Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant Progress Update February 2014

Progress on Scope of Work Activities – Successes and Next Steps

Local Early Childhood Councils - Project 1

1.1.2 Follow up contact with local government chief executives regarding local early childhood advisory council progress

- ✓ Maryland's local government chief executives and local school superintendents received official notice of grant award letters from Dr. Lillian M. Lowery, Superintendent of Schools, approving implementation of the local early childhood advisory council action plans.

1.1.6 Set expectations for local early childhood advisory councils to submit their membership roster, agendas, and meeting minutes to the Governors State ECAC

- ✓ The local early childhood advisory councils have begun submitting agendas and meeting minutes. The local councils will continue to submit these items on a rolling basis throughout the full grant period (January 1, 2013-June 30, 2014) as their meetings are held.

Maryland EXCELS - Project 2

2.5 Increase the number of early learning and development programs, including publicly funded programs, participating in Maryland EXCELS

- ✓ 1,958 early learning and development programs are participating in Maryland EXCELS Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System as of January 12, 2014.
- ✓ Nearly 20% of licensed child care centers and registered family providers are now participating in Maryland EXCELS statewide.

Date	Total Participating Programs	Family Child Care	Center-Based	Public PreK	School-Age Only	Programs with Published Ratings
7/1/13	330 *field test*					
7/18/13	531					29
8/12/13	603	289	296	4	14	59
9/12/13	813	420	364	4	25	87
10/12/13	1038	552	453	4	29	116
11/12/13	1,186	638	498	4	46	160
12/12/13	1,579	877	604	4	94	221
1/12/14	1,775	987	659	5	124	267
2/12/14	1,958	1,104	710	5	139	307

Coaching and Mentoring – Project 3

3.6.3 Ongoing provision of quality assurance on the early learning and development programs participating in the Early Childhood Breakthrough Center

✓ Child Care Resource Center staff including Capacity Builders will be meeting in March to discuss technical assistance and capacity building with individual programs in their region. Capacity Builders are collaborating with elementary schools to have transition activities this spring.

3.7.1 Coordination of all Early Childhood Breakthrough Center activities with Maryland EXCELS.

✓ Maryland EXCELS staff and Breakthrough Center staff have responded to inquiries and requests for information about Maryland EXCELS. They continue to introduce early childhood programs to Maryland EXCELS through individual and small group meetings. Maryland EXCELS and Breakthrough Center staff have participated in county wide public events, and school system events to encourage participation in Maryland EXCELS.

3.9.4 Monitor the implementation of the two community hubs in accordance with the approved work plan

✓ With a grant from several Baltimore-based foundations, Maryland Family Network staff are providing training to parents and child care providers in the use of the Mobile Literacy Labs. At each Community Hub in the City, the Outreach Specialist is targeting at least 120 children in both center-based and family child care settings. The Mobile Literacy Labs are large bins filled with activities and materials designed to enhance and extend the experience of a book that is shared with the children. Each age group in a program is visited three times. During each visit, a different book is read, and the reading is followed by related activities. During the same visit, the Outreach Specialist provides resources to the child care teacher/provider/parent so activities can be replicated with other children's literature strategies/programs.

Promoting Use of Early Learning Standards- Project 4

4.3   Early Childhood Curriculum

✓ Stage one of the review was completed at the end of February. Fifteen publishers submitted technical reports and teacher manuals for review. Ten curricula will move on to stage two where full curriculum materials will be reviewed by the evaluation committee. The committee will review complete materials in early April. The revised list of recommended curriculum will be posted by May 2014.

4.4   Completion of the Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy (PreK-Grade 2)

✓ The videographer and photographer have completed collecting images of developmentally appropriate instructional practices that will augment the Guide. They are continuing to edit and finalize images for use in the online and print versions of the Guide.

4.5.3   Assign coaches/mentors and assessors located in geographic regions to implement VIOLETS in 50 programs identified through Breakthrough Centers

✓ Coaches are facilitating the implementation of VIOLETS in 51 early childhood programs statewide. All programs are following the implementation schedule. The coaches are providing enhancement materials to programs that as they demonstrate success with the foundational VIOLETS materials.

Professional Development Maryland Model for School Readiness - Project 5

5.1.5 Implement first cohort (five full-day sessions) of the MMSR Professional Development for licensed child care and Head Start programs using revised MMSR PD modules

- ✓ 18 MMSR 2013 trainings are in session with an average of 255 child care providers attending.
- ✓ 19 MMSR 2013 training sessions are complete with 289 trained child care providers, and 10 MMSR 2013 trainings are scheduled to begin in Winter/Spring 2014.

Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) – Project 6

6.2.4 - Develop items and tasks for the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) and Pre-K/K formative assessments using experts and practitioner stakeholder groups in Ohio and Maryland

- ✓ The testing window for the Field Test ended on Friday, December 20th in Maryland and a final report of findings was presented to leadership teams in Maryland and Ohio on February 20th and 21st. Data gathered from the Field Test has been used to determine what items will actually be included as part of the census administration in the fall of 2014.
- ✓ Initial items for the formative assessment have been developed by WestEd and will be tested in two phases in Maryland and Ohio in March 2014. The first test will consist of a virtual performance assessment usability study conducted in 2 sites in Maryland and 2 sites in Ohio. The second test will consist of hands on performance assessment pilot conducted with 25 teachers in each state.

6.2.9 - Conduct formal field test of the KEA and formative assessments in selected sites in Ohio and Maryland

- ✓ The testing window for the Field Test in Maryland ended on Friday, December 20th. Maryland had a very high completion rate with approximately 90% of teachers finishing the field test utilizing all items they were assigned to administer and 97% having at least completing a portion of items they were assigned to administer. Findings from the Field Test were presented to leadership in both Maryland and Ohio on February 20th and 21st. A formal report of findings will be ready for state review in March 2014.
- ✓ In addition to the formal field test of the KEA, additional data on the use of the Allowable Supports Document in planning for assessment for children with disabilities and ELL students was collected from teachers. Findings from the Field Test were presented to leadership in both Maryland and Ohio on February 20th and 21st. A formal report of findings will be ready for state review in March 2014.

6.3.5 – Develop and implement training protocol for the cognitive interviews and the pilot and field tests

- ✓ Data and feedback gathered from the Field Test has been used to further develop and refine the training protocol. The professional development will begin with teachers in Maryland in April 2014 in preparation for census administration in the fall of 2014.

3

6.4.1 - Conduct business analysis of existing Maryland technology and data infrastructure and identify needs for new infrastructure

✓ All CIO's and LEA's have been provided with updated information on the requirements and specifications for the Ready For Kindergarten ECCAS (formerly called KEA) and were given a new timeline for the development and implementation of the technology. In addition, Maryland's Branch Chief for Early Learning has visited 10 LEAs to meet with their elementary principals to present on the Ready For Kindergarten ECCAS; the remaining 14 LEA visits are scheduled.

Child Development Innovations – Project 7

7.2.9 Conduct training with pediatric PCPs

✓ The second CHECKup Learning Session for primary care providers was held, enrolling 13 providers and offered consultation and web based training support.

✓ The next CHECK UP Learning Community will begin in April in Calvert, St Mary and Charles Counties.

7.4.5 *University of MD will submit quarterly reports in January, April, July, and September, to inform regarding each of the products, including the web based data system, the online SEFEL modules, and the ECMH website*

✓ As included in the January 30, 2014 quarterly report, 682 unique users had accessed the system.

✓ The U. of MD Institute's staff logged over 21 hours this quarter assisting users who have difficulty using technology. Additionally, there have been many calls from users who were not able to access the certificate due to not completing the training. To insure full participation, the system has a built in validation check that requires users to click on each slide, complete each interaction, and play each video before it will populate a certificate of completion.

Family Engagement and Support – Project 8

8.1.4 Identify any potential new members and conduct Coalition meetings three times per year

✓ On February 19, 2014, the Maryland's Family Engagement Coalition met and identified additional organizations that will be invited to participate on the Coalition for the implementation of *The Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework: Maryland's Vision for Engaging Families with Young Children*.

8.3.1 Develop and follow process for on-going communication and joint implementation

✓ The Family Engagement Coalition and Communications Sub-Committee have developed a meeting strategy to support on-going communication and joint collaboration. Both committees are held on the same day, which supports joint enactments towards effectively overseeing implementation of strategies for the framework.

8.4.8 Milestone: By December 31, 2013, 14, and 15, conduct an additional 24 cafes each year

✓ Three Parent Cafés were held during the past month: one at Maryland Family Network (as a demonstration for service providers), one at the Family Support Center in Hagerstown (Washington County), and one at Our House Family Support Center/Community Hub (Baltimore City). There were a large number of parents at both Family Support Centers and this helped inform revisions to the Café script and materials in order to make it easier for parents to understand certain concepts in Protective Factors. Even with staff clarification and assistance, there was difficulty linking the concepts to the questions. The evaluation form has been revised to address the lower literacy skills at the Family Support Centers to address this identified challenge. Trained Table Hosts and Facilitators continue to offer their skills at cafes.

✓ Parent Cafés continue to be scheduled by previously trained facilitators. Most Parent Cafés planned to date have been for specific, program-based groups and are not open to the public, which is appropriate for the purpose of parent engagement.

8.4.3 Connect with hard to reach families, making times and dates for the cafes flexible to promote wide participation

✓ On March 3 – 6, Maryland Family Network is holding the next Strengthening Families Parent Café Facilitator Training Institute in Annapolis. The proximity to the Eastern Shore is intentional to make the training more accessible to Eastern Shore programs.

