Quality Standards

Meeting the Definition of a High Performing Charter School

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction Sections

Indicator Sections

Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement

Indicator B. Innovative Practices

Indicator C. Student Learning and Achievement

Indicator D. School and Community Engagement

Indicator E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures

General Appendices

INTRODUCTION

The Public Charter School Law was enacted to establish the Charter School Program in Maryland in 2003. According to the law the general purpose of the charter school program, "is to create alternative means within the existing public school system in order to provide innovative learning opportunities and creative educational approaches to improve the education of students". Subsequently, the Maryland State Board of Education developed policy for the Charter School Program that clearly defines the obligations of charter schools and their authorizers.

Since the enactment of the Maryland Charter School Law, there has been an annual expansion in the number of charter schools across the State. Charter Schools have brought many opportunities for innovation, school reform and, most importantly, have provided more educational choices for Maryland families.

Historically, there are two key principles that guide charter schools. The first is that they are provided an opportunity to operate autonomously in exchange for school innovation, and second, that they are held accountable for student achievement and school performance as a condition of their charter.

The U.S. Department of Education defines a high-quality charter school as: (1) showing evidence of strong academic achievement results, based on indicators, and (2) has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial management, or statutory or regulatory compliance. For more information on the various provisions of the federal charter school program authorizing statute (Title V, Part B of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA), refer to the U.S. Department of Education's charter school program non-regulatory guidance handbook.

A key challenge that has limited the charter school success across Maryland to date is the broad misalignment in expectations among charter operators, authorizers, funders and other stakeholders about how to measure and judge school quality. The vast diversity in charter school missions, educational models, and student populations - as well as differences in accountability requirements and individual authorizer expectations – makes it challenging to establish common standards and measures of quality that are applicable and meaningful to all kinds of charter schools.

The charter sector both nationally and across the state has had no basic, universal measures of school quality other than those shared with other public schools under the No Child Left Behind Act. This yields mixed results and contradictions in judgments about the performance of charter schools which can be frequently ill-informed. A common error made is to believe that charter schools are no different from any other public school when they were in fact conceptualized to be very different. The charter school idea is based on a simple, compelling bargain: greater autonomy in exchange for greater accountability for student achievement. The very nature of greater autonomy and accountability in fact create the differences in the designs of charter schools. These differences are what mandate differences in how the performance standards for charter schools be unique in design.

Too often, current approaches to evaluating school performance rely on data that are seriously limited and misleading, unhelpful to charter schools, and inappropriate for high-stakes judgments that impact renewals of charter school contracts. To fulfill the promise of the charter school program in Maryland and maximize its success and impact, the statewide charter sector presented an urgent need to clarify and commit to a common set of basic quality expectations and performance measures to define and assess charter school success.

The Maryland Charter School Quality Standards are the product of a statewide consensus process conducted as part of *Building Charter School Quality: Strengthening Performance Management* among Schools in Maryland. Establishing consensus among state charter school leaders and organizations brings about quality educational options to underserved families regarding academic and operational performance measures and practices that define quality charter schools. This project builds knowledge about sound performance measures and associated practices among leaders and key stakeholders in the charter school community. Thus, the purpose of Maryland's Charter School Quality Standards, are to strengthen school performance management practices to support school quality and both internal and external accountability in Maryland charter schools across the state.

Disseminated information on these necessary measures and practices will serve to inform and improve charter school performance, particularly for schools in need of improvement and in high-need communities – thereby benefiting students who are most at risk of educational failure. These standards are accompanied by the development of Quality Standards self assessments for the use of charter schools. They will serve as an engine for monitoring outcomes from the implementation of these performance measures and practices, providing an empirical base to inform ongoing work to strengthen charter school practices.

To strengthen the quality of charter schools in Maryland, the Office of School Innovations of the Maryland State Department of Education identified quality charter school indicators, standards, critical success factors, and performance measures to serve a map to achieve Charter School Quality. For further information, and an electronic copy of this publication, access the Office of School Innovations' web site at: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/charter_schools/.

Linkages to Maryland's Standards and Practices

The Maryland Charter School Quality Standards are built on the same performance expectations and standards for all public schools in the State. The standards however, reflect the distinct uniqueness of charter school concepts and designs. Wherever possible, the charter school standards reference guidance and best practices identified and promoted by Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) through the master planning process required of all school systems. The MSDE Master Plan is intended to guide the State and its' school systems in connecting high expectations, fiscal resources, and performance accountability. Through the enactment of the Bridge to Excellence legislation in 2002, Maryland "adopted a standards-based approach to public school financing. This approach was based on the premise that when students have access to rigorous curriculum, highly qualified teachers, and programs that employ proven strategies and methods for student learning, all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, or socioeconomic background, can achieve" (Bridge to Excellence Master Plan Annual Update Review, 2010). In 2010, MSDE conducted a review of the Bridge to Excellence Master Plan outcomes to provide updates on local school systems' progress toward meeting their five year master plan goals for improving student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and the alignment of local school system priorities with their annual budgets. The outcomes of this process have significantly contributed to the recognition of Maryland as one of the highest performing academic achievement states in the country.

Indicators are used with each of the five standards to identify a general dimension of school quality or strategic direction to achieve results. The Maryland State Department of Education has identified five indicators addressing:

(A)   **Culture of Continuous Improvement;**

(B)   **Innovative Practices;**

(C)   Student Learning and Achievement;

(D)   School and Community Engagement; and

(E)   Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures.

The indicators and standards are not presented in a linear or rank order; rather they are meant to be viewed as interrelated and influencing one another as demonstrated in the components graph illustrating a visual representation of this relationship between each indicator, standard, performance measures, and critical success factors.

Each indicator has a section of the Implementation Guide that includes the standard, performance measures, and critical success factors:

The Standard is a quality benchmark that has been established as a model or an example of a high quality charter school.

Performance Measures indicate information, tools, or evidence to be used to document the attainment of standards.

Critical Success Factors are the critical activities or factors that need to be evident and implemented to reach the standards. The descriptions of the critical success factors are based on the latest literature and research on charter and high-performing schools.

Each guide also includes a table of contents, glossary, and list of resources by critical success factors with links, indicator specific appendices as appropriate and general appendices. The guide includes references and resources for charter schools to access.

Purposes of the Implementation Guide

The implementation guide has several purposes: (1) describe Maryland's quality charter school standards for charter school authorizers, operators, and stakeholders; (2) help map out charter school improvement, growth, and development; and (3) serve as a resource for the charter school stakeholders and community on the latest literature and research on charter schools. The ultimate goal is that charter schools in Maryland will take ownership of the standards and use the standards to define quality for their school.

The use of the information in this guide along with the facilitation guide will help to prepare charter schools to conduct the *Charter School Quality Self-Assessment*. The facilitation guide maps out the recommended processes for the completion of the self-assessment. It is expected that the topics contained within the standards as critical success factors be studied more in depth as a vehicle in launching forward with school development and continous improvement. The critical success factors can serve as a focus for professional development or study groups in a professional learning community. The Office of School Innovations will support these efforts through the provision of professional learning opportunities and the consequent publication of best practice guides beginning in 2013.

Organization of the Implementation Guide

The Maryland Charter School Quality Standards Implementation Guide is organized and divided into the following sections:

- Introduction
- Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement
- Indicator B. Innovative Practices
- Indicator C. Student Learning and Achievement
- Indicator D. School and Community Engagement
- Indicator E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures
- General Appendices (Quick Reference List of Maryland and National Standards and Quick Reference List of Other Relevant Resources)

Each Indicator section includes: Table of Contents, Standard, performance measures, critical success factors, resources, references, glossary of terms, and master list of resources by critical success factors. Some sections include appendices.

MSDE piloted the quality standards and implementation guide with seven new charter schools in 2012. MSDE used the results of the pilot to make further revisions to the Implementation Guide.

Use of Guide in Planning for Continuous Development and Efforts

It is recommended that charter school authorizers, operators, and stakeholders review and become familiar with the indicators and standards. Refer to the *MSDE Facilitation Guide for discussion of the Maryland Charter School Quality Standards Implementation Guide for Indicators A through E and Maryland Self-Assessment Tool for Charter School* for a suggested process and procedures to be used.

Using the performance measures, charter schools can review when and how they are collecting and using the evidence needed to document the school's attainment of the standards or if additional collection of evidence is needed. On a regular basis, charter schools should be reviewing their data and evidence to determine if they have met the standards. If the standard(s) have not been met, then charter schools can use the performance measures and critical success factors to guide strategic and improvement planning. In addition, charter schools can review and study the critical success factors for additional clarification and explanation. Charter schools may also want to access the resources and references identified for each critical success factor.

Next Steps for the Maryland Self-Assessment Tool for Charter Schools

The *Maryland Self-Assessment Tool for Charter School,* was piloted by four charter schools during the 2012-2013 and scheduled for completion in the summer of 2013. Charter schools in the state of Maryland will use the standards as a foundation for their quality review self-assessment process to benchmark their progress towards meeting the quality standards.

The dissemination and implementation of the Self-Assessment Tool begins during the 2013- 2014 school year. The Self-Assessment tool will be used by LEAs and public charter schools through five year contractual cycles. Schools will have access to and utilize the self-assessment process to inform continuous improvement efforts.

Definitions of Key Terms

Standard

A standard is a quality benchmark that helps you visualize where a school needs to be and is established by the authority of proven effective practice and general consent as a model or example of high performance.

Indicator

An indicator is a general dimension of school performance quality or achievement.

Performance Measures

Performance measures quantify the level of implementation for objectives (related to the activities involved in meeting critical success factors) and enable the measurement of strategic performance or meeting the quality standard. The use of tools or the collection and review of information are used to measure results and ensure accountability.

Critical Success Factors

Critical Success Factors are elements that are necessary for an organization or project to achieve its' mission. These factors help track the progress of work plans and document the achievement of the strategic vision.

Inputs

Inputs are the actions or resources that are used or implemented to achieve the intended outcomes (such as professional development, focus groups, hiring of consultants, use of personnel, school funds, materials, equipment, technology, space).

Outputs

Outputs are the results of inputs (for every action there is a reaction), and the type of change in performance that results from implementation of actions, strategies, and/or plans.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the long-term end goals that are accomplished as a result of the use of inputs, serving to influence changes and end results. Outcomes reflect the actual results achieved, as well as the impact or benefit, of a program.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation investigates issues regarding the program's current operations or the implementation of new initiatives. Questions most often focus on what the program does, who does it, and how it is done.

Components Graph
Quality Standards for Charter Schools

Indicators = Five Performance Areas of Quality

Standards to
Achieve =
High Performing CS

CS Quality
Standard E

CS Quality
Standard D

Performance
Measures = Evidence of
Implementation

CS Quality
Standard C

CS Quality
Standard B

Inputs plus Outputs = Outcome
Meeting or exceeding standards

CS Quality
Standard A

GOAL

Critical Success Factors = Steps to Reach the Standards

FEDERAL DEFINITION OF A PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

The Charter Schools Program (CSP) was originally authorized in October 1994, under title X, part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), 20 U.S.C. 8061-8067. The program statute was amended in October 1998 by the Charter School Expansion Act of 1998 and in January 2002 by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The current program legislation (title V, part B of the ESEA; 20 U.S.C. 7221-7225g). (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, Charter Schools Program, Title V, Part B Non-Regulatory Guidance, April, 2011).

To receive federal CSP funds, a charter school must meet the definition in section 5210(1) of the ESEA, which is as follows:

The term "charter school" means a public school that:

a) In accordance with a specific State statute authorizing the granting of charters to schools, is exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools, but not from any rules relating to the requirements in paragraphs 1 through 12 of this definition;

b) Is created by a developer as a public school, or is adapted by a developer from an existing public school, and is operated under public supervision and direction;

c) Operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives determined by the school's developer and agreed to by the authorized public chartering agency;

d) Provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;

e) Is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;

f) Does not charge tuition;

g) Complies with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

h) Is a school to which parents choose to send their children, and that admits students on the basis of a lottery, if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated;

i) Agrees to comply with the same Federal and State audit requirements as do other elementary schools and secondary schools in the State, unless such requirements are specifically waived for the purpose of this program;

j) Meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements;

k) Operates in accordance with State law; and

l) Has a written performance contract with the authorized public chartering agency in the State that includes a description of how student performance will be measured in charter schools pursuant to State assessments that are required of other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school. 20 U.S.C. 7221i(1)

FEDERAL DEFINITION OF HIGH QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS

A high-quality charter school shows evidence of strong academic results, based on the indicators described in the Criteria below, and has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial management, or statutory or regulatory compliance. Significant issue means something that did, will, or could lead to the revocation of a school's charter.

(a) Quality – The following factors are considered to determine the quality of a charter school:

i) The degree of demonstrated success in significantly increasing academic achievement and attainment for all students, including educationally disadvantaged students, served by charter schools.

ii) The degree to which the charter school has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students.

iii) The degree to which the school has achieved results for low-income and minority students that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State. A review of objective data provides relevant information in support of these three factors, along with comparison data for similar schools, as follows:

   (1) Performance (school-wide and by subgroup) on statewide tests of all charter schools operated or managed by the applicant as compared to all students in other schools in the State or States at the same grade level, and compared with other schools serving similar demographics of students;

   (2) annual student attendance and retention rates (school-wide and by subgroup), and comparisons with other similar schools; and

   (3) where applicable and available, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates (school-wide and by subgroup) of students attending the school.

(b) Contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students - The contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students served by the school to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, and to graduate college- and career-ready.

<div align="right">U.S. Department of Education</div>

MARYLAND STATE DEFINITION OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

MD Charter School Law 2003

TITLE 9. MARYLAND PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

§ 9-102. Public school charter, defined.

In this title, "public charter school" means a public school that:

(1) Is nonsectarian in all its programs, policies, and operations;

(2) Is a school to which parents choose to send their children;

(3) Is open to all students on a space-available basis and admits students on a lottery basis if more students apply than can be accommodated;

(4) Is a new public school or a conversion of an existing public school;

(5) Provides a program of elementary or secondary education or both;

(6) Operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives;

(7) Is tuition-free;

(8) Is subject to federal and State laws prohibiting discrimination;

(9) Is in compliance with all applicable health and safety laws;

(10) Is in compliance with § 9-107 of this title;

(11) Operates under the supervision of the public chartering authority from which its charter is granted and in accordance with its charter and, except as provided in § 9-106 of this title, the provisions of law and regulation governing other public schools;

(12) Requires students to be physically present on school premises for a period of time substantially similar to that which other public school students spend on school premises; and

(13) Is created in accordance with this title and the appropriate county board policy.[2003, ch. 358; 2004, ch. 25.]

QUALITY STANDARDS FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS OVERVIEW

Indicator A: Culture of Continuous Improvement (Process)

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools sustain a culture and infrastructure of continuous improvements that serves to maintain the long term success of the school.

Indicator B: Innovative Practices (Process, Input)

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools launch and sustain effective educational innovations and the promising practices of school reform.

Indicator C: Student Learning and Achievement (Outcome)

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools are dedicated to increasing student learning and achievement and use this value as the foundation of all school efforts.

Indicator D: School & Community Engagement (Input, Output)

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools maintain shared understandings and commitment to provide positive learning environments and experiences through the engagement of all students, parents, staff and community.

Indicator E: Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures (Process, Input)

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools implement structures and processes that support effective organizational and learning environments.

Student Learning & Achievement

Governance, Leadership, & Organizational Structure

Culture of Continuous Improvement

High Quality Charter Schools of Maryland

Indicators of Excellence

School & Community Engagement

Innovative Practices

Indicator A: Culture of Continuous Improvement

Quality Public Charter Schools sustain a culture and infrastructure of continuous improvements that serves to maintain the long term success of the school.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools sustain a culture and infrastructure of continuous improvements that serves to maintain the long term success of the school.

Performance Measures:

1. **Board of Director's policies and procedures for accountability**

2. **Evidence of the use of data analysis to guide improvements**

3. **Evidence of action plans/strategic plan/improvement plan/professional development plan**

4. **School schedules**

5. **Description of leadership roles and responsibilities**

6. **Evidence of school organization supporting improvement efforts**

7. **Evidence of an implemented performance management process (systematic methods to address results) (*see appendix A. 1. Performance Management System*)**

Critical Success Factors:

1. Strategic planning is used to guide and focus improvement efforts as needed, but minimally on an annual basis.

2. Data analysis helps to design and guide improvement efforts:
   - Data analysis is conducted at distinct levels: school level, classroom level, student level;
   - Data analysis is conducted in three distinct data areas: demographic area, outcome area and process area; and
   - Process data analysis includes: the study of classroom practices, curriculum alignment and teacher development needs.

3. School schedules allocate time for grade level teachers to meet weekly to plan and to develop strategies for improving student achievement.

4. Professional development is guided by strategic planning and data analysis.

5. Distributed leadership is valued and encouraged.

6. Staff and parents are invested in the school mission and vision, and in supporting the process of continuous improvements.

7. The school's administration effectively implements instructional leadership strategies.

<center>A. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</center>

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools sustain a culture and infrastructure of continuous improvements that serves to maintain the long term success of the school.

1. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR: **STRATEGIC PLANNING IS USED TO GUIDE AND FOCUS IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS AS NEEDED, BUT MINIMALLY ON AN ANNUAL BASIS.**

Strategic Planning is a roadmap to follow to achieve the Charter School's Mission and Vision... It drives systemic change. Strategic planning aligns the school's resources with improvement goals and mutually predetermined measurable outcomes. An effective plan helps to map out the work and also guides the allocation of resources to where they are most needed. This includes not only the school budget but other resources such as staff, materials, time, space, etc. It is a process that must be implemented school wide to ensure the commitment of all school staff. Strategic planning has many benefits. It also serves to monitor and check the progress of the school. The school environment becomes united through strategic planning to dedicate its time, effort, and resources towards accomplished common goals.

A strategic plan begins with a mission statement. It describes what the main purpose of the school is. The mission provides information in three basic areas:

1. School Purpose: What the school exists to accomplish
2. Audience: Who the school serves
3. Action: How this is accomplished

The school's vision statement helps the school community to picture what they would like the school to be like. The vision is a manifestation of shared common values and motivates the school community to do what needs to be done to make the vision a reality. The vision also serves as the foundation to help the school assess where it is (present state) in relationship to the implementation of the vision (future state). Experts strongly recommend the participation of stakeholders to ensure that there is a strong investment to implementing the plan. They also recommend that the plan be fully discussed and publicized before it is implemented.

The plan must also find its way into the school's budget, job functions, school policies, processes and procedures. The plan must be fully *operationalized t*o ensure full implementation of the action activities and the institutionalization of improvements. The stakeholders responsible for carrying out the plan's various objectives should report their progress on at least a quarterly basis. Deadlines and objectives can be modified, but not without thorough discussion by the school's leadership and governance team.

Strategic plans should be for at least five years. They should be reviewed annually, with a particularly thorough review at the end of the first year. These are the times to check the plan against what the school is actually doing and to make adjustments in either the plan or in how the plan is or is not being followed.

Other Relevant Sections of the *Implementation Guide*

Refer to the following sections on staff investment in the school's vision and mission and the use of collaborative processes to develop the school's vision and mission.

Indicator B. Innovative Practices, Critical Success Factor 1. Vision and mission of the school is clearly defined and supported by the school's strategic plan, culture, and infrastructure.

Indicator E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures, Critical Success Factor 5. A collaborative process is used to develop the school's vision, mission, and goals and guides decision-making.

RESOURCES

Appendix A. 2.   Contains a checklist from "The Handbook for SMART School Teams that can be used to evaluate the school's mission statement.
Appendix A. 3.   Contains a template that can be used to construct a strategic plan.

REFERENCES

Conzemius, A., & O'Neill, J. (2009). **The handbook for SMART school teams**. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree. See A.2. Checklist.

<center>**A. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**</center>

2. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR: DATA ANALYSIS HELPS TO DESIGN AND GUIDE IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS.

Research on school effectiveness and improvement have documented that data use is central to continuous improvement. Data-based decision-making is defined as school staff systematically collecting and analyzing various types of data to guide a range of decisions to help continuously improve the performance of students and the school. The types of data that a school may collect and analyze include: demographics, process, and outcome data.

First, charter schools gather data on student learning from standardized tests, district-made tests, student work samples, portfolios, and other data sources. These data sources provide important input to the selection of school improvement goals and provide focus for professional development efforts.

Data Analysis is conducted in Three Distinct Data Areas

There are three distinct data areas that could be the focus of a school's data collection and analyses:

- Demographics;
- Outcomes; and
- Processes.

Demographic Data

Demographics are the social/ physical characteristics of a population such as age, grade, gender, race/ethnicity, home language, income level, parent educational level, etc. Demographics may also include student enrollment and program participation data, such as: student attendance, mobility, tardy rates, discipline infractions, drop-out rates, graduation rates, etc.

Demographic data can help staff understand their students and their unique needs. It can identify social/physical factors that must be considered in instructional decisions.

Key demographic questions to ask: Who are our students, by race/ethnicity, by gender, by socioeconomic status, by other categories (e.g., English language learners, students with disabilities)? Who are our staff members? Who is our neighborhood or our community? What trends are we seeing in our student population? What factors outside the school may help us understand our students?

Outcomes Data

Student outcomes are the most important type of data. Student learning outcomes are defined in terms of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students have attained as a result of their involvement in a particular set of educational experiences. Outcomes can describe how a student or groups of students is performing at a particular point of time. Student outcomes may be measured by classroom, formative, benchmark, end-of-course, or yearly State and/or National assessments.

Key outcome questions to ask: What does the analysis of student outcome data reveal about students' learning? What do the analyses of data reveal about the knowledge and skills students have achieved? What does the analyses of data reveal about which students are or are not meeting or exceeding expectations?

High performing schools use a variety of data to identify areas of strength and weakness in school performance by disaggregating data by grade level, subject area, learning strand, gender, ethnicity, income levels and disability (Picucci, et. al, 2002).

Process Data

Process data includes the study of classroom practices, curriculum alignment, and teacher development needs.

Classroom Practices may include: classroom management, instructional strategies, and assessment of student learning. The classroom management practices may include: implementation and enforcement of class rules, management procedures, and managing the behaviors of individual and groups of students. Instructional strategies may include: questioning and discussion techniques; instructional activities and assignments; structure and pacing of lessons; and flexibility and responsiveness to students, etc.

Classroom practice data may include: observational data, classroom infraction data, informal assessments of students, and student assignments and work. When analyzing classroom practice data, key questions to ask may include: Based on student outcomes, which classroom practices were successful with which students and which were not? What are the gaps between what is desired in classroom practices and what the data indicate?

Curriculum Alignment refers to the degree to which the school's written and implemented curriculums are aligned with the State standards and assessments. An aligned curriculum is one that addresses the State's standards that are assessed at each grade level. High performing schools align the curriculum vertically and horizontally with State standards so that students are exposed to the material they are expected to answer on state assessments (Picucci et al., 2002).

Curriculum alignment data may include: written curriculum; scope and sequence charts; curriculum maps; unit and lesson plans; classroom observations; etc. When analyzing data on curriculum alignment, key questions to ask may include: Is the scope and sequence of our curriculum aligned with the scope and sequence implicit in students' assessments? Based on student outcome data, which components of the curriculum are our students mastering or are not mastering? Does the curriculum need to be reorganized to better meet the needs of students?

Teacher Development Needs can be determined through the use of the data based on a variety of processes, including: student performance data, teacher self-assessment or reflection, teacher observations, teacher evaluations, teacher surveys, and district, state and federal requirements.

The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards, **Standard VII** states that effective professional development relies on rigorous analysis of data. Two indicators are relevant: (7e) carefully analyze a variety of disaggregated student data to identify gaps between student learning and standards for proficiency to inform the choice of the content of professional development; and (7f) as appropriate, data analysis focuses on the results from approved national, state, and local assessments, student work samples and portfolios, and behavioral indicators, such as attendance and disciplinary referrals. Based on the analyses of data at the student, classroom and school levels, the school could identify specific learning needs and priorities of teachers for teacher development.

Data Analysis is Conducted at Three Distinct Levels

An effective school is continuously collecting and analyzing a variety of data at the school, classroom, and student levels.

School Level

The Office of School Innovations, Maryland State Department of Education, issues Charter School Dashboards on a yearly basis through its external evaluator, ICF Macro. The purpose of the dashboards is to present a snapshot of each of the Maryland charter schools. Each dashboard provides a description of each school and its mission, as well as a profile of its student body and academic progress. See example in Appendices.

At the school level, educators may analyze a variety of data to examine student performance across grade levels, within grade levels, by subjects, across student groups, and by student groups. The analysis may review current school year data, changes and trends over time, and/or differences/discrepancies between groups. At the school level, educators may analyze student performance data on a quarterly basis. In addition, educators need to examine the impact of school policies and practices on student and school effectiveness.

Classroom Level

At the classroom level, educators analyze data to determine what a group or class of students has learned what they need to learn, and how to plan instruction to ensure that students are learning. The analyses may be conducted on a weekly basis.

Student Level

At the student level, school staff could review individual performance data to identify differences in background knowledge, language ability, learning styles, reading levels, and other characteristics that may affect a student's learning. In addition, data analysis may focus on analyzing the progress, strengths, and weaknesses of a specific student. Particularly if any student fails to make sufficient progress, administrators meet with teachers to assist in developing intervention strategies. Administrators and teachers should use assessment data to identify students in need of tutoring, small-group instruction, and other supports (Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 2002). A high performing school checks student progress in core curriculum areas daily, weekly, and monthly (Just for the Kids, no date).

Data is Used to Guide and Design Improvement Efforts

Continuous improvement incorporates the collection and analyses of data on a cyclical basis.

High performing schools establish a strong culture of data use to ensure that data-based decisions are made frequently, consistently, and effectively (Datnow, Park, & Wohlstetter, 2007).

The planning and design of improvement efforts should be based on the analyses of demographic, process, and outcome data at the student, class, and school levels.

<u>**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES**</u>

Resources listed below are available from http://mdk12.org/data/index.html

Analyzing Your State Assessment Data.

The data results for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), Maryland State Assessments (MSA), High School Assessment (HAS), and Alternate-MSA is available for schools, districts, and the state. The section includes: Data Results for Your School, Guided Process to Analyze Your Data, AYP Tutorials, and How to Lead the Data Discussion. There is a description of the principal's role in data analyses and leading the data analysis process, data analysis worksheets, and Key Actions Checklist.

Analyzing Data for Students with Disabilities.

This section includes data results from schools, districts, and state performance for students with disabilities as well as the results and compliance indicators used to evaluate the effectiveness of special education programs and services. The section includes: Data used to analyze the performance of students with disabilities; and Use of data to improve student performance.

Analyzing Your Classroom Data: *Monitoring Student Progress*.

This section addresses: Developing a monitoring plan, Assessing for learning, Analyzing and using the data, Leading the process, Examining your monitoring data, Using your monitoring data, and Graphing your monitoring data. It also includes class and individual student monitoring templates for: MSA assessed State Curriculum, State Curriculum, HSA Core Learning Goals, and High School State Curriculum.

Data Explorer. This multi-media tool that can be used to analyze assessment data. Recent tutorials include: How MSDE uses a confidence interval, Reading your AYP reading data, and Reading your AYP mathematics data.

Examining Student Work to Inform Instruction.

This section addresses: How do you know what students know? What do experts say? How do you agree on what you are looking for? How do you diagnose student performance to inform instruction? The section also includes an "Examining Student Work Protocol" at elementary and middle school levels. There is also an explanation of how the protocol works and a video demonstrating a team working through the protocol.

Maryland Charter School Dashboard Example

Maryland State Department of Education contracts with an external evaluator to summarize data on; charter schools operations, grade levels, student enrollment, and student performance on state assessments by student ethnicity/race and special services. These are only shared with charter schools and not made public. *See Appendix A.4, for an example of a Dashboard.*

Doing What Works

The Doing What Works (DWW) is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The DWW website has an online library of resources that may help teachers, schools, and districts and implementing research-based practices. The web site resources include: overview of multimedia presentations and materials with interviews with experts and videos and interviews with schools successfully implementing research-based practices, and comprehensive tools and templates, including planning and implementation tools for schools.

Relevant priority areas and topics include:

- Data-driven improvement
    - ❖ Turning around low-performing schools
    - ❖ Response to intervention

The web site features include:

- Learn what works (understanding the research base supporting the use of recommended practices)
- See how it works (understand how practices are implemented by teachers and administrators)
- Do what works (access and use school and professional development tools and resources)

Access the web site at http://dww.ed.gov/

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/

An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):

- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and
- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

Relevant Practice Guides include:

- ***Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making***

    Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J. & Wayman, J. (2009). ***Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making***. (NCES 2009-4067). Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/

REFERENCES

Council of Chief State School Officers and the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin (2002). *Expecting success: a study of five high performing, high poverty schools*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers**.**

Datnow, A. Park, V. & Wohlstetter, P. (2007)..*Achieving with data: how high-performing school systems use data to improve instruction for elementary students*. Los Angeles, CA: University of Southern California, Center on Educational Governance.

Just for the Kids (JFTK) (2001). *Promising Practices: How High-Performing Schools in Texas Get Results.* Austin, TX: JFTK.

Learning Point Associates (2004, December). *Guide to Using Data in School Improvement Efforts: A Compilation of Knowledge from Data Retreats and Data Use at Learning Points Associates*. Naperville, IL: Author.

Maryland State Department of Education (2001). *Maryland teacher professional development standards*. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Picucci, A., Brownson, A, Kahlert, R., & Sobel, A. (2002). *Driven to succeed: high-performing, high-poverty, turnaround middle schools. A*ustin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, Charles R. Dana Center and the STAR Center.

A. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

3. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR: SCHOOL SCHEDULES ALLOCATE TIME FOR GRADE LEVEL TEACHERS TO MEET WEEKLY TO PLAN AND TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

A quality charter school structures the school day or school week so that grade level teachers meet weekly.

Schools are finding ways to carve out more time for teachers to meet and plan collaboratively (National Staff Development Council, 2005). Here are some examples:

- Organize special subject area classes into blocks of time to create common time for teachers.
- Link planning periods to other non-instructional times, such as lunch periods.
- Hire substitute teachers to fill-in for classroom teachers while they plan together.
- Add an extra rotating teaching position so the teacher could fill in for teachers during their planning time.
- Shave minutes off the lunch period and use that time for teacher planning.
- Schedule half-day or full day for team planning at frequent intervals.

Examples of Scheduling Approaches for Teacher Collaboration

School	Time and Planning Strategies	Activities
A	Once every month, the school day begins two hours later and teachers meet during this time to engage in activities (listed in the next column). School makes up this accumulated time by extending the school year.	1. School staff review district standards and realign the assessments they use accordingly. 2. School staff continuously reevaluates this work and discuss and plan changes as needed.
B	School staff is released early from school once per week for at least 45 minutes. This time is added to other days throughout the week. The entire staff meets weekly for one hour before school. Staff decreased the "nuts and bolts" of the meetings and prioritized work related to assessments.	1. Schools use allotted time to align curriculum across grades with the state standards. This process is driven by student assessment data. 2. School staff continuously reevaluates this work and discuss and plan changes as needed.
C	Same-grade teachers meet informally during weekly planning periods and formally every six weeks. Students in entire grades are sent to "specials" (e.g. art, gym). Time also is allotted at regularly scheduled staff meetings. Teachers are released from teaching duties several days each year and are replaced by substitute teachers. Teachers meet with the principal up to three times each year.	1. Staff discuss students' progress according to the "developmental continuums" written by school staff. 2. Teachers administer individual assessments to students. 3. Staff discuss reports on assessment data from district research department.

School	Time and Planning Strategies	Activities
D	Teachers request time to meet with each other during school hours; substitutes are hired to support this. In addition, teachers meet after school. Teachers meet in "within-grade" and "subject area" teams during their planning hours once per week.	1. Staff members share knowledge gained from professional development activities that addressed curriculum and assessment. They also discuss student mastery of standards and other outcomes and possible intervention strategies.

Source: Cromey and Hanson (2000) cited in Hamilton, Halverson, Jackson, Mandinach, Supovitz, & Wayman (2009).

To increase productivity and effectiveness of collaborative planning, consider:

- Including teacher leaders in organizing the planning time.
- Establishing clear expectations for the work during the planning time.
- Preparing an agenda for team planning time so that the time is used efficiently.
- Creating a weekly schedule for planning time that specifies the purpose for each period (Perlman & Redding, 2009).

During these weekly meetings, teachers may plan and develop strategies for improving student achievement. Teachers may share, discuss, and strategize on the implementation of strategies.

Collaborative teams, where teachers share planning time and a common group of students, is correlated with better school culture, higher student achievement, increased teacher motivation and job satisfaction, and more effective parent communication (Perlman & Redding, 2009).

RESOURCES

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/

An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):

- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and
- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

**Relevant Practice Guides include*:*

Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making

Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J. & Wayman, J. (2009). *Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making*, (NCES 2009-4067). Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/

Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning

Pashler, H., Bain, P., Bottge, B., Graesser, A., Koedinger, K., McDaniel, M., & Metcalfe, J. (2007). ***Organizing instruction and study to improve student learning*** *(*NCER 2007-2004). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/20072004.pdf

R̲EFERENCES̲

Cromey, A. & Hanson, M. (2000**). *An exploratory analysis of school-based student assessment systems*. Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL).

Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J. & Wayman, J. (2009). ***Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making*** (NCES 2009-4067). Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

National Staff Development Council (2005, November). How to find time. ***The learning* system,** 1(3), 5.

Perlman, C. & Redding, S. (Eds.). (2009**). *Handbook on effective implementation of school improvement grants*. Lincoln, IL: Center on Innovation and Improvement.

A. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

4. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR: **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS GUIDED BY STRATEGIC PLANNING AND DATA ANALYSIS.**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The term "professional development" means a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement (Learning Forward (formerly National Staff Development Council), 2010). The purpose of professional development is to help principals and teachers develop and apply the knowledge and skills necessary to help students learn. Effective professional development is guided by effective strategic planning and data analyses; implementation of best and/or research-based practices; and evaluation of activities and outcomes.

Strategic Planning for Professional Development

The **2008** *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide* is a resource for planning professional development that meets the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards* (see below). The guide is most appropriate for teams, such as professional development committee, school improvement teams (SIT), and/or department or grade-level committees.

The Guide describes a six-step planning process: (1) establishing the need; (2) identifying who will participate; (3) identifying the intended outcomes; (4) identifying learning activities and follow-up; (5) determining how the professional development will be evaluated; and (6) determining necessary resources to support the learning activities, follow-up, and evaluation. The Guide includes a planning form and planning checklist. There is an emphasis on professional development plans that: a) carefully identify needs, b) effectively target participants, c) set clear and measurable outcomes and indicators, d) include well-designed professional learning activities and follow-up, e) include well-designed evaluation plans, and f) include adequate resources.

Data Analyses for Professional Development

Effective professional development should be based on the analyses of the differences between the goals and standards for student learning and actual student performance. *Refer to Maryland Charter School Quality Standards, A. Culture of Continuous Improvement, Critical Success Factor 2. Data analysis helps to design and guide improvement efforts* for more information on the analyses of process data for teacher development needs.

Planning professional development should involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn. To determine the needs for professional development, the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide* recommends reviewing at least three kinds of student outcome data. It is recommended that a team first determine student learning needs by analyzing: (1) results from the Maryland School Assessment or High School Assessment; (2) results from locally developed formative or benchmark assessments; and (3) samples of student work. In addition, staff may review other student data, such as student attendance and/or disciplinary data. It is also recommended that the data be disaggregated by race or ethnicity, gender, age or grade level, English language learner status, and special education status. Then the team should identify what teachers need to know and be able to do to address the identified student needs. The intended outcomes for professional development may be defined in terms of improved professional practice which will lead to improved student outcomes.

Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards

The *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards,* derived from the National Staff Development Council's Standards for Staff Development, define high-quality professional development. The standards rest on several fundamental assumptions about effective professional development. Professional development is most effective when:

- it takes place in vibrant professional learning communities;
- there are strong leaders;
- there are adequate resources; and
- there is consensus around clear expectations for what teachers should know and be able to do to help all students learn.

The Standards are organized into two categories: content and process. The content standards and indicators refer to skills and knowledge that effective educators need to possess or acquire through professional development. The six content standards address: content knowledge and quality teaching; research-based, collaboration, diverse learning needs; student learning environments; and family involvement. The process standards refer to the means for acquiring new knowledge and skills. The three process standards address: data-driven PD, evaluation, and design and teacher learning. When fully implemented, the standards and indicators can help improve the quality of professional development so it is most effective in having an impact on teaching and learning.

Job-Embedded Professional Development

Best Practices Series for Maryland Charter Schools: Job-Embedded Professional Development

The Maryland State Department of Education's 2009 Best Practice Series provides background information based on the models of Professional Learning Communities which incorporates job-embedded professional development strategies that engage ongoing targeted efforts to improve teacher performance and student learning. The models include: study groups, lesson study, examining student work, collaborative lesson planning, and action research. The Series includes Charlotte Danielson's framework for teaching which identifies areas for teacher development and protocols for job-embedded strategies.

The U.S. Department of Education's (2010) definition of job-embedded professional development:

Job-embedded professional development is professional learning that occurs at a school as educators engage in their daily work activities. It is closely connected to what teachers are asked to do in the classroom so that the skills and knowledge gained from such learning can be immediately transferred to classroom instructional practices. Job-embedded professional development is usually characterized by the following:

- It occurs on a regular basis (e.g. daily or weekly);
- It is aligned with academic standards, school curricula, and school improvement goals;
- It involves educators working together collaboratively and is often facilitated by school instructional leaders or school-based professional development coaches or mentors;
- It requires active engagement rather than passive learning by participants; and

- It focuses on understanding what and how students are learning and on how to address students' learning needs, including reviewing student work and achievement data and collaboratively planning, testing, and adjusting instructional strategies, formative assessments, and materials based on such data.

Evaluation of Professional Development

The **2010** *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Evaluation Guide* is intended to help schools plan, conduct, and report on professional development. The Guide emphasizes that evaluation planning should be an integral part of professional development planning. The Guide introduces five key questions to shape the evaluation plan: 1) To evaluate or not evaluate? 2) What are the key features and guiding assumptions of the professional development that will be evaluated? 3) Who is likely to be interested in the evaluation and what do they want to know about the professional development? 4) What resources are available to support the evaluation? 5) Who will work on the evaluation? The Guide also includes suggestions and options for evaluation design, data collection and analyses, and evaluation reports. High-quality, effective professional development begins with strategic planning and careful data analyses. By implementing and evaluating research-based activities that meet the Maryland content and process professional standards and indicators, a school will be able to document the most effective approaches to improve educators' practices and improve outcomes for students.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

School Improvement in Maryland: Professional Development web site has the following resources identified above:

- *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide*
- *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards*
- *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Evaluation Guide*

Available from http://mdk12.org/instruction/professional_development/index.html

Other resources at the web site include:

- *Professional Development Planning Form*
- *Professional Development Checklist*
- *Maryland Technology Standards for Teacher Professional Development*
- *High-Quality Professional Development Survey and Report*

The Office of School Innovations, Maryland State Department of Education's web site link for the ***Best Practice Series for Maryland Charter Schools: Job Embedded Professional Development*** is:

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/15D2BCE6-9869-43B6-8E4F-D37A7FFCBC5F/22664/Best_Practices_MD_Charter_Schools_2010.pdf

REFERENCES

Haslam, M.B. (2010, January). ***Maryland teacher professional development evaluation guide***. Prepared under contracts with Harford County Public Schools, Maryland State Department of Education, and the National Staff Development Council. Available from: Baltimore, MD: Maryland State Department of Education.

Learning Forward. (2010). *Definition of professional development*. Oxford, OH: Author.

Ortiz, H. L. (2009). *Best practices series for Maryland charter schools: job-embedded professional development*. Baltimore, MD: Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations.

Maryland State Department of Education. (2001). *Maryland teacher professional standards*. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Maryland State Department of Education. (2008, November). *Maryland Teacher Professional development planning guide.,* Baltimore, MD: Author.

Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council (2009, July). *Ensuring high-quality professional development for all Maryland teachers.* Baltimore, MD: Author.

U.S. Department of Education (2010, June 29), *Guidance on school improvement grants under section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*. Washington, DC: Author.

A. Culture of Continuous Improvement

5. Critical Success Factor: Distributed leadership is valued and encouraged.

Distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership practice rather than leaders or their roles, functions, routines, and structures (Spillane, 2005). A distributed perspective frames leadership practice in a particular way; leadership *practice* is viewed as a product of the interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situation. These interacting components must be understood together because the system is more than the sum of practices or component parts.

Camburn and others (2003) define leadership as a set of organizational functions that leaders might be expected to perform—including not only instructional leadership functions, but also functions related to broader school and building management. Recent work in more than 100 U.S. schools showed that responsibility for leadership functions typically was distributed among three to seven people, including administrators and specialists (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor 2003). The distribution of leadership functions to members of the school community are typically charged with exercising leadership—namely, line and staff administrative professionals such as principals, assistant principals, program and curricular area coordinators, mentor teachers, and teacher leaders. This study identified two processes by which leadership is distributed: (1) configuration process in which the organizational structure of the school is created and designates leadership status in the school; and (2) activation process that includes social processes to encourage school staff to actively perform leadership functions.

When principals and administrators share leadership with staff and create shared ownership with teachers around norms, values, and expectations, the school's mission and goals are more likely to be a prominent part of the daily operations of the school (Louis, et.al., 1996). By welcoming teacher input about the learning environment, administrators can promote a climate of respect and sense of professional community (McREL, 2005).

A school, that increases the number of groups that are empowered to make and implement decisions, can multiply the opportunities for identifying and applying practices that are effective for all students (Lab and RMC Research, 2000).

Other Relevant Sections of the Implementation Guide

See also *Indicator B. Innovative Practices, Critical Success Factor 3, Infrastructure supports continuous teacher leadership, instructional leadership, and board development.*

References

Camburn, E., Rowan, & B., Taylor, J. (2003). Leadership in schools: The case of elementary schools adopting comprehensive school reform models, ***Educational evaluation and policy analysis*, 25(4), 347-73.**

LAB (Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory) in partnership with RMC Research Corporation. (2000). ***What it takes: 10 capacities for initiating and sustaining school improvement at the elementary level.*** Providence, RI: Lab at Brown University.

Louis, K., Marks, & H., & Kruse, S. (1996). Teachers' Professional Community in Restructuring Schools. *American Educational Research Journal, 3*3(4), 757-798.

Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) (2005). *McREL insights: schools that 'beat the odd'.* Denver, CO: Author.

Spillane, J. (2005). *Distributed leadership*, *The Educational Forum,* 69(2), 143-150.

A. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

6. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR: STAFF AND PARENTS ARE INVESTED IN THE SCHOOL MISSION AND VISION AND IN SUPPORTING THE PROCESS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS.

The mission statement defines the main purpose of the school. A mission statement is about the present while a vision statement is a statement about the anticipated future. The vision statement helps the school community to picture what they want the school to become. The vision reflects high standards for all students and guides all decisions that affect teaching practices and goals for student learning (McREL, 2003).

A strategic plan is the road map that helps the school reach its vision. Effective schools have a clearly defined vision for the improvement of learning for each and every student.

A school achieves a common unifying vision when teachers, students, parents, support staff, and administrators are able to clearly communicate the vision through the school's operations. The vision should be influencing all major decisions and should be embedded in communications, programs, and the allocation and uses of resources.

Staff and Parent Investment in School's Mission and Vision

A vision stays alive through sharing, modeling, reinforcement, and recognition (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2001). To create a shared vision of what is important and why, school staff and parents need to engage in ongoing conversations. Creating a shared vision is a dynamic, living process in which people share and express their hopes for the future of the school (Senge, 1990). People in every role of the school should be able to speak from the heart about what really matters and be heard.

It is important for leaders to talk about and write about their reflections and views of the vision and invite comments and suggestions from others. The more clear the vision, the greater the enthusiasm and commitment of individuals for the vision.

Sustaining the vision requires opportunities, time, and structures so people can openly talk about their hopes for the school's future (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2001). In a school that is sustaining improvement, an effective vision is more than a collection of statements on paper — it paints a picture of what the school wants to become. The school stakeholders "commit to" rather than "buy into" the vision. Effective schools use the vision as a guide for carrying out their work and as a basis for decision making about instructional practice and collaborative learning efforts. They monitor how members interact with students, teach and assess, and allocate resources to make certain that the vision continues to reflect the school's common values and goals for improvement. (McREL, 2003).

"Experts agree that the single most important attribute of a successful charter schools is a clear sense of purpose or mission shared by parents, students, staff, and the school's board of trustees. A common vision of what it means to be educated and how one becomes educated forms the basis of a coherent school design. It guides the school's decision-making in every aspect of planning and operations" (Millot & Lake, 1996).

Staff and Parents Supporting Process of Continuous Improvement

A quality charter school engages in a process of continuous improvement to increase the quality and effectiveness of its programs and services. The school staff and the governing board regularly assess

and evaluation the school's progress in meeting goals based on student learning and performance. Quality charter schools, on an annual basis, evaluate their school program, quality of teaching, and student outcome measures in light of its mission and goals (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

In schools with cultures of shared responsibility, the primary objective is to continuously improve student learning (Conzemius, & O'Neill, 2001). Research has documented that where there is shared responsibility for student learning, that the achievement of all student groups improves (Barth, Haycock, & Jackson, 1999).

RESOURCES

Barnes, F. (2004). *Making school improvement part of daily practice: inquiry and action*. Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University. Available from: http://www.annenberginstitute.org/tools/guide/SIGuide_intro.pdf

The Guide describes a school self-study cycle of inquiry and action, designed to help a school community develop the habits of collaboration, discussion, inquiry, and data-based informed decision-making that informs on-going improvement. The Guide can be used by school-level administrators or other stakeholders, to respond to external requirements or to start their own improvement process.

REFERENCES

Barth, P., Haycock, K., & Jackson, H. (Eds.) (1999). *Dispelling the myth: high poverty schools exceeding expectations*. (Report No. SR9901). Washington, DC: Education Trust (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 445 140).

Conzemius, A., & O'Neill, J. (2001). *Building shared responsibility for student learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) (2003), *Sustaining school improvement: professional learning community.* Denver, CO: Author.

Millot, M. & Lake, R. (1996). *So you want to start a charter school? Strategic advice for applicants: recommendations from an expert workshop*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington/RAND.

Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization.* New York: Doubleday.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement (2004), *Innovations in education: successful charter schools.* Washington, DC: Author.

A. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

7. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR: THE SCHOOL'S ADMINISTRATION EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES.

Instructional leadership can be provided through the allocation of resources to support effective instruction; ensuring that curriculum, instruction, and assessments are aligned; and monitoring the day-to-day work of teachers in classes (McREL, 2005). In high performing schools, the principal provides instructional leadership and support to ensure that strong learning opportunities and motivation exist in every class in the school (Balfanz & MacIver, 2000; Waters et. al., 2003).

Maryland's Instructional Leadership Framework

Maryland's Instructional Leadership Framework describes outcomes expected of Maryland principals as they provide instructional leadership for their schools. The framework focuses on the content knowledge needed for school principals to be the leader of teaching-learning in the school. The framework identifies the following outcomes:

1. Facilitate the development of a school vision.
2. Align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning.
3. Monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessments.
4. Improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers.
5. Ensure the regular integration of appropriate assessments into daily classroom instruction.
6. Use technology and multiple sources of data to improve classroom instruction.
7. Provide staff with focused, sustained, research-based professional development.
8. Engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success.
9. Manage and administer the school operations and budget in an effective and efficient manner.
10. Communicate effectively in a variety of situations and circumstances with diverse audiences.
11. Understand, respond to, and help influence the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context of the school community.
12. Promote the success of every student and teacher by acting within a framework of integrity, fairness, and ethics.

Effective Implementation of Instructional Leadership

Maryland's Instructional Leadership Framework not only identifies outcomes but also evidence in practice for each of the outcomes.

The latest April 2012 framework included in the ***Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation Guidebook,*** is summarized on the next pages.

2012 MARYLAND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

Instructional Leadership Outcome	Professional Practice Measures
1. Facilitate the development of a school vision.	The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are: 1.1 Written school vision that encompasses vision, challenges, and opportunities for the academic, social, and emotional development of each student. 1.2 A process for ensuring that all staff and other stakeholders are able to articulate the vision. 1.3 Procedures in place for the periodic collaborative review of the vision by stakeholders. 1.4 Resources aligned to support the vision.
2. Align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning.	The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are: 2.1 Mutual respect, teamwork, & trust in dealings with students, staff, and parents. 2.2 High expectations for all students and teachers in a culture of continuous improvement. 2.3 An effective school leadership team. 2.4 Effective professional learning communities aligned with the school improvement plan, focused on results, and characterized by collective responsibility for instructional planning and student learning. 2.5 Opportunities for leadership and collaborative decision making distributed among stakeholders, especially teachers.
3. Monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are: 3.1 Ongoing conversations with teachers as to how Maryland State Common Core Curriculum and/or local curriculum, and research-based instructional strategies that are integrated into daily classroom instruction. 3.2 Teacher assignments that are rigorous, purposeful, & engaging. 3.3 Student work that is appropriately challenging & demonstrates new learning. 3.4 Assessments that regularly measure student mastery of the content standards.
4. Improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers.	The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are: 4.1 A process to determine what students are reading, writing, producing, and learning. 4.2 Use of student data and data collected during the observation process to make recommendations for improvement in classroom instruction. 4.3 Formal feedback during observation conferences as well as ongoing informal visits, meetings, and conversations with teachers regarding classroom instruction. 4.4 Regular and effective evaluation of teacher performance based on continuous student progress. 4.5 Identification and development of potential school leaders.
5. Ensure the regular integration of appropriate assessments into daily classroom instruction.	The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are: 5.1 Multiple and varied assessments that are collaboratively developed. 5.2 Formative assessments that are a regular part of the ongoing evaluation of student performance and that serve as the basis for adjustments to instruction. 5.3 Summative assessments that are aligned in format and content with state assessments. 5.4 Appropriate interventions for individual students based on results of assessments.

Instructional Leadership Outcome	Professional Practice Measures
6. Use technology and multiple sources of data to improve classroom instruction.	The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are: 6.1 Effective use of appropriate instructional technology by students, staff, and administration. 6.2 Regular use of the MSDE websites 6.3 Review of disaggregated data by subgroups. 6.4 Ongoing root cause analyses of student performance that drives instructional decision-making. 6.5 Regular collaboration among teachers on analyzing student work.
7. Provide staff with focused, sustained, research-based professional development.	The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are: 7.1 Results-driven professional development that is aligned with identified curricular, instructional, and assessment needs, and is connected to school improvement goals. 7.2 Opportunities for teachers to engage in collaborative planning and critical reflection that is embedded within the regular school day. 7.3 Differentiated professional development according to career stages, needs of staff, and student performance. 7.4 Personal involvement in professional development activities. 7.5 Professional development aligned with the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards.*
8. Engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success.	The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are: 8.1 Parents and caregivers welcomed in the school, encouraged to participate, and given information & materials to help their children to learn. 8.2 Parents and caregivers who are active members of the school improvement process. 8.3 Community stakeholders and school partners who readily participate in school life.
9. Prioritize, manage, and administer resources in an effective and efficient manner.	There is a leader who: 9.1. Create processes and a schedule that maximizes time for instruction and collaboration. 9.2 Facilitates hiring, assigning, and supervising of all personnel employed at the school. 9.3 Uses a variety of performance data to recommend personnel for promotion, change of assignment, reclassification, or dismissal. 9.4 Uses public resources and funds appropriately and wisely. 9.5 Manages financial, material, and technology resources in an effective, equitable, and strategic manner. 9.6 Coordinates the management of the school plant. 9.7 Ensures the maintenance and accuracy of all school records.
10. Communicate effectively in a variety of situations and circumstances with diverse audiences.	There is a leader who: 10.1 Strives to keep the community aware of school programs and shares important data and information with the school community. 10.2 Facilitates adequate information and systems for the continuous safety of the school. 10.3 Responds appropriately and in a timely manner regarding the school, family, and community concerns, expectations, and needs. 10.4 Communicates and interacts professionally and positively with members of the internal and external school communities. 10.5 Demonstrates appreciation of diversity and promotes sensitivity to student and staff needs.

Instructional Leadership Outcome	Professional Practice Measures
	10.6 Utilizes effective problem solving strategies for resolving conflict and building consensus. 10.7 Develops and nurtures effective media relationships.
11. Understand, respond to, and help influence the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context of the school community.	There is a leader who: 11.1 Models the core beliefs of the system and the school. 11.2 Aligns the actions to the vision of the school. 11.3 Develops positive relationships with community leaders and fosters a climate that invites community members to donate time, expertise, and resources. 11.4 Promotes positive feelings about the school, the system, and public education. 11.5 Recognizes and celebrates the contributions of all school community members.
12. Promote the success of every student and teacher by acting within a framework of integrity, fairness, and ethics.	There is a leader who: 12.1 Defines, fosters, models, and supports a high level of professional performance and growth for administrative, instructional, and support staff. 12.2. Maintains confidentiality when dealing with staff, students, services, and records. 12.3 Follows established legal practices, board policy, negotiated agreements, and system procedures. 12.4 Exercises appropriate judgment when making decisions. 12.5 Adapts personal behavior to the situation and is comfortable with dissent. 12.6 Models and enforces responsible and professional use of communications.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

*Maryland State Department of Education (2012, April), **Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation Guidebook.** Baltimore, MD: Author. From:*
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/race_to_the_top/tpeg.

*Maryland State Department of Education, Division for Leadership Development (2005, February)**, Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework.** Baltimore, MD: Author. Access the **2005 Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework** from*
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/DF957230-EC07-4FEE-B904-7FEB176BD978/19877/MDInstructionalLeadershipRramework.pdf.

OTHER RESOURCES

Waters, J. T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. A. (2003).,***Balanced leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells Us About the Effect of leadership on Student Achievement.*** Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning. Available from http://www.mcrel.or/PDF/LeadershipOrganizationDevelopment/5031RR_BalancedLeadership.pdf.

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) conducted a meta-analysis that examined the effects of leadership practices on student achievement. After analyzing studies conducted over a 30 year period, McREL identified 21 leadership responsibilities that were significantly associated with student achievement. They translated the results into a balanced leadership framework that describes the knowledge, skills, strategies and tools leaders need to positively impact student achievement.

REFERENCES

Balfanz, R., & MacIver, D. (2000). ***Transforming high poverty urban middle schools into strong learning institutions: Lessons from the first five years of the talent development middle school***. *Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk* (JESPAR), 5 (1&2), 137-158.

Maryland State Department of Education. (2012, April). ***Maryland teacher and principal evaluation guidebook.*** Baltimore, MD: Author.

Maryland State Department of Education, Division for Leadership Development (2005, February). ***Maryland instructional leadership framework***. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) (2005). ***McREL insights: schools that 'beat the odds'.*** Denver, CO: Author.

INDICATOR A. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

GLOSSARY

Continuous Improvement - An ongoing school improvement process that helps schools focus their efforts in support of their mission and goals. Student performance and school/community data is analyzed and used to develop plans to ensure all students are learning and progressing toward achievement of academic standards.

Data – Pieces of information that educators can draw upon to make a variety of instructional and organizational decisions. Education related data may be student focused (e.g. attendance and behavior, performance on assessments) or administrative (e.g. staffing and financial information) in nature. (National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institutes of Education Science, U.S. Department of Education).

Data-based decision making – Teachers, principals, and administrators systematically collecting and analyzing various types of data, including demographic, administrative, process, perceptual and achievement data, to guide a range of decisions to help improve the success of students and school. National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institutes of Education Science, U.S. Department of Education).

Demographic Data - The social/ physical characteristics of a population such as age, grade, gender, race/ethnicity, home language, income level, parent educational level, etc. Demographics may also include student enrollment and program participation data, such as: student attendance, mobility, tardy rates, discipline infractions, drop-out rates, graduation rates, etc.

Job-embedded professional development - Professional learning that occurs at a school as educators engage in their daily work activities. It is closely connected to what teachers are asked to do in the classroom so that the skills and knowledge gained from such learning can be immediately transferred to classroom instructional practices. (U.S. Department of Education)

Leadership - A set of organizational functions that leaders might be expected to perform—including not only instructional leadership functions, but also functions related to broader school and building management. (Camburn and others, 2003).

Mission - The mission statement defines the main purpose of the school. The mission reflects the vision, values, and beliefs of the school.

Outcome - The ultimate, long-term, resulting effect-both expected and unexpected-of an educator's use or application of the instructional strategies. Content outcomes describes what students should know and be able to do in particular subject areas. Student performance outcomes describe how and at what level students must demonstrate such knowledge and skills (Maryland RTI Framework)

Performance Management System – A system that includes regular recurring activities to establish organizational goals, monitor progress toward the goals, and make adjustments to achieve those goals more effectively and efficiently.

Process data – Data that includes the study of classroom practices, curriculum alignment, and teacher development needs.

Professional development - A comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement (Learning Forward (formerly National Staff Development Council), 2010).

Strategic planning - A strategic plan is the road map that helps the school reach its vision. The strategic plan begins with the mission statement. The vision and mission is the cornerstone for the school's strategic plan, goals, strategies, and decisions.

Vision - The vision statement helps the school community to picture what they want the school to become.

INDICATOR A. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT APPENDICES

A. 1.   Performance Management System

A. 2.   Checklist from *"The Handbook for SMART School Teams",* that can be used to evaluate the school's mission statement.

A. 3.   Template that can be used to construct a strategic plan

A. 4.   Maryland Charter School Dashboard example

A. 1. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A system that includes regular recurring activities to establish organizational goals, monitor progress toward the goals, and make adjustments to achieve those goals more effectively and efficiently. There are numerous, major methods and movements to regularly increase the performance of organizations. Typically, these become integrated into the overall recurring management systems in the organization.

A. 2. CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

The school's mission statement:

1. Is clear and understandable _____

2. Is brief enough for most people to remember and say it in one breath _____

3. Clearly specifies the school's fundamental process _____

4. Has a primary focus on a single strategic thrust (such as learning) _____

5. Reflects the distinctive competence and culture of this particular school _____

6. Is broad enough to allow flexibility in implementation but not so

    broad as to create a lack of focus _____

7. Will help school personnel, parents, and community members

    make decisions _____

8. Is energizing and compelling _____

REFERENCE:

Conzemius, A., & O'Neill, J. (2002). *The handbook for SMART school teams*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service. (page 224).

A. 3. STRATEGIC PLAN TEMPLATE

Section I: What Drives This School?

Component	Question	School Responses
Core Values:	What is important to the school?	
Mission:	To launch the core values?	
Vision:	What will the school look like in the future?	

Section II: Moving from the Present to the Future

ACTION PLAN

Area of Focus: Indicator					
Strategic Objectives	Measures	Strategies	Resources	Responsibilities	Timelines

A. 4. Maryland Charter School Data Dashboard Example

Name of School/ Name of District	09-10 AYP Status: Not Met or Met
Year Opened: Year **Current Grades:** Numbered grade levels **School Operator:** Name **School / Program Description:**	**Number of Students:** Total **Proposed Grades:** Numbered grade levels **School Leader:** Name

Student Enrollment: Total
Gr 6: Number Gr 9: Number
Gr 7: Number Gr 10: Number
Gr 8: Number Gr 11: Number

Special Services (N)
SPED: Percent (number)
ELL: Percent (number)
FARMs: Percent (number)

Student Ethnicity/Race (N)
Afr-Am: Percent (No) Hisp: Percent (no)
Asian: Percent (No) Am-In: Percent (no)
White: Percent (No)

School Characteristics
School Type: New
School Level:
Title I School: Yes or No

Performance Measures
Attendance: Percentage (AMO = 90%)
% Classes NOT taught by HQ teachers: Percent

Trends in MSA/HSA Performance (2008-2010): School vs. State and LSS
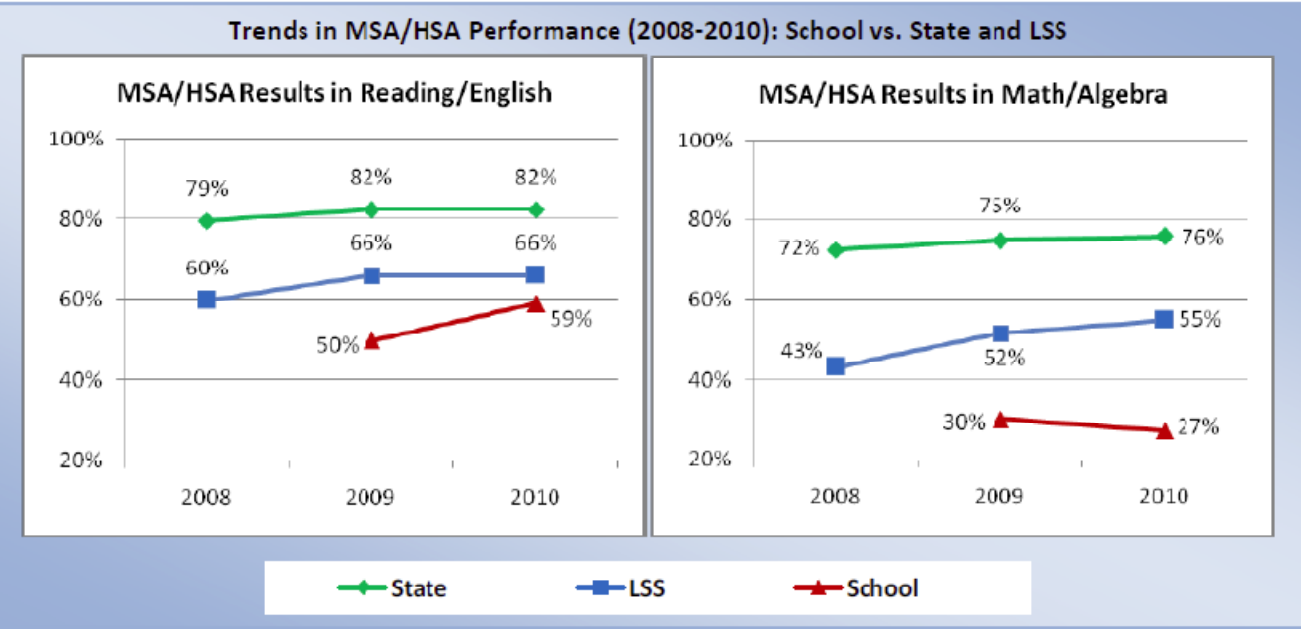
2010 MSA/HSA Results Grades 6 to 12:	Reading/English			Mathematics/Algebra		
	% Proficient/Advanced AMO = 78.7%		AYP Status	% Proficient/Advanced AMO = 69.8%		AYP Status
All	59.0%	N = 261	Not Met	27.1%	N = 262	Not Met
Special Education	35.9%	N = 39	Not Met	15.4%	N = 39	Not Met
ELL	-	N = 0	n/a	-	N = 0	n/a
FARMs	56.8%	N = 222	Not Met	23.8%	N = 223	Not Met
African-American	58.8%	N = 260	Not Met	27.2%	N = 261	Not Met
Asian/Am. Indian/Hispanic/White	-	N = 0	n/a	-	N = 0	n/a

Resources by Critical Success Factors

A. 1. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: STRATEGIC PLANNING

See Appendix A.2. and A. 3.

A. 2. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: DATA ANALYSIS

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Resources related to data analyses listed below are available from http://mdk12.org/data/index.html

Analyzing Your State Assessment Data.

The data results for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), Maryland State Assessments (MSA), High School Assessment (HAS), and Alternate-MSA is available for schools, districts, and the state. The section includes: Data Results for Your School, Guided Process to Analyze Your Data, AYP Tutorials, and How to Lead the Data Discussion. There is a description of the principal's role in data analyses and leading the data analysis process, data analysis worksheets, and Key Actions Checklist.

Analyzing Data for Students with Disabilities.

This section includes data results from schools, districts, and state performance for students with disabilities as well as the results and compliance indicators used to evaluate the effectiveness of special education programs and services. The section includes: Data used to analyze the performance of students with disabilities; and Use of data to improve student performance.

Analyzing Your Classroom Data: *Monitoring Student Progress*.

This section addresses: Developing a monitoring plan, Assessing for learning, Analyzing and using the data, Leading the process, Examining your monitoring data, Using your monitoring data, and Graphing your monitoring data. It also includes class and individual student monitoring templates for: MSA assessed State Curriculum, State Curriculum, HSA Core Learning Goals, and High School State Curriculum.

Data Explorer. This a multi-media tool to analyze assessment data. Recent tutorials include: How MSDE uses a confidence interval, Reading your AYP reading data, and Reading your AYP mathematics data.

Examining Student Work to Inform Instruction.

This section addresses: How do you know what students know? What do experts say? How do you agree on what you are looking for? How do you diagnose student performance to inform instruction? The section also includes an Examining Student Work Protocol at elementary and middle school levels. There is also an explanation of how the protocol works and a video demonstrating a team working through the protocol.

Resources by Critical Success Factors

A. 2. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: DATA ANALYSIS CONTINUED

<u>OTHER RESOURCES</u>

Doing What Works (DWW) Access the web site at http://dww.ed.gov/

The Doing What Works (DWW) is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The web site resources include: overview of multimedia presentations and materials with interviews with experts and videos and interviews with schools successfully implementing research-based practices, and comprehensive tools and templates, including planning and implementation tools for schools. The web site features

- Learn what works (understanding the research base supporting the use of recommended practices)
- See how it works (understand how practices are implemented by teachers and administrators)
- Do what works (access and use school and professional development tools and resources)

Relevant priority areas and topics include:

- Data-driven improvement
  - ❖ Turning around low-performing schools
  - ❖ Response to intervention

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/.

An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):

- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions.

 Relevant Practice Guides include:

 Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making
 Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning

Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J. & Wayman, J.   (2009).,***Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making****,* (NCES 2009-4067). Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/.

Resources by Critical Success Factors

A. 3. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: SCHOOL SCHEDULES AND TEACHER MEETINGS

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/ .

An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):

- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and
- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

Relevant Practice Guides include:

Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making
Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning

Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J. & Wayman, J. (2009), ***Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making***. (NCES 2009-4067). Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/.

Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning

Pashler, H., Bain, P., Bottge, B., Graesser, A., Koedinger, K., McDaniel, M., & Metcalfe, J. (2007), ***Organizing instruction and study to improve student learning*** (NCER 2007-2004). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
Available from: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/20072004.pdf.

Resources by Critical Success Factors

A. 4. CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Professional Development Resources

School Improvement in Maryland: Professional Development web site has the following resources identified above:

- *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide*
- *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards*
- *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Evaluation Guide*

Available from http://mdk12.org/instruction/professional_development/index.html

Other resources at the web site include:

- *Professional Development Planning Form*
- *Professional Development Checklist*
- *Maryland Technology Standards for Teacher Professional Development*
- *High-Quality Professional Development Survey and Report*

Best Practice Series for Maryland Charter Schools: Job Embedded Professional Development

The Office of School Innovations, Maryland State Department of Education's web site link for the ***Best practice Series for Maryland Charter Schools: Job Embedded Professional Development*** is: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/15D2BCE6-9869-43B6-8E4F-D37A7FFCBC5F/22664/Best_Practices_MD_Charter_Schools_2010.pdf

Resources by Critical Success Factors

A. 5. **CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP**

See also *Indicator B. Innovative Practices, Critical Success Factor 3. on infrastructure supports continuous teacher leadership, instructional leadership, and board development.*

A. 6. **CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT 6. INVESTMENT IN SCHOOL MISSION, VISION, AND IMPROVEMENT**

Barnes, F. (2004). *Making school improvement part of daily practice: inquiry and action*. Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University. Available from: http://www.annenberginstitute.org/tools/guide/SIGuide_intro.pdf.

The Guide describes a school self-study cycle of inquiry and action, designed to help a school community develop the habits of collaboration, discussion, inquiry, and data-based informed decision-making that informs on-going improvement. The Guide can be used by school-level administrators or other stakeholders, to respond to external requirements or to start their own improvement process.

A. 7. **CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES:

Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation Guidebook

Maryland State Department of Education. (2012, April). *Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation Guidebook*. Baltimore, MD: Author. http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/race_to_the_top/tpeg

2005 Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework

Maryland State Department of Education, Division for Leadership Development (2005, February). *Maryland instructional leadership framework*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Access the framework at http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/DF957230-EC07-4FEE-B904-7FEB176BD978/19877/MDInstructionalLeadershipRramework.pdf

OTHER RESOURCES:

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) conducted a meta-analysis that examined the effects of leadership practices on student achievement. After analyzing studies conducted over a 30 year period, McREL identified 21 leadership responsibilities that were significantly associated with student achievement. They translated the results into a balanced leadership framework that describes the knowledge, skills, strategies and tools leaders need to positively impact student achievement.

Waters, J. T., Marzano, & R. J., & McNulty, B. A. (2003). *Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells Us about the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement*. Aurora, CO: Mid-

continent Research for Education and Learning. Available from:
http://www.mcrel.or/PDF/LeadershipOrganizationDevelopment/5031RR_BalancedLeadership.pdf.

Indicator B. Innovative Practices

QUALITY Public Charter Schools launch and sustain effective educational innovations and the promising practices of school reform.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STANDARD: QUALITY Public Charter Schools launch and sustain effective educational innovations and the promising practices of school reform.

*Performance Measures***:**

1. **Number of identified researched based innovations and levels of implementation. (see Appendix B.1. Systemic Change Process for Continuous Improvement).**

2. **Balanced Scorecard (a performance management approach that focuses on various overall performance indicators).** *(see Appendix B.2. for an example)*

3. **Charter School Data Dashboards (***see Appendix A.4.* **for example)**

4. **Strategic plan**

5. **Documentation of continuous development for board, teachers, and instructional leaders**

Critical Success Factors:

1. Vision and mission of the school is clearly defined and is supported by the school's strategic plan, culture and infrastructure.

2. Infrastructure of school is based upon best researched practices e.g.: curriculum, assessment, and instructional strategies, resource utilization (i.e. staffing, space, community, parents, materials, technology, equipment, furniture etc.), programs, governance models, school schedules, classroom and school organization etc.

3. Infrastructure supports continuous teacher leadership, instructional leadership and board development.

4. School stakeholders show commitment to implementing practices for producing best results.

B. INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools launch and sustain effective educational innovations and the promising practices of school reform.
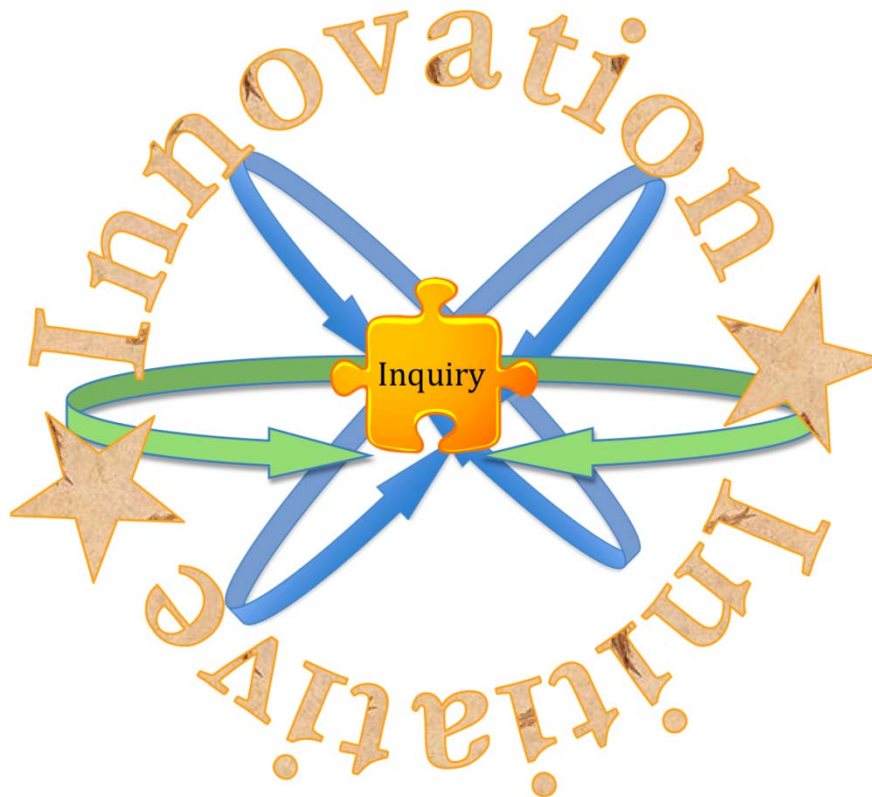
"One of the promises of charter schools is that they can serve as laboratories of innovation—they can be public education's "R&D" [research and development] arm. Because they have greater autonomy than traditional public schools, and since they tend to attract pioneering educators, they can try out new approaches to education that, if proven effective, can be transplanted back into the larger public education system."

Rod Paige, Secretary of U.S. Department of Education,
(U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Innovations in Education Introduction

Innovation in education has been defined as a new approach that brings an improved result. The innovations can be small or large, mostly recognizable, or entirely new and different (Smith, 2009). Pincus (1974) elaborated that innovations in education should be thought of as technologies that improve educational outcomes, improve working relationships or processes within schools, or reduce the costs of education without significantly reducing the quality of desired outcomes or processes.

Some of the major areas in which educational innovation can take place are: teaching and learning, school organization, governance and management, and parent and community engagement (Arsen, Plank, & Sykes, 1999; Smith & Wohlstetter, 2009). Each of these will be briefly described.

Innovations in Teaching and Learning

Charter schools may introduce changes in instructional practices, curriculum, and assessment of student learning. For example, innovations in teaching and learning may include: processes or strategies such as constructivist teaching, blended learning with increased use of technologies and on-line learning, problem-based learning, cooperative learning, etc.

Examples of curriculum innovation might include: integrated units across academic subjects, specialized approaches to career/vocational education by connecting schools and workplaces in novel ways, individualized curriculum for students, organizing the curriculum around themes which draw from different subjects, flexible use of curriculum time, or alternative curriculum pathways.

Examples of innovations in assessments may include performance assessments or student portfolios.

In a study of charter school applications in three states, the National Charter School Research Project (Christensen & Rainey, 2009) found that charter schools:

> (1) often targeted specific student populations, especially at risk students;

> (2) tailor educational programs to meet the needs of targeted student populations;

> (3) employ more student-centered instructional methods (e.g. project-based or experiential learning);

> (4) use college-prep and school-to-work packages to serve at-risk students; and

(5) provide instructional support services, such as mandatory after-school tutoring, academic counseling, and post-graduate support.

Innovations in School Organization

Charter schools have introduced in school or class size, grade configurations, class and academic year scheduling, and other structural features, as well as aspects of school culture or community. Charter schools are more likely to experiment with unconventional staffing, scheduling, and compensation arrangements (Lake, 2008). In the previously mentioned study by Christensen and Rainey (2009), charter schools were more likely to use one or more alternative structures for their classes (e.g., grouping multiple ages or grades together, looping classes of students with teachers over multiple school years, or having teams of teachers together). Christensen and Rainey also found that charter schools employed unique grade span configurations, extended the school day or year, provided flexible scheduling, and offered more off-site programs.

Innovations in Governance and Management

The structure of authority and administration in schools can be changed according to who participates in school decision-making, how, and with what influence (Arsen, Plank, & Sykes, 1999). Including teachers and parents on school boards constitutes one of the differences between charter and public schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Innovations in Parent and Community Engagement

In a study of twelve urban charter schools in six states, Smith and Wohlstetter (2009) found that charter schools were introducing changes in parent involvement activities, such as parent contracts, using technology to notify parents of volunteer opportunities and tracking parent involvement, involving parents in school beautification and maintenance, offering wraparound services for students and families, and including parents in decision-making roles.

In effective charter schools, the mission drives every aspect of the school program, and in each case the school program reflects the school's freedom to experiment, to be creative in terms of organization, scheduling, curriculum, and instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The school's vision leads the way for school improvement and development.

Different Approaches to Adopting Innovations

Described below are three approaches to change processes for innovative schools: 1) Rogers process of adopting innovations; (2) the Concerns Based Adoption Model; and (3) the change process described by Miles and Fullan.

Rogers Process for Adopting Innovations

Rogers (1995) describes an innovation decision process as a sequential process with five distinct steps, knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. The change process starts with increasing a group's understanding of an innovation and then moves to the second step during where the group forms a positive or negative attitude about the innovation. Rogers believes that potential adopters perceive an innovation in regards to five general characteristics: Relative advantage compared to the status quo; the compatibility with an individual's existing values, past experiences, and needs; its simplicity/complexity; the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited and safe basis; and the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others. These two steps greatly influence the third step, implementation, in which the innovation is either

adopted or rejected. During this step the intended users of the innovation are actively using the innovation. The final step involves evaluating the decision to adopt the innovation. In this step the group looks for evidence that will help them to either confirm their adoption as correct or to spur the group to reject the innovation (Rogers 1995).

Concerns Based Adoption Model

The Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Hall & Hord, 1987), one of the most widely cited educational change models, describes a process that organizations must progress through when implementing an innovation in schools. The process involves seven stages that an organization moves through sequentially, with each level having a corresponding level of use. These stages are awareness, informational, personal, management, consequences, collaboration, and refocusing. Each step in the process emphasizes either the individual's experience with the innovation, the impact of the innovation, or the group's evaluation of the innovation.

Initiation, Implementation, and Institutionalization of Innovations

Miles (1986) and Fullan (2001) describe the change process consists of a series of three overlapping phases: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.

Initiation. In the initiation phase, schools decide whether to embark on innovation and develop commitment towards the process. The key activities in the initiation phase are the decisions to start, and a review of the school's current status as regards to a particular need or change. This is a list of factors that Miles (1986) believes make for successful initiation:

- the innovation should be tied to a local agenda and high profile local need;

- there is a clear, well-structured approach to change;

- there is an active advocate or champion who understands the innovation and supports it;

- there is active initiation to start the innovation (top-down is OK under certain conditions); and

- it represents a good quality innovation.

Implementation is the phase of the process that has received the most attention. It is the phase of a school attempting to use the innovation. The key implementation activities are the carrying out of action plans, the developing and sustaining of commitment, the checking of progress and overcoming problems. The key factors making for success at this stage, according to Miles (1986), are:

- clear responsibility for orchestration/co-ordination (head, coordinator, external consultant);

- shared control over implementation (top-down is not OK); good cross-hierarchical work and relations; empowerment of both individuals and the school;

- a mix of pressure, insistence on `doing it right', and support;

- adequate and sustained staff development and in-service training; and

- rewards for teachers early in the process (empowerment, collegiality, meeting needs, classroom help, load reduction, supply cover, expenses, resources).

Institutionalization is the phase when innovation and change stop being regarded as something new and become part of the school's usual way of doing things. The move from implementation to institutionalization often involves the transformation of a pilot project, to a school-wide initiative, often without the advantage of the previously available funding. Key activities at this stage according to Miles (1986) are:

- an emphasis on `embedding' the change within the school's structures, its organization and resources;

- the elimination of competing or contradictory practices;

- strong and purposeful links to other change efforts, the curriculum and classroom teaching;

- widespread use in the school and local area; and

- an adequate bank of local facilitators, (e.g., advisory teachers) for skills training.

Many change efforts fail to progress beyond early implementation because those involved do not realize that each of these phases have different characteristics and require different strategies for success to be achieved.

See Indicator B. Appendix, B.1. Systemic Change Process for Continuous Improvement.

Sustaining Innovations

According to Light (1998), there are four main factors that influence how nonprofit and government organizations sustain innovations:

- The external environment in which an organization exists (uncertainty within the environment, level of shock of an extreme event, support/encouragement for the innovation, collaboration, and availability of external support/resources for the innovation);

- Its internal structure (the organizational structures and communication channels, demographics or levels of diversity of members, uncertainty/turnover, internal boundaries, and internal resources);

- Its leadership (leader's vision for the future, temperament (flexibility, entrepreneurial), clarity of communication, endurance, and ability to foster experimentation and new ideas); and

- Its internal management system (management of mission, personnel and remuneration, organizational learning and continuous improvement, system for idea generation, budget, and accountability and governance). (Sherry, 2003).

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovations and Improvement, Innovations in Education Guides

The Innovations in Education book series, published by the Office of Innovations and Improvement, highlight promising practices in putting the *No Child Left Behind Act* to work. Available from: http://www2.ed.gov/about/pubs/intro/innovations.html

The following titles of the books related to charter schools are free:

Charter High Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap

This guide shows how eight diverse schools are using innovative instructional approaches to close the achievement gap between the highest and lowest performing students.

K-8 Charter Schools Guide Closing the Achievement Gap

This guide looks at seven K-8 charter schools that are dispelling the myth that some students cannot achieve to high standards. These schools are closing the achievement gap through challenging curriculum, high expectations, and the proper support that all students need to success.

Making Charter School Facilities More Affordable: State-driven Policy Approaches

This book showcases charter school facility laws and practices that have been developed to tackle the facilities challenge in eight states and Washington DC.

REFERENCES

Arsen, D., Plank, D., & Sykes, G. (1999). *The rules matter: School choice policies in Michigan*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.

Christensen, J. & Rainey, L. (2009, May). Custom tailored: Trends in charter school educational programs. *Inside Charter School Research Brief*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington, Center on Reinventing Public Education.

Dibbon, D., & Pollock, K. (2007). The nature of change and innovation in five innovative schools. *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal*, 12(1), article 3, 1-15.

Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change*. New York: Teachers' College Press.

Hall, G. & Hord, S. (1987). *Change in schools: Facilitating the process*. New York, NY: State University of New York Press.

Lake, R. (2008, April). *In the eye of the beholder: Charter schools and innovation*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington, Center on Reinventing Public Education. Available from http://crpe.edgateway.net/cs/crpe/view/csr_pubs/242

Light, P. (1998). *Sustaining innovations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M.B. (1986) *Research findings on the stages of school improvement*. . Mimeo. NY: Center for Policy Research.

Pincus, J. (1974). Incentives for innovation in the public schools. *Review of Educational Research*, 44 (4), 113-144.

Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations* (4th ed.). New York, NY: The Free Press.

Light, P. (1998). *Sustaining innovations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sherry, L. (2003). *Sustainability of innovations. Journal of Interactive Learning Research*, 13(3), 209-236.

Smith, J. (2009, August). *Innovation in public education: Problems and opportunities*. San Francisco, CA: NewSchools Venture Fund. Available from http://www.newschools.org/files/innovation-in-education.pdf

Smith, M. E. & Mourier, P. (1999). Implementation: Key to organizational change. *Strategy & Leadership*, 27(6), 37-41.

Smith, J., & Wohlstetter, P. (2009, October). *Parent involvement in urban charter schools: A new paradigm or the status quo*. Prepared for School Choice and School Improvement: Research in State, District and Community Contexts, Vanderbilt University. Nashville, TN: National Center on School Choice, Vanderbilt University.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement (2004, June). *Innovations in education: Successful charter schools*. Report produced by WestEd. Washington, DC: Author.

<center>**B. INNOVATIVE PRACTICES**</center>

1. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR: VISION AND MISSION OF THE SCHOOL IS CLEARLY DEFINED AND IS SUPPORTED BY THE SCHOOL'S STRATEGIC PLAN, CULTURE AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

The school's vision and mission are clearly defined. The vision and mission are stated in a clear form that is understandable by all stakeholders (students, teachers, staff, parents, and the community). The mission reflects the vision, values, and beliefs of the school. The mission is short enough for all stakeholders to remember and recite easily.

The vision and mission is supported by the strategic plan. The strategic plan begins with the mission statement. The vision and mission is the cornerstone for the school's strategic plan, goals, strategies, and decisions. A quality charter school focuses on student academic performance as one of its highest priorities. *Refer to Maryland Charter School Quality Standards, A. Culture of Continuous Improvement, 1. Strategic planning is used annually to guide and focus improvement efforts.*

The vision and mission is supported by the school culture and infrastructure. The school culture and infrastructure support the school's vision and mission through: references to them in communications, policies, and programs; driving all major decisions; and through reactions from the school community when the vision and mission are deviated from (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2001). For example, the spirit of the mission appears on school banners, slogans in the hall, assemblies, T-shirts, and informal conversations (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). During site visits, board members, teachers, students, and parents should easily articulate the school's mission to visitors.

Other Relevant Sections of the *Implementation Guide*

Refer to the following sections on staff investment in the school's vision and mission and the use of collaborative processes to develop the school's vision and mission.

> *Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement, Critical Success Factor 6. All staff is invested in the school's mission, vision, and in supporting the process of continuous improvements.*

> *Indicator E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures, Critical Success Factor 5. A collaborative process is used to develop the school's vision, mission, and goals and guides decision-making.*

<u>**REFERENCES**</u>

Conzemius, A., & O'Neill, J. (2001). ***Building shared responsibility for student learning***. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement (2004, June). ***Innovations in education: Successful charter schools***. Prepared by WestEd for U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: Author.

B. Innovative Practices

2. Critical Success Factor: **Infrastructure of school is based upon best researched practices e.g.: curriculum, assessment, and instructional strategies, resource utilization (i.e. staffing, space, community, parents, materials, technology, equipment, furniture etc.), programs, governance models, school schedules, classroom and school organization etc.**

In schools driven by a vision and mission, the school structure should be at the service of function (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The structure should depend on what the school is trying to accomplish. To be successful, charter schools need to create organizational infrastructures that are fluid enough to respond quickly to new and changing circumstances (Deering, Dilts, & Russell, 2003).

Leadership in high performing schools ensures that staff is aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture (Waters et. al., 2003). The school selects and develops resources and programs based on scientific evidence and the specific needs of its students (National Center for Educational Accountability, 2002). A high performing school experiments carefully with new ways to improve teaching and learning (Lewis, 2001). School leadership is continually monitoring the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning (Waters et. al., 2003).

The continuous improvement process in which innovations and best practices are adopted by a school takes place in three stages: initiation and readiness, implementation, and institutionalization (Louis & Miles, 1990).

See *Appendix B. 1. Systemic Change Process for Continuous Improvement*

Resources for Research Based Strategies

Doing What Works (DWW)

The Doing What Works (DWW) is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of DWW is to create an online library of resources that may help teachers, schools, school systems, states and technical assistance providers implement research-based instructional practice. Resources include: overview of multimedia presentations and materials with interviews with experts and videos and interviews with schools successfully implementing research-based practices, and comprehensive tools and templates, including planning and implementation tools for schools.

The priority areas and topics include:

Data-driven improvement
- ❖ Turning around low-performing schools
- ❖ Response to intervention

Quality Teaching
- ❖ How to organize your teaching

Literacy
- ❖ Preschool language and literacy
- ❖ Literacy for K-5 English Learners
- ❖ Adolescent literacy

Math and Science
- ❖ Critical Foundations for Algebra
- ❖ Major Topics of School Algebra
- ❖ Encouraging Girls

Comprehensive Support
- ❖ Reducing Behavior Problems in Elementary Classrooms
- ❖ Dropout Prevention

Early Childhood
- ❖ Preschool Language and Literacy

The web site features:
- Learn what works (understanding the research base supporting the use of recommended practices)
- See how it works (understand how practices are implemented by teachers and administrators)
- Do what works (access and use school and professional development tools and resources)

Access the web site at: http://dwww.ed.gov

Center for Instruction

The Center on Instruction supports the regional Comprehensive Centers as they serve state education leaders helping schools and districts meet the goals of No Child Left Behind—to close the achievement gap and improve teaching and learning for all students. Content areas include: reading, mathematics, science, special education, and English language learning.   Access web site at: http://www.centeroninstruction.org

National Charter School Research Project

The National Charter School Research Project (NCSRP) aims to bring rigor, evidence, and balance to the national charter school debate. Their research ranges from the school level to charter management organizations (CMOs) to school districts and authorizers. They provide ongoing charter research and information on: accountability and oversight, c harter management organizations, states, and teachers and leaders. Access website at: http://www.crpe.org/cs/crpe/view/projects/1

National Charter School Resource Center

The National Charter School Resource Center (Charter School Center) is a national center to provide on-demand resources, information, and technical assistance to support successful planning, authorizing, implementation, and sustainability of high-quality charter schools; to share evaluations on the effects of charter schools; and to disseminate information about successful practices in charter schools. The Charter School Center focuses on five priorities: (1) Providing technical assistance and resources on facilities-related issues; (2) Supporting successful charter models as they work to turn around the nation's lowest performing schools under Title I School Improvement; (3) Providing technical assistance and resources on issues related to quality authorizing; (4) Providing technical assistance and resources on charter school leadership issues; and (5) Providing technical assistance and resources to charter school SEA personnel.   Access website at: http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) -   Access web site at: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/

An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):

- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and
- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

Practice Guides include:

- *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making*
- *Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning*
- *Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement*
- *Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools*
- *Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom*
- *Dropout Prevention*
- *Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do?*
- *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*
- *Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Interventions in the Primary Grades*
- *Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades*
- *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*
- *Developing Effective Fractions Instruction for Kindergarten Through 8th Grade*
- *Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Response to Intervention (RtI) for Elementary and Middle Schools*
- *Encouraging Girls in Math and Science*

REFERENCES

Deering, A., Dilts, R. & Russell, J. (2003). Leadership cults and culture. *Leader to Leader,* 28, 31-3

Lewis, A. & Paik, S. (2001). *Add it up: Using research to improve education for low-income and minority students.* Washington, DC: Poverty & Race Research Action Council,

Louis, K. & Miles, M. (1990). *Improving the urban high school: What works and why*. New York: Teachers College Press.

The National Center for Educational Accountability. (2002). *Showcasing success: Rewarding achievement*. Austin, TX: Author.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement (2004, June). *Innovations in education: Successful charter schools*. Report produced by WestEd. Washington, DC: Author.

Waters, T., Marzano, R., & McNulty, B.. (2003*). Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement*. Denver, CO: Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL).

<center>**B. INNOVATIVE PRACTICES**</center>

3. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR: INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTS CONTINUOUS TEACHER LEADERSHIP, INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP, AND BOARD DEVELOPMENT.

A quality charter school has an intentional plan and the organizational infrastructure (time, human and financial resources, and utilization of space) that supports continuously building its leadership and school capacity, including teacher leadership, instructional leadership, and board development.

Continuous Teacher Leadership

A quality charter school creates a climate and working conditions that encourages the development of teacher leaders and recognizes teacher leaders for their contributions and accomplishments.

York-Barr and Duke (2004) define as teacher leadership—namely, "the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement."

A quality charter school identifies and creates formal and informal opportunities for teachers to assume leadership roles as well as support teachers through relevant professional development experiences (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2007). Teacher leadership may include roles from assisting with the management of a school, to facilitating professional learning communities, to evaluating educational initiatives (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

The Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium (which represents a broad array of education organizations, state education agencies, teacher leaders, principals, superintendents, and institutions of higher education), issued Teacher Leadership Standards in 2011. The Standards follow a format similar to that of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) State Standards for School Leaders—that is, a series of broadly stated expectations or "domains" that define critical dimensions of teacher leadership. Under each domain, there are "functions" that more specifically define the range of actions or expectations for teacher leaders related to that domain. The Standards describe seven domains of leadership. Each domain is further developed and supported by a list of functions that a teacher leader who is an expert in that domain might perform.

The teacher leadership standards address the following domains:

- Domain I: Fostering a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning

- Domain II: Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning

- Domain III: Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement

- Domain IV: Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning

- Domain V: Promoting the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement

- Domain VI: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community

- Domain VII: Advocating for Student Learning and the Profession

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2007) identified the following strategies to promote teacher leadership:

1. Recognize the importance of teacher leaders.
2. Identify and create opportunities for teachers to assume leadership roles.
3. Establish professional development programs that involve faculty members as leaders.
4. Identify barriers to the development of teacher leaders (e.g. time, colleagues) and find ways to remove them.
5. Improve teacher leadership development programs, enhance qualifications and development of teacher leaders through relevant training, and provide teachers with quality professional development opportunities.
6. Build professional learning communities in which teachers take on leadership roles.
7. Support teacher leaders by providing access to human and financial resources, promoting better understanding of teacher leadership roles, and helping teacher leaders maintain balance and avoid overload.
8. Build principal's knowledge of teacher leadership and foster interactions between principal and teacher leaders.
9. Encourage the development of teacher leaders through a supportive school culture and conditions and that facilitate leadership.
10. Create working conditions that encourage positive faculty relationships among faculty members, particularly between teachers and teacher leaders.
11. Recognize teacher leaders for their contributions and accomplishments.
12. Encourage teachers to participate in external professional teacher networks.
13. Recruit qualified and effective teacher leaders.
14. Provide principals information on the purposes of teacher leadership and the relationship between principals and teacher leaders.
15. Distribute teacher leadership tasks among a number of teachers and staff members.
16. Enhance the professionalism of teachers and teaching.
17. Promote union support of teachers as leaders.

Instructional Leadership

A quality charter school provides time and resources to support personnel in on-the-job learning through either coaching/mentoring, targeted training, and/or personnel involvement and/or networking in professional organizations or communities of learning (NewSchools Venture Fund, 2008). Coaching/mentoring sessions can vary from unstructured (impromptu discussions) to highly structured (protocol-driven data meetings) depending on the needs of the leaders. The coaching sessions may provide models, observations of practices, and feedback. The most effective coaching sessions are frequent (at least once a month), structured with agendas and clear expectations, and focused (tightly concentrated on a specific topic) (NewSchools Venture Fund, 2008). Targeted training refers to opportunities that are tailed to current challenges to instructional leaders. The training may vary from on-site professional development, web-based opportunities, to off-site workshops or conferences. Other opportunities for continuous development include involvement in professional organizations or communities of practice through electronic and in-person activities.

Other Relevant Sections of the Implementation Guide

Refer to the following, *A. Culture of Continuous Improvement, Critical Success Factor 7. School's administration effectively implements instructional leadership strategies.*

Board Development

Board orientation and ongoing training is critical to creating and sustaining an effective governing board (Wohlstetter, Smith, Farrell, & O'Neill, 2009). Some charter schools have created annual orientation and training sessions for their board, including a review of the school mission and charter, expectations for and accountability of board members, and an overview of the governance responsibilities. The National Consensus Panel on Charter School Operational Quality identified eight measures of board performance:

1. Board-member skills, knowledge and commitment;
2. Setting expectations;
3. Ethical conduct;
4. Regulatory and reporting compliance;
5. Leadership oversight and evaluation;
6. Contract management and oversight;
7. Public accountability and transparency; and
8. Securing the future/continuous improvement (Wohlstetter, et. al, 2009).

Other Relevant Sections of the Implementation Guide

Refer to sections on distributed leadership and professional development for the Board and Leadership Team.

Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement, Critical Success Factor 5. Distributed leadership is valued and encouraged.

Indicator E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures, Critical Success Factor 8. Quality and needs-based professional development that supports their own development is planned and implemented for the governing board and leadership team.

RESOURCES

National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) is a national resource for: regional comprehensive centers, State Departments of Education, and other education stakeholders. The Center's activities includes: a resource library with online resources and print and electronic products, interactive tools, and other resources.

The following topics are addressed: teacher preparation; teacher recruitment, hiring, and placement; mentoring and induction; professional development; teacher evaluation, and teacher leadership. Access the Center's web site at: http://www.tqsource.org/

Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium

The Teacher Leadership Model Standards may be accessed at:
http://www.teacherleaderstandards.org/index.php

REFERENCES

National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2007, October). *Key issue: Enhancing teacher leadership*. Washington, DC: Author. Access the issue at:
http://www2.tqsource.org/strategies/leadership/EnhancingTeacherLeadership.pdf

NewSchools Venture Fund (2008, June*). Principal development: Selection, support and evaluation: Key strategies from New Schools Portfolio Venture*s. San Francisco, CA: Author. Available at:
http://www.newschools.org/files/PrincipalDevelopment.pdf

Wohlstetter, P., Smith, J., Farrell, C., & O'Neill, P. (2009). *Maximizing effectiveness: Focusing the microscope on charter school governing boards.* Los Angeles, CA: National Resource Center on Charter School Finance & Governance. Available at:
http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/cegov/focus/charter-schools/publications/policy/MaximizingEffectiveness-FocusingtheMicroscope.pdf

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). **Who** *do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. Review of Educational Research*, 74(3), 255-316.

4. Critical Success Factor: School stakeholders show commitment to implementing practices producing best results.

To produce the best results, it is important to obtain stakeholder commitment to implementing best practices. Commitment describes an outcome in which one agrees with a decision or request and makes a great effort to carry out that decision to implement practices or request effectively (Yukl, 2006). Commitment to student learning involves teacher dedication to helping students learn regardless of academic difficulties or social background (Dannetta, 2002).

Identification and implementation of best practices should be based on the analyses of data. *Refer to Maryland Quality Charter School Standards A. Culture of Continuous Improvement, 2. Data analysis helps to design and guide improvement efforts.* The Balanced Scorecard is also available for charter schools. The Scorecard includes annual short-term targets, long-term targets (3years), and results for: student achievement goals, school environment goals, implementation of schoolwide practices, professional learning goals, organizational effectiveness goals, and engagement goals.

In addition to data analyses, the school stakeholders should select best practices based on a review of research. *Refer to Maryland Quality Charter School Standards B. Innovative Practices, 2. Infrastructure is based upon best research-based practices.*

The U.S. Department of Education (Comprehensive School Reform Program Office, 2002) identified the following questions to ask when judging the quality of implementation and "*replicability*" of a research-based practice:

- How many schools have used this practice or program?
- Did the schools using it fully implement the practice or program?
- In what settings has it been implemented?
- Has improved student achievement been convincingly demonstrated in a variety of settings?

Charter schools can use a variety of strategies to build stakeholders' commitment to implementing practices that produce best results. To build commitment to sustainable improvement:

- Provide concrete, compelling reasons for change and/or the implementation of practices;
- Continuously solicit and use stakeholder input to foster ownership;
- Understand how the implementation of practices will actually change what happens in classes and the school;
- Make the implementation of the practices and or the changes as transparent as possible;
- Provide the necessary training and support for implementation of the practices;
- Provide incentives for implementing practices and/or changes;
- Mobilize community support (board, parents) for the implementation of practices outside school staff. (Walter, 2004); and
- Mobilize to elicit engagement in support of forwarding school goals.

A school culture that demonstrates its commitment to continuous improvement is characterized by professionals who learn every day. This norm will be evident in a school in many ways:

- Team, grade level, and/or department meetings are used to discuss the implementation of teaching and learning practices.
- Teachers conduct classroom-based action research and some share the responsibility with a university partner.
- All staff participate in study groups that discuss the latest research and reports from their professional journals.
- Staff members belong to and participate in professional associations.
- Master teachers mentor new teachers.
- Teachers regularly observe, coach, and provide feedback to each other. (Hirsh, 1997).

RESOURCES

Walter, K. (2004). *Sustainable school improvement: Making good choices*. Written for the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates

The resource presents information on building commitment, developing capacity, finding time, increasing staff retention, and finding money for continuous school improvement. Also included is a list of additional resources (tools, software, and guidance) by topic. Available from http://www.learningpt.org/expertise/schoolimprovement/mgcSustainableSchoolImp.php

REFERENCES

Dannetta, V. (2002). What factors influence a teacher's commitment to student learning? *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 1*(2), 144-171.

Hirsh, S. (1997). On-Going learning key part of school improvement. *Results*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

Walter, K. (2004). *Sustainable school improvement: Making good choices*. Written for the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates.

Yukl, G. (2006). *Leadership in organizations* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

B. INNOVATIVE PRACTICES GLOSSARY

Balanced Scorecard - The Balanced Scorecard is a strategic planning and management system that is used extensively in nonprofit organizations, business and industry, and government worldwide. It is used to align activities to the vision and strategy of the organization by focusing on various overall performance indicators to improve internal and external communications, and monitor the organization's performance against strategic goals. Scorecard includes annual short-term targets, long-term targets (3years), and results for: student achievement goals, school environment goals, implementation of schoolwide practices, professional learning goals, organizational effectiveness goals, and engagement goals.

Best practice - Evidenced-based program(s), initiative(s) or activities that reflect contemporary research and are associated with positive outcomes. Best practices are considered to be exemplar models and have resulted in positive outcomes following implementation with fidelity. (Maryland State Department of Education, Response to Intervention Framework)

Board Development – A process in which a charter school provides its board members orientation and ongoing training.

Innovation in education – A new approach that brings an improved result.

School culture – The norms, values, beliefs, relationships, rituals, traditions, myths, etc. shared in varying degrees by members of a school community.

School infrastructure - time, human and financial resources and utilization of space.

Teacher leadership - the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement. (York -Barr, & Duke, 2004).

Stakeholder commitment – Description of an outcome in which one agrees with a decision or request and makes a great effort to carry out that decision to implement practices or request effectively (Yukl, 2006)

INDICATOR B. INNOVATIVE PRACTICES APPENDICES

B. 1.   Systemic Change Process for Continuous Improvement

B. 2.   Balanced Scorecard

B.1. Systemic Change Process for Continuous Improvement

THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION
Guide for Planning and Supporting Change Initiatives

Phases of Change Initiatives:

Initiation and Readiness Phase:

o   Has the need for change and improvement been identified and shared with staff?

o   Has the majority of the staff developed ownership of the improvement initiative?

o   Is there a clear and shared vision of the outcomes of the improvement initiative based upon clearly articulated beliefs?

o   Have strong advocates and leaders been identified at the school level that can help motivate and influence others to support this initiative?

o   Do these leaders possess sufficient knowledge to guarantee the support necessary for the development of research based practices?

o   Have internal and external experts been identified to help support this improvement initiative?

o   Which current school practices are congruent with this new vision for change that can support this initiative and related improvement targets?

o   What new practices need to be adopted to achieve these improvement goals?

o   Does the staff development plan align with these improvement goals and continue objectives and activities to support attitude change, skill development and knowledge acquisition?

o   Does the improvement plan include activities to recognize and celebrate improvements and risk taking?

Implementation Phase:

o   Is there an action plan that identifies activities, responsibilities, timelines and targets to drive the change initiative?

o   Is this improvement action plan revisited continuously for monitoring and to make sure that activities are taking place?

o   Are there problem solving strategies in place to deal with obstacles that might impede effective implementation of the new? Improvement initiatives and strategies?

o   Are structural and administrative arrangements in place to accommodate study groups or learning teams to discuss new learning and to facilitate the use of new practices?

o   Are arrangements being made to ensure the development of theoretical understanding along with the demonstration of skills (thru modeling) and the practice of new skills (thru coaching and feedback) in training?

o   Are participants aware of the implementation dip (things often get worse before getting better)?

o   Are the instructional leadership roles, aligned to the improvement initiative goals, clearly defined for: the principal, the assistant principal, instructional coaches, teacher leaders and other consultants?

o   Has the need for external expertise been identified and secured?

o   How are the expectations for change communicated and monitored?

o   Is the impact on students monitored?

o   How will staff know if the change or improvement has been effectively implemented?

o   Are you implementing the "Five Phases of Professional Development"?

B.2. Balanced Scorecard

N A M E   O F   S C H O O L ____ SCHOOL YEAR
EXAMPLE OF BALANCED SCORECARD FOR ____ SCHOOL YEAR

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES AND QUALITY TARGETS:	TARGETS:		RESULTS:		
	ANNUAL SHORT TERM	LONG TERM (3 YRS.)	CURRENT	ANNUAL	FUTURE
1. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT (QI C)					
• All students meet proficiency levels	70%	100% of all students	65% ⊙	70% ⊙	100% ⊙
2. SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT (QI D and E)					
• Reduced discipline Referrals – total = <5%		<5% of all students	⊙	⊙	<5% ⊙
• Reduced Suspensions – total = <2%		<2% of all students	⊙	⊙	<2% ⊙
• Climate Surveys indicate 95% staff agree environment conducive to learning			⊙	⊙	
• Parent Surveys indicate 95% parents agree that school has a safe and positive welcoming environment for them and their children		95% of all students	⊙	⊙	95% ⊙
		95% of all students	⊙	⊙	95% ⊙
3. IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOLWIDE PRACTICES (QI B and D)					
• School walkthroughs indicate that 95% of all teachers are implementing identified school-wide best practices		95% of all students	⊙	⊙	95% ⊙
• Lesson plan reviews indicate that 95% of all					

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES AND QUALITY TARGETS:	TARGETS:		RESULTS:		
	ANNUAL SHORT TERM	LONG TERM (3 YRS.)	Current	Annual	Future
teachers are planning for differentiation		95% of all students	⊙ ◄	⊙	95% ⊙
• 95% of teacher observations indicate institutionalization of key classroom practices		95% of all students	⊙ ◄	⊙	95% ⊙
4. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING (QI A and B)					
• Coaches indicate that 100% of all teachers are actively engaged in PLCs		100% of all teachers	⊙	⊙	100% ⊙
• 95% of teachers surveyed indicate that PD is making a difference to their practice		95% of all students	⊙ ◄	⊙	95% ⊙
• 95% of teachers surveyed indicated that they believe they can strongly impact student achievement		95% of all students	⊙ ◄	⊙	95% ⊙
5. ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (QI E)					
• Annual audits indicate no findings (0) Reviews conducted indicate that student records are organized, up to date and are kept in a secure location		0% audit findings	⊙ ◄	⊙	0% ⊙
• Compliance review show no findings (0)		0% compliance findings	⊙ ◄	⊙	0% ⊙

• All staff indicate that school processes are clear and well organized	100% of all staff	⊙ ·········· ◁ ⊙ ·········· 100%
6. ENGAGEMENT (QI D)		
• All parents surveyed indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the school	100% of all parents	⊙ ·········· ◁ ⊙ ·········· 100%
• School events are attended by 75% of invited parents and community	75% of all students	⊙ ·········· ◁ ⊙ ·········· 75%

B. INNOVATIVE PRACTICES INDICATOR

<u>**Innovations in Education Introduction**</u>

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovations and Improvement, Innovations in Education Guides

The Innovations in Education book series, published by the Office of Innovations and Improvement, highlight promising practices in putting the *No Child Left Behind Act* to work. Available from: http://www2.ed.gov/about/pubs/intro/innovations.html

The following titles of the books related to charter schools are free:

Charter High Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap

This guide shows how eight diverse schools are using innovative instructional approaches to close the achievement gap between the highest and lowest performing students.

K-8 Charter Schools Guide Closing the Achievement Gap

This guide looks at seven K-8 charter schools that are dispelling the myth that some students cannot achieve to high standards. These schools are closing the achievement gap through challenging curriculum, high expectations, and the proper support that all students need to succeed.

Making Charter School Facilities More Affordable: State-driven Policy Approaches.

This book showcases charter school facility laws and practices that have been developed to tackle the facilities challenge in eight states and Washington DC.

Resources by Critical Success Factors

B. INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

Critical Success Factor 1.   Vision and Mission

See also *Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement* Appendices

Critical Success Factor 2.   Infrastructure based on researched practices

Resources for Research Based Strategies

Doing What Works (DWW)

The Doing What Works (DWW) is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of DWW is to create an online library of resources that may help teachers, schools, districts, states and technical assistance providers implement research-based instructional practice. The priority areas and topics include:

Data-driven improvement
   ❖ Turning around low-performing schools
   ❖ Response to intervention

Quality Teaching
   ❖ How to organize your teaching

Literacy
   ❖ Preschool language and literacy
   ❖ Literacy for K-5 English Learners
   ❖ Adolescent literacy

Math and Science
   ❖ Critical Foundations for Algebra
   ❖ Major Topics of School Algebra
   ❖ Encouraging Girls

Comprehensive Support
   ❖ Reducing Behavior Problems in Elementary Classrooms
   ❖ Dropout Prevention

Early Childhood
   ❖ Preschool Language and Literacy

Resources include: overview of multimedia presentations and materials with interviews with experts and videos and interviews with schools successfully implementing research-based practices, comprehensive tools and templates, including planning and implementation templates for schools, and related links. Access the web site at http://dwww.ed.gov

Critical Success Factor 2.   Infrastructure based on researched practices Continued

Center for Instruction

The Center on Instruction supports the regional Comprehensive Centers as they serve state education leaders helping schools and districts meet the goals of No Child Left Behind—to close the achievement gap and improve teaching and learning for all students. Content areas include: reading, mathematics, science, special education, and English language learning. Access web site at http://www.centeroninstruction.org

National Charter School Research Project

The National Charter School Research Project (NCSRP) aims to bring rigor, evidence, and balance to the national charter school debate. Their research ranges from the school level to charter management organizations (CMOs) to school districts and authorizers. They provide ongoing charter research and information on: accountability and oversight, Charter management organizations, states, and teachers and leaders. Access website at: http://www.crpe.org/cs/crpe/view/projects/1

National Charter School Resource Center

The National Charter School Resource Center (Charter School Center) is a national center to provide on-demand resources, information, and technical assistance to support successful planning, authorizing, implementation, and sustainability of high-quality charter schools; to share evaluations on the effects of charter schools; and to disseminate information about successful practices in charter schools. The Charter School Center focuses on five priorities: (1) Providing technical assistance and resources on facilities-related issues; (2) Supporting successful charter models as they work to turn around the nation's lowest performing schools under Title I School Improvement; (3) Providing technical assistance and resources on issues related to quality authorizing; (4) Providing technical assistance and resources on charter school leadership issues; and (5) Providing technical assistance and resources to charter school SEA personnel. Access website at: http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/

Walter, K. (2004). ***Sustainable school improvement: Making good choices***. Written for the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates

The resource presents information on building commitment, developing capacity, finding time, increasing staff retention, and finding money for continuous school improvement. Also included is a list of additional resources (tools, software, and guidance) by topic. Available from http://www.learningpt.org/expertise/schoolimprovement/mgcSustainableSchoolImp.php

Resources Continued

B. INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

Critical Success Factor 2.   Infrastructure based on researched practices Continued

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

Access web site at: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/

An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):

- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and
- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

Practice Guides include:

- *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making*
- *Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning*
- *Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement*
- *Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools*
- *Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom*
- *Dropout Prevention*
- *Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do*
- *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*
- *Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Interventions in the Primary Grades*
- *Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades*
- *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*
- *Developing Effective Fractions Instruction for Kindergarten Through 8th Grade*
- *Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Response to Intervention (RtI) for Elementary and Middle Schools*
- *Encouraging Girls in Math and Science*

Resources by Critical Success Factors

B. INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

Critical Success Factor 3.   **Infrastructure supports continuous teacher and instructional leadership and board development**.

National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) is a national resource for: regional comprehensive centers, State Departments of Education, and other education stakeholders. The Center's activities includes: a resource library with online resources and print and electronic products, interactive tools, and other resources. The following topics are addressed: teacher preparation; teacher recruitment, hiring, and placement; mentoring and induction; professional development; teacher evaluation, and teacher leadership.   Access the Center's web site at: http://www.tqsource.org/

Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium

The Teacher Leadership Model Standards may be accessed at:
http://www.teacherleaderstandards.org/index.php

Critical Success Factor 4.   **School stakeholders show commitment to implementing best practices producing best results.**

Walter, K. (2004). *Sustainable school improvement: Making good choices*. Written for the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates

The resource presents information on building commitment, developing capacity, finding time, increasing staff retention, and finding money for continuous school improvement. Also included is a list of additional resources (tools, software, and guidance) by topic. Available from
http://www.learningpt.org/expertise/schoolimprovement/mgcSustainableSchoolImp.php

Indicator C: Student Learning and Achievement

Quality Public Charter Schools are dedicated to increasing student learning and achievement and use this value as the foundation of all school efforts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STANDARD: *Quality Public Charter Schools are dedicated to increasing student learning and achievement and use this value as the foundation of all school efforts.*

Performance Measures:

1. **Proficiency levels on state assessments by grade and subject (***Proficiency Rates)*

2. **Student performance on benchmark assessments by grade and subject**

3. **Student performance on school and/or teacher-made assessments** (e.g., different types of assessments)

4. **Student progress over time – annual growth** **(**Improvement of individual students during the year on particular assessments [*Gain scores]*)

5. **Student progress over time – cumulative growth (Improvement of individual students across years on particular assessments)**

6. **Student self-assessments, reflections, surveys, and feedback**

7. **Student participation (e.g., attendance, continuance enrollment, truancy rates)**

8. **Rated levels of implementation of research-based innovations.** *(See Indicator B. Innovative Practices, Appendix B.1. Systemic Change Process for Continuous Improvement)*

9. **Teacher planning documentation**

10. **Parent involvement activities/communication, progress reports**

11. **Description of student interventions and acceleration opportunities**

12. **Student Post-Secondary Readiness / Success** (high school graduation, postsecondary education, training, workforce participation or military service)

13. **Charter school's accountability system with additional performance measures**

Critical Success Factors

1. All students achieve a high level of proficiency on state assessment measures annually.

2. Achievement goals are defined and targets set by all school staff and students to accomplish annual achievement increases.

3. Teachers meet regularly to discuss learning standards, plan how they will help students to meet or exceed the standards and examine student work against the standards and use this information to adjust their instruction.

4. Progress Report updates are provided to parents regularly.

5. Students that are not meeting grade level standards receive multiple opportunities for academic intervention and acceleration (in classroom, out of classroom, beyond regular school hours, etc.).

6. Staff holds high expectations for all students.

7. Teachers differentiate their instructional practices to meet the learning needs of all diverse students in their classes.

8. School policies, procedures, programs and resources are aligned to support student learning.

9. Secondary courses and curricula prepare students for career-ready and college-level work.

10. High school students are:

    - Made aware of what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by 9th grade;

    - Assisted in overcoming deficiencies to ensure they are prepared for college;

    - Assisted in completing critical steps for college entry; and

    - Made aware of post-secondary options including career awareness and timeliness.

C. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools are dedicated to increasing student learning and achievement and use this value as the foundation of all school efforts.

1.   Critical Success Factor: All students achieve a high level of proficiency on state assessment measures annually.

Performance Contract Requirements Addressing Student Assessment

The *Maryland Charter Schools Model Performance Contract, Section 1.26 Assessment of Student Performance*, states that the charter school shall implement the plan for assessment of student performance and administration of statewide assessments identified in the contract. At a minimum, the charter school shall administer the: Maryland School Assessments for grades 3-8, and the Maryland High School Assessments for grade 11. In addition, annually, the charter school must certify that pupils have participated in the State testing program.

Maryland's Current State Assessments

Student attainment of Maryland's standards is measured through State assessments (e.g., *Maryland School Assessment, High School Assessment*) in academic content subjects (e.g., English language arts, mathematics, and science). The Maryland School Assessments annually assess the Maryland content standards in mathematics and reading in grades 3 through 8, and in science in grades 5 and 9. The High School Assessments assess student's knowledge of Maryland's Core Learning Goals at the indicator level in: Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology, English, and Government.
Note: Beginning with the class of 2012, Government High School Assessments will no longer be a component of Maryland's graduation requirements. However, Government will remain a course requirement for a high school diploma.

The Maryland standards are divided into three levels of achievement:

- **Advanced** – a highly challenging and exemplary level of achievement indicating outstanding accomplishment in meeting the needs of students;

- **Proficient** – a realistic and rigorous level of achievement indicating proficiency in meeting the needs of students; and

- **Basic** – a level of achievement indicating that more work is needed to attach proficiency in meeting the needs of students.

Proficiency is the performance level students need to reach to demonstrate mastery of the content and performance standards.

Maryland's New State Assessments for 2014-15 School Year

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is developing new assessments that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards. PARCC is a consortium of 24 states working together to develop an assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Maryland is a Governing State in the PARCC consortium. The new assessments will be anchored in college and career readiness; provide comparability across states; and be able to assess and measure higher-order skills such as critical thinking, communications, and problem solving. The PARCC assessments will be implemented in Maryland in the 2014-15 school year and will replace the Maryland School Assessments. The PARCC website is http://www.parconline.org/

Maryland Content Standards

Maryland has content standards in the following subject areas: reading/English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), fine arts, health, physical education, world languages, English language proficiency, technology education, technology literacy standards for students, school library media, and personal financial literacy education.

Maryland Common Core Standards

In June 2010 the Maryland State Board of Education unanimously adopted the Common Core State Standards in English/Language Arts; Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects; and Mathematics. After its' adoption educators from around the state have met to determine the best way for Maryland teachers to transition from the existing State Curriculum to the Common Core State Standards.

These national education standards establish a set of shared goals and expectations for what students should understand and be able to do in grades K-12 so that students are prepared for success in college and the workplace. Common standards help ensure that students are receiving an equally rigorous, high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state. The Common Core State Standards form the foundation upon which Maryland is building its new State Curriculum.

Maryland Common Core State Curriculum

The Common Core State Curriculum will be implemented in Maryland schools in the 2013-2014 school year. The Maryland Common Core State Curriculum will have two main components, the Curriculum Frameworks and the Online Curriculum Toolkit.
The Maryland Common Core Curriculum Frameworks in English/Language Arts and Mathematics define the essential skills and knowledge that students need to know and be able to do in order to achieve the academic goals of the Common Core State Standards. The Frameworks are the foundation of Maryland's new Curriculum and will guide the development of curriculum resources. On June 21, 2011, the Maryland State Board of Education unanimously accepted Maryland's Draft Common Core Curriculum Frameworks for English/Language Arts and Mathematics. MSDE has posted the draft Frameworks on this website http://mdk12.org/instruction/commoncore/index.html

The 2013-2014 school year marks the implementation date for the completed curriculum.   The State Curriculum is the document that identifies the Maryland Content Standards and aligns them with the Maryland Assessment Program. The curriculum documents are formatted so that each begins with content standards or broad, measurable statements about what students should know and be able to do. Indicator statements provide the next level of specificity and begin to narrow the focus for

teachers. Finally, the objectives provide teachers with very clear information about what specific learning should occur. When the objective is tested on the Maryland State Mathematics and Reading Assessments, it will be followed by an assessment limit.

Maryland STEM Education and STEM Standards of Practice

On April 24, 2012, the Maryland State Board of Education accepted the definition of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) Education and STEM Standards of Practice presented by the Office of STEM Initiatives. The definition of STEM Education and the STEM Standards of Practice reflect the skills and knowledge students must master to be prepared to meet the increasing demand of the workplace where STEM skills are required.

STEM Education Defined: STEM education is an approach to teaching and learning that integrates the content and skills of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. STEM Standards of Practice guide STEM instruction by defining the combination of behaviors, integrated with STEM content, which is expected of a proficient STEM student. These behaviors include engagement in inquiry, logical reasoning, collaboration, and investigation. The goal of STEM education is to prepare students for post-secondary study and the 21st century workforce**.**

STEM Standards of Practice:

The titles of the seven STEM Standards of Practice are:

1. Learn and Apply Rigorous Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Content

2. Integrate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Content

3. Interpret and Communicate STEM Information

4. Engage in Inquiry

5. Engage in Logical Reasoning

6. Collaborate as a STEM Team

7. Apply Technology Appropriately

For more information, access the Maryland State Department of Education's website
http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/stem/

Maryland's Accountability System Prior to May 2012 under No Child Left Behind Act

In Maryland, AMO's or **Annual Measurable Objectives**, are state established performance targets that assess the progress of student groups, schools, school districts, and the state annually. The annual measurement ensures that schools are on track to meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) goal of having 100% of the students achieve proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics by the end of the school year in 2013-2014. Between the 2002-2003 baseline and the 2013-2014 goal of 100% proficiency, the state established annual performance targets. These targets, or annual measurable objectives, were set for reading, mathematics attendance and graduation rate. Every school and school system was held to the same annual measurable objectives, although those objectives were adjusted to each school's grade-level enrollment and structure (e.g., K-5, 6-8, K-8, K-12).

> **Adequate Yearly Progress** (AYP) was designed to measure the continuous improvement each year toward the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) goal of 100% proficiency by 2014. The Maryland State Department of Education set Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO's) that all students and the eight student groups identified in NCLB also need to meet.

Maryland's Accountability System after May, 2012

On May 29, 2012, Maryland State Department of Education received from the U.S. Department of Education flexibility from some of the provisions under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) also known as the No Child Left Behind Act. Under the flexibility plan, the State was able to reset the annual progress goals for the next six years on a trajectory toward 2017, at which time each individual school is expected to reduce its percentage of non-proficient students by half – for each subgroup as well as for all students. The flexibility plan also gives the State some room regarding how it recognizes Title I schools that are making progress, and how it focuses attention on those schools in need of intervention. The progress of each school toward meeting their own unique targets provide valuable information over time on the effectiveness of instructional strategies, the inherent needs of the students and the extent to which the school is fulfilling those needs. These provisions include the following:

- **New Targets (Annual Measurable Objectives).** MSDE has set targets so that by 2017 each school is expected to reduce its percentages of non-proficient students for each student group and at the "All Students" level by 50 percent. The targets rise each year until 2018.

- **Maryland School Performance/Progress Index Starting 2012-13**

The Adequate Yearly Progress has been replaced by the Maryland School Performance/Progress Index.

Each school will have an individual performance target designed to cut in half, over the next six years, the percentages of students who fail to reach proficiency on State tests. Each school will be measured against itself, rather than against other schools. The new index will examine achievement and gap issues in all schools, growth in elementary and middle schools, and college- and career-readiness in high schools.

The index is based on two rigorous multi-measure performance frameworks – one for elementary and middle schools (grades PreK-8) and one for high schools (grades 9-12).

The Elementary and Middle School index includes:

- Student achievement on State assessments (MSA proficiency in reading, math, and science) – 30% of index;

- Growth (percent of students making one year's growth in reading and math MSA proficiency) – 30% of index;

- Gaps between the highest and lowest performing student groups (MSA proficiency in reading, math, science proficiency) – 40% of index.

The High School index includes:

- Student achievement (student proficiency on HSA Algebra/Data Analysis, English, and Biology) – 40% of index;

- College- and career-readiness (cohort graduation rate, career attainment, attendance) – 20% of index;

- Gaps between the highest and lowest performing students (HSA proficiency on Algebra/Data Analysis, English, and Biology; cohort graduation rate, and cohort dropout rate) – 40% of index.

Each school receives a School Performance/Progress index score.

School Performance Strands

Based on the analyses of this data, cut scores will be established for the placement of each school into one of the following performance strands:

- **High Performing Reward Schools** will have met the Annual Measurable Objectives for all student groups for two consecutive years. High Performing Reward Schools must also have a 10% or less achievement gap between students in subgroups and the rest of the student body. High Performing Reward Schools will receive additional recognition based on their performance. Of the schools that are considered High Performing Reward Schools, those that are in the top 10 percent of Title I schools, indicating the maximum amount of improvement in student performance on MSA tests, will be designated as Distinguished High Performing Reward Schools. In addition, if a High Performing Reward School has improved its performance, and the school is made up of 50% or more economically disadvantaged students, it will receive the title of a Superlative High Performing Reward School.

- **High Progress Reward Schools** are those Title I schools that have significantly reduced the gap in achievement between subgroups. These schools must have made at least an 18 percentage point gain in the "all students" subgroup and have a 10 percent or less gap between any other performing subgroup. Reward Schools in either category will be recognized by the Maryland State Department of Education and act as models of success for other Title I schools.

- **Priority Schools** are five percent of all Title I schools that are the lowest achieving on the MSA. These schools have not reached adequate performance standards in reading and math for "all students" and student groups.

- **Focus Schools** are ten percent of all Title I schools having the largest gap between the "all students" and the lowest performing group of students or a Title I eligible high school with graduation rates 60% or lower.

- **Approaching Target Schools** are Title I schools that do not meet the criteria for Priority Schools or Focus Schools under ESEA Flexibility, but are missing Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) in one or more categories.

Maryland Charter School Performance Accountability Related to Student Performance

In 2012, the Office of School Innovations of MSDE developed the Maryland Charter School Performance Framework which is included in the 2012 revised *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course toward excellence: Model performance contract*.

Charter school performance accountability means collecting the data needed to make high-stakes decisions that are based on the application of valid, reliable evidence to the school's performance as set out in the charter contract. Accountability includes decisions about a school's preparation to open; whether to intervene in a school's operation; and whether to revoke or renew a charter contract.

The Maryland Charter School Performance Framework provides an overview of how all of the performance accountability tools correlate to create a complete assessment process. The Charter School Performance Plan charts out the key performance indicators, measures, and metrics most important to consider in ensuring that only quality charter schools exist in Maryland. The key indicators include:

I.   Academic quality;

II.   Student, Parent, and Community Engagement;

III.   Mission of the School;

IV.   Organizational Effectiveness; and

V.   Maryland Charter School Quality Standards implementation.

The measures for academic quality align with the Maryland School Performance Index and with the recommendations of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA).
For more information about the Maryland Charter School Performance Plan and Framework, refer to the **2012** *Maryland Charter Schools: Chartering a Course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*.

U.S. Department of Education's Definition of a High Quality Charter School

A primary focus of a quality charter school's is on student attainment of rigorous standards. According to the U.S. Department of Education's definition of a high-quality charter school, a high-quality charter school shows evidence of strong academic results.

(a) Quality – The following factors are considered to determine the quality of a charter school:

    iv) The degree of demonstrated success in significantly increasing academic achievement and attainment for all students, including educationally disadvantaged students, served by charter schools.

    v) The degree to which the charter school has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students.

    vi) The degree to which the school has achieved results for low-income and minority students that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State. A review of objective data provides relevant information in support of these three factors, along with comparison data for similar schools, as follows:

        (1) performance (school-wide and by subgroup) on statewide tests of all charter schools operated or managed by the applicant as compared to all students in other schools in the State or States at the same grade level, and compared with other schools serving similar demographics of students;

        (2) annual student attendance and retention rates (school-wide and by subgroup), and comparisons with other similar schools; and

        (3) where applicable and available, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates (school-wide and by subgroup) of students attending the school.

(b) Contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students - The contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students served by the school to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, and to graduate college- and career-ready.

The MSDE Publications Overview website has a variety of resources.
Access the website at http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/newsroom/publications

Maryland State Content Standards

The State Curriculum is the document that identifies the Maryland Content Standards and aligns them with the Maryland Assessment Program. The curriculum documents are formatted so that each begins with content standards or broad, measurable statements about what students should know and be able to do. More information on standards is available from http://mdk12.org/assessments/vsc/index.html

Maryland Common Core Standards

 More information on Maryland's adoption of the Common Core Standards is available from
 http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/ccss

Maryland Common Core Curriculum Frameworks

Since the adoption of the standards, educators from around the state met to determine the Essential Skills and Knowledge associated with these standards. The frameworks in English Language Arts and Mathematics are available on Maryland State Department of Education's web site. It is important to view these frameworks in color. On the web site, the Common Core State Standards appear in black and the Essential Skills and Knowledge added by Maryland educators appear in red. MSDE introduced draft frameworks to teachers and administrators at the Educator Effectiveness Academies in summer, 2011. The development of the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum will be developed over the next several years by Maryland educators to support the implementation of these new standards. The draft curriculum frameworks are available from
http://mdk12.org/instruction/commoncore/index.html.

Maryland Education Effectiveness Academies

The Maryland State Department of Education offered Educator Effectiveness Academies in 2011, 2012, and 2013. The following website has a variety of resources that address: reading/English language arts, mathematics, STEM, and general academy information.   Access the resources at http://mdk12.org/instruction/academies/index.html.

Maryland Charter School Common Core English Language Arts (ELA Symposium)

On May 8, 2012, the Office of School Innovations of Maryland State Department of Education hosted a symposium for charter schools on the Common Core English Language Arts. The purposes of the symposium were to: 1) support the transition process that is needed to implement the Common Core State Standards in charter schools successfully, 2) provide a forum for sharing among charter schools on the approaches schools have taken so far; and provide time and resources for school teams to start planning the effective implementation of CCSS. A variety of resources were available to participating school teams. For more information about the symposium and the resources available to charter schools, contact the Office of School Innovations, Maryland State Department of Education.

Maryland State Curriculum Toolkits

Created by Maryland teachers, the State Curriculum Toolkits are resources aligned with Maryland's State Standards. The Toolkits include detailed explanations of skills, ideas for lessons and student work samples, public release items, sample assessment, and resources for advanced/gifted and talented students. Available from http://mdk12.org/instruction/curriculum.

Maryland STEM Education

For more information, access the Maryland State Department of Education's website: http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/stem/

Maryland STEM Education Toolkit

The Maryland STEM Education Toolkit includes the following resources: STEM Standards of Practice, K-5 Framework, 6-12 Framework, Instructional Guides, STEM Units and lessons (K-5, 6-8, 9-12), STEM Centric Learning Environment, STEM professional development, STEM Education Pipeline, and STEM education frequently asked questions. Access the toolkit at the following website http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/curriculum/stem/index.html

Maryland School Assessment (MSA) and Maryland High School Assessment

Information and resources on the state assessments are available from the following website: http://mdk12.org/assessments/index.html

A Parent's Guide to the MSA (Maryland School Assessment)

This 2012 document describes the MSA and answers common questions parents might have. Access the document at http://www.msde.maryland.gov

Maryland Flexibility Plan under ESEA

Additional Information may be found at http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/esea_flex

Maryland 2012 Report Card

The 2012 Maryland Report Card website includes the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) and High School Assessment (HSA) highlights, as well as school progress, Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), ESEA Flexibility, demographic, enrollment, and attendance data, and other supporting facts. Access the website at http://mdreportcard.org/.

Common Core State Standards Initiative

The website includes the standards, information on the standards, resources, FAQs, and links to other websites.   The web site link is http://www.corestandards.org/

Achieve the Core

A variety of free resources on the Common Core State Standards have been collected by Student Achievement Partners.   Access the web site at **http://www.achievethecore.org/**

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a consortium of states working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. Information is available from http://www.parcconline.org/

REFERENCES

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course toward excellence: Model performance contract.* Baltimore, MD: Author.

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2009). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course toward excellence: Model performance contract.* Baltimore, MD: Author.

Maryland State Department of Education (2012). *Maryland ESEA flexibility request: Summary provided by Council of Chief State School Officers* (CCSS). Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/esea_flex

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement (no date). *Federal definition of high quality charter school*. Washington, DC: Author.

2. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT: ACHIEVEMENT GOALS ARE DEFINED AND TARGETS SET BY ALL SCHOOL STAFF AND STUDENTS TO ACCOMPLISH ANNUAL ACHIEVEMENT INCREASES.

Based on the analyses of student assessment data, quality public charter schools set yearly achievement goals and targets. Targets are quantifiable objectives that set expectations or define what will constitute success on particular measures within a given period of time (Performance Management Institute, CREDO, Stanford University). The achievement goals and targets may address the entire school, by grade levels, by groups of students, in academic content areas (e.g., reading and/or mathematics).

Maryland Annual Measurable Objectives

Prior to May, 2012 under the No Child Left Behind Act

The annual measurement ensures that schools are on track to meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) goal of having 100% of the students achieve proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics by the end of the school year in 2013-2014. Between the 2002-2003 baseline and the 2013-2014 goal of 100% proficiency, the state established annual performance targets. These targets, or annual measurable objectives, were set for reading, mathematics attendance and graduation rate. Every school and school system was held to the same annual measurable objectives, although those objectives were adjusted to each school's grade-level enrollment and structure (e.g., K-5, 6-8, K-8, K-12).

After May, 2012, Maryland's Flexibility Plan under Elementary and Secondary Education Act

On May 29, 2012, Maryland State Department of Education received from the U.S. Department of Education flexibility from some of the provisions under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) also known as the No Child Left Behind Act. The provisions include the following:

New Targets (Annual Measurable Objectives

MSDE has set targets so that by 2017 each school is expected to reduce its percentages of non-proficient students for each student group and at the ""All Students" level by 50 percent. The targets rise each year until 2018. For more information, refer to *C. Student Learning and Achievement, Critical Success Factor 1. All students achieve a high-level of proficiency on state assessment measures annually*.

Oversight authority of Public Charter Schools by Maryland County Boards

Under Maryland Education Annotated Code, §9-102.11, and §103.a, the County Board shall have oversight authority over the Charter School. Under COMAR, §9-110. Public charter school policy, each county board is to develop a public charter school policy that includes:

1. Evaluation of public charter schools;

2. Revocation of a charter;

3. Reporting requirements; and

4. Financial, programmatic, or compliance audits of public charter schools.

In the *Maryland Charter Schools: Chartering a Course towards Excellence: Model Performance Contract*, Section 5.6 states that: The County Board's oversight of the Charter School shall include the following activities:

- Pre-opening, intervention, revocation, and renewal processes for the Charter School pursuant to the Charter, and the contract;

- Monitoring the performance and compliance of the Charter School with the terms of the Charter, the contract and/or applicable laws, policies and regulations;

- Monitoring the Charter School's compliance with the performance framework and reporting requirements;

- Review and timely response to the Charter School's Annual Independent Fiscal and Performance Audit;

- Identification and availability of at least one Local School System staff member (the Charter School Liaison) as a contact person for the Charter School;

- Providing performance feedback to the Charter School at least annually;

- Monitoring the educational, legal and fiscal condition of the Charter;

- Providing guidance and assistance to the Charter School on compliance and other operational matters; and

- Participation in the dispute resolution process described in the Charter.

Maryland Charter School Performance Framework

In 2012, the Office of School Innovations of MSDE developed the Maryland Charter School Performance Framework which is included in the 2012 revised ***Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course toward excellence: Model performance contract.***

Charter school performance accountability means collecting the data needed to make high-stakes decisions that are based on the application of valid, reliable evidence to the school's performance as set out in the charter contract. Accountability includes decisions about a school's preparation to open; whether to intervene in a school's operation; and whether to revoke or renew a charter contract.

The Maryland Charter School Performance Framework provides an overview of how all of the performance accountability tools correlate to create a complete assessment process. The Charter School Performance Plan charts out the key performance indicators, measures, and metrics most important to consider in ensuring that only quality charter schools exist in Maryland. The key indicators include:

> I. Academic quality;
> II. Student, Parent, and Community Engagement;
> III. Mission of the School;
> IV. Organizational Effectiveness; and
> V. Maryland Charter School Quality Standards implementation.

The measures for academic quality align with the Maryland School Performance Index and with the recommendations of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA).

For more information about the Maryland Charter School Performance Plan and Framework, refer to the 2012 ***Maryland Charter Schools: Chartering a Course Towards Excellence: Model Performance Contract.***

The Maryland Charter School Performance Plan and Framework aligns with the standards of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA).

National Association of Charter School Authorizers: Charter School Performance Framework and Standards

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) has developed **Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing**, (2012).

One component of the NACSA standards for performance contracting is performance framework and standards.

A quality authorizer executes contracts with charter schools that clearly:
- Establish the performance standards under which schools will be evaluated
- Use objective and verifiable measures of student achievement as the primary measure of school quality
- Define clear, measurable, and attainable academic, financial, and organizational performance standards and targets that the school must meet as a condition of renewal
- Implement a comprehensive performance accountability and compliance monitoring system that is defined by the charter contract
- Provide the information necessary to make rigorous and standards-based renewal, revocation, and intervention decisions
- Define and communicate to schools the process, methods, and timing of gathering and reporting school performance and compliance data.
- Implement an accountability system that effectively streamlines federal, state, and local performance expectations and compliance requirements
- Provide clear technical guidance to schools as needed to ensure timely compliance with applicable rules and regulations.
- Describe visits to each school as appropriate and necessary for collecting data that cannot be obtained otherwise and in accordance with the contract, while ensuring that the frequency, purposes, and methods of such visits respect school autonomy and avoid operational interference.
- Provide for the evaluation of each school annually on its performance and progress toward meeting the standards and targets stated in the charter contract,
- Communicate evaluation results to the school's governing board and leadership.
- Require and review annual financial audits of schools, conducted by a qualified independent auditor.
- Communicate regularly with schools as needed, including both the school leaders and governing boards, and provides timely notice of contract violations or performance deficiencies.
- Provide an annual written report to each school, summarizing its performance and compliance to date and identifying areas of strength and areas needing improvement.
- Articulate and enforce stated consequences for failing to meet performance expectations or compliance requirements.

Performance standards enable schools and authorizers to know the outcomes for which authorizers will hold schools accountable. They are the basis for school evaluation and should be incorporated in the charter contract, commonly as an attachment (or the performance portfolio- see Maryland's Model Performance Contract). Academic, financial, and organizational performance standards should include clearly defined and measurable indicators, measures, metrics, and targets.

The Maryland Quality Standards provide more (qualitative) detailed information and guidance "specific" to charter school performance and provide factors that when implemented help to enhance the growth and development of the schools to better meet the federal definition for quality charter schools.

Balanced Scorecard

The Balanced Scorecard is available for charter schools. The Scorecard includes annual short-term targets, long-term targets (3years), and results for: student achievement goals, school environment goals, implementation of schoolwide practices, professional learning goals, organizational effectiveness goals, and engagement goals. See *Indicator B. Innovative Practices, Appendix B.2.* for more information on the Balanced Scorecard and examples of a Balanced Scorecard.

Effective school leadership uses measurable goals to establish a culture of achievement. High levels of student proficiency are expected, communicated, and pursued (Carter, 2000). The school leadership keeps these goals in the forefront of the school's attention (Carter, 2000; Waters, et. al., 2003). Refer to the following relevant section of *the Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement Implementation Guide* on data analyses: *Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement, Critical Success Factor 2. Data analysis helps to design and guide improvement efforts.*

Charter School Dashboards

The Office of School Innovations, Maryland State Department of Education, issues Charter School Dashboards to charter schools on a yearly basis through its external evaluator, ICF Macro. The purpose of the dashboards is to present a snapshot of each of the Maryland charter schools. Each dashboard provides a description of each school and its mission, as well as a profile of its student body and academic progress. The dashboards are not made public.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Maryland Flexibility Plan under Elementary and Secondary Act (No Child Left Behind Act (also known as NCLB or ESEA) Additional Information may be found at http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/esea_flex

Maryland 2012 Report Card

The 2012 Maryland Report Card website includes the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) and High School Assessment (HSA) highlights, as well as school progress, Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), ESEA Flexibility, demographic, enrollment, and attendance data, and other supporting facts. Access the website at http://mdreportcard.org/

Maryland Charter School Performance Plan and Framework
Contact Office of School Innovations at Maryland State Department of Education.

Charter School Dashboards and Balanced Scorecards More information on Charter School Dashboards and the Balanced Scorecards are available from the Office of School Innovations, Maryland State Department of Education. See the following sections in the Implementation Guide:

> *Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement*, Appendix A.4. for example of the Charter School Dashboard, and
> *Indicator B. Innovative Practices*, Appendix B. 2. for more information and example for the Balanced Scorecard.

OTHER RESOURCES

National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA)

NACSA is a nonprofit membership organization committed to developing and maintaining high standards for charter school authorizing.

Principles and standards for quality charter school authorizing.

The 2010 version is available from http://www.qualitycharters.org/publications-resources/principles-standards

REFERENCES

Carter, Samuel Casey. (2000). *No excuses: Lessons from 21 high-performing, high poverty schools*. Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation. Retrieved from: http://www.theqeducationgroup.com/uploads/No_Excuses.pdf

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2009). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course toward excellence: Model performance contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Maryland State Department of Education (2012). *Maryland ESEA flexibility request: Summary provided by Council of Chief State School Officers* (CCSS). Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from**:** http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/esea_flex

National Association of Charter School Authorizers (2010**). *Principles and standards for quality charter school authorizing*. Chicago, IL: Author. Retrieved from http://www.qualitycharters.org/publications-resources/principles-standards

Performance Management Institute, CREDO, Stanford University. (no date). *Performance management*. Palo Alto, CA: Author.

Waters, T., Marzano, R., & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement*. Denver, CO: Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL).

3. **STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT: TEACHERS MEET REGULARLY TO DISCUSS LEARNING STANDARDS, PLAN HOW THEY WILL HELP STUDENTS TO MEET OR EXCEED THE STANDARDS AND EXAMINE STUDENT WORK AGAINST THE STANDARDS AND USE THIS INFORMATION TO ADJUST THEIR INSTRUCTION.**

Common Planning Time

Common planning time for teams of teachers (grade level, subject, or interdisciplinary) is considered a crucial component of continuous improvement. Collaborative teams, where teachers share planning time and a common group of students, is correlated with better school culture, higher student achievement, increased teacher motivation and job satisfaction, and more effective parent communication (Perlman & Redding, 2009).

According to research, teachers need: (1) to have a deep conceptual understanding of the subject matter they teach, including the learning standards; and (2) to know about children's developmental stages and how differences among students in areas such as culture, language, class, and gender relate to learners' frames of reference. Third, teachers need to increase their understanding about how children learn, especially higher order learning. Finally, teachers need to know pedagogy and a variety of instructional strategies (Lauer, 2001). To address teachers' needs, Darling-Hammond (1998) asserts, "Teachers learn best by studying, doing, and reflecting; by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see" (p. 8). Therefore, given the above findings, quality public charter schools structure their schedules so that teachers can meet regularly.

Examples of Scheduling Approaches for Teacher Collaboration

School	Time and Planning Strategies	Activities
A	Once every month, the school day begins two hours later and teachers meet during this time to engage in activities (listed in the next column). School makes up this accumulated time by extending the school year.	1. School staff review district standards and realign the assessments they use accordingly. 2. School staff continuously reevaluate this work and discuss and plan changes as needed.
B	School staff is released early from school once per week for at least 45 minutes. This time is added to other days throughout the week. The entire staff meets weekly for one hour before school. Staff decreased the "nuts and bolts" of the meetings and prioritized work related to assessments.	1. Schools use allotted time to align curriculum across grades with the state standards. This process is driven by student assessment data. 2. School staff continuously reevaluate this work and discuss and plan changes as needed.
C	Same-grade teachers meet informally during weekly planning periods and formally every six weeks. Students in entire grades are sent to "specials" (e.g. art, gym). Time also is allotted at regularly scheduled staff meetings. Teachers are released from teaching duties several days each year and are replaced by substitute teachers. Teachers meet with the principal up to three times each year.	1. Staff discuss students' progress according to the "developmental continuums" written by school staff. 2. Teachers administer individual assessments to students. 3. Staff discuss reports on assessment data from district research department.

School	Time and Planning Strategies	Activities
D	Teachers request time to meet with each other during school hours; substitutes are hired to support this. In addition, teachers meet after school. Teachers meet in "within-grade" and "subject area" teams during their planning hours once per week.	1. Staff members share knowledge gained from professional development activities that addressed curriculum and assessment. They also discuss student mastery of standards and other outcomes and possible intervention strategies.

Source: Cromey and Hanson (2000) cited in Hamilton, Halverson, Jackson, Mandinach, Supovitz, & Wayman (2009).

Discussions and Activities During Teacher Meetings

During these teacher meetings, teachers may discuss curriculum and instruction issues. Teachers need to thoroughly know, discuss, and understand the standards and develop consensus on performance expectations for students. They may examine when and how students are meeting or exceeding state standards, particularly what do students need to know and be able to do. As a result, teachers may make curriculum and instructional adjustments.

During meetings, teachers may review student assessment data on a regular basis. The data may include a variety of assessments: screening, diagnostic, teacher-made, benchmarks, progress monitoring, and/or State assessment. Teachers should use the assessment data to check student progress in core curriculum areas daily, weekly, and monthly (Just for the Kids, 2001.). As a result of the review of data, teachers may adjust their instruction. Teachers may also use the assessment data to identify students in need of additional small group instruction, tutoring, and other supports (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2002).

Teachers need to meet regularly to examine student work. Examination of student work is a critical component of the instructional planning process (Maryland State Department of Education). It is recommended that teams of teachers have structure and guiding questions to examine student work. As teachers examine what students produce in response to their teaching and the assignments given, teachers are able to see the successes in achieving what they intended to teach and are also able to see where they were not able to reach students. This information helps guide them to improve their practice in order to reach all students. It provides critical data to inform instruction, particularly when re-teaching needs to occur. The data can also provide feedback to teachers to know how to approach student performance. As a result of these meetings, teachers may adjust their instruction.
Please refer to the Maryland State Department of Education's ***Best Practices Series for Maryland Charter Schools: Job Embedded Professional Development.*** *(2009)* for additional information on study groups, lesson studies, examining student work, collaborative lesson planning, and action research.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Examining Student Work to Inform Instruction

This site has a variety of resources, including: protocols, discussion, quotes from experts, videos, professional development ideas, lessons learned, principal's role in structuring **r**egular examination of student work, and additional resources. Available from http://mdk12.org/data/examining/index.html

***Best Practices Series for Maryland Charter Schools: Job Embedded Professional Development**. (2009).* Available from
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/

<u>**OTHER RESOURCES**</u>

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/
An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):

- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and
- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

Relevant Practice Guides include:

Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making
Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J. & Wayman, J. (2009).

***Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making**. (NCES 2009-4067).* Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide

This guide offers five recommendations to help educators effectively use data to monitor students' academic progress and evaluate instructional practices. The guide recommends that schools set a clear vision for schoolwide data use, develop a data-driven culture, and make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement. The guide also recommends teaching students how to use their own data to set learning goals.

Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning

Pashler, H., Bain, P., Bottge, B., Graesser, A., Koedinger, K., McDaniel, M., and Metcalfe, J. (2007). ***Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning** (NCER 2007-2004).* Washington, DC: National Center for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide.

This guide includes a set of concrete actions relating to the use of instructional and study time that are applicable to subjects that demand a great deal of content learning, including social studies, science, and mathematics.

Doing What Works

The Doing What Works (DWW) is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The DWW website has an online library of resources that may help teachers, schools, and districts and implementing research-based practices. Resources include: overview of multimedia presentations and materials with interviews with experts and videos and interviews with schools successfully implementing research-based practices, and comprehensive tools and templates, including planning and implementation tools for schools. One of the topics under Data-driven improvement, is Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision-making. Access the web site at: http://dww.ed.gov/Data-Driven-Instructional-Decision-Making/topic/

R̲E̲F̲E̲R̲E̲N̲C̲E̲S̲

Apthorp, H., Dean, C., Florian, J., Lauer, P., Reichardt, R., Sanders, N., & Snow-Renner, R. (2001). *Standards in classroom practice: Research synthesis*. Aurora, CO: Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning.

Council of Chief State School Officers and the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin. (2002). *Expecting success: A study of five high performing, high poverty schools*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers**.**

Cromey, A. & Hanson, M. (2000). *An exploratory analysis of school-based student assessment systems.* Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL).

Darling-Hammond, L. (1999). *Solving the dilemmas of teacher supply, demand and standards: How we can ensure a competent, caring, and qualified teacher for every child*. Washington, DC: National Commission on Teaching & America's Future.

Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J. & Wayman, J. (2009). *Using student achievement data to s support instructional decision making.* (NCES 2009-4067). Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Just for the Kids (JFTK) (2001). *Promising practices: How high-performing schools in Texas get results*. Austin, TX: JFTK. Retrieved from http://www.just4kids.org/US/pdf/PP_OSummary.pdf Lauer, P. (2001).

Teacher learning for standards-based education. In Apthorp, H., Dean, C., Florian, J., Lauer, P., Reichardt, R., Sanders, N., & Snow-Renner, R. *Standards in classroom practice: Research synthesis***.** Aurora, CO: Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning

Maryland State Department of Education**.** *Structure regular time for teams to examine student work***.** Retrieved from http://mdk12.org/proces//student_achievement/Structure-Regular_Time_e.html

Perlman, C. & Redding, S. (Eds.). (2009). *Handbook on effective implementation of School Improvement Grants*. Lincoln, IL: Center on Innovation and Improvement.

4. **STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT: PROGRESS REPORT UPDATES ARE PROVIDED TO PARENTS REGULARLY.**

Quality charter schools and teachers provide parents reports on their children's academic and social progress on a regular basis.

Frequency of reports. The frequency of reports may vary depending on the grades served. Student progress refers to reports on students' academic and behavioral performance.

Reporting Formats. The reports may be formal (e.g., such as a report card) or informal (through telephone conversations or emails). The written reports should be clearly written and available in the parents' home language. The reports should include specific written explanation of student performance. A recent study of 35 public charter elementary and middle schools in New York City found that high achieving charter schools provided more academic, behavioral, and general feedback to parents per semester than less effective schools (Dobbie and Fryer, 2011).

Parent Teacher Association (PTA) National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

The second standard of the PTA National Standards is: Communicating Effectively:
Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

The PTA has the following suggestions for school leaders and staff:

1. Map the school's parent-teacher contacts. How often do teachers communicate with families? What are the main topics? When do they have face- to- face contact?

2. Work with the PTA/parent group to establish guidelines for regular communication between home and school (e.g., monthly calls from teachers to parents, home visits, weekly newspaper).

3. Engage school staff, community members, and parents in developing a parent handbook.

4. Establish a method for parents to review their children's work on a regular basis. For example, use envelopes to send student work home each week and have a place for parent comments.

5. Publicize the hours when administrators and teachers are available for parent visits and any procedures for contacting teachers on the telephone or in writing.

National Network of Partnership Schools

Joyce Epstein (1995) recommends designing effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress. Activities may include:

- Conferences with every parent at least once a year.

- Language translators to assist families as needed.

- Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications.

Refer to the following relevant section of the Implementation Guide on parents understanding how to support learning at home: *Indicator D.2. School and Community Engagement: Parents understand how to support learning at home.*

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
The National Standards for Family-School Partnerships offer a framework for how families, schools, and communities should work together to support student success.

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: An Implementation Guide

A tool for empowering people to work together with an end goal of building family-school partnerships and student success. Available from http://pta.org/2757.asp
For each standard, the guide provides the following information: A definition of the standard, followed by a brief explanation of its importance and a discussion of the key goals; Expert insights, which can help convince educators of the standard's value; A local success story from a school community making real progress toward meeting that standard; Action steps for your school community; and additional resources to enhance your understanding and help your school meet the standard.

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

To facilitate the implementation in local schools of programs, practices, and policies that are guided by the Standards, the PTA has developed an assessment guide, otherwise known as a rubric. Access the rubric from http://www.pta.org/Documents/National_Standards_Assessment_Guide.pdf

National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)

Established at Johns Hopkins University in 1996, NNPS invites schools, districts, states, and organizations to join together and use research-based approaches to organize and sustain excellent programs of family and community involvement that will increase student success in school.
The NNPS website has a variety of resources, including: publications and products, professional development resources, research summaries and briefs, Promising Partnership Practices, and Success Stories. Access the website at http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/

National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools disseminates research-based information and resources to foster connections among families, communities, and schools with the goal of improving student academic achievement. The Center emphasizes connections that impact student achievement in reading and math, as well as connections that contribute to students' overall success in school and in life. The website includes: toolkits, literature database, free archived webinars and forums, research syntheses, and briefs and handouts.

Family and Community Involvement: Reaching Out to Diverse Populations

Ferguson, C. (2005). *Family and community involvement: Reaching out to diverse populations.* Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). Also available in Spanish. Available from http://www.sedl.org/pubs/family29/family_involvement.pdf

This handbook is designed for teachers and principals who want to develop meaningful parent and community involvement with culturally and linguistically diverse community members. This guide introduces strategies for promoting meaningful dialogue with diverse populations, including:

1. Know your community, get smart about communicating with parents and community members;

2. Provide extra help for school staff and parents;

3. Bridge the gap between families, communities, and schools; and

4. Evaluate your public engagement efforts regularly.

Each strategy explanation includes questions for consideration and suggested activities.

REFERENCES

Dobbie, W., & Fryer, R. (2011, November). *Getting beneath the veil of effective schools: Evidence from New York City.*

Epstein, J. (1995). *School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share, Phi Delta Kappan*, 76 (9), 701-712.

National PTA. (2009*). PTA National standards for family-school partnerships: An implementation guide.* Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved from http://pta.org/2757.asp

5. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT: STUDENTS THAT ARE NOT MEETING GRADE LEVEL STANDARDS RECEIVE MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACADEMIC INTERVENTION AND ACCELERATION (IN CLASSROOM, OUT OF CLASSROOM, BEYOND REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS, ETC.).

Given the diversity of students enrolled in public charter schools, quality charter schools acknowledge student differences and implement a variety of intervention and acceleration opportunities for students to meet achievement goals. Academic intervention refers to additional instruction which supplements the instruction provided in the general curriculum and assists students in meeting the State standards. Academic acceleration is the successful use of many different techniques, methodologies and approaches to instruction and the learning environment to achieve a faster learning rate. (Maryland State Department of Education)

 A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework, 2008)

Teachers in high performing schools provide immediate feedback and intervention for students based on daily, weekly, or monthly reviews of student progress (Just for the Kids, no date). The opportunities for intervention and acceleration should be based on assessments of students (e.g., screening, diagnostic, classroom, benchmark assessments). If any student fails to make sufficient progress, administrators meet with teachers to assist in developing intervention strategies immediately. Effective schools regroups students for instruction as they progress or experience difficulty. (Just for the Kids, 2001). In addition, administrators and teachers use assessment data to identify students in need of tutoring, small-group instruction, and other support (Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 2002).

In one study of charter school applications in three states, the National Charter School Research Project (Christensen & Rainey, 2009) found that charter schools:

(1)   often targeted specific student populations, especially at risk students;

(2)   tailor educational programs to meet the needs of targeted student populations;

(3)   employ more student-centered instructional methods

(4)   use college-prep and school-to-work packages to serve at-risk students; and

(5)   provide instructional support services, such as mandatory after-school tutoring, academic counseling, and post-graduate support.

Maryland's Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students

There are a variety of approaches to providing interventions and acceleration to students. Many schools are moving to a systematic, school-wide multi-tiered approach.

In June, 2008, Maryland State Department of Education released guidelines for *A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement for All Students*. The document includes: a description of the suggested tiered instructional approach that may be implemented, guidance on identifying specific learning disabilities, and a description of the development process by Maryland stakeholders.   See the Maryland State Department of Education resources for access to the publication: *Accelerating Achievement Across Cultures*

In 2008, Maryland State Department of Education published *A Practical Guide to Accelerating Student Achievement Across Cultures: Strategies for Administrators, Teachers, Students and parents*. The guide identifies the following five core competencies and goals:

1. Participating in Intercultural Communication
   Goal: Adopt a global perspective that promotes the valuing of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity.

2. Reducing prejudice
   Goal: Eliminate racism and other forms of prejudice and discrimination within the learning environment.

3. Establishing culturally support learning environments
   Goal: Determine and implement appropriate strategies that allow all students to learn.

4. Designing and implementing curriculum and instruction for education that is multicultural and accelerating minority achievement
   Goal: Establish and maintain high expectations for achievement of all students.

5. Designing tests, measurements, and assessments for achievement equity
   Goal: Utilize tests, measurements, and assessments to access information and prepare for instruction and learning.

The guide includes twelve strategies with one to four strategies stated per goal. Strategies are organized by three dimensions: personal, cognitive, and social. The strategies are organized by administrators, teachers, students, and parents. In addition, the guide includes professional development competencies for enhancing teacher efficacy in implementing education that is multicultural and accelerating minority achievement.

Virtual Learning in Maryland

The Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities (MVLO) program, established in 2002, by legislation, includes: 1) Maryland Virtual School (MVS) which provides supplemental online courses for grades 6-12 in collaboration with local school systems; the High School Assessments program; and online professional development. To ensure a quality online learning experience, MVS has established an extensive set of policies and procedures (including technical specifications, school requirements and registration procedures, and a Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation Guide). All MVS courses must meet Maryland state standards and be reviewed and approved by MSDE per Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) requirements. All online courses for high school graduation credit must be approved by MSDE.

Online Course. The MSDE's Definition of an Online Course is as follows: an online course is "a course provided through the Internet and other technologies in which 80% or more of the instruction is conducted online with the teacher and student separated by distance or time or both and in which two-way communication between the teacher and student is required."

Note: Maryland State Code, Section 9-102 (10) (Definition of a public charter school), a public charter school means a school that requires students to be physically present on school premises for a period of time substantially similar to that which other public school students spend on school premises.

Local School System Policies and Procedures. For online courses, COMAR 13A.03.02.05D(1) specifies that "Consistent with local school system policy and procedure, credit may be given for Department-approved online courses." MSDE has developed an approval process for online courses that are administered by a local school system. This approval process helps ensure the quality of the online courses offered by our public schools and ensures that such courses align with state content standards and core learning goals. Credit can only be awarded for MSDE-approved online courses.

Students may take a course through the MVS only with permission from the local school system and school principal.

Blended Learning Definition and Models

The definition for blended learning has two components: 1) a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of instruction and content, with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace; and 2) at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home (Innosight Institute, Staker & Horn, May 2012).

Innosight Institute (Staker & Horn, May, 2012) has identified four models of blended learning. These include:

1. Rotation model
A rotation model is a program in which within a given course or subject, students rotate on a fixed schedule or at the teacher's discretion between learning modalities, with at least one of these is online learning. Other modalities might include activities such as small-group, whole class instruction, group projects, individual tutoring, and paper-and-pencil assignments.

2. Flex model
A flex model is a program in which content and instruction are delivered primarily by the Internet; students move on an individually, customized and fluid schedule using different modalities; and the teacher-of-record is on-site. The teacher or other adults provide personal support on a flexible and adaptive as-needed basis through the activities.

3. Self-blend model
The self-blend model is one in which students choose to take one or more courses entirely online to supplement their traditional courses and the teacher-of-record is the online teacher. Students may take online courses either on campus or off-site. Students self-blend some individual online courses and take other courses on campus with teachers.

4. Enriched virtual model
The enriched virtual model is a whole school experience. Students divide their time between attending the campus and learning remotely using online delivery of courses and instruction.
For more information about these models, see the resource section for Innosight Institute.
.

The MSDE Publications Overview website has a variety of resources. Access the website at
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/newsroom/publications

A Practical Guide to Accelerating Student Achievement Across Cultures

Maryland State Department of Education, (2008, September). *A practical guide to accelerating student achievement across cultures: Strategies for administrators, teachers, students and parents.* Developed by the Education That is Multicultural and Achievement Network (ETMA) in collaboration with the Achievement Initiative for Maryland's Minority Students (AIMMS) Steering Committee and the Maryland State Department of Education. Baltimore, MD: Maryland State Department of Education Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/
This document provides action steps that can be taken by teachers, administrators, parents, and students to develop the personal, cognitive and social dimensions of students.

A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework (2008).

Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, Division of Instruction, and Division of Student, Family, and School Support. (2008, June). *A tiered instructional approach to support achievement of all students: Maryland's Response to Intervention framework.* Baltimore, MD: Author. Available from
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/rti/
Additional Resources on Getting Started with Response to Intervention available from
http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/rti/started
Additional Resources on Teachers Using Response to Intervention available from
http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/rti/teachers
Additional Resources for RtI Leaders at School and District Level available from
http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/rti/leaders_school_district

Special Education in Charter Schools: A Resource Primer for the State of Maryland (2006).

Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services. (2006). *Special education in charter schools: A resource primer for the State of Maryland.* Baltimore, MD: Author. Available from http://www.mdcharternetwork.org/res_publications.html

Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities (MVLO) program

For more information, refer to the MVLO web site:
http://mdk12online.org/schools/schoolshome.htm

Innosight Institute

Innosight Institute currently has two Practices where it works on applying these theories to introduce innovation to improve society: education and health care. In these Practices, the Institute: Researches how the theories apply and offer a path for improvement; Promotes the recommendations; and Helps to apply the theories to induce positive change and learn more. The web site has a variety of resources on blended learning at http://www.innosightinstitute.org

Classifying K-12 Blended Learning

Staker, H., & Horn, M. (2012, May). *Classifying K-12 blended learning*. San Mateo, CA: Innosight Institute. Retrieved from http://www.innosightinstitute.org/media-room/publications/blended-learning/ This white paper introduces a refined definition of blended learning and distinguishes blended learning from other education practices. It highlights four blended-learning models and sub-models that are appearing across K-12 education. It provides examples of schools and districts that have implemented these models.

National Center on Response to Intervention (RTI)

The National Center on RTI, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, hosts a variety of resources about RTI. The resources include: tool charts, implementation tools, webinars, ask the experts, training modules, and research.   Access the Center's web site at http://www.rti4success.org/

Doing What Works

The Doing What Works (DWW) is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The DWW website has an online library of resources that may help teachers, schools, and districts and implementing research-based practices. Resources include: overview of multimedia presentations and materials with interviews with experts and videos and interviews with schools successfully implementing research-based practices, and comprehensive tools and templates, including planning and implementation tools for schools.

One of the topic areas under Data-driven Improvement is the Response to Intervention. The specific topics include: Response to Intervention in Primary Grade Reading and Response to Intervention in Elementary-Middle Math. Under Literacy, there are resources for Response to Intervention in Primary Grade Reading. Under Math and Science, there is Response to Intervention in Elementary-Middle Math. Access the web site on Response to Intervention at http://dww.ed.gov/.

REFERENCES

Christensen, J. & Rainey, L. (2009, May). Custom tailored: Trends in charter school educational programs. *Inside Charter School Research Brief*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington, Center on Reinventing Public Education. Retrieved from http://crpe.edgateway.net/cs/crpe/view/csr_pubs/279.

Council of Chief State School Officers and the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin. (2002). *Expecting success: A study of five high performing, high poverty schools.* Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers**.**

Staker, H., & Horn, M. (2012, May). ***Classifying K-12 blended learning.*** San Mateo, CA: Innosight Institute. Retrieved from http://www.innosightinstitute.org/media-room/publications/blended-learning/.

Just for the Kids (JFTK) (2001). Promising practices: How high-performing schools in Texas get results. Austin, TX: JFTK. Retrieved from http://www.just4kids.org/US/pdf/PP_OSummary.pdf.

Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, Division of Instruction, and Division of Student, Family, and School Support. (2008, June). ***A tiered instructional approach to support achievement of all students: Maryland's Response to Intervention framework***. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/rti/

6. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT: STAFF HOLDS HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENT S.

Research has documented that high performing schools have high academic and behavioral expectations for all students, regardless of students' previous academic and/or behavioral performance (Education Trust, 2005; Dobbie and Fryer, 2011). Schools communicate high expectations to students and parents through their goals, curriculum, instruction, assignments, and other activities.

Effective schools have an orderly climate that supports student learning through clear and enforced expectations for student behavior that minimize disruptions (McREL, 2005). Through shared leadership, teachers take responsibility for creating structured, well-managed classes where students are clear about their learning goals and behavioral expectations (McREL, 2005).

At high performing schools, educators and staff take responsibility for helping students meet these expectations. Educators believe that they can succeed with any student regardless of the nature of the home situation, the student's previous performance or diagnosis, resource difficulties and whatever other constraints might confront the school (Lewis, 2001).

A school that establishes high expectations for all students – and provides the support necessary to achieve these expectations – has high rates of academic success.

RESOURCES FROM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Innovations in Education Guides

The Innovations in Education book series, published by the Office of Innovations and Improvement, highlight promising practices in putting the *No Child Left Behind Act* to work. Available from http://www2.ed/gov/about/pubs/intro/innovations.html

The following titles of the books related to charter schools are free:

Charter High Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap

This guide shows how eight diverse schools are using innovative instructional approaches to close the achievement gap between the highest and lowest performing students.

K-8 Charter Schools Guide Closing the Achievement Gap

This guide looks at seven K-8 charter schools that are dispelling the myth that some students cannot achieve to high standards. These schools are closing the achievement gap through challenging curriculum, high expectations, and the proper support that all students need to success.

REFERENCES

Dobbie, W., & Fryer, R., Jr. (2011, November). *Getting beneath the veil of effective schools: Evidence from New York City*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University. Retrieved from http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/fryer/files/effective_schools.pdf

Education Trust (2005, November**). *Gaining transaction, gaining ground: How some high schools accelerate learning for struggling students***. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.edtrust.org/dc/publication/gaining-traction-gaining-ground-how-some-high-schools-accelerate-learning-for-struggling-students.

Lewis, A. with Paik, S. (2001). *Add it up: Using research to improve education for low-income and minority students***. Washington, DC: Poverty & Race Research Action Council. Retrieved from http://acrn.ovae.org/teachers/documents/pubs_aiu.pdf

Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) (2005). ***McREL Insights: Schools that 'beat the odds.'*** Denver, CO: Author.

7. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT: TEACHERS DIFFERENTIATE THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES TO MEET THE LEARNING NEEDS OF ALL DIVERSE STUDENTS IN THEIR CLASSES.

Diverse students include groups of students who differ in the areas of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, language, exceptionalities, background and experience, religion, region, age, and/or sexual orientation**.** (Maryland State Department of Education).

A high performing school has strategies in place to address the variant student needs and learning preferences, inclusive of students at risk of academic failure, advanced learners, and/or students not making reasonable progress toward achieving school goals.

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is a process of designing instruction that meets the varied needs of a group of learners. Differentiated instruction includes, but is not limited to, varying the instructional content, instructional strategies, groupings or materials, and student assignments based on student skill levels, learning preferences, and interest levels. There are a variety of resources on differentiated instructional practices. See the resource section.

Universal Design for Learning

Another approach is to differentiation is Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework for applying universal design principles to instructional materials, curricula, and educational activities so that they are achievable and challenging for students with a wide range of abilities and needs. The framework focuses on: Multiple means of representation to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge. Multiple means of action and expression to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know. Multiple means of engagement to tap into learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn. See the resource section for additional resources.

Maryland Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Maryland legislature passed HB 59/SB 467 entitled "Task Force to Explore the Incorporation of the Principles of Universal Design for Learning into the Education Systems in Maryland." This is the first of its kind in the nation. This bill will establish a statewide Task Force of stakeholders that will make recommendations related to UDL implementation in Maryland. More information and resources are available from http://udl4maryland.webs.com/apps/links/.

A Route for Every Learner: Universal Design for learning as a Framework for Supporting Learning and Improving Achievement for All Learners in Maryland, Prekindergarten through Higher Education

In March, 2011, the above referenced Task Force issued their recommendations to the Maryland State Board of Education; the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee; the Budget and Taxation Committee, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Health and Government Operations Committee. The Task force report is titled *A Route for Every Learner: Universal Design for learning as a Framework for Supporting Learning and Improving Achievement for All Learners in Maryland, Prekindergarten through Higher Education*. The report includes: a description of Universal Design for Learning, UDL in context, task force recommendations, references, literature review, UDL Guidelines graphic, UDL guidelines educator checklist. The report is available from http://www.udlcenter.org/sites/udlcenter.org/

Maryland Criteria for Excellence: Gifted and Talented Program Guidelines

The publication sets forth the criteria in programs and services for gifted and talented students. Six major program components are addressed: (1) Identification of students; (2) Instructional program; (3) Professionally qualified teachers; (4) Professional development; (5) Program management; and (6) Evaluation. The publication is available from
http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented/criteria.htm
Additional information and resources can be found at the Maryland State Department of Education's web site: http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented/.

A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework (2008).

Available from *http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/rti/*.

Students with Disabilities and Special Education Services

Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education and Early Intervention. Additional resources and publications may be found at:
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/earlyinterv/Special_Ed_Info

Special Education in Charter Schools: A Resource Primer for the State of Maryland (2006).

This primer was developed to provide guidance to Maryland's local school systems (charter school authorizers) and charter school developers (operators) as they confront the unique challenges in developing and implementing effective practices to ensure the access and success of students with disabilities in charter schools. Available from the Maryland Charter School Network. Access the web-site document at http://www.mdcharternetwork.org/res_publications.html

Maryland Learning Links

Sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education in conjunction with Johns Hopkins University School for Education, Center for Technology in Education. This web site provides an overview of differentiated instruction as well as a variety of resources and links to other sites The major resources for differentiated instruction include:
- How you can use the framework of "content, process, and product" to implement differentiated instruction.
- The importance of pre-assessment – developing an understanding of your students' learning strengths and needs.
- The ways you can adapt the curricula, instruction, and assessment to ensure growth for all students.
- How you can adapt your classroom space to promote differentiated instruction.

Resources Web site http://marylandlearninglinks.org/951.

Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE)

The Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education, Inc. (MCIE) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the inclusion of students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools. Their mission is to be the catalyst for meaningful and successful participation of all students in their neighborhood schools. The publications below are available from: http://www.mcie.org/pages/resources/resources-and-publications

All Inclusive: Special Education is a Service, Not a Place!

This monograph was commissioned by the Maryland Task Force on Inclusive Education, which was formed to explore best practices and to make recommendations on inclusive education throughout the state. MCIE put this together for the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education and Early Intervention Services.

Individual Student Planning - Planning the Transition from Special Education Classes to General Education Settings!

Read about how to use the MAPs process (Making Action Plans, or McGill Action Planning System) to set the stage for inclusion. When students have been in self-contained classes, are moving from elementary to middle or high school, or when making inclusion a success is a challenge, this process helps to create the vision, identify needed supports, and rally together the team to take action. MCIE divides the process into two parts: planning for services prior to the IEP meeting, and then planning to implement the IEP and supports needed in a regular class and neighborhood school.

Inclusive Education in Maryland: A Blueprint for Change (in partnership with The Arc of Maryland, Inc., Maryland Disability Law Center, Mid-Atlantic Chapter of TASH)

This 2003 comprehensive resource chronicles the history of least restrictive environments (LREs), explains inclusive education in the context of IDEA, describes barriers to inclusion, and proposes solutions to those barriers. The collaborative effort was a project of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council.

Inclusive Education Research and Practice: Inclusion Works

This document describes the vast body of research demonstrating the positive impact of inclusion in general education classrooms. It uses quantitative and qualitative research findings to explain the positive outcomes of inclusion on both students with and without disabilities, and describes effective tools in making inclusion work.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Research and Practice

Focusing on the school-wide approach to PBIS, this guide describes the tiers of successful intervention and provides evidence of its impact on student performance. Throughout the guide, PBIS studies are incorporated and explained.

Quality Indicators for Inclusive Building Based Practices

Developed using several evidence-based practice tools, this resource was designed to help schools examine their inclusive practices and better meet the needs of diverse learners. It includes a detailed self-assessment tool for school teams.

OTHER GENERAL RESOURCES

ASCD

ASCD (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) is a membership educational leadership organization. The web site includes research and reports, articles, books, experts, identification of courses on line and institutes and conferences, and videos on differentiated instruction. Web site for resources on differentiated instruction at: http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/differentiated-instruction-resources.aspx.

Center for Applied Special Technology – CAST

The CAST web site offers information related to Universal Design for Learning, including publications, tools, products, and professional development resources. Topics and resources such as Learning About UDL (the Basics, Activities, Case Stories) and Featured Tools (Diagnosing the Curriculum, and Planning UDL Curriculum) and Model UDL Literacy Lessons for Elementary, Middle and High School. The Learning Tools site provides educators with an array of instructional supports including:

- UDL Book Builder – develop digital books to support reading instruction;

- Curriculum Self-Check – build options and flexibility into curriculum elements to reach and engage all students;

- UDL Lesson Builder – assists with lesson/units of study design.

  Website at http://www.cast.org

Center for Instruction

The Center on Instruction, funded by the U.S. Department of Instruction, supports the regional Comprehensive Centers as they serve state education leaders helping schools and districts meet the goals of No Child Left Behind—to close the achievement gap and improve teaching and learning for all students. Content areas include: reading, mathematics, science, special education, and English language learning. Resources include: syntheses of recent research, practitioner guides, professional development materials, tools for educators, and examples from the field. Web site for resources on differentiated instruction: http://www.centeroninstruction.org/resources

Differentiation Central

This is the website for Dr. Carol Tomlinson, Professor of Education at University of Virginia and a major expert in differentiated instruction. The web site includes: resources on differentiation for different grade levels, articles, books, video clips, multi-media, and   lesson plan templates and examples. Web site http://differtiationcentral.com/.

ERIC (Education Resources Information Clearinghouse)

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the web site includes a variety of free articles and reports. Search for differentiated instruction. Website http://www.eric.ed.gov/

The IRIS Center

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the web site includes seven video modules and twenty-seven articles on differentiated instruction. On the web site, look for the tab for differentiated instruction. Web site http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources.html.

Learning Port

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the web site provides a national online library of professional development resources compiled to help bridge research, policy and practice. Web site for resources on differentiated instruction http://www.learningport.us/

National Charter School Resource Center

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Charter School Resource Center has a variety of resources on the following relevant focus areas:
- Charter Operations
- Collaboration
- English Language Learners
- Human Capital
- Special Education
- Understanding Charter Schools

The resources include: reports, toolkits, briefs, presentations, articles, case studies, policy and procedures, data, books, and samples. General web site http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/.

PBS TeacherLine

The web site includes information about on-line courses in differentiated instruction through a variety of universities for 6th-8th grades. The information includes names of universities, credits, syllabi, and pricing. Web site http://www.pbs.org/teacherline/catalog/courses/INST180/.

The RTI Action Network

The RTI Action Network is a program of the National Center for Learning Disabilities, funded by the Cisco Foundation and in partnership with the nation's leading education associations and top RTI experts. Search the web site for differentiated instruction resources: Web site http://www.rtinetwork.org/.

Reading Rockets

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Reading Rockets is a national multimedia project that offers research-based and best-practice information on teaching kids to read and helping those who struggle. The web site includes articles, video resources and professional development webcasts. Web site http://www.readingrockets.org/atoz/differentiated_instruction/.

U.S. Department of Education

The web site includes archived materials from a PowerPoint presentation at a Summer Workshop by Mark Walker on Differentiated Instruction.   Web site http://www2.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/summerworkshop/walker/

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/

An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):
- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and
- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

Relevant Practice Guides include:
- *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making*
- *Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning*
- *Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement*
- *Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom*

English Language Arts
- *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*
- *Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Interventions in the Primary Grades*

- *Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades*
- *Teaching Elementary School Students to be Effective Writers*
- *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*

Mathematics
- *Developing Effective Fractions Instruction for Kindergarten Through 8th Grade*
- *Improving Mathematical Problem Solving in Grades 4 through 8*
- *Encouraging Girls in Math and Science*
- *Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Response to Intervention (RtI) for Elementary and Middle Schools*

GENERAL RESOURCES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Center for Instruction

The Center on Instruction, funded by the U.S. Department of Instruction, supports the regional Comprehensive Centers as they serve state education leaders helping schools and districts meet the goals of No Child Left Behind—to close the achievement gap and improve teaching and learning for all students. Content areas include: reading, mathematics, science, special education, and **English language learning**. Resources include: syntheses of recent research, practitioner guides, professional development materials, tools for educators, and examples from the field. Web site for resources on English language learners http://www.centeroninstruction.org/topic

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA)

Authorized under Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA) supports the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (OELA) in its mission to respond to Title III educational needs, and implement NCLB as it applies to English language learners (ELLs). The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition collects, coordinates and conveys a broad range of research and resources in support of an inclusive approach to high quality education for English Language Learners. The web site has a library variety of resources for professional development and English Language proficiency standards and assessments. Resources available from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/

National Charter School Resource Center

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Charter School Resource Center has a variety of resources on the following relevant focus areas: English Language Learners.
The resources include: reports, toolkits, briefs, presentations, articles, case studies, policy and procedures, data, books, and samples. General web site http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/.

National Council of La Raza.

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is the largest national Hispanic advocacy organization in the United States. NCLR conducts research, policy analysis, and advocacy. Among its resources are:

Educating English Language Learners: Implementing Instructional Practices

Vialpando, J. & Yedlin, J. with C. Linse, M. Harrington, & G. Cannon. (2005). *Educating English language learners: Implementing instructional practices*. Supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and in consultation with the Education Alliance at Brown University. Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza.

This guide emphasizes the implementation of instructional strategies and techniques by charter school professionals. Its purpose is to assist charter school educators in developing the capacity to provide appropriate curricula, instruction, and assessment for English language learners and to increase educators' awareness of how to access relevant resources. The authors describe the process for identifying English language learners, review theories related to second language acquisition and language development, discuss considerations for selecting program models and training staff, and outline a number of instructional strategies that can be used to help ELLs succeed. The guide is available from http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/nclr/edells_impinstprct.pdf.

Educating English Language Learners: Understanding and Using Assessment

Vialpando, J. & Yedlin, J. with C. Linse, M. Harrington, & G. Cannon. (2005). *Educating English language learners: Understanding and Using Assessment*. Supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and in consultation with the Education Alliance at Brown University.
This guide provides information relevant to operators, teachers, and teacher trainers on the development of an effective assessment program for schools serving English language learners. The guide includes bilingual education resources, web resources, and scenarios for professional development. Available from http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications

Preparing Young Latino Children for School Success: Best Practices in Language Instruction

Beltran, E. (2012, August). Preparing young Latino children for school success: Best practices in language instruction. *NCLR Issue Brief 2012*, 23, 1-7. Washington, DC: National Council for La Raza. This policy brief highlights the importance of intentional language instruction for Hispanic children, particularly English language learners, highlights a best practice in the field, and concludes with policy recommendations for bringing successful programs to scale. The Brief features the The Latin American Montessori Bilingual Public Charter School in Washington, D.C.
Available from
http://www.nclr.org/index.php/publications/preparing_young_latino_children_for_school_sucess_best_practices_in_language_instruction/ .

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/
An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):
- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and

- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades: A Practice Guide

Gersten, R., Baker, S.K., Shanahan, T., Linan-Thompson, S., Collins, P., & Scarcella, R. (2007). *Effective literacy and English language instruction for English learners in the elementary grades: A practice guide* (NCEE 2007-4011). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/20074011.pdf .

GENERAL RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Center for Instruction

The Center on Instruction, funded by the U.S. Department of Instruction, supports the regional Comprehensive Centers as they serve state education leaders helping schools and districts meet the goals of No Child Left Behind—to close the achievement gap and improve teaching and learning for all students. Content areas include: reading, mathematics, science, **special education**, and English language learning. Resources include: syntheses of recent research, practitioner guides, professional development materials, tools for educators, and examples from the field. Web site for resources on special education http://www.centeroninstruction.org/

The IRIS Center

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the web site includes the following types of resources: video modules, case studies, activities, information briefs, and podcasts in English and Spanish. Topics include: accommodations, assessment (including progress monitoring), behavior and classroom management, collaboration, content instruction, differentiated instruction, disability, diversity, learning strategies, mathematics, RTI (response to intervention), Literacy (reading and language arts), related services, school improvement/leadership, transition, and grades: Prek-3, 4-8, and high school. Web site for resources http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources.html.

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY)

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the Center has a variety of resources on disabilities, special education, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
Resources address: specific disabilities, student behavior and federal discipline requirements, effective instruction, disability resources in your state, IDEA requirements, staff development, and paraprofessionals. Website especially for school teachers and administrators http://nichcy.org/schools-administrators.

8. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT: SCHOOL POLICIES, PROCEDURES, PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES ARE ALIGNED TO SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING

A high quality charter school ensures that its policies and procedures, programs, and resources are aligned and support student learning.
High performing school leaders have a gift for acquiring, allocating and using resources to strengthen student learning and link the deployment of resources to the school's mission and goals (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007). Human, financial, and material resources are all directed to improve student learning.

A study of 35 public charter elementary and middle schools in New York City found that five policies explained almost half the variation in school effectiveness (student outcomes) and denoted the differences between high achieving and other charter schools (Dobbie and Fryer, 2011).
The key policies of high achieving public charter schools included:

(1)   Frequent teacher feedback (16.41 times per semester for elementary schools, 13.42 times per semester at a middle school);
(2)   Data-driven instruction (interim assessments 3.92 times per semester for elementary school and 4 times per semester for middle school; schools tracked students using data and differentiated strategies based on data);
(3)   Parental engagement (high achieving elementary and middle schools provided more academic, behavioral, and general feedback to parents per semester);
(4)   High-dosage tutoring of students (typical group of six or fewer students and tutoring four or more times per week);
(5)   Increased instructional time (longer instructional year (elementary: 190.67 instructional days and 7.36 instructional hours; middle: 191 instructional days and 8.17 instructional hours); and
(6)   A relentless focus on academic goals with higher behavioral and academic expectations (culture and expectations).

Instructional Coherence

A school may promote instructional coherence or an instructional framework that specifies and aligns the content, tools, and methods of teaching and assessment, and the expectations and climate for student learning both vertically across grades and horizontally within grades (Newman, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001). Programs, procedures and practices are in place that are deliberately designed to provide an academic learning climate reflective of the school's mission in which quality instruction and student achievement are valued and supported at the highest level.
The National Working Group on Funding Student Learning (2008) believes that ambitious learning goals demand that educators:

- distinguish core instruction and instructional supports from competing resource demands;
- understand effective resource use;
- match available resources with instructional needs; and
- make choices and tradeoffs to strengthen teaching and learning.

Other Relevant Sections of the Implementation Guide

Refer also to relevant sections on the allocation, integration, and organization of resources and access to resources by instructional staff:
       Indicator E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures,
       Critical Success Factor 5. Allocation, Integration, and Organization of Resources; and

<u>**RESOURCES**</u>

School Finance Redesign Project of the Center on Reinventing Public Education

The School Finance Redesign Project (SFRP) encompasses research, policy analysis, and public engagement activities that examine how K-12 finance can be redesigned to better support student performance. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, SFRP addresses the question, "How can resources help schools achieve the higher levels of student performance that state and national education standards now demand?" The Center has a variety of publications at the following website http://crpe.edgateway.net/cs/crpe/view/projects/

<u>**REFERENCES**</u>

Dobbie, W., & Fryer, R., Jr. (2011, November). *Getting beneath the veil of effective schools: Evidence from New York City.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University. Retrieved from: http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/fryer/files/effective_schools.pdf.

Murphy, J., Elliott, S., Goldring, E., & Porter, A. (2007). Leadership for learning: A research-based model and taxonomy of behaviors. *School Leadership and Management*, 27(2), 179-201. Retrieved from: http://www.ode.state.or.us/opportunities/grants/saelp/murphy.pdf.

National Working Group on Funding Student Learning. (2008, October). *Funding student learning: How to align education resources with student learning goals.* Bothell, WA: School Finance Redesign Project, Center on Reinventing Public Education, University of Washington. Retrieved from: http://cepa.stanford.edu/.

Newman, F., Smith, B., Allensworth, E., & Bryk, A. (2001). *School instructional program coherence: Benefits and challenges*. Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved from: http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/school-instructional-program-coherence-benefits-and-challenges

9. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT: SECONDARY COURSES AND CURRICULA PREPARE STUDENTS FOR CAREER-READY AND COLLEGE-LEVEL WORK

Quality charter schools offer rigorous secondary courses and curricula so that high school graduates have the reading, writing, and mathematics skills needed to prepare them for the work force and/or place them in credit-bearing college courses.

Career Awareness and Readiness

All students should be guided to thinking about careers from an early age, so that as they begin high school, they make appropriate choices about courses and activities that can help them prepare for their desired career and, as they leave high school, they are prepared to enter a career pathway that will lead them to a family-sustaining wage. Multiple pathways are an important part of providing a valuable and relevant secondary education to students and can include options such as rigorous career technology education, early college access, and transition courses in middle or high school.

Maryland Career Development Framework

Maryland's Career Development Framework teaches individuals, PreK through adult, how to make appropriate choices regarding their education and career paths. Based on the *National Career Development Guidelines*, the framework includes six career development standards: self-awareness, career awareness, career exploration, career preparation, job seeking and advancement, and career satisfaction and transition. The framework is aligned with the Maryland State Curriculum and Skills for Success. It provides a developmental process for schools to use to give students an understanding of their individual traits, career aspirations, motives, and learning styles. It imparts life-long skill sets that are transferable as children mature into adults.

Maryland's Career and Technology Education

Maryland's system of Career and Technology Education (CTE) provides opportunities for students to explore career options and gain an understanding of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success. MSDE in partnership with statewide industry advisory groups, identified ten (10) Career Clusters that represent core business functions across broad industry areas in Maryland. Business partners further identified career pathways based on the end-to-end business process within career clusters. This representation of industry clusters and pathways is provided in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) publication *Maryland Career Clusters: Restructuring Learning for Student Achievement in a Technologically Advanced, Global Society* and serves as a starting point for the identification of Maryland CTE Programs of Study.

Maryland Career Clusters include:

- o Arts, Media, and Communication
- o Business Management and Finance
- o Consumer Services, Hospitality, and Tourism
- o Construction and Development
- o Environmental, Agricultural, and Natural Resources Systems
- o Health and Biosciences
- o Human Resource Services
- o Information Technology
- o Manufacturing, Engineering, and Technology

o Transportation Technologies Maryland's goal for 2020 is to have at least 55 percent of its students hold a postsecondary degree. (***Report of the Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force, 2010).***

To reach that goal, secondary charter schools will need to increase the success of students moving through high school into and through college (***Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force**, **2010***). It is particularly important to focus on students learning core skills that prepare them for postsecondary success. Schools need to ensure there are multiple pathways, flexibility, and supports to meet individual student needs. Multiple Pathway models include at least three components: college preparatory academic core classes, a choice of professional or technical core classes that offer academic and real world applications, and field-based learning. This type of curriculum provides students opportunities to learn and apply essential academic concepts and skills for functional purposes (Dynarski, et. al., 2009).

College Readiness

With almost 80 percent of today's fastest-growing jobs require some post-secondary education, all students need to complete an academically rigorous high school curriculum (ACT, 2005; Pathways to College Network). Students, who take high-level courses in high school, including advanced mathematics, laboratory science, and world language, are more likely to enroll in and complete a bachelor's degree program (Adelman, 2006).
College readiness can be defined operationally as the level of preparation a student needs in order to enroll and succeed—without remediation—in a credit-bearing general education course at a postsecondary institution that offers a baccalaureate degree or transfer to a baccalaureate program. (Conley, 2007). The following courses and programs have been defined as rigorous by several organizations (e.g. College Board, ACT, Inc., High Schools That Work, and State Scholars Initiative):

- Four years of English;
- Four years of mathematics, including Algebra I and II, geometry, and at least one advance course (trigonometry, pre-calculus, calculus, or statistics);
- Three years of laboratory science (e.g., biology, chemistry, physics);
- Three years of social studies; and
- Two years of a world language. (Pathways to College Network, no date).

An academically rigorous curriculum should be coherent across grade levels and teach comprehension, learning, writing, and analytical thinking skills (Pathways to College Network, no date).

Actions Principals/Teachers/Counselors Can Take

The Pathway to College Network recommends the following actions:

- Focus curricula and in-depth content coverage (including inquiry-based learning and development of students' critical reading and writing skills, analytical thinking, and reasoning abilities);
- Allow all students to take honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and provide students the support they need to successfully complete the courses;
- Partner with postsecondary institutions to provide students with dual enrollment programs that expose the students to college-level learning and allows them to earn degree credits;
- Provide all students with the academic and social support they need to succeed in college preparatory courses; and
- Implement programs that identify and engage students, who are at risk of falling behind or who are behind, and provide academic interventions that support successful outcomes.

Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force

The *Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force* (2010) identified that a central component is an aligned curriculum that prepares students for the content, assignments, and rigor they encounter in introductory college courses. The Task Force recommended that by 10th grade, schools should: (1) assess student progress toward achieving college readiness, (2) develop an individualized student plan to ensure college readiness by the end of 12th grade, (3) identify and clearly use benchmarks marking the path to college; and (4) provide interventions and acceleration strategies to help more students graduate. They also recommended that schools should determine if appropriate transition courses are available in the senior year of high school in expository reading, writing, and mathematics to assist students who are not college ready in becoming ready prior to graduation.

The *Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force* (2010) identified that a college-ready student has the following characteristics:

- Can be successful in credit-bearing introductory general education college courses or in an industry certification program without needing remediation;
- Competent in the Skills for Success, which are components of the Core Learning Goals identified by educators and the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education for workplace readiness. These skills address: learning, thinking, communication, technology, and interpersonal.
- Has an understanding of the steps to achieve identified career goals; and
- Mature enough and skilled enough in communication to seek assistance as needed, including student financial assistance.

Maryland Standards and Skills for Success

In 2010, Maryland adopted the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts. The Common Core State Standards is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The Common Core State Standards include college- and career-readiness exit standards and K-12 standards in mathematics and "language arts," defined as reading, writing, and speaking and listening.

Maryland developed the Skills for Success (SFS) to provide a readily understandable set of skills essential for students' future success in three learning environments: postsecondary education, the workplace, and the community. They were dubbed *skills* to distinguish them from the knowledge-centered content standards and core learning goals in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. There are descriptions of what students should know and be able to do upon graduation from high school.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

High School Graduation Requirements

Note: As of September, 2012, the Maryland Graduation Requirements are in the process of being revised. Please refer to the web site of the Maryland State Department of Education for more updated information.

Maryland Career Development Framework

The framework includes six career development standards: Self Awareness, Career Awareness, Career Exploration, Career Preparation, Job Seeking and Advancement, and Career Satisfaction and Transition. Available from: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/careertech/career_technology/tools_support/mcdfr.htm.

Companion resources have been created using the framework's standards to assist with implementation of Career Guidance and Advisory Programs for Grades 7-12. This allows for the attainment of a systemic approach for school guidance and advisement that stresses both academic and career planning. Resources have also been developed for adult learners.

Maryland High School Career and Technology Education Programs of Study

Career Technology Education (CTE) provides high school and community college students an opportunity to pursue a sequential technical and academic program of study leading to advancement in a career field. Available from: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/careertech/career_technology/publications/.

Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force Report

Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force. (2010, May). *Report of the Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force.* Baltimore, MD: Maryland State Department of Education. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/leadership/programs/cstf/.

Maryland Skills for Success

Available from:
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/careertech/career_technology/publications/

<u>OTHER RESOURCES</u>

Educational Policy Improvement Center

Creating College Readiness

Conley, D. (2009*). **Creating college readiness**. Prepared for the Bill & MeLinda Gates Foundation.
Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center.
Creating College Readiness is a report on a study of 38 U.S. high schools with proven success in preparing students for life after graduation. The selected schools represent a diverse cross-section of the U.S. education system. This document profiles each school and contains comprehensive and tangible examples of successful student preparation. Available from
http://cepr.uoregon.edu/publications.

Redefining College Readiness

Conley, D. (2007*). *Redefining college readiness*. Prepared for the Bill & MeLinda Gates Foundation.
Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center. This publication suggests that "college readiness" has been defined primarily in terms of high school courses taken, grades received, and scores on national tests. It proposes widening the scope of the definition to include Key Cognitive Strategies, Key Content Knowledge, Academic Behaviors, and Contextual Skills. Available from
http://cepr.uoregon.edu/publications.

National High School Center, **American Institutes for Research**

The National High School Center identifies research-supported improvement programs and tools, offers user-friendly products, and provides technical assistance services to improve secondary education. The National High School Center develops tools and products on the latest practices and information on pressing high school improvement topics such as: Graduation; Dropout Prevention; and Equity in High School Learning. General web site http://www.betterhighschools.org

High School Improvement: Indicators of Effectiveness and School-Level Benchmarks

This document, High School Improvement: Indicators of Effectiveness and School-Level Benchmarks, extends the framework and offers specific school-level benchmarks that provide a deeper level of detail for each indicator of effectiveness and describe school-level practices that can be implemented to support high school improvement at the local level. The Center provides the following eight elements of high school improvement to help facilitate a cohesive and comprehensive approach to high school improvement:

1. Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction
2. Assessment and Accountability
3. Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Growth
4. Student and Family Involvement

5. Stakeholder Engagement
6. Effective Leadership
7. Organization and Structure
8. Sustainability

Available from
http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/NHSC_ImprovementIndicators_2012.pdf.

National High School Center's College and Career Development Organizer

The National High School Center conducted a scan of organizations that address college and career readiness and identified more than 70 such organizations, including those focused on policy, practice, advocacy, access and research. Through this scan, the Center identified three major strands of work (see below) and created the College and Career Development Organizer. The organizer is intended to help users traverse the vast CCR landscape, encouraging conversations on each of the three strands and serving as a tool that can support the development of strategies and initiatives to better prepare all students for college and careers. Additionally, the National High School Center has created a series of tools and briefs to extrapolate on the College and Career Development Organizer and provide further insight into this increasingly complicated field of college and career readiness initiatives. Available from http://www.betterhighschools.org/documents/NHSC_CCROrganizerMar2012.pdf.

Multiple Pathways Program Assessment Rubric

LaPlante, A. and Stearns, R. (2008). *Multiple Pathways Assessment Rubric.* Berkeley, CA: ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career.
Schools offering multiple pathways should consider a wide range of elements to ensure that their pathway programs are of high quality and meet the varied needs of their students. The Multiple Pathways Program Assessment Rubric offers 19 elements that a school should consider in implementing programs, including: integrated project-based curriculum and instruction, teacher collaboration, scheduling, parent involvement, program evaluation, and other key components. For each element, the rubric describes four stages of growth, ranging from foundation pieces to full development. School design teams (typically including academic and technical teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, and students as well as postsecondary, business/industry, and community partners) can use the rubric for: Visioning, Self-assessment, Planning and Evaluation. Available from http://irvine.org/assets/pdf/evaluation/multiplePathwaysAssessmentRubric.pdf.

Pathways to College Network

The Pathways to College Network is an alliance of national organizations that advances college opportunity for underserved students by raising public awareness, supporting innovative research, and promoting evidence-based policies and practices across the K-12 and higher education sectors. Pathways promotes the use of research-based policies and practices, the development of new research that is both rigorous and actionable, and the alignment of efforts across middle school, high school, and higher education in order to promote college access and success for underserved students. General web site http://www.pathwaystocollege.net/

The ***College Readiness for All Toolbox*** is an effective set of well-researched tools, lessons learned, resources, and documents designed to do the following: Create a college-ready culture for ALL students, Enhance student expectations, achievement, and access, Provide educators and outreach professionals with self-assessment and evaluation activities, Help students and educators collaborate

on postsecondary success, Provide an understanding of the change process, and Create an easy to use roadmap for program implementation. Available from http://toolbox.pathwaystocollege.net/How-to-Use-the-Toolbox/

Putting Kids On The Pathway To College: How Is Your School Doing?

Asher, C. Henderson, A. T., and Maguire, C. (2008). *Putting kids on the pathway to college: How is your school doing?* Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University. This rubric enables high schools to assess their current programs and practices and their effectiveness at helping students graduate on time and ready for college-level work. The rubric identifies good practices, describes three levels of implementation for each one, gives examples of specific practices from the "Beating the Odds" schools, and provides a blank rubric form and a list of resources. Available from http://annenberginstitute.org/pdf/CollegePathwaysRubric.pdf

REFERENCES

ACT, Inc. (2005). **Courses count: Preparing students for postsecondary success**. Iowa City, IA: Author. Retrieved from http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/CoursesCount.pdf.

Adelman, C. (2006). **The toolbox revisited: Paths to degree completion from high school through college.** Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/toolboxrevisit/toolbox.pdf.

Conley, D. (2007*).* **Redefining college readiness**. Prepared for the Bill & MeLinda Gates Foundation. Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center. Retrieved from http://cepr.uoregon.edu/publications.

Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force. (2010, May). **Report of the Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force**. Baltimore, MD: Maryland State Department of Education.

Pathways to College Network. (no date). Academic rigor: At the heart of college access and success. **A College Readiness Issue Brief**. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy, Pathways to College Network
.

10. Student Learning and Achievement: High School students are prepared for post-secondary options.

Quality charter schools prepare high school students for post-secondary options by:

- increasing awareness of what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by 9th grade;
- assisting in overcoming deficiencies to ensure they are prepared for college or the work force;
- assisting in completing critical steps for college entry; and
- increasing aware of post-secondary options including career awareness and readiness.

Definition of College and Career Readiness

Conley (2012) defines college and career readiness as: "A student who is ready for college and career can qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit bearing college courses leading to a baccalaureate or certificate, or career pathway-oriented training programs without the need for remedial or developmental coursework."

College and Career Ready Curriculum

To build the knowledge base and academic skills necessary for post-secondary success, secondary students need rigorous curriculum and challenging learning experiences, opportunities to practice academic success behaviors, and support to develop and increase their knowledge.

By 9th grade, students and their families need to understand what is required for college and what is needed to apply to certain post-secondary institutions. Beginning in 9th grade, high school counselors should work with each student to ensure that he or she has a plan to complete the courses during high school. Schools need to develop a general four-year plan that defines the potential timing and sequence of college-ready courses for students. By the end of 9th grade, students need to complete Algebra II (Tierney, Bailey, Constantine, Finkelstein, & Hurd, 2009).

In a study of 38 schools and their college readiness programs and practices, the Educational Policy Improvement Center (Hooker & Brand, 2009) found that the schools designed their curriculum to prepare students for college readiness generally and for advanced placement courses specifically. College readiness standards are available from **College Board** and the **American College Testing Program** (see resources section).The schools strove to align course expectations, assignments, goals, and activities vertically across grades 9–12, using a set of college readiness standards as the reference point.

Assisting Students in Overcoming Deficiencies

As schools increase academic rigor, they need support strategies to ensure that students are receiving the assistance needed to complete challenging courses and be prepared for the work force. Schools need to identify students who have college expectations but are not meeting grade-level standards. The identification of students may be based on course grades, grade point averages, course completion, assessments, and college-readiness assessments (Tierney, et. al., 2009). It is recommended that schools hold conferences with students and their families at least annually to review the students' progress toward college expectations.

Students, who are not on track to complete a typical academic course sequence in four years, often have trouble catching up and meeting college-readiness objectives. The earlier in high school a student can catch up to a standard course sequence, the greater the likelihood that the student will meet college entrance requirements at high school graduation (Tierney, et. al., 2009). High schools need to develop a plan and work with students, who are not on track, to graduate in four years. The

plan should specify the steps students will take to get back on track academically and what additional instruction they will receive. High schools need to develop a variety of strategies to address academic deficiencies. Tutoring in all subject areas along with supplemental reading, writing, and math skill-building activities need to be offered to students (Pathways to College Network). Other strategies may include: providing extra time and opportunities through double blocking periods, tutorials, credit recovery, Saturday school, summer school, etc. Schools may design strategies and programs to help students improve their study skills; collect, organize, and retain factual information; take better notes; manage their time more effectively and efficiently; work in teams; and reflect on the quality of their work.

Analyzing Data on Students Dropping Out

The ***Dropout Prevention Practice Guide***, produced by the ***What Works Clearinghouse*** in 2009, identifies a variety of recommendations for targeted and school interventions. The *Practice Guide* recommends that schools examine:

> Which students are at risk of dropping out?

> Why do individual students drop out?

> When are students at risk of dropping out?

They recommend that schools use the data to identify incoming students with histories of academic problems, truancy, behavioral problems, and retentions. Once schools identify potential students, it is recommended that they monitor the academic and social performance and sense of engagement and belonging of all students on a regular basis. Then assign students to adult advocates who can help students address academic and social needs, communicate with families, and advocate for the student. The adult advocate can model positive behavior and decision-making skills, offer guidance, and encourage the student.

Effective Practices in Drop-Out Prevention

According to the What Works Clearinghouse, Dropout Prevention Practice Guide (2008), increasing student engagement is critical to preventing students from dropping out. Engagement involves active participation in learning and schoolwork as well as the social life of school. Student engagement involves both behavioral and psychological components. Behavioral engagement indicators include: student attendance, avoidance of disciplinary actions, class participation, and effort in doing schoolwork. Psychological engagement indicators include: a sense of belonging, interest, enthusiasm, and identification with the school.

The What Works Clearinghouse, ***Dropout Prevention Practice Guide*** (2008), recommends the following to reduce dropout rates of students:

1. Utilize data systems that support a realistic diagnosis of the numbers of students who drop out and that help identify individual students at high risk of dropping out (diagnostic);

2. Assign adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out (targeted intervention);

3. Provide academic support and enrichment to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills (targeted intervention);

4. Implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills (targeted intervention);

5. Personalize the learning environment and instructional process (schoolwide intervention);

6. Provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning and provide the skills needed to graduate and to serve them after they leave school (schoolwide intervention).

The WWC panel strongly recommended that schools take a strategic approach that integrates multiple recommendations for the biggest difference.

Maryland Dropout Prevention/School Completion Intervention/Resource Guide

In 2011, Maryland State Department of Education issued *a Dropout Prevention/School Completion Intervention/Resource Guide.* The purpose of the guide is to provide educators and parents a list of programs, initiatives, tools and evidenced-based practices to address the issue of school non completion. The guide includes an:

(1)   Overview;

(2)   Description of the What Works Clearinghouse *Dropout Practice Guide,* previously mentioned*,* and evidenced supported programs identified by the Institute of Education Sciences;

(3)   Dropout Prevention School Completion Toolkit with local school system assessment tool, appropriate placement tool, and systematic planning tool);

(4)   Alternative Education definition and standards; and

(5)   Local School system Programs/Initiatives.

The guide is available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org

Assisting Students in Completing Critical Steps for College Entry

Students need early exposure to the world of college in order to develop a college-going identity and understand how the structures, opportunities, and demands of higher education differ from high school. It is also critical for young people to be able to turn to adults who can answer their questions about college, guide them through the admission process, and help them find ways to finance their education (Hooker & Brand, 2009).

Schools across the country use a variety of strategies to assist students in completing critical steps for college entry **(**Hooker & Brand, 2009). Some schools require all students to take one or more college readiness tests, such as the American College Testing Program's EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT series or the College Board's PSAT and SAT. Student advisors help students interpret the results and use them to become more college-ready. Many schools have extensive programs of student and parent information to explain financial aid. Some offer help to families in completing financial aid forms. Many schools made college real to their students through visitation programs, dual enrollment courses, and opportunities for their students to take college courses.

College Readiness Model

The Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) (2009) developed a college readiness model in which a comprehensive college preparation program must address four distinct dimensions of college readiness:

- o cognitive strategies (problem solving, interpretation, reasoning, research);

- o content knowledge (master writing skills, algebraic content, foundational content);

- o self-management skills (study skills, time management, learning strategies); and

       o   knowledge about postsecondary education.

For more information on the model, see the citation under Resources. The, EPIC with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, undertook an in-depth study of 38 high schools (including charter schools) across the country to identify college readiness programs and practices. See citation in references.

Schools Create and Maintain a College-Going Culture

A college going culture refers to the environment, attitudes, and practices in schools and communities that encourage students and their families to obtain the information, tools, and perspective to enhance access to and success in post-secondary education (University of California at Berkeley). High schools with a college-going culture have a schoolwide belief that all students should go to college as their goal. They are focused on preparing students for college and how to make the transition successful. Faculty advisors may meet with a designated group of students regularly to review grades, discuss course selection, and develop strategies to overcome any learning obstacles. Counselors work intensively with students, providing technical support related to college application, choice, and financial aid. Schools may arrange multiple visits to college campuses, especially for potential first-generation college attendees. Senior seminars, may be required for all 12th graders, provide information, financial aid applications, encouragement, and support. Award ceremonies focus on students' academic accomplishments and recognize students who had been accepted to college (Hooker & Brand, 2009).

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Maryland High School Career and Technology Education Programs of Study

Career Technology Education (CTE) provides high school and community college students an opportunity to pursue a sequential technical and academic program of study leading to advancement in a career field. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/careertech/career_technology/publications/.

Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force Report

Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/leadership/programs/cstf/.

Maryland Dropout Prevention/School Completion Intervention/Resource Guide.

Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org

OTHER RESOURCES

American Youth Policy Forum

Success at Every Step: How 23 Programs Support Youth on the Path to College and Beyond

Hooker, S. and Brand, B. (2009). **Success at every step: How 23 programs support youth on the path to college and beyond.** Washington: American Youth Policy Forum. Available from http://www.aypf.org/publications/SuccessAtEveryStep.htm

The report presents a logic model for college- and career-readiness and success and profiles of 23 programs. Through valid evaluations, the programs were determined to be successful in building students' foundation for learning and growth based on short-, intermediate-, or long-term outcomes. The authors offer a comprehensive definition of college and career readiness for success that speaks to a broad set of developmental concerns and includes financial resources in "personal resources."

College Readiness Standards from American College Testing Program (ACT)

ACT has identified College Readiness Standards in English, reading, writing, mathematics, and science that are aligned with EXPLORE, PLAN, and the ACT which measure students' progress development of knowledge and skills in the same academic areas from grades 8 through 12. For more information about the standards and assessments, access the web site http://www.act.org/standard/.

College Board Resources

The College Board has a variety of resources on college readiness, alignment of the Common Core State Standards with the College Board examinations, and specific examinations (e.g., SAT, PSAT). Access the web site at http://www.collegeboard.com.

CollegeEd: Creating a college-going culture guide

College Board. (2006) *CollegeEd: Creating a college-going culture guide*. New York: Author. Available from http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/collegeed/collegeEd-create-college-going-culture.pdf. **A guide for schools to create a college-going culture.** It answers the following questions: Why have a college-going culture? How does a college-going culture help meet school goals? How can you assess your school's current culture? How can you create a college-going culture? How do we implement the design? What kinds of outreach programs can we offer our students? How can we engage our parent community in our college-going culture?

College Board Standards for College Success

The College Board Standards for College Success define the knowledge and skills students need to develop and master in English language arts, mathematics and statistics, and science to be considered college and career ready. Access the standards at http://professionals.collegeboard.com/k-12/standards.

The SAT

The SAT is a standardized assessment of the critical reading, mathematical reasoning and writing skills students have developed over time and that they need to be successful in college. For more information, access: http://sat.collegeboard.org/

Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Tests

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying test is a standardized test that provides practice for the SAT. It measures: critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skills. For more information, access: http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html.

Doing What Works (DWW)

The Doing What Works (DWW) is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of DWW is to create an online library of resources that may help teachers, schools, districts, states and technical assistance providers implement research-based instructional practice.

The Section on Dropout Prevention includes a variety of resources on the following recommended practices:
- o Data systems
- o Adult advocates
- o Academic supports
- o Social/behavior programs
- o Learning environment
- o Rigorous/relevant instruction

Resources include: overview of multimedia presentations and materials, comprehensive tools and templates, including planning templates for schools, and related links. Available from http://dww.ed.gov/Dropout-Prevention/

Educational Policy and Improvement Center (EPIC)

The Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) is a nationally recognized leader in the field of College and Career Readiness. EPIC provides research and tools to empower states, districts, schools, and teachers to prepare students for success beyond high school. The Center has a variety of resources. Access the Center's website at https://www.epiconline.org./.

A Complete Definition of College and Career Readiness

Conley, D. (2012, May). *A complete definition of college and career readiness.* Eugene, OR: Educational Policy and Improvement Center. Available from https://www.epiconline.org/files/pdf/College_and_Career_Readiness_Complete_Definition

College and Career Readiness: Same or Different?

Conley, D. & McGaughy, C. (2012, April). College and career readiness: Same or different? *Educational Leadership,* Volume 69(7), 28-34. Available from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr12/vol69/num07/College-and-Career-Readiness

Are career readiness and college readiness one and the same? Studies conducted at the Educational Policy Improvement Center in Eugene, Oregon, provide insight into this issue. Cross-disciplinary standards, such as study skills, problem solving, critical thinking, and goal setting, were found to be important for student success in career-oriented courses whereas prerequisite academic content necessary for success varied, depending on the content area. Secondary schools can accommodate both a core of common expectations and enough customization to prepare all students to pursue both college and careers by taking crucial four steps.

Creating College Readiness - Profiles of 38 Schools that Know How

Educational Policy and Improvement Center. (2009). *Creating college readiness – profiles of 38 schools that know how*. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Eugene, OR: Author. Available from https://www.epiconline.org/files/pdf/doclibrary/AERA_2010_CRPractices.pdf The document does include information on public charter schools, alternative schools, early college high schools, comprehensive high schools, magnet schools, and private high schools.

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network

The mission of the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N) is to increase high school graduation rates through research and evidenced-based solutions. The Center offers a clearinghouse of resources, active research projects, publications, and professional development activities. In addition, the NDPC/N conducts a variety of third party evaluations and Program Assessment and Reviews (PAR). The site has a variety of resources, including a database of model dropout prevention programs taking place across the country, newsletters, research reports, practitioner guides, and online media. General web site http://www.dropoutprevention.org/.

What Works Clearinghouse Resources

Dropout Prevention: A Practice Guide

Dynarski, M., Clarke, L., Cobb, B., Finn, J., Rumberger, R., and Smink, J. (2008). *Dropout prevention: A practice guide* (NCEE 2008–4025). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/
This guide is intended to be useful to educators in high schools and middle schools in planning and executing dropout prevention strategies. This guide seeks to help them develop practice and policy alternatives for implementation. The guide includes specific recommendations and indicates the quality of the evidence that supports these recommendations. In addition, there are descriptions of some ways each recommendation could be carried out.

Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do?

Tierney, W., Bailey, T., Constantine, J., Finkelstein, N. & Hurd, N. (2009). *Helping students navigate the path to college: What high schools can do? A practice guide. (NCEE 2009-4066).* Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/higher_ed
The guide is intended to help schools develop practices that increase student access to higher education. A panel of experts in college access programs and strategies developed the recommendations in the guide. The guide contains specific steps on how to implement the recommendations. This guide targets high schools and school districts, and focuses on effective practices that prepare students academically for college, assist them in completing the steps to college entry, and improve their likelihood of enrolling in college.

REFERENCES

Conley, D. (2012, May). *A complete definition of college and career readiness*. Eugene, OR: Educational Policy and Improvement Center. Retrieved from: https://www.epiconline.org/files/pdf/College_and_Career_Readiness_Complete_Definition

Conley, D. (2008, October). What makes a student college ready? *Educational Leadership online,* **66** (2).

Dynarski, M., Clarke, L., Cobb, B., Finn, J., Rumberger, R., &Smink, J. (2008). ***Dropout prevention: A practice guide* (NCEE 2008–4025).** Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/

Educational Policy Improvement Center (2009). ***Creating college readiness: Profiles of 38 schools that know how***. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Eugene, OR: Author.

Hooker, S. and Brand, B. (2009). ***Success at every step: How 23 programs support youth on the path to college and beyond***. Washington: American Youth Policy Forum. Retrieved from: http://www.aypf.org/publications/SuccessAtEveryStep.htm.

Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force. (2010, May). ***Report of the Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force***. Baltimore, MD: Maryland State Department of Education.

Pathways to College Network. (no date). Academic rigor: At the heart of college access and success. ***A College Readiness Issue Brief***. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy, Pathways to College Network.

Tierney, W., Bailey, T., Constantine, J., Finkelstein, N. & Hurd, N. (2009). ***Helping students navigate the path to college: What high schools can do? A practice guide.*** *(NCEE 2009-4066)*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/higher

University of California at Berkeley. ***Advancing college-going culture. What is a college-going culture?*** Retrieved from http://collegetools.berkeley.edu/

C. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

GLOSSARY

Academic Acceleration – Successful use of many different techniques, methodologies and approaches to instruction and the learning environment to achieve a faster learning rate. (*A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework,* 2008).

Academic intervention - Additional instruction which supplements the instruction provided in the general curriculum and assists students in meeting the State standards.

Accelerated Learning - Successful use of many different techniques, methodologies, and approaches to instruction and the learning environment to achieve a faster learning rate. (*A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework,* 2008).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – AYP was designed to measure the continuous improvement each year toward the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) goal of 100% proficiency. (Maryland State Department of Education).

Annual Measurable Objectives - State established performance targets that assess the progress of student groups, schools, school districts, and the state annually. (Maryland State Department of Education).

Assessment - The administration of tests, and other methods of gathering and integrating information to determine a student's current level of performance to illustrate whether the student is achieving appropriately to the instructional program being delivered. **(*A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework,* 2008).**

Benchmark Assessment – A benchmark assessment is a formative assessment, usually with two or more equivalent forms so that the assessment can be administered to the same children at multiple times over a school year without evidence of practice effects (improvements in scores resulting from taking the same version of a test multiple times). In addition to formative functions, benchmark assessments allow educators to monitor the progress of students against state standards and to predict performance on state exams. (National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institutes of Education Science, U.S. Department of Education). Benchmark assessment data are frequently and systematically collected across a grade level or content area (often across a whole school system) at several predetermined times throughout the school year. They may have a variety of titles, such as short-cycle assessments or system-wide unit tests. Benchmark assessments may be developed by school districts, textbook publishers, or testing companies. (Maryland State Department of Education)

Criterion-referenced Assessment – Student performance is compared to a set standard or objective. Evaluation of objectives as a learner progresses through the course of instruction. In most cases, success is measured by attaining or exceeding a cut score and is NOT determined by their rank or standing among peers. In this case, criterion refers to the subject matter rather than the specific cut score assigned. **(*A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework, 2008*).**

Curriculum-based Assessment (CBA) – "Determination of the instructional needs of a student, based upon the student's on-going performance within the existing course content in order to deliver instruction as effectively and efficiently as possible." (Gickling, Shane, & Croskery, 1989, pp. 344-345**).** *(A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework, 2008***).**

Formative assessment – A process given in the classes by teachers that is intended to provide feedback to teachers and students at regular intervals during the course of instruction. The purpose is to influence the teaching and learning process so as to close the gap between current learning and a desired goal. Formative assessments are designed to provide information to guide instruction. (National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institutes of Education Science, U.S. Department of Education).

Interim Assessments – assessments typically administrated on a school- or district-wide scale at regular intervals during a single school year. (National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institutes of Education Science, U.S. Department of Education).

Performance Assessments – Instruments that involve the comparison a learner's behavior to an established guideline or rubric. The guidelines can be a single condition – or complicated multi-page rubrics with carefully described levels of performance for each action or behavior. *(A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework, 2008***).**

Screening Assessments – A brief procedure used to identify a particular set of knowledge, skill or ability gaps in students. The purpose of the screening could be related to academic, behavioral, or health such as vision or scoliosis screenings are conducted as brief measures to judge whether further assessment or referral is needed. *(A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework, 2008***).**

Summative assessments – A process that establishes what students have and have not accomplished at the culmination of a specific unit of instruction, grading period, or school year. It is intended to evaluate the knowledge and skills of students at a given point in time. It may also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, school improvement goals, or curriculum alignment processes. These may include state assessments, district benchmark or interim assessments, end-of-unit or end-of-chapter tests, and end-of-term exams and scores that are used for accountability of schools and students. . (National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institutes of Education Science, U.S. Department of Education).

Blended Instruction – The integration of academic and occupational concepts to provide students with a more coherent program of study. Blended Instruction allows every student to participate in challenging and purposeful studies that blend theory and application. Every student will demonstrate mastery of work-related and life skills required for a smooth transition into a globally competitive, technologically advanced, and service oriented society. (Maryland State Department of Education).

Blended Learning – (1) a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of instruction and content, with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace; and (2) at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home (Innosight Institute, Staker & Horn, May 2012).

Career and Technology Education (or High Quality CTE) – Organized educational activities that offer a sequence of courses that provides individuals with coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant technical knowledge and skills needed to prepare for

further education and careers in current or emerging professions; provide technical skill proficiency, an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or an associate degree; and may include prerequisite courses (other than a remedial course) and include applied learning that contributes to the academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, general employability skills, technical skills, and occupation-specific skills, and knowledge of all aspects of an industry, including entrepreneurship, of an individual.(Maryland State Department of Education).

Career Development – The process through which an individual comes to understand his/her place in the world of work including the psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to influence the nature and significance of work in an individual's life. (Maryland State Department of Education).

College and Career Readiness – "A student who is ready for college and career can qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit bearing college courses leading to a baccalaureate or certificate, or career pathway-oriented training programs without the need for remedial or developmental coursework." (Conley, 2012).

College Readiness – The level of preparation a student needs in order to enroll and succeed—without remediation—in a credit-bearing general education course at a postsecondary institution that offers a baccalaureate degree or transfer to a baccalaureate program. (Conley, 2007).

Curriculum – The aggregate of formal courses of study given in a learning environment. Courses are arranged sequentially to increase the efficiency of learning a subject. In schools, a curriculum spans several grades; for example, a math curriculum. In business, it can run for days, weeks, months, or years. Learners enter it at various points depending on their job experience and the needs of the business. *(A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework, 2008).*

Differentiated instruction – A process of designing instruction that meets the varied needs of a group of learners. Differentiated instruction includes, but is not limited to, varying the instructional content, instructional strategies, groupings or materials, and student assignments based on student skill levels, learning preferences, and interest levels.

Diverse Learners – Includes groups of students who differ in the areas of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, language, exceptionalities, background and experience, religion, region, age, and/or sexual orientation**.** (Maryland State Department of Education).

Education that is Multicultural – A continuous, integrated, multi-ethnic, multi-disciplinary process for educating all students about diversity and commonality. Education that is multicultural promotes academic achievement and student success through addressing diverse learning styles and presenting curriculum and instruction that incorporate multiple perspectives. (Maryland State Department of Education).

Ethnicity – Ethnicity refers to common heritage, consisting of a common culture, including a shared language or dialect of a group of people. The group's ethos or ideology may also stress common ancestry and religion.

Free and Reduced Meal Services (FARMS) – Students Receiving Free/Reduced-Price Meals (Maryland State Department of Education).

Gifted and Talented Student – an elementary or secondary student who is identified by professionally qualified individuals as having outstanding talented and performing, or showing their

potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students of a similar age, experience, or environment (Annotated Code of Maryland §8-201). A gifted and talented students is one who exhibits high performance capability in intellectual, creative, or artistic areas; possesses an unusual leadership capacity; or excels in special academic fields (Maryland State Department of Education.

Limited English Proficient – An individual who does not speak English as his or her primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. *(A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework, 2008)*.

Maryland State Assessments – Student attainment of Maryland's standards is measured through State assessments (e.g., *Maryland School Assessment, High School Assessment*) in academic content subjects (e.g., English language arts, mathematics, and science).(Maryland State Department of Education).

Online Course – "a course provided through the Internet and other technologies in which 80% or more of the instruction is conducted online with the teacher and student separated by distance or time or both and in which two-way communication between the teacher and student is required." (Maryland State Department of Education).

Proficiency – Ability to perform a specific behavior (e.g., task, learning objective) in accordance with the established performance standard in order to demonstrate mastery of the behavior. *(A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework, 2008)*.

Progress Monitoring – Measuring student performance over time to illustrate whether the student is achieving appropriately to the instructional program being delivered. . *(A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework, 2008)*.

Progress Reports – Student progress refers to reports on students' academic and behavioral performance. The progress reports may be formal (e.g., such as a report card) or informal (through telephone conversations or emails).

RACE

American Indian or Alaska Native – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains a tribal affiliation or community attachment.

Asian - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Black or African American - A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

White – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. (Maryland State Department of Education).

Response to Intervention (RtI) – A process of providing high quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs that includes frequent progress monitoring to assist in decision making regarding the need for a change in instructional and/or behavioral programming. *(A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework, 2008*).

Special Populations – means:
- **(A)**   individuals with disabilities;
- **(B)**   individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including foster children;
- **(C)**   individuals preparing for non-traditional fields;
- **(D)**   single parents, including single pregnant women;
- **(E)**   displaced homemakers; and
- **(F)**   individuals with limited English proficiency. (Maryland State Department of Education).

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) – STEM education is an approach to teaching and learning that integrates the content and skills of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (Maryland State Department of Education, 2012).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – A framework for applying universal design principles to instructional materials, curricula, and educational activities so that they are achievable and challenging for students with a wide range of abilities and needs. The framework focuses on: Multiple means of representation to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge. Multiple means of action and expression to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know. Multiple means of engagement to tap into learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn.

Resources by Critical Success Factors

1. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT: STUDENTS ACHIEVE A HIGH LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY ON STATE ASSESSMENTS

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

The MSDE Publications Overview website has a variety of resources. Access the website at
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/newsroom/publications

Maryland State Content Standards

The State Curriculum is the document that identifies the Maryland Content Standards and aligns them with the Maryland Assessment Program. The curriculum documents are formatted so that each begins with content standards or broad, measurable statements about what students should know and be able to do. More information on standards is available from http://mdk12.org/assessments/vsc/index.html

Maryland Common Core Standards

More information on Maryland's adoption of the Common Core Standards is available from
http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/ccss

Maryland Common Core Curriculum Frameworks

Since the adoption of the standards, educators from around the state met to determine the Essential Skills and Knowledge associated with these standards. The draft frameworks in English Language Arts and Mathematics are available on Maryland State Department of Education's web site. It is important to view these frameworks in color. On the web site, the Common Core State Standards appear in black and the Essential Skills and Knowledge added by Maryland educators appear in red. MSDE introduced these draft frameworks to teachers and administrators at the Educator Effectiveness Academies in summer, 2011. Over the next several years, the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum will be developed by Maryland educators to support the implementation of these new standards. The draft curriculum frameworks are available from
http://mdk12.org/instruction/commoncore/

Maryland Education Effectiveness Academies

The Maryland State Department of Education has offered Educator Effectiveness Academies in 2011 and 2012 with plans for 2013. The following website has a variety of resources that address: reading/English language arts, mathematics, STEM, and general academy information. Access the resources at http://mdk12.org/instruction/academies/

Maryland Charter School Common Core English Language Arts (ELA Symposium)

On May 8, 2012, the Office of School Innovations of Maryland State Department of Education hosted a symposium for charter schools on the Common Core English Language Arts. The purposes of the symposium were to: 1) support the transition process that is needed to implement the Common Core State Standards in charter schools successfully, 2) provide a forum for sharing among charter schools on the approaches schools have taken so far; and provide time and resources for school teams to start planning the effective implementation of CCSS. A variety of resources were available to participating

school teams. For more information about the symposium and the resources available to charter schools, contact the Office of School Innovations, Maryland State Department of Education.

Maryland State Curriculum Toolkits

Created by Maryland teachers, the State Curriculum Toolkits are resources aligned with Maryland's State Standards. The Toolkits include detailed explanations of skills, ideas for lessons and student work samples, public release items, sample assessment, and resources for advanced/gifted and talented students. Available from http://mdk12.org/instruction/curriculum

Maryland STEM Education

For more information, access the Maryland State Department of Education's website: http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/stem/

Maryland STEM Education Toolkit

The Maryland STEM Education Toolkit includes the following resources: STEM Standards of Practice, K-5 Framework, 6-12 Framework, Instructional Guides, STEM Units and lessons (K-5, 6-8, 9-12), STEM Centric Learning Environment, STEM professional development, STEM Education Pipeline, and STEM education frequently asked questions. Access the toolkit at the following website http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/curriculum/stem/

Maryland School Assessment (MSA) and Maryland High School Assessment

Information and resources on the state assessments are available from the following website: http://mdk12.org/assessments/

A Parent's Guide to the MSA (Maryland School Assessment)

This 2012 document describes the MSA and answers common questions parents might have. Access the document at http://www.msde.maryland.gov/

Maryland Flexibility Plan under ESEA

Additional Information may be found at http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/esea_flex

Maryland 2012 Report Card

The 2012 Maryland Report Card website includes the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) and High School Assessment (HSA) highlights, as well as school progress, Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), ESEA Flexibility, demographic, enrollment, and attendance data, and other supporting facts. Access the website at http://mdreportcard.org/

Resources by Critical Success Factors

1. **STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR: STUDENTS ACHIEVE A HIGH LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY ON STATE ASSESSMENTS**

<u>OTHER RESOURCES</u>

Common Core State Standards Initiative

The website includes the standards, information on the standards, resources, FAQs, and links to other websites. The web site link is http://www.corestandards.org/.

Achieve the Core

A variety of free resources on the Common Core State Standards have been collected by Student Achievement Partners. Access the web site at http://www.achievethecore.org/.

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a consortium of states working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. Information is available from http://www.parcconline.org/.

2 . **STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR: ACHIEVEMENT GOALS ARE DEFINED AND TARGETS SET**

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Maryland Flexibility Plan under Elementary and Secondary Act (No Child Left Behind Act (also known as NCLB or ESEA). Additional Information may be found at http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/esea_flex.

Maryland 2012 Report Card

The 2012 Maryland Report Card website includes the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) and High School Assessment (HSA) highlights, as well as school progress, Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), ESEA Flexibility, demographic, enrollment, and attendance data, and other supporting facts. Access the website at http://mdreportcard.org/.

Resources from MSDE Office of School Innovations

Maryland Charter School Performance Plan and Framework
Contact Office of School Innovations at Maryland State Department of Education.

Charter School Dashboards and Balanced Scorecards

More information on Charter School Dashboards and the Balanced Scorecards are available from the Office of School Innovations, Maryland State Department of Education.

Other Relevant Sections of the Implementation Guide
See also:
> *Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement*, Appendix A.4. for example of the Charter School Dashboard and
> *Indicator B. Innovative Practices*, Appendix B. 2. for more information and example for the Balanced Scorecard.

RESOURCES

National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA)
NACSA is a nonprofit membership organization committed to developing and maintaining high standards for charter school authorizing.

Principles and standards for quality charter school authorizing.

The 2010 version is available from http://www.qualitycharters.org/publications-resources/principles-standards.

C. 3. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR: TEACHERS MEET REGULARLY

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Examining Student Work to Inform Instruction

This site has a variety of resources, including: protocols, discussion, quotes from experts, videos, professional development ideas, lessons learned, principal's role in structuring **r**egular examination of student work, and additional resources. Available from http://mdk12.org/data/examining/

Best Practices Series for Maryland Charter Schools: Job Embedded Professional Development. (2009).

Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/

OTHER RESOURCES

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/
An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):

- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;

- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and
- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

3. Student Learning and Achievement Indicator: Teachers meet regularly

Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making

Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J. & Wayman, J. (2009). *Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making.* (NCES 2009-4067). Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide. This guide offers five recommendations to help educators effectively use data to monitor students' academic progress and evaluate instructional practices. The guide recommends that schools set a clear vision for schoolwide data use, develop a data-driven culture, and make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement. The guide also recommends teaching students how to use their own data to set learning goals.

Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning

Pashler, H., Bain, P., Bottge, B., Graesser, A., Koedinger, K., McDaniel, M., and Metcalfe, J. (2007). *Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning* (NCER 2007-2004). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide
This guide includes a set of concrete actions relating to the use of instructional and study time that are applicable to subjects that demand a great deal of content learning, including social studies, science, and mathematics.

Doing What Works

The Doing What Works (DWW) is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The DWW website has an online library of resources that may help teachers, schools, and districts and implementing research-based practices. Resources include: overview of multimedia presentations and materials with interviews with experts and videos and interviews with schools successfully implementing research-based practices, and comprehensive tools and templates, including planning and implementation tools for schools. One of the topics under Data-driven improvement, is Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision-making. Access the web site at http://dww.ed.gov/Data-Driven-Instructional-Decision-Making/.

