Directions: In preparation for monthly calls, a State must provide responses to the questions in Part A for their overall plan, and responses to the questions in Part B for two application sub-criterion.

Part A: In preparation for monthly calls, States must provide information that addresses the three questions below on the implementation of all aspects of its approved scope of work. This may include a written response. If your State already has a state-specific system to report on its progress, please work with your program officer to determine the best method of providing this information for your State.

1. What were the State’s key accomplishments and challenges this past month?

Sub-criterion A2: Building strong statewide capacity

Accomplishments: This month, as part of the work of project 1/78 (Office of Academic Reform and Innovation), Maryland received approval from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) for a no cost extension (NCE) for project 46/57 (Extend Student Learning and Improve School Culture, Climate, and Support).

All Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Race to the Top (RTTT) project managers have completed Project Year 4 close-out reports, providing an executive summary of their projects; detailing project outcomes, major accomplishments, evidence of progress, the quality of implementation, and challenges and lessons learned; providing a description of the effect of the project on participants as well as the State, schools, and classrooms; and submitting artifacts/supporting project documentation. The close-out reports also required project managers to provide a sustainability plan for each project, as necessary, describing how their division or the agency will continue the work going forward. Weekly RTTT Stat meetings are scheduled to review the status of close out process and address any issues.

This month, guidelines for the Request for Proposal (RFP) for MSDE’s new Communications Hub were completed. The Communications Hub will equip existing MSDE conference rooms with new technology (e.g., wireless technology, projectors, and laptop stations) to deliver more timely and engaging training and communication with
Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and other education stakeholders across the State, including real-time video conferencing to connect with LEAs unable to travel to MSDE for in-person convenings. The RFP is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

In project 2/1 (Program Evaluation), the Center for Application and Innovation Research in Education (CAIRE) at Towson University completed all of its deliverables (eight of the eight objective outcome analysis studies and the final five (out of 13 total) Breakthrough Center case studies), submitting final versions of all analysis reports and case studies. This month, an addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for this project was signed, to extend the project into Project Year 5.

**Challenges:** The project in sub-criterion A2 did not report any significant challenges this month.

**Sub-criterion B2: Developing and implementing high-quality assessments**

**Accomplishments:** Participants in the project 3/2 (Formative Assessment) Formative Assessment for Maryland Educators (FAME) course on Blackboard have completed Module 1, Introduction to Formative Assessment. Principals participating in FAME took part in small group leadership webinars to enhance their formative assessment leadership skills and to collaborate with other FAME principals. Members of the MSDE project team visited FAME schools across Maryland and provided technical assistance for the module launch and Community of Practice preparation. The vendor, Measured Progress, delivered formative assessment task shells for MSDE review and approval.

**Challenges:** The project in sub-criterion B2 did not report any significant challenges this month.

**Sub-criterion B3: Supporting the transition to new standards and assessments**
**Accomplishments:** In project 4/3 (Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development) the third modules for both the “Financial Literacy STEM Course” and the “Foundation of Technology (FoT) STEM Course” are under development. Cecil County began piloting the Environmental Science course in October. The Cyber-Security course is being offered as a regular course this fall in Charles County. The Video-Game Design course is being piloted this fall.

To date, in project 5/4 (Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development for International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA)), 12,168 students have taken the pre assessments. Recently, the ITEEA Assessment Team has produced new data reports on the assessment system, and local administrators will be able to access the reports through the online system. The project team continues to engage educators from up to 22 LEAs in implementing ITEEA’s Foundations of Technology (FoT) curriculum and the pre- and post-assessments. The project team is also providing technical assistance to local supervisors of technology education as they implement the FoT model.

**Challenges:** Project 4/3 has experienced challenges with regards to the contracts with the two vendors responsible for completing the online courses, ITEEA and AP Ventures. Both contracts were negotiated during a period when MSDE was awaiting approval for NCE from USDE. Therefore contracts had an end date of September 2014. MSDE has worked with the procurement office to find a solution to extend the time on the contracts and complete the work. ITEEA was approved as a soul source procurement and the new contract will be completed by November 1. AP Ventures was not accepted as a sole source and thus MSDE has entered into an emergency contract to complete this work. This caused a one month work stoppage. All work will be completed within the timeline of the grant.
Sub-criterion C2: Accessing and using State data

Accomplishments: The project 8/11 (Develop Overall Technology Infrastructure) team implemented an enhanced security configuration in the development environment to store LEA user attributes and make those available to the Web Center Portal and OBIEE. Contract extensions have been sent to the vendors and accepted.

Challenges: The design of the system requires functionality that is beyond the intended use of Oracle Federation and Business Intelligence suite of products. Additionally, system updates need to be completed regularly and security risks must be eliminated. The project team is working to complete Oracle's recommended security solution using Java development solution in Oracle's Internet Directory (OID) to pass the LEA security information from the Oracle Access Manager (OAM) to the Business Intelligence Applications (Webcenter and Dashboards). The team is also working to update all infrastructure as needed to Oracle's recommended and supported versions. Technical assistance will also be provided to all LEAs to implement security solutions.

