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

Progress on Scope of Work Activities – Successes and Next Steps

Local Early Childhood Councils - Project 1

1.2.3 Finalize plan of allocation of RTT funds to local councils, parameters for spending requirements, and budget reporting mechanisms
- ✓ The planning phase for Local ECACs has ended and all counties are preparing to fully transition into the implementation stages of the RTT-ELC Grant.
- ✓ The RTT-ELC Implementation Grant application is due for submission December 4, 2013.
- ✓ Parameters for spending requirements were listed within the request for proposal (RFP) and distributed to all Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils.

1.3.10 Deliverable: By December 31, 2013, completion of remaining Regional Leadership Capacity Building Training
- ✓ October 22, 2013 will mark the end/completion of all Regional Leadership Training for all 24 jurisdictions (8 cohorts).

Maryland EXCELS - Project 2

2.3.24 Provide ongoing Program Coordination to in-process programs (n = 914) at Program Coordination ratio of 200 programs: 1 coordinator
- ✓ Program Coordination to participating in-process programs has been achieved at a ratio of 200 programs: 1 coordinator.

2.5 Increase the number of early learning and development programs, including publicly funded programs, participating in Maryland EXCELS
- ✓ 1,038 early learning and development programs are participating in Maryland EXCELS Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. Overall participation goals for year one of full implementation (July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014) have been exceeded and the number of programs participating continues to grow. An outreach effort to encourage increased participation by Public Pre Kindergarten programs is underway.

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

Coaching and Mentoring – Project 3

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

- ✓ Early Childhood Breakthrough Centers provide coaching, consulting, and capacity building, and will build to 225 programs served by December 2014.   Additional child care and family child care centers are being added weekly.

3.6.1 Measure the progress of children enrolled in early learning and development programs participating in the Early Childhood Breakthrough Center

- ✓ Breakthrough center staff is developing a protocol to capture the data necessary to measure the progress of children who have attended an early childhood program that participated in the Breakthrough Center, through to their kindergarten year.

3.8.2 Solicit application, including work plan and formal MOA, for the selected Judy Center sites

- ✓ The Commodore John Rodgers Judy Center is moving toward reality as federal approval of an amendment was received and private funding will be in place.

Promoting Use of Early Learning Standards- Project 4

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

- ✓ Two full day trainings were conducted- Oct 23, 2013 in Baltimore City; October 29, 2013 in Prince George's County for the 50 VIOLET sites identified for 2013-2014. Classroom teachers, Program Directors and Educational Coordinators have been invited to the training which includes an overview of VIOLETS; its research based; the content of the curriculum, an observation of a teacher implementing VIOLETS as well as ample time for paired sharing and practice. Coaches assigned to programs will meet and start planning for their classroom visits.
- ✓ VIOLETS Extension Activities are continuing to be posted on a VIOLETS portal on Ready at Five's website - http://www.readyatfive.org/- creating a VIOLETS "community of learners" -. The extension activities offer creative ideas and techniques of ways to enrich the VIOLETS read-alouds.

4.5.5 Assess implementation of VIOLETS and VIOLETS Learning Parties

- ✓ The evaluation of the 2012-2013 implementations of VIOLETS is completed. The evaluation findings indicated that both English proficient students (EP) and English Learners (ELs) who participated in VIOLETS experienced significant gains in language and vocabulary. The assessment results indicated that children participating in VIOLETS will have greater language literacy skills than those who were not served in this program. Further, it points to the fact that explicit and consistent language instruction builds language skills, vocabulary skills and overall literacy development.

Professional Development Maryland Model for School Readiness - Project 5

5.1.4- Develop and present Training of the Trainers

- ✓ MD Family Network held two days of Training the Trainers for MMSR Professional Development Modules in October for new trainers.

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

- ✓ All items and tasks for the KEA were finalized for testing in our Field Test after an extensive review process that included a two day item content review and a one day on-line bias and sensitivity review process with experts in both states. The feedback from those reviews was used to do final revisions of items prior to the Field Test. The Field Test begins on November 4th in Maryland. Data gathered from the Field Test will be used to determine what items will actually be included as part of the census administration in the fall of 2014. All 28 Learning Progressions, and four Fine Arts Learning Progressions for Maryland, are complete and have also gone through an extensive review process in both states and with our National Technical Advisory Committee.

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

- ✓ Both Ohio and Maryland will begin the Field Test of the remaining KEA items on November 4, 2013. In Maryland, the final sample, which is representative of Maryland demographics overall, includes 80 teachers, from 28 schools and 16 counties. Final data was gathered from teachers in preparation for the Field Test, and approximately 1700 children will be assessed from Maryland Kindergarten classrooms.

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

- ✓ Teachers who are part of the Field Test in Maryland participated in two days of professional development training on August 5th and 6th to prepare them to administer a portion of the KEA during the Field Test beginning on November 4, 2013. Additional on-line modules were also developed by JHU-CTE to provide additional support and a refresher on implementing the Field Test, to walk teachers through the Teacher Administration Manual (TAM), and issues related to accessibility and accommodations for special education and ELL students.

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

- ✓ Documents with details regarding the data infrastructure that is being developed to support CAS and technology specifications were developed and reviewed by both states. All CIO's and LEA's have been provided with information on the requirements and specifications for the EC-CAS and

were given a timeline for the development and implementation of the technology. In addition, Maryland's Assistant State Superintendent of the Division of Early Childhood and the Branch Chief for Early Learning have made individual visits to each county in Maryland over the past few months to present details on the technology infrastructure requirements and answer questions regarding those requirements leading up to the census administration in the Fall of 2014.

Child Development Innovations – Project 7

7.1.5 Conduct outreach to pediatric primary care providers
✓ Joyce Harrison and Kelly Coble conducted a webinar for the Maryland Coalition of Families. The webinar can be accessed on YouTube and it focuses on helping parents partner with the primary care provider to address their children's mental health concerns. To listen and view the webinar go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cl4n0ccD6hE&feature=youtu.be

7.1.9 Deliverable: By December 31, 2013, successful recruitment and completion of training, and collection of feedback
✓ The University of Maryland staff working with this ECMH initiative are working cooperatively with the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, who are offering Reach Out and Read (Project 8) and Developmental Screening Training for Pediatric Health Care providers (Project 7) to exchange outreach stories and tips. This communication link coordinates work done with the medical community.

7.3.2 Develop on-line (Social and Emotional Foundation of Early Learning) SEFEL training modules
✓ The Institute for Innovation and Implementation has launched a new and improved Social Emotional Foundations in Early Learning (SEFEL) website that will offer professional development training modules, resources developed for parents and for those teaching or implementing SEFEL in early learning programs across the state. The website is being advertised at conferences, through existing local councils and state level committees and councils, and links will be establish with MSDE and other websites for http://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/sefel/.

Family Engagement and Support – Project 8

8.2.4 Deliverable: By March 31, 2013, MD Framework strategies, training modules, resource guide, materials will be completed
✓ On October 10, 2013 the State Early Childhood Advisory Council official members voted and fully approved "*The Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework: Maryland's Vision for Engaging Families with Young Children*" which outlines goals and strategies to support family engagement initiatives implemented by early care and education providers.
✓ On October 31, 2013 the Family Engagement Coalition will meet and develop implementation of strategies to support the framework.

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

✓ On the evening of October 8, a Parent Café was held in Prince George's County (Largo) for 45 participants. The following day, approximately 35 returned for the beginning of a two-day Facilitator's Training event, offered by the "inventors" of the Parent Café, Kathy Goetz Wolf and Dara Griffin from Strengthening Families Illinois (now known as Be Strong Families). On October 11, an additional 8 people attended a Table Host training; Table Hosts play a key role in every Parent Café, keeping the conversations going deeper and making sure the participants are supported and encouraged.

8.5.2 Select programs to participate in Learning Parties for each year of the grant (Total of 64 programs)

✓ Vocabulary Improvement and Oral Enrichment through Stories (VIOLETS) is a currently funded RTT ELC initiative in Project 3. VIOLETS classroom/programs and the elementary school in their attendance areas are being identified to jointly offer Learning Parties - in the Domain of Learning of their choice based on their kindergarten assessment results. The joining of the two early childhood programs – a community program and the school - is an excellent transition practice and a strong family engagement strategy.

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

✓ Representatives from Reach Out and Read (MD Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics) continue to meet individually with local early childhood advisory council representatives on the initiative and implementation plans.

8.12.2 Five Additional Library Systems establish Library Family Council (LFC)

✓ Cohort One (5 libraries) is going into year two and they have had positive reactions from parents and staff to the establishment of the LFC.

✓ Cohort Two (7 libraries) have started their LFC, but are in beginning stages.

Workforce Competency and Leadership Development- Project 9

9.2.6 Establish additional cohorts to follow pilot group, and work with vendor to add to pool of applicants

✓ Cohort one candidates are preparing to begin residency in January. Most candidates have completed Praxis requirements and internships. Upon successful completion of the residency, candidates will be eligible to receive the Standard Professional Certificate. Recruitment for cohort two is under way with 5 of 15 spots filled. Candidates from cohort two represent family child care and center based programs. January 2014 is the tentative start date for cohort two.

9.5.7 Leadership Academies conducted for administrators/teachers/child care and Head Start programs in 30 Title I school attendance areas

✓ Planning has begun for the summer of 2014 Early Learning Leadership Academies. The Early Learning Branch is meeting with the Division of Instruction to collaborate with their planning for their summer's Educator Effectiveness Academies.

Early Learning Data System – Project 10

10.2 Enhance the CCATS public portal by including the trainer support and professional development grants and incentives modules

✓ In progress for the first release of the CCATS public portal, which will include the child enrollment/attendance tracking component (see Activity 10.3).   However, the target date for that release is now October 1, 104 (see the note re: 10.3.3 below).

10.2.8 Deliverable: 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

✓ The agency is still awaiting the eCCATS vendor's price proposal for building the changes specified in the functional requirements document submitted in June. Submission of the proposal is being held up primarily by pricing issues around the IVR component of the POS system. Due to this delay, the projected roll-out date of the initial build of the portal has been pushed back from June 1, 2014 to October 1, 2014.

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