**Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant Progress Update
July 2013**

Progress on Scope of Work Activities – Successes and Next Steps

Local Early Childhood Councils - Project 1

1.1.7 Meetings (at least 1-2) will be held with the Governor's Council and local representatives from the local ECACs

✓ On July 11, 2013 a joint meeting of the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care and Chairs of the Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils (LECAC) was held. Three (3) representatives from the LECACs (Charles County, Montgomery County, and Garrett County) presented on the accomplishments taking place within their jurisdictions (i.e. establishing the LECAC, current status, development of their action plans, and sustaining their councils beyond the ending of the grant period.

✓ Chairs and Co-Chairs of the Local ECACs have been established and placed on MSDE website.
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/planning

1.3 Implementation of capacity building leadership curriculum

✓ Final leadership and training seminars begin August 13, 2013. In total, there were ten (10) days of training participation from each of core planning teams.

✓ To celebrate their accomplishments each planning team has invited guests to attend their final leadership training to hear presentations of their LECAC's plans, and the plans of the two other jurisdictions who have trained with them as a Cohort throughout the trainings.

Maryland EXCELS - Project 2

2.3.33 Deliverable: By July 1, 2013, Maryland EXCELS (the revised Quality Rating and Improvement System) will be fully implemented for participation by all early education and learning programs after the current pilot study and a field test in 2012.

✓ Maryland EXCELS opened for statewide participation on July 1, 2013. From July 1 through July 9, 2013, 201 programs registered to participate and joined the 330 pilot and field test programs in Maryland's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. As of July 19, 2013, 30 programs have published ratings on the Maryland EXCELS website. The number of programs by type and check level is below. Additional information on rated programs can be found by selecting the ***Find a Program*** button on the home page of the Maryland EXCELS website at http://www.marylandexcels.org/.

✓

Family Child Care Homes		Child Care Centers and School-Age Only Programs	
Level 1 -	8	Level 1 -	0
Level 2-	3	Level 2-	2
Level 3-	0	Level 3-	0
Level 4-	0	Level 4-	0
Level 5-	6	Level 5-	11

Coaching and Mentoring – Project 3

3.2.1 Establish a cross-sectional planning team to lead the planning and implementation of the Early Childhood Breakthrough Center.

✓ The members of the Cross Functional Team have been identified and the Team meets quarterly. The next meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2013.

3.4.2 Conduct pilot project, including evaluation, on the implementation of the Early Childhood Breakthrough Center in urban, suburban, and rural Title I attendance areas.

✓ Early childhood programs are continuing to implement Breakthrough Services statewide. Programs have registered for EXCELS and are beginning to work to progress through the levels of EXCELS. The sites are in urban, suburban, and rural Title I school attendance areas.

✓ Breakthrough Center customer satisfaction survey was sent to all participating programs. The surveys will be returned by July 30, 2013 and will be tabulated. The survey will assist in determining service and professional development needs in 2013-2014.

3.5.1 Implement the Breakthrough quality capacity building process with 56 early learning and development programs.

✓ Early Childhood Breakthrough Centers are providing coaching, consulting, and capacity building. Technical assistance is being provided in July to the CCRCs through meetings and conference calls. Program assessment activities are being discussed so that we can provide assistance to programs in area. Strategies to encourage to articulation and transition services and collaboration with local schools are being discussed.

3.11.5 Monitor the implementation of the professional development coaching and mentoring training program in the pilot jurisdictions, and the effectiveness of the training with public and private community-based providers of early learning and development programs.

✓ Allegany County completed and approved an Action Plan as part of a July 11 planning meeting with the JHU team; this Action Plan is also being coordinated with efforts initiated under a 2-year Division of Special Education/Early Intervention

Services discretionary grant to narrow the performance gap for children and youth with disabilities.

✓ Contacts with Phase II jurisdictions initiated: Frederick, Washington, Calvert, St. Mary's, and Charles.

✓ Harford County local grant was approved, and the Notice of Grant Award mailed.

✓ JHU's scope of work was amended/expanded to include solicitation of an additional national expert for added evidence-based content on successful inclusion of children in Natural and Least Restrictive Environments and on the development of functional IFSP outcomes and IEP goals that are aligned with school readiness expectations for all children.

Promoting Use of Early Learning Standards- Project 4

4.4.2 Establish a state work group to develop the Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy (PreK to Grade 2).

✓ A statewide workgroup, in consultation with a national consultant, is developing the content of the Guide based on early childhood research, Maryland standards and evidenced based practices. The draft guide has been reviewed by statewide focus groups of over 90 educators. The results of the review have been incorporated into the guide. When completed, the Guide will be available in print and electronic formats on the web.

4.5.2 Identify programs and coordinate expansion of VIOLETS to selected classrooms in Title 1 Breakthrough Center Programs.

✓ The VIOLETS program is administered by the Ready At Five Partnership. VIOLETS have been expanded to reach 30 additional classrooms. This cohort (of classrooms) has completed VIOLETS. The assessment data is being reviewed and a report is being compiled. The identification of programs for the fall 2013 cohort of 50 programs has begun.

4.5.3 Assign coaches/mentors and assessors located in geographic regions to implement VIOLETS in 30 programs identified through Breakthrough Centers.

✓ Coaches/mentors and assessors are being identified for the 2013 cohort of programs. The coaches and mentors will participate in update training in the fall.

Professional Development Maryland Model for School Readiness - Project 5

5.1.5 Implement first cohort of the MMSR Professional Development for licensed chld care and Head Start programs using revised MMSR PD modules.

✓ One 5 module MMSR 2013 training series is complete and three are still in session. Several more will be scheduled for the fall. Maryland child care associations have been asked to distribute information regarding the "Introducing MMSR 2013".

Wiggio continues to be updated with information relevant to the MMSR 2013 training community.

Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) – Project 6

6.2.6 - Conduct extensive pilot test (Phase 2) of KEA and PreK/K formative assessments with samples in Ohio and Maryland.

✓ Both Ohio and Maryland conducted their pilot test of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System (EC-CAS) in April. The first subset of KEA test items, which included 70 items and 10 learning progressions, were tested. A sample of 23 teachers and 105 students was selected from 16 schools representing rural, suburban, and urban districts in Maryland. The final report of findings obtained from data collected during the pilot test has been submitted by WestEd to the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Technology Education (CTE), Maryland, and Ohio. Data gathered from the pilot test is being used to revise existing items and develop the remaining items to be field tested in November 2013.

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

✓ Both Ohio and Maryland have finalized their sample for the field test of the KEA that will begin in November 2013. In Maryland, the final sample, which is representative of Maryland demographics overall, was selected from candidates submitted by Assistant Superintendents and Early Childhood Coordinators in each county. The final sample as of July 2013 will consist of approximately 1800 students and 79 teachers drawn from 28 schools representing 17 counties in Maryland.

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

✓ MSDE, in collaboration with JHU-CTE, has finalized the professional development for teachers to administer the field test in November 2013. All teachers participating in the field test in November 2013 (79) will receive two days of face-to-face professional development on August 5th and 6th.

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

✓ Two documents were developed and are being revised by the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Technology Education detailing the technology and data infrastructure that will support the EC-CAS - the "Virtual Performance Assessment

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Functional Requirements" document and the "CAS Wireframes and Use Cases" document.

✓ Based on the functional requirements, CIO's have been provided with information on the requirements and specifications for the EC-CAS and a timeline for the development and implementation of the technology.

Child Development Innovations – Project 7

7.1.5 Conduct outreach to pediatric Primary Care Providers

✓ Highlights for this period include presentations on this program at the Stakeholders' Meeting at Salisbury University; meetings with 35 providers on the Eastern Shore to recruit them into the program; the Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Competencies for pediatricians were presented at the Maryland chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Emotional Health meeting and at the Maryland ECMH steering Committee meeting.