Sub-criterion C3: Using data to support instruction

Accomplishments: As part of project 15/7 (Expand the Instructional Toolkit), Maryland is creating a repository of resources that support the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards. While the online Instructional Toolkit website is still under development, the project team is working to compile and get approval on the resources that will populate the Toolkit. Approximately 1,460 resources have been approved to date, and it is expected that a total of 4,000 and 5,000 approved resources will be available when the Instructional Toolkit is completed.

As part of project 16/20’s (STEM Instructional and Career Support) Project Year 5 goal, to build sustainability and collaboration for STEM across the State, the project team is planning 12 regional workshops for elementary, middle, and high school STEM teachers and coordinators – over 345 participants in total. These regional workshops will help
build participants’ content knowledge, and the project team is partnering with the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center on three of the workshops. The STEM Strategic Plan was presented to the State Board of Education at its meeting on October 28, detailing MSDE’s vision of STEM education and how its expansion will strengthen the State’s success moving forward.

In project 17/32 (Implement a Test Item Bank System), 20 LEAs have submitted subgrant applications. Eighteen of those subgrants have been awarded, totaling $4,420,508.60. The project team is awaiting grant revisions from the two remaining LEAs.

Part 1 of project 22/6 (Develop Online Instructional Intervention Modules) calls for the development of intervention and enrichment modules supporting the Maryland Career and College Ready English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards. To date, all 250 of these modules have been completed and are in the process of being uploaded to Blackboard. Part 2 of the project calls for the development of intervention and enrichment modules supporting Maryland’s Disciplinary Literacy Standards. Recently, Maryland Public Television (MPT) has submitted a detailed project schedule for the development of 70 disciplinary literacy modules, and the first four prototypes are under development. MSDE reviewers have also been identified to review the modules in various content areas.

**Challenges:** Project 22/6 has reduced the original deliverable of online modules as a result of inadequate funding. The team worked with MPT to renegotiate deliverables within the project budget and condensed timeframe. The project will now deliver 70 modules, 80 if permitted to continue work through the end of July 2015. (Val please expand as needed)

**Sub-criterion D2: Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance**
Accomplishments: Recently, project 29/48 (Develop and Implement an Educator Evaluation System) published and distributed its annual Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPE) report from WestEd and the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC), titled “Real Progress in Maryland.” The report was presented to the State Board of Education at its September 23, 2014 meeting and can be found at [http://msde.state.md.us/tpe/TPEReport2014.pdf](http://msde.state.md.us/tpe/TPEReport2014.pdf). MSDE personnel have been reorganized to officially bring new team members into this project and the Office of Teacher and Principal Evaluation has been formalized within MSDE. Members of the project team also presented the State Board of Education with a report on the first full year of teacher and principal evaluations at their October 28 meeting, showing the data distribution of effective, highly effective, and ineffective teachers and principals by LEA.

The project 30/48 (Expand Educator Information System (EIS) to Accommodate Additional Data) team has completed several deliverables recently, including portal development (certification application); the educator search section of the portal (allowing the public to search educator certifications); production build-out (the building of the servers to be used for the EIS system); and soft deployment (the internal deployment for testing purposes). Work continues on User Acceptance Testing (UAT); full production database migration (moving data from the old system to the new one); and production deployment (installation, migration, configuration, and implementation in the production environment).

Challenges: The projects in sub-criterion D2 did not report any significant challenges this month.

Sub-criterion D3: Ensuring the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

Accomplishments: The project 34/51 (Compensation Incentives for Teachers in Shortage Areas) project manager has been collecting and reviewing end-of-year reporting requirements from the LEAs that participated in the project in Project Year 4 (Baltimore
City, Baltimore County, and Kent County). The reports detail the outcomes of each LEA’s incentive program over the past school year and those teachers who received incentives. In the reports, the LEAs also describe any challenges they encountered while implementing their projects – information the project manager will utilize as she revises project applications for Project Year 5. The Year 5 applications will be distributed to participating LEAs within the coming month.

**Challenges:** The projects in sub-criterion D3 did not report any significant challenges this month.

**Sub-criterion D5: Providing effective support to teachers and principals**

**Accomplishments:** The project 39/25 (Teacher Induction Academies) team collaborated with Andrew Sioberg from the New Teacher Center on a presentation to Professional Learning Coordinators focusing on data from the Tell Maryland Survey, a perceptual survey that allows every educator to Tell Maryland if they have positive teaching and learning conditions that research has shown to be important to student achievement and teacher retention. The project team is holding four regional follow-up sessions to the 2014 Teacher Induction Academy held this past June. This first set of follow-up sessions for mentor teachers and others who support beginning educators focuses on Maryland’s College and Career-Ready Standards, as well as providing equity in education.

