HSPD-12) was issued, calling for a mandatory government-wide standard for secure and reliable ID for all employees and employees of federal contractors to access federally controlled facilities and networks. Because of the nature of the work that the staff of the DDS does on behalf of SSA, DDS employees are considered federal contractors. Additionally, HSPD-12 has five tiers or security clearance levels, which determine the level of detail that an individual background checks need to be reviewed. DDS staff were initially considered a Tier 1 security risk. Tier 1 is the investigation for positions designated as low-risk, non-sensitive. It is also the minimum level of investigation for a final credentialing determination for physical and logical access.

SSA rolled out the requirement under HSPD-12 to the Maryland DDS in 2014. On average, a Tier 1 background check took approximately three weeks to complete before issuing either a favorable or unfavorable decision from SSA. In a Tier 1 review, DDS applicants were quickly assessed as to their suitability for a position at the DDS.

In October 2021, DDS was moved to a Tier 2 background check requirement. A Tier 2 standard background investigation meets the suitability investigative requirement for non-sensitive positions designated as moderate risk public trust. Background checks have gone from an average of three weeks to an average of two months.

Due to SSA restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic and the simultaneous loss of employees, the backlog of cases waiting to be adjudicated has grown to over 24,000 cases. The increased length of time associated with Tier 2 background checks will further delay MSDE from being able to adjudicate existing cases and decrease the backlog.

Inherited DDS Challenges and Recent MSDE Solutions:

The skills the DDS Claims Examiners need to accurately adjudicate SSDI and SSI claims take several years to develop. This skill set did not go unnoticed as DDS staff was frequently hired by SSA and other outside organizations. The DDS staffing shortages became exacerbated because of Covid-19. From January 1, 2020, to May 19, 2022, there was a 150% increase in the number of vacancies. Exit surveys indicated that staff were exiting to similar positions in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the District of Columbia, earning on average \$25,000 more than they were earning in Maryland. Upon starting as Superintendent in Maryland, I conducted a salary study of surrounding states and the federal government to determine how to move MSDE to becoming competitive with our own salaries. I simultaneously engaged the State Department of Budget and Management to work to reclassify the DDS Claims Examiner positions through an off-cycle salary increase.

While working on a solution to increase salaries, MSDE worked with the University of Maryland (UMD) to launch the Pre-Employment Transitioning Services Intake Partnership Program (Pre-ETS IPP) as a two-year pilot program for students with a disability causing difficulty transitioning to employment. Part of the pilot program includes a goal to develop a fee for service model which will enable DORS to shift certain job functions, when applicable, to an outside organization. This will increase efficiency within MSDE to reduce the waitlist and increase the ability for staff to provide services in a more expedient manner. The initial format will be developed by October 31, 2023.

Effective July 1, 2022, the starting salary for an entry level VR specialist increased from \$42,035 to \$54,605. The increase in salary also applied to all existing employees in the same classification. Since the time of the salary increase, the following events have occurred:

- In 2022 prior to the change in salary, MSDE averaged seven applicants per week for the vacancies. In the time since the salary change, MSDE has averaged sixty-four applicants per week.
- In 2022 prior to the change in salary, MSDE had difficulty identifying selectable applicants for the DDS Claims Examiner vacancies. In the time since the salary change, MSDE had sixty-nine selectable applicants.
- Several employees rescinded their letters of resignation.
- MSDE reached out to six individuals who had recently resigned and informed them of the new salaries. Four of the six returned to MSDE.
- MSDE has not recently lost any DDS Claims Examiners to any surrounding States or municipalities.
- The loss of one experience DDS Claims Examiner represents 700 claims that are not adjudicated each year. With forty-eight vacancies this represents approximately 33,000 Maryland citizens claims that are delayed in being processed.

Congressional Support for Expedited Background Check Processes:

Due to SSA restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic and the simultaneous loss of employees, the backlog of cases waiting to be adjudicated has grown to over 24,000 cases. Prior to the change in the salary structure, MSDE was only able to identify nine individuals who met the necessary job qualifications. After the change in salary structure, MSDE was able to identify sixty-nine candidates who met the necessary qualifications. However, the increased length of time associated with Tier 2 background checks will further delay MSDE from being able to adjudicate existing cases and decrease the backlog. If MSDE were able to fully staff DORS today, the backlog would be able to be cut in half in a one-year span.

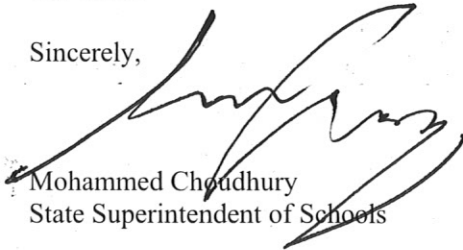
It is imperative that MSDE collaborates with our federal partners to accelerate the timeline and eliminate barriers that currently exist to improve services for the citizens of Maryland. A few paths forward are outlined below:

- Move DDS back to a Tier 1 standard background investigation.
- Work with SSA to expedite Tier 2 standard background investigation processing times as this is just not a Maryland issue, but a national issue as well

- Allow for potential employees to begin work at MSDE while the Tier 2 standard background check is occurring simultaneously. MSDE conducts their own State background check prior to any employees beginning with the agency.

As MSDE does everything we can to attract the best candidate, we request your assistance in working to remedy this situation. If you have any further questions, please contact Yousuf Ahmad at yousuf.ahmad@maryland.gov or 410-767-0504.

Sincerely,



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

September 16, 2022

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
100 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Ben Cardin
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Re: Division of Rehabilitation Services

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Senatorial Support for Expedited Background Check Processes:

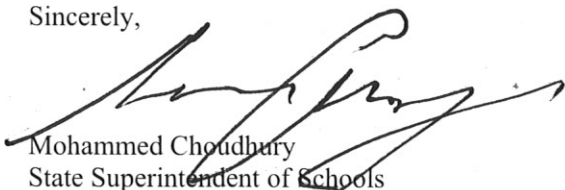
Due to SSA restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic and the simultaneous loss of employees, the backlog of cases waiting to be adjudicated has grown to over 24,000 cases. Prior to the change in the salary structure, MSDE was only able to identify nine individuals who met the necessary job qualifications. After the change in salary structure, MSDE was able to identify sixty-nine candidates who met the necessary qualifications. However, the increased length of time associated with Tier 2 background checks will further delay MSDE from being able to adjudicate existing cases and decrease the backlog. If MSDE were able to fully staff DORS today, the backlog would be able to be cut in half in a one-year span.

It is imperative that MSDE collaborates with our federal partners to accelerate the timeline and eliminate barriers that currently exist to improve services for the citizens of Maryland. A few paths forward are outlined below:

- Move DDS back to a Tier 1 standard background investigation.
- Work with SSA to expedite Tier 2 standard background investigation processing times as this is just not a Maryland issue, but a national issue as well
- Allow for potential employees to begin work at MSDE while the Tier 2 standard background check is occurring simultaneously. MSDE conducts their own State background check prior to any employees beginning with the agency.

As MSDE does everything we can to attract the best candidate, we request your assistance in working to remedy this situation. If you have any further questions, please contact Yousuf Ahmad at yousuf.ahmad@maryland.gov or 410-767-0504.

Sincerely,



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools