

Race to the Top FAQ's

(Updated 9/1/10.)

What is Race to the Top?

The Race to the Top (RTTT) is a \$4.35 billion competitive grant program created by the federal government to encourage school districts and states to pursue education reform measures with four core ideas:

- Enhance standards and assessments
- Create and use data to improve instruction
- Increase effectiveness of teachers and administrators
- Turn around struggling schools

What did Maryland get by winning the RTTT grant?

The program provides substantial financial rewards to states and school districts to implement education reform plans. The award will bring \$250 million to the state with roughly \$21 million being awarded to Prince George's County, to be spent over the next four years.

Now that we will receive funds from the RTTT Grant, does this mean we will get a raise?

No. These funds would be used to pay for the initiatives and programs that are outlined in Maryland's RTTT application. But it also means general fund dollars would not be dedicated to designated reforms that may make funding available for other needs.

Does being a part of the RTTT process mean we are giving up our collective bargaining rights?

No. PGCEA has taken additional steps to protect our members against any negative repercussions from the process by developing a separate Memorandum of Understanding that will capture the bargaining and work relationships required to enter into this type of work in a collaborative manner. The State's application also includes language that protects the collective bargaining rights of the local Associations.

Will RTTT replace our salary scale with a merit pay program?

No. While there is a performance pay program that is part of Maryland's RTTT application, it would not replace salary scales. Any incentive pay programs would have to be negotiated locally between PGCEA and PGCPs and would focus on hard staff schools and positions.

The tenure law changed. How am I affected?

As of July 1, 2010 all newly hired employees will have to complete three full years of satisfactory service to attain tenure. This will not affect teachers hired before July 1, 2010.

I hear my evaluation is going to be based on student achievement. How will the new evaluation system work?

New evaluation systems are expected to come online in the 2012-13 school year. Several School districts will be piloting an evaluation program designed by MSDE beginning in January 2011. New evaluation systems may be created locally and student achievement will be one of multiple measures of a teacher's effectiveness on their evaluation. Scores from standardized tests like the MSA's and HSA's will be factored in. You can view the teacher evaluation framework at the end of the document.

Is PGCEA working with PGCPs to implement its own new evaluation program?

PGCEA and PGCPs have been piloting a new evaluation system for three years, initially in the FIRST schools, then across the district using small groups of employees. The state's projected model looks a lot like the model that we have been using during our local pilot.

How will teachers who do not teach subjects with standardized tests be evaluated in regards to student achievement?

School districts will be charged with creating new assessments for use in measuring student growth in classes that currently do not have tests.

Why did PGCEA sign off on the RTTT application when other unions did not?

By signing the MOU with the State, PGCEA guarantees that our local voice and expertise will be heard. While there are many disagreements with portions of the grant framework, by signing we are given a seat at the table and the opportunity to help shape and develop the programs going forward. The state has made it clear that many of the reforms being proposed will be implemented with or without RTTT. Our position is that we would rather help shape it for our members than have it done to our members. Signing on has the potential to bring significant dollars to the State and to the County. In fact, Prince George's would be eligible for over \$21 million paid out over four years and that number is likely to go up. And lastly, our Board of Directors felt that we could not be viewed as standing in the way of reform. This district is the lowest performing district in the state at this time and the only school district in Maryland that is on corrective action. How could we say no?

Who signed on to Maryland's RTTT application?

22 of the Board's of Education in Maryland signed off on the RTTT application. Two did not; Montgomery and Frederick Counties. PGCEA and the Baltimore Teachers Union (Baltimore City) are the only local associations to sign the application.

What happens next?

More details will be forthcoming as the Governor's Council for Educator Effectiveness and the State Department of Education begin to work on the details of implementing the state's reform plan. More information, including the application submitted by the state can be found at:

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/race_to_the_top

Student growth and teacher evaluation design: For teachers, the new evaluation system includes these factors:

MARYLAND TEACHER EVALUATION FRAMEWORK					
	Weight	Metric	Measure	Frequency	
DOMAINS	30%	Growth in student learning <i>for an individual teacher</i> from a baseline to at least one other point in time	<p><i>For teachers of mathematics and reading (grades 3–8):</i> Maryland Student Assessment (summative test)</p> <p><i>For all other teachers:</i> Objective pre-and post- measures comparable across classrooms and approved by MSDE. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments already used by school districts • Measures acquired or developed by MSDE in conjunction with the National Psychometric Council 	Annual	
		<p><u>State model:</u> Growth in student learning <i>for educator teams</i> from a baseline to at least one other point in time (10%) - AND - Growth in closing the achievement gap <i>for the entire school</i> (10%)</p>	To be determined by the National Psychometric Council and national experts in conjunction with the Educator Effectiveness Workgroup	Annual	
	-OR-				
	20%	<p><u>Local flexibility:</u> LEA proposes objective measures of <i>student growth and learning linked to local goals</i></p>	LEA proposes appropriate measures that are objective and comparable across classrooms.	Annual	
Teacher Skills and Knowledge	50%	<i>Planning and preparation</i>	LEA determines weight, format, and means for evaluation; MSDE will provide model tools.	Annual; LEA determines process	
		<i>Classroom environment</i>			
		<i>Instruction</i>			
		<i>Professional responsibilities</i>			
		<p><u>Local flexibility:</u> LEA may propose <i>additional domains based on local priorities</i></p>			