7.4.2 Develop on-line (Social and Emotional Foundation of Early Learning) SEFEL training modules

✓ *The* online Infant and Toddler training modules are updated with new scripts and formatted for online learning. These modules will be posted to the site upon completion of the site revisions and approval from the SEFEL team on the above changes.

7.4.3 Develop a website to house data system, training modules, and other related SEFEL and Early Childhood Mental Health resources.

✓ Links are being updated, revisions being made to the new top navigation menu, the site template was changed, and new photos are being added. It is expected that revisions to the site will be completed and ready for review by the SEFEL team by July 30.

Family Engagement and Support – Project 8

8.2 Family Engagement Coalition: Customize to Maryland needs, the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework.

✓ The Maryland Family Engagement Framework, that addresses strategies to improve the quality and quantity of engagement of families with their young child's development and education, was presented to the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care on July, 11, 2013. Final comments were requested with approval being sought at the next Council meeting in October.

✓ The Family Engagement Coalition will continue to meet beginning in the fall to develop an implementation plan for developing a guide and a distribution/professional development plan.

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

✓ MSDE grantee, the Maryland Family Network, is working to connect with hard-to-reach families through training parents and community members on how to conduct Parent Cafes. The Parent Café research finds that when staff who work with young children know how to build families' protective factors, families are stronger and children are safer. The Protective Factors were developed by the National Alliance of Children's Trust Funds, the Arkansas Children's Trust Fund, and ZERO TO THREE. The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) of Illinois has been a critical partner in developing the Parent Café training. Parent Café training in Western Maryland was held at the end of June to connect with rural areas. Twenty new facilitators and 10 new Table Hosts were trained, who were mostly from the Garrett, Allegheny, and Washington Counties. (http://www.strengtheningfamiliesillinois.org/index.php/main/content/category/protective_factors).

✓ The evaluations of both training events indicated that participants were very excited about hosting Parent Cafes for parents with whom they work and are confident that parents will enjoy the experience and get a lot out of working with the Protective Factors.

8.7.15 By July 31, 2013, 80% of children in identified programs for that year have attended Learning Parties with their Families.

✓ The four sets of Ready At Five Summer Learning Parties have been completed

8.10.5 Develop mechanisms for Reach Out and Read (ROR) local and state coalitions to interact with early childhood councils at regular intervals.

✓ ROR representatives are conducting outreach to local pediatricians and creating connections to local councils.

8.12.2 Five additional library systems establish Library Family Councils (LFC).

✓ Eleven library systems have incorporated the *Parent Café* networking model into the planning and work of their Parent Library Councils.

Workforce Competency and Leadership Development- Project 9
9.2.5 - *Monitor grantee and progress of first pilot cohort of MAAPP participants*

✓ Candidates are continuing to take classes in the program. Classes will be complete in December and candidates will be eligible to apply for the Resident Teacher Certificate by October of this year.

Early Learning Data System – Project 10

Activity 10.1 – Create the professional development grants and incentives module in the internal CCATS application. Plan and schedule the module's design process.

✓ The potential system risk identification process has been completed, and the module's project plan, schedule, and technical staffing requirements are being developed.

Activities 10.3 – Design, develop, and implement the child care subsidy point-of-service (POS) system for pilot purposes. Design system changes that meet all the functional requirements of the POS system.

✓ A complete Functional Requirements Document (FRD) for the POS system was received by the CCATS contractor, and the process of costing out the design elements based on the FRD has started. The FRD includes the following:

   (1) Functional Requirements Specification in Use Cases covering
   - Both subsidy and licensing child enrollment and attendance (EARS) reporting
   - IVR Requirements
   - Mobile/QR features

   (2) Appendices with
   - Screen Mockups
   - IVR Specification
   - Reports

   (3) Requirements Traceability Matrix

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