✓ Finally, several Maryland Family Network staff will be attending the Training of Trainers portion of the March 3-6 engagement so they can provide Facilitator Training Institutes, without bringing in consultants from Illinois.

8.7.8 Oversee implementation of Learning Parties, monitor trainers supporting teachers and parents

✓ Ready At Five staff has been overseeing the presentation of Learning Party Trainings in different locations - Baltimore, Caroline, Hagerstown and Carroll Counties where full Learning Party Curriculum Binders are provided to participants.

✓ VIOLETS early childhood programs are partnering with community PreK programs to jointly offer Learning Parties. In addition to offering the early learning experiences to children and families, staff is observing the secondary benefit of the partnerships which is strengthening communication and transition opportunities between community programs and school classrooms.

8.10.9 Milestone: By December 31, 2013, 10 jurisdictions in Maryland will have established a local coalition and will have ROR expansion plan/goal in place.

✓ All twenty-four (24) jurisdictions have established a local early childhood advisory council. Sixteen (16) of those coalitions have a ROR expansion action plan in place (Allegany County, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Caroline County, Carroll County, Dorchester County, Garrett County, Harford County, Howard County, Montgomery County, Somerset County, Talbot County, Washington County, Wicomico County and Worcester County).

✓ Thirty-eight (38) practices are actively participating in the Reach Out and Read program across Maryland and 35,279 children are currently being served.

8.12 Library Family Councils: Establish Library Family Councils in Library Systems serving Title I school districts

- ✓ Cohort One (Baltimore, Caroline, Carroll, Frederick, St. Mary's) and Cohort Two (Calvert, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Kent, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico) met and planned a presentation of the "Library Cafes" at the Maryland Library Association Annual Conference in Ocean City in May. Panelists will include Caroline, Carroll, Cecil and Wicomico Counties. Questions to be asked of the panelists include:
  1. What agencies did you partner with to facilitate the Library Cafes?
  2. What information did the participants in the Library Cafes find surprising?
  3. What where the challenges you faced?
  4. What advice would you give someone who is planning their Library Café?
  5. What was the most satisfying thing that happened?

Workforce Competency and Leadership Development- Project 9

9.2 Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program in Early Childhood Education (MAAPP-ECE)

- ✓ The second cohort of the MAAPP-ECE began in February. The fourteen candidates will complete a four week internship in the fall of 2014. Candidates will be eligible for the Professional Eligibility Certificate upon completion of the residency in December of 2015.

9.3 Develop an articulation agreement regarding pre-service courses between MSDE approved trainers and the state's community colleges.

- ✓ The State Superintendent of Schools created a Task Force on Early Learning Teacher Education in July 2013 to examine the system of teacher education with respect to those prepared for early education. The final report, including recommendations, will be submitted to the State Superintendent of Schools and the Secretary of the Maryland Higher Education Commission by the end of 2014. The Task Force met twice in 2013 – July 17 and December 17. The following topics were presented and discussed:
  - Credentialing for licensed child care professionals and supply and demand for these professionals;
  - PreK to 3 certification and Special Education birth to 8 certification, and demand and supply for these teachers;
  - Certification in other states for PreK and special education that was presented by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC);
  - Presentation on child development programs that Maryland high schools offer students through Career and Technology Education. Students graduate with the 90 clock hours certificate which enables them to apply for the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential;
  - The Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs (MAAPP) is for those career changers that want to become certified in early childhood and already have a bachelor's degree in a field other than education.
  - The Scholarship Fund which is funded by the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF), and assists child care providers in pursuing a college degree in early childhood education;

- The Associate's degree in the Art of Teaching, and transitioning to four year colleges for early childhood certification; and
- The articulation of child care credentialing clock hours to college credit.

Early Learning Data System – Project 10

10.1 Create the professional development grants and incentives module in the internal CCATS application
- ✓ Development and documentation of the functional requirements of the module is completed.

10.2.8 By February 1, 2015, the trainer support and grants/ incentives modules are live in the CCATS public portal
- ✓ The target date for implementation has been pushed back to July 2015.

10.3 Design, develop, and implement the child care subsidy point-of-service (POS) system for pilot purposes
- ✓ Technical design work on the functional requirements began in mid-December. The projected roll-out date of the portal for user acceptance testing purposes is November 30, 2014.

10.5 Develop the Early Childhood Data Warehouse (ECDW) as the main repository for collection, integration, and reporting of DECD data through the creation of a comprehensive database and the development of data dashboards, pre-determined data reports, and an ad hoc database query capability
- ✓ The accreditation, compliance rate, capacity utilization, confirmed complaints, and QRIS dashboards have been completed and approved for release to production.

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For more information:
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/challenge.htm