On October 9, the project 40/15 (Professional Development for Executive Officers) team hosted professional development for LEA Executive Officers focused on providing attendees with a deeper knowledge of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and their relationship to instructional planning, delivery, and student growth. This convening, as well as two held in September for LEA teams (described in the previous month’s report), were collaboratively planned with CTAC and provided SLO training to 300 educators. The project team is also planning for the winter convenings of LEA teams as part of the State’s Principals Pipeline initiative, as well as the simultaneous convening of the Governor’s Promising Principals Academy. The overlapping convenings will cover topics related to communications – both external (relating to working with the media) and
internal (communicating with school staff, parents, students, and community members, as well as ensuring that messages/information get to their intended audiences).

Recently the project 41/24 (Educator Effectiveness Academies) team held two of four scheduled regional Master Teacher debriefings in Baltimore County on September 18 and in Charles County on September 30. Two hundred and forty-nine out of 252 total Master Teachers registered to attend one of the four. The first webinar of the 2014-15 webinar series was also held in late September. The webinar featured the principal and staff of Snow Hill Elementary in Worcester County for their strategic implementation of parent involvement and communication initiatives. The project team also began the creation and organization of a Master Teacher Network, which will include face-to-face and online facilitators to promote sustainability. Editing continues on the remainder of the videos from the 2012 and 2013 summer Educator Effectiveness Academy sessions. When completed, these videos will be posted as stand-alone modules on the professional learning section of the Blackboard website. Eleven of the 49 total videos are still being edited.

The project 43/21 (Develop Online Professional Development on Educator Instructional Improvement Content) team continues to work with AP Ventures on the development of modules and professional development courses. The project team is conducting quality reviews of the newly developed modules and courses, ensuring that they are reviewed and approved by MSDE content experts.

**Challenges:** Project 43/21 has experienced challenges with regards to the contracts with the two vendors responsible for completing the online courses, Soul Tree and AP Ventures. Both contracts were negotiated during a period when MSDE was awaiting approval for NCE from USDE. Therefore contracts had an end date of September 2014. MSDE has worked with the procurement office to find a solution to extend the time on the contracts and complete the work. Soul Tree was approved as a soul source procurement and the new contract will be completed by November 1. AP Ventures was
not accepted as a sole source and thus MSDE has entered into an emergency contract to complete this work. This caused a one month work stoppage. All work will be completed within the timeline of the grant.

**Sub-criterion E2: Turning around the lowest-achieving schools**

**Accomplishments:** In Project Year 5, project 44/41 (The Breakthrough Center) was provided with additional funds to allow the Breakthrough Center to service low-performing schools. The Center will continue to provide additional professional development for the Aspiring Principals’ Institute fellows; mentor and coach those fellows in the development of a project structured around the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework and their school improvement plan; provide monthly professional development to the instructional leaders in identified low-performing schools; and provide differentiated professional development and content based collaborative planning to instructional leaders.

As mentioned above, project 46/57 (Extend Student Learning and Improve School Culture, Climate, and Support) just recently received approval on its No Cost Extension request from the U.S. Department of Education. The project team continues to communicate with Prince Georges County’s and Baltimore City’s Finance Offices in order to ensure the spend down of allotted grant funds.

In project 51/71 (Project Lead the Way(PLTW) – Gateway to Technology (GTT)) four new schools (two in Baltimore City and two in Garrett County) are now offering the GTT program this school year. Teachers from the four schools attended GTT training, and the materials of instruction were ordered. Recently, Dorchester County purchased needed computers, and will be offering the PLTW Engineering program in the feeder high schools, providing students with an opportunity to continue their interest in STEM.

**Challenges:** The projects in sub-criterion E2 did not report any significant challenges this month.
Sub-criterion F2: Ensuring conditions for high-performing charter schools

Accomplishments: The project 53/44 (Charter Schools) team conducted site visits to charter schools in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George’s, and St. Mary’s Counties. The contract for the Maryland charter school publications webinar series was completed and signed by RMC Research. The University of Baltimore has completed its field work for the Charter School Program of Study, which included the collection of background information, the initial update of prior analysis and development of the interview guide for stakeholders, and interviews with leaders from Maryland’s 47 charter schools.

Challenges: The projects in sub-criterion F2 did not report any significant challenges this month.

2. Is the State on track to meet the goals and timelines associated with the activities outlined in its approved scope of work? If not, what strategies is the State employing in order to meet its goals?

Overall, Maryland is on track to meet the goals and timelines associated with the activities outlined in its approved scope of work. All of Maryland’s RTTT projects, even those that have No Cost Extensions, have completed all close-out documentation, and are working to pay out any final invoices. The 21 projects with No Cost Extensions continue to move forward on schedule and with fidelity. MSDE RTTT leadership is working closely with project managers, continuing to hold regular RTTT Stat meetings, as well as one-on-one meetings as needed, to complete the Project Year 4 closeout process and ensure that PY 5 work is initiated.

3. How can the Department help the State meet its goals?

MSDE appreciates the valuable insight and assistance that USDE continues to provide, especially with regards to closeout procedures and reporting requirements.