Resources by Critical Success Factors

4. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR: PROGRESS REPORT UPDATES TO PARENT

OTHER RESOURCES

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The National Standards for Family-School Partnerships offer a framework for how families, schools, and communities should work together to support student success.

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: An Implementation Guide

A tool for empowering people to work together with an end goal of building family-school partnerships and student success. Available from http://pta.org/
For each standard, the guide provides the following information: A definition of the standard, followed by a brief explanation of its importance and a discussion of the key goals; Expert insights, which can help convince educators of the standard's value; A local success story from a school community making real progress toward meeting that standard; Action steps for your school community; and additional resources to enhance your understanding and help your school meet the standard.

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

To facilitate the implementation in local schools of programs, practices, and policies that are guided by the Standards, the PTA has developed an assessment guide, otherwise known as a rubric. Access the rubric from http://www.pta.org/Documents/National_Standards_Assessment_Guide.pdf.

National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)

Established at Johns Hopkins University in 1996, NNPS invites schools, districts, states, and organizations to join together and use research-based approaches to organize and sustain excellent programs of family and community involvement that will increase student success in school.
The NNPS website has a variety of resources, including: publications and products, professional development resources, research summaries and briefs, Promising Partnership Practices, and Success Stories. Access the website at http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/.

Resources by Critical Success Factors

4. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR*:* PROGRESS REPORT UPDATES TO PARENTS

National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools disseminates research-based information and resources to foster connections among families, communities, and schools with the goal of improving student academic achievement. The Center emphasizes connections that impact student achievement in reading and math, as well as connections that contribute to students' overall success in school and in life. The website includes: toolkits, literature database, free archived webinars and forums, research syntheses, and briefs and handouts.

Family and Community Involvement: Reaching Out to Diverse Populations

Ferguson, C. (2005). *Family and community involvement: Reaching out to diverse populations.* Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). Also available in Spanish. Available from http://www.sedl.org/pubs/family29/family_involvement.pdf.

This handbook is designed for teachers and principals who want to develop meaningful parent and community involvement with culturally and linguistically diverse community members. This guide introduces strategies for promoting meaningful dialogue with diverse populations, including:
- Know your community, get smart about communicating with parents and community members;
- Provide extra help for school staff and parents;
- Bridge the gap between families, communities, and schools; and
- Evaluate your public engagement efforts regularly.

Each strategy explanation includes questions for consideration and suggested activities.

Resources by Critical Success Factors

5. **STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR: STUDENTS NOT MEETING STANDARDS RECEIVE MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACADEMIC INTERVENTION AND ACCELERATION**

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

The MSDE Publications Overview website has a variety of resources. Access the website at
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/newsroom/publications

A Practical Guide to Accelerating Student Achievement Across Cultures

Maryland State Department of Education, (2008, September). *A practical guide to accelerating student achievement across cultures: Strategies for administrators, teachers, students and parents.* Developed by the Education That is Multicultural and Achievement Network (ETMA) in collaboration with the Achievement Initiative for Maryland's Minority Students (AIMMS) Steering Committee and the Maryland State Department of Education. Baltimore, MD: Maryland State Department of Education. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/ This document provides action steps that can be taken by teachers, administrators, parents, and students to develop the personal, cognitive and social dimensions of students.

A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework (2008).

Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, Division of Instruction, and Division of Student, Family, and School Support. (2008, June). *A tiered instructional approach to support achievement of all students: Maryland's Response to Intervention framework.* Baltimore, MD: Author. Available from
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/rti/
Additional Resources on Getting Started with Response to Intervention available from
http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/rti/started
Additional Resources on Teachers Using Response to Intervention available from
http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/rti/teachers
Additional Resources for RtI Leaders at School and District Level available from
http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/rti/leaders_school_district

Special Education in Charter Schools: A Resource Primer for the State of Maryland (2006).

Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services. (2006). *Special education in charter schools: A resource primer for the State of Maryland.* Baltimore, MD: Author. Available from http://www.mdcharternetwork.org/res_publications.html.

Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities (MVLO) program

For more information, refer to the MVLO web site:
http://mdk12online.org/schools/schoolshome.htm.

<u>OTHER RESOURCES</u>

Innosight Institute

Innosight Institute currently has two Practices where it works on applying these theories to introduce innovation to improve society: education and health care. In these Practices, the Institute: Researches how the theories apply and offer a path for improvement; Promotes the recommendations; and Helps to apply the theories to induce positive change and learn more. The web site has a variety of resources on blended learning at http://www.innosightinstitute.org.

Classifying K-12 Blended Learning

Staker, H., & Horn, M. (2012, May). *Classifying K-12 blended learning*. San Mateo, CA: Innosight Institute. Retrieved from http://www.innosightinstitute.org/media-room/publications/blended-learning/. This white paper introduces a refined definition of blended learning and distinguishes blended learning from other education practices. It highlights four blended-learning models and sub-models that are appearing across K-12 education. It provides examples of schools and districts that have implemented these models.

National Center on Response to Intervention (RTI)

The National Center on RTI, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, hosts a variety of resources about RTI. The resources include: tool charts, implementation tools, webinars, ask the experts, training modules, and research. Access the Center's web site at http://www.rti4success.org/.

Doing What Works

The Doing What Works (DWW) is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The DWW website has an online library of resources that may help teachers, schools, and districts on implementing research-based practices. Resources include: overview of multimedia presentations and materials with interviews with experts and videos and interviews with schools successfully implementing research-based practices, and comprehensive tools and templates, including planning and implementation tools for schools.

One of the topic areas under Data-driven Improvement is the Response to Intervention. The specific topics include: Response to Intervention in Primary Grade Reading and Response to Intervention in Elementary-Middle Math. Under Literacy, there are resources for Response to Intervention in Primary Grade Reading. Under Math and Science, there is Response to Intervention in Elementary-Middle Math. Access the web site on Response to Intervention at http://dww.ed.gov/.

Resources by Critical Success Factors

6. **STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR*:* STAFF HOLDS HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS**

Innovations in Education Guides

The Innovations in Education book series, published by the Office of Innovations and Improvement, highlight promising practices in putting the *No Child Left Behind Act* to work. Available from http://www2.ed/gov/about/pubs/intro/innovations.

The following titles of the books related to charter schools are free:

Charter High Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap
This guide shows how eight diverse schools are using innovative instructional approaches to close the achievement gap between the highest and lowest performing students.

K-8 Charter Schools Guide Closing the Achievement Gap
This guide looks at seven K-8 charter schools that are dispelling the myth that some students cannot achieve to high standards. These schools are closing the achievement gap through challenging curriculum, high expectations, and the proper support that all students need to success.

7. **STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR: TEACHERS DIFFERENTIATE THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES TO MEET NEEDS OF ALL DIVERSE STUDENTS**

STATE OF MARYLAND RESOURCES

Maryland Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Maryland legislature passed HB 59/SB 467 entitled "Task Force to Explore the Incorporation of the Principles of Universal Design for Learning into the Education Systems in Maryland." This is the first of its kind in the nation. This bill will establish a statewide Task Force of stakeholders that will make recommendations related to UDL implementation in Maryland. More information and resources are available from http://udl4maryland.webs.com/apps/links/.

A Route for Every Learner: Universal Design for learning as a Framework for Supporting Learning and Improving Achievement for All Learners in Maryland, Prekindergarten through Higher Education

In March, 2011, the above referenced Task Force issued their recommendations to the Maryland State Board of Education; the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee; the Budget and Taxation Committee, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the Health and Government Operations Committee. The Task force report is titled *A Route for Every Learner: Universal Design for learning as a Framework for Supporting Learning and Improving Achievement for All Learners in Maryland, Prekindergarten through Higher Education*. The report includes: a description of Universal Design for Learning, UDL in context, task force recommendations, references, literature review, UDL Guidelines graphic, UDL guidelines educator checklist.   The report is available from http://www.udlcenter.org/sites/udlcenter.org/

Maryland Criteria for Excellence: Gifted and Talented Program Guidelines
The publication sets forth the criteria in programs and services for gifted and talented students. Six major program components are addressed: (1) Identification of students; (2) Instructional program; (3) Professionally qualified teachers; (4) Professional development; (5) Program management; and (6) Evaluation. The publication is available from http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented/criteria.htm.

Additional information and resources can be found at the Maryland State Department of Education's web site: http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented/.

A Tiered Instructional Approach to Support Achievement of All Students: Maryland's Response to Intervention Framework (2008).
Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/rti/.

Students with Disabilities and Special Education Services

Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education and Early Intervention
Additional resources and publications may be found at
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/earlyinterv/Special_Ed_Info

Special Education in Charter Schools: A Resource Primer for the State of Maryland (2006).

This primer was developed to provide guidance to Maryland's local school systems (charter school authorizers) and charter school developers (operators) as they confront the unique challenges in developing and implementing effective practices to ensure the access and success of students with disabilities in charter schools. Available from the Maryland Charter School Network. Access the web-site document at http://www.mdcharternetwork.org.

Maryland Learning Links

Sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education in conjunction with Johns Hopkins University School for Education, Center for Technology in Education. This web site provides an overview of differentiated instruction as well as a variety of resources and links to other sites. The major resources for differentiated instruction include:

- How you can use the framework of "content, process, and product" to implement differentiated instruction.
- The importance of pre-assessment – developing an understanding of your students' learning strengths and needs.
- The ways you can adapt the curricula, instruction, and assessment to ensure growth for all students.
- How you can adapt your classroom space to promote differentiated instruction.

Resources Web site http://marylandlearninglinks.org/951.

The Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education, Inc. (MCIE) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the inclusion of students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools. Their mission is to be the catalyst for meaningful and successful participation of all students in their neighborhood schools. The publications below are available from:
http://www.mcie.org/pages/resources/resources-and-publications.

All Inclusive: Special Education is a Service, Not a Place!

This monograph was commissioned by the Maryland Task Force on Inclusive Education, which was formed to explore best practices and to make recommendations on inclusive education throughout the state. We are pleased to have put this together for the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education and Early Intervention Services.

Individual Student Planning - Planning the Transition from Special Education Classes to General Education Settings!

Read about how to use the MAPs process (Making Action Plans, or McGill Action Planning System) to set the stage for inclusion. When students have been in self-contained classes, are moving from elementary to middle or high school, or when making inclusion a success is a challenge, this process helps to create the vision, identify needed supports, and rally together the team to take action. We divide the process into two parts: planning for services prior to the IEP meeting, and then planning to implement the IEP and supports needed in a regular class and neighborhood school.

Inclusive Education in Maryland: A Blueprint for Change (in partnership with The Arc of Maryland, Inc., Maryland Disability Law Center, Mid-Atlantic Chapter of TASH)

This 2003 comprehensive resource chronicles the history of least restrictive environments (LREs), explains inclusive education in the context of IDEA, describes barriers to inclusion, and proposes solutions to those barriers. The collaborative effort was a project of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council.

Inclusive Education Research and Practice: Inclusion Works

This document describes the vast body of research demonstrating the positive impact of inclusion in general education classrooms. It uses quantitative and qualitative research findings to explain the positive outcomes of inclusion on both students with and without disabilities, and describes effective tools in making inclusion work.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Research and Practice

Focusing on the school-wide approach to PBIS, this guide describes the tiers of successful intervention and provides evidence of its impact on student performance. Throughout the guide, PBIS studies are incorporated and explained.

Quality Indicators for Inclusive Building Based Practices

Developed using several evidence-based practice tools, this resource was designed to help schools examine their inclusive practices and better meet the needs of diverse learners. It includes a detailed self-assessment tool for school teams.

OTHER GENERAL RESOURCES

ASCD

ASCD (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) is a membership educational leadership organization. The web site includes research and reports, articles, books, experts, identification of courses on line and institutes and conferences, and videos on differentiated instruction. Web site for resources on differentiated instruction at: http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/differentiated-instruction-resources.

Center for Applied Special Technology – CAST

The CAST web site offers information related to Universal Design for Learning, including publications, tools, products, and professional development resources. Topics and resources such as Learning About UDL (the Basics, Activities, Case Stories) and Featured Tools (Diagnosing the Curriculum, and Planning UDL Curriculum) and Model UDL Literacy Lessons for Elementary, Middle and High School. The Learning Tools site provides educators with an array of instructional supports including:

- UDL Book Builder – develop digital books to support reading instruction;
- Curriculum Self-Check – build options and flexibility into curriculum elements to reach and engage all students;
- UDL Lesson Builder – assists with lesson/units of study design.

Web site at http://www.cast.org.

Center for Instruction

The Center on Instruction, funded by the U.S. Department of Instruction, supports the regional Comprehensive Centers as they serve state education leaders helping schools and districts meet the goals of No Child Left Behind—to close the achievement gap and improve teaching and learning for all students. Content areas include: reading, mathematics, science, special education, and English language learning. Resources include: syntheses of recent research, practitioner guides, professional development materials, tools for educators, and examples from the field. Web site for resources on differentiated instruction
http://www.centeroninstruction.org/resources

Differentiation Central

This is the website for Dr. Carol Tomlinson, Professor of Education at University of Virginia and a major expert in differentiated instruction. The web site includes: resources on differentiation for different grade levels, articles, books, video clips, multi-media, and   lesson plan templates and examples. Web site http://differtiationcentral.com/.

ERIC (Education Resources Information Clearinghouse)

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the web site includes a variety of free articles and reports. Search for differentiated instruction. Web site http://www.eric.ed.gov/.

The IRIS Center

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the web site includes seven video modules and twenty-seven articles on differentiated instruction. On the web site, look for the tab for differentiated instruction. Web site http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/.

Learning Port

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the web site provides a national online library of professional development resources compiled to help bridge research, policy and practice
Web site for resources on differentiated instruction: http://www.learningport.us/topics/.

National Charter School Resource Center

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Charter School Resource Center has a variety of resources on the following relevant focus areas:

- Charter Operations
- Collaboration
- English Language Learners
- Human Capital
- Special Education
- Understanding Charter Schools

The resources include: reports, toolkits, briefs, presentations, articles, case studies, policy and procedures, data, books, and samples. General web site http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/.

PBS TeacherLine

The web site includes information about on-line courses in differentiated instruction through a variety of universities for 6th-8th grades. The information includes names of universities, credits, syllabi, and pricing. Web site http://www.pbs.org/teacherline/catalog/courses/INST180/.

The RTI Action Network

The RTI Action Network is a program of the National Center for Learning Disabilities, funded by the Cisco Foundation and in partnership with the nation's leading education associations and top RTI experts. Search the web site for differentiated instruction resources: Web site http://www.rtinetwork.org/.

Reading Rockets

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Reading Rockets is a national multimedia project that offers research-based and best-practice information on teaching kids to read and helping those who struggle. The web site includes articles, video resources and professional development webcasts. Web site http://www.readingrockets.org/atoz/differentiated_instruction/.

U.S. Department of Education

The web site includes archived materials from a PowerPoint presentation at a Summer Workshop by Mark Walker on Differentiated Instruction. Web site http://www2.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/summerworkshop/walker/

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/. An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):

- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and
- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

Relevant Practice Guides include:

- *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making*
- *Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning*
- *Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement*
- *Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom*

Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/

English Language Arts
- *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade*
- *Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Interventions in the Primary Grades*
- *Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades*
- *Teaching Elementary School Students to be Effective Writers*
- *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices*

Mathematics
- *Developing Effective Fractions Instruction for Kindergarten Through 8th Grade*
- *Improving Mathematical Problem Solving in Grades 4 through 8*
- *Encouraging Girls in Math and Science*
- *Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Response to Intervention (RtI) for Elementary and Middle Schools*

Center for Instruction

The Center on Instruction, funded by the U.S. Department of Instruction, supports the regional Comprehensive Centers as they serve state education leaders helping schools and districts meet the goals of No Child Left Behind—to close the achievement gap and improve teaching and learning for all students. Content areas include: reading, mathematics, science, special education, and **English language learning**. Resources include: syntheses of recent research, practitioner guides, professional development materials, tools for educators, and examples from the field.   Web site for resources on English language learners: http://www.centeroninstruction.org/.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA)

Authorized under Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA) supports the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (OELA) in its mission to respond to Title III educational needs, and implement NCLB as it applies to English language learners (ELLs). The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition collects, coordinates and conveys a broad range of research and resources in support of an inclusive approach to high quality education for English Language Learners. The web site has a library variety of resources for professional development and English Language proficiency standards and assessments.   Resources available from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/.

National Charter School Resource Center

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Charter School Resource Center has a variety of resources on the following relevant focus areas: English Language Learners. The resources include: reports, toolkits, briefs, presentations, articles, case studies, policy and procedures, data, books, and samples. General web site http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/.

National Council of La Raza

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is the largest national Hispanic advocacy organization in the United States. NCLR conducts research, policy analysis, and advocacy. Among its resources are:

Educating English Language Learners: Implementing Instructional Practices

Vialpando, J. & Yedlin, J. with C. Linse, M. Harrington, & G. Cannon. (2005). *Educating English language learners: Implementing instructional practices.*   Supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and in consultation with the Education Alliance at Brown University. Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza.   This guide emphasizes the implementation of instructional strategies and techniques by charter school professionals. Its purpose is to assist charter school educators in developing the capacity to provide appropriate curricula, instruction, and assessment for English language learners and to increase educators' awareness of how to access relevant resources. The authors describe the process for identifying English language learners, review theories related to second language acquisition and language development, discuss considerations for selecting program models and training staff, and outline a number of instructional strategies that can be used to help

ELLs succeed. The guide is available from
http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/nclr/edells_impinstprct.pdf.

Educating English Language Learners: Understanding and Using Assessment

Vialpando, J. & Yedlin, J. with C. Linse, M. Harrington, & G. Cannon. (2005). *Educating English language learners: Understanding and Using Assessment.* Supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and in consultation with the Education Alliance at Brown University.
This guide provides information relevant to operators, teachers, and teacher trainers on the development of an effective assessment program for schools serving English language learners. The guide includes bilingual education resources, web resources, and scenarios for professional development. Available from http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications.

Preparing Young Latino Children for School Success: Best Practices in Language Instruction

Beltran, E. (2012, August). Preparing young Latino children for school success: Best practices in language instruction. *NCLR Issue Brief 2012,* 23, 1-7. Washington, DC: National Council for La Raza. This policy brief highlights the importance of intentional language instruction for Hispanic children, particularly English language learners, highlights a best practice in the field, and concludes with policy recommendations for bringing successful programs to scale. The Brief features The Latin American Montessori Bilingual Public Charter School in Washington, D.C. Available from http://www.nclr.org/index.php/publications/.

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/. An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):

- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and
- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades: A Practice Guide

Gersten, R., Baker, S.K., Shanahan, T., Linan-Thompson, S., Collins, P., & Scarcella, R. (2007). *Effective literacy and English language instruction for English learners in the elementary grades: A practice guide* (NCEE 2007-4011). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/.

<u>GENERAL RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION</u>

Center for Instruction

The Center on Instruction, funded by the U.S. Department of Instruction, supports the regional Comprehensive Centers as they serve state education leaders helping schools and districts meet the goals of No Child Left Behind—to close the achievement gap and improve teaching and learning for all students. Content areas include: reading, mathematics, science, **special education**, and English language learning. Resources include: syntheses of recent research, practitioner guides, professional development materials, tools for educators, and examples from the field. Web site for resources on special education http://www.centeroninstruction.org.

The IRIS Center

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the web site includes the following types of resources: video modules, case studies, activities, information briefs, and podcasts in English and Spanish. Topics include: accommodations, assessment (including progress monitoring), behavior and classroom management, collaboration, content instruction, differentiated instruction, disability, diversity, learning strategies, mathematics, RTI (response to intervention), Literacy (reading and language arts), related services, school improvement/leadership, transition, and grades: Prek-3, 4-8, and high school. Web site for resources http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources.html.

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY)

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the Center has a variety of resources on disabilities, special education, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Resources address: specific disabilities, student behavior and federal discipline requirements, effective instruction, disability resources in your state, IDEA requirements, staff development, and paraprofessionals. Web site for especially for school teachers and administrators http://nichcy.org/schools-administrators.

C. 8. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR: SCHOOL POLICIES, PROCEDURES, PROGRAMS, AND RESOURCES ARE ALIGNED TO SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING

<u>RESOURCES</u>

School Finance Redesign Project of the Center on Reinventing Public Education

The School Finance Redesign Project (SFRP) encompasses research, policy analysis, and public engagement activities that examine how K-12 finance can be redesigned to better support student performance. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, SFRP addresses the question, "How can resources help schools achieve the higher levels of student performance that state and national education standards now demand?" The Center has a variety of publications at the following website http://crpe.edgateway.net/cs/crpe/view/projects/.

Resources by Critical Success Factors

9. STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT INDICATOR: SECONDARY COURSES AND CURRICULA PREPARE STUDENTS FOR CAREER-READY AND COLLEGE-LEVEL WORK

Maryland Career Development Framework

The framework includes six career development standards: Self Awareness, Career Awareness, Career Exploration, Career Preparation, Job Seeking and Advancement, and Career Satisfaction and Transition. Available from
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/careertech/career_technology/tools_support/
Companion resources have been created using the framework's standards to assist with implementation of Career Guidance and Advisory Programs for Grades 7-12. This allows for the attainment of a systemic approach for school guidance and advisement that stresses both academic and career planning. Resources have also been developed for adult learners.

Maryland High School Career and Technology Education Programs of Study

Career Technology Education (CTE) provides high school and community college students an opportunity to pursue a sequential technical and academic program of study leading to advancement in a career field. Available from
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/careertech/career_technology/publications/.

Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force Report
Available from
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/leadership/programs/cstf/.

Maryland Skills for Success
Available from
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/careertech/career_technology/publications/

Educational Policy Improvement Center

Creating College Readiness

Conley, D. (2009*). Creating college readiness*. Prepared for the Bill & MeLinda Gates Foundation. Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center.
Creating College Readiness is a report on a study of 38 U.S. high schools with proven success in preparing students for life after graduation. The selected schools represent a diverse cross-section of the U.S. education system. This document profiles each school and contains comprehensive and tangible examples of successful student preparation. Available from
http://cepr.uoregon.edu/publications.

Redefining College Readiness

Conley, D. (2007*). Redefining college readiness*. Prepared for the Bill & MeLinda Gates Foundation. Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center. This publication suggests that "college readiness" has been defined primarily in terms of high school courses taken, grades received, and scores on national tests. It proposes widening the scope of the definition to include Key Cognitive Strategies, Key Content Knowledge, Academic Behaviors, and Contextual Skills. Available from
http://cepr.uoregon.edu/publications.

National High School Center, *American Institutes for Research*

The National High School Center identifies research-supported improvement programs and tools, offers user-friendly products, and provides technical assistance services to improve secondary education. The National High School Center develops tools and products on the latest practices and information on pressing high school improvement topics such as: Graduation; Dropout Prevention; and Equity in High School Learning. General web site http://www.betterhighschools.org.

National High School Center

High School Improvement: Indicators of Effectiveness and School-Level Benchmarks

This document extends the framework and offers specific school-level benchmarks that provide a deeper level of detail for each indicator of effectiveness and describe school-level practices that can be implemented to support high school improvement at the local level. The Center provides the following eight elements of high school improvement to help facilitate a cohesive and comprehensive approach to high school improvement:

1. Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction
2. Assessment and Accountability
3. Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Growth
4. Student and Family Involvement
5. Stakeholder Engagement
6. Effective Leadership
7. Organization and Structure
8. Sustainability

Available from http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/NHSC_ImprovementIndicators_2012.pdf.

National High School Center's College and Career Development Organizer

The National High School Center conducted a scan of organizations that address college and career readiness and identified more than 70 such organizations, including those focused on policy, practice, advocacy, access and research. Through this scan, the Center identified three major strands of work and created the College and Career Development Organizer. The organizer is intended to help users traverse the vast CCR landscape, encouraging conversations on each of the three strands and serving as a tool that can support the development of strategies and initiatives to better prepare all students for college and careers. Additionally, the National High School Center has created a series of tools and briefs to extrapolate on the College and Career Development Organizer and provide further insight into this increasingly complicated field of college and career readiness initiatives. Available from http://www.betterhighschools.org/documents/NHSC_CCROrganizerMar2012.pdf.

Multiple Pathways Program Assessment Rubric

LaPlante, A. and Stearns, R. (2008). *Multiple Pathways Assessment Rubric.* Berkeley, CA: ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career. The Multiple Pathways Program Assessment Rubric offers 19 elements that a school should consider in implementing programs, including: integrated project-based curriculum and instruction, teacher collaboration, scheduling, parent involvement, program evaluation, and other key components. For each element, the rubric

describes four stages of growth, ranging from foundation pieces to full development. School design teams (typically including academic and technical teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, and students as well as postsecondary, business/industry, and community partners) can use the rubric for: Visioning, Self-assessment, Planning and Evaluation. Available from http://irvine.org/assets/pdf/evaluation/multiplePathwaysAssessmentRubric.pdf.

Pathways to College Network

The Pathways to College Network is an alliance of national organizations that advances college opportunity for underserved students by raising public awareness, supporting innovative research, and promoting evidence-based policies and practices across the K-12 and higher education sectors. Pathways promotes the use of research-based policies and practices, the development of new research that is both rigorous and actionable, and the alignment of efforts across middle school, high school, and higher education in order to promote college access and success for underserved students. General web site http://www.pathwaystocollege.net/.

College Readiness for All Toolbox

The ***College Readiness for All Toolbox*** is an effective set of well-researched tools, lessons learned, resources, and documents designed to do the following: Create a college-ready culture for ALL students, Enhance student expectations, achievement, and access, Provide educators and outreach professionals with self-assessment and evaluation activities, Help students and educators collaborate on postsecondary success, Provide an understanding of the change process, and Create an easy to use roadmap for program implementation. Available from http://toolbox.pathwaystocollege.net/How-to-Use-the-Toolbox/.

Putting Kids On The Pathway To College: How Is Your School Doing?

Asher, C. Henderson, A. T., and Maguire, C. (2008). *Putting kids on the pathway to college: How is your school doing?* Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University. This rubric enables high schools to assess their current programs and practices and their effectiveness at helping students graduate on time and ready for college-level work. The rubric identifies good practices, describes three levels of implementation for each one, gives examples of specific practices from the "Beating the Odds" schools, and provides a blank rubric form and a list of resources. Available from http://annenberginstitute.org/pdf/CollegePathwaysRubric.pdf.

Maryland High School Career and Technology Education Programs of Study

Career Technology Education (CTE) provides high school and community college students an opportunity to pursue a sequential technical and academic program of study leading to advancement in a career field. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/careertech/career_technology/publications/.

Maryland P-20 College Success Task Force Report
Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/leadership/programs/cstf/

Maryland *Dropout Prevention/School Completion Intervention/Resource Guide.*
Available from: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/

American Youth Policy Forum

> *Success at Every Step: How 23 Programs Support Youth on the Path to College and Beyond*

Hooker, S. and Brand, B. (2009). *Success at every step: How 23 programs support youth on the path to college and beyond*. Washington: American Youth Policy Forum.   Available from http://www.aypf.org/publications/SuccessAtEveryStep.htm. The report presents a logic model for college- and career-readiness and success and profiles of 23 programs. Through valid evaluations, the programs were determined to be successful in building students' foundation for learning and growth based on short-, intermediate-, or long-term outcomes. The authors offer a comprehensive definition of college and career readiness for success that speaks to a broad set of developmental concerns and includes financial resources in "personal resources."

College Readiness Standards from American College Testing Program (ACT)

ACT has identified College Readiness Standards in English, reading, writing, mathematics, and science that are aligned with EXPLORE, PLAN, and the ACT which measure students' progress development of knowledge and skills in the same academic areas from grades 8 through 12. For more information about the standards and assessments, access http://www.act.org/standard/.

College Board Resources

The College Board has a variety of resources on college readiness, alignment of the Common Core State Standards with the College Board examinations, and the specific examinations (e.g., SAT, PSAT). Access the web site at http://www.collegeboard.com.

CollegeEd: Creating a college-going culture guide

College Board. (2006)   *CollegeEd: Creating a college-going culture guide*. New York: Author. Available from http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/collegeed/collegeEd-create-college-going-culture.pdf. A guide for schools to create a college-going culture. It answers the following questions: Why have a college-going culture? How does a college-going culture help meet school goals? How can you assess your school's current culture? How can you create a college-going culture? How do we implement the design? What kinds of outreach programs can we offer our students? How can we engage our parent community in our college-going culture?

College Board Standards for College Success

The College Board Standards for College Success define the knowledge and skills students need to develop and master in English language arts, mathematics and statistics, and science to be considered college and career ready. Access the standards at http://professionals.collegeboard.com/k-12/standards.

The SAT

The SAT is a standardized assessment of the critical reading, mathematical reasoning and writing skills students have developed over time and that they need to be successful in college. For more information, access: http://sat.collegeboard.org/

Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Tests

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying test is a standardized test that provides practice for the SAT. It measures: critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skills. For more information, access: http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/.

Doing What Works (DWW)

The Doing What Works (DWW) is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of DWW is to create an online library of resources that may help teachers, schools, districts, states and technical assistance providers implement research-based instructional practice. The Section on Dropout Prevention includes a variety of resources on the following recommended practices:

- o Data systems
- o Adult advocates
- o Academic supports
- o Social/behavior programs
- o Learning environment
- o Rigorous/relevant instruction

Resources include: overview of multimedia presentations and materials, comprehensive tools and templates, including planning templates for schools, and related links. Available from http://dww.ed.gov/Dropout-Prevention/.

Educational Policy and Improvement Center (EPIC)

The Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) is a nationally recognized leader in the field of College and Career Readiness. EPIC provides research and tools to empower states, districts, schools, and teachers to prepare students for success beyond high school. The Center has a variety of resources. Access the Center's website at https://www.epiconline.org/.

A Complete Definition of College and Career Readiness

Conley, D. (2012, May). *A complete definition of college and career readiness.* Eugene, OR: Educational Policy and Improvement Center. Available from http://epiconline.org/files/pdf/College_and_Career_Readiness_Complete_Definition_.

College and Career Readiness: Same or Different?

Conley, D. & McGaughy, C. (2012, April). College and career readiness: Same or different? *Educational Leadership,* Volume 69(7), 28-34. Available from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr12/vol69/num07/College-and-Career-Readiness. Are career readiness and college readiness one and the same? Cross-disciplinary standards, such as study skills, problem solving, critical thinking, and goal setting, were found to be important for student success in career-oriented courses whereas prerequisite academic content necessary for success varied, depending on the content area. Secondary schools can accommodate both a core of common expectations and enough customization to prepare all students to pursue both college and careers by taking crucial four steps.

Creating College Readiness - Profiles of 38 Schools that Know How

Educational Policy and Improvement Center. (2009). *Creating college readiness – profiles of 38 schools that know how*. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Eugene, OR: Author. Available from https://www.epiconline.org/files/pdf/doclibrary/AERA_2010_CRPractices.pdf The document includes profiles on public charter schools, alternative schools, early college high schools, comprehensive high schools, magnet schools, and private high schools.

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network

The mission of the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N) is to increase high school graduation rates through research and evidenced-based solutions. The Center offers a clearinghouse of resources, active research projects, publications, and professional development activities. In addition, the NDPC/N conducts a variety of third party evaluations and Program Assessment and Reviews (PAR). The site has a variety of resources, including a database of model dropout prevention programs taking place across the country, newsletters, research reports, practitioner guides, and online media. General web site http://www.dropoutprevention.org/.

What Works Clearinghouse
Dropout Prevention: A Practice Guide

Dynarski, M., Clarke, L., Cobb, B., Finn, J., Rumberger, R., and Smink, J. (2008). *Dropout prevention: A practice guide* (NCEE 2008–4025). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/.

This guide is intended to be useful to educators in high schools and middle schools in planning and executing dropout prevention strategies. This guide seeks to help them develop practice and policy alternatives for implementation. The guide includes specific recommendations and indicates the quality of the evidence that supports these recommendations. In addition, there are descriptions of some ways each recommendation could be carried out.

Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do?

Tierney, W., Bailey, T., Constantine, J., Finkelstein, N. & Hurd, N. (2009). *Helping students navigate the path to college: What high schools can do? A practice guide. (NCEE 2009-4066).* Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/higher_ed_pg_. The guide is intended to help schools develop practices that increase student access to higher education. A panel of experts in college access programs and strategies developed the recommendations in the guide. The guide contains specific steps on how to implement the recommendations. This guide targets high schools and school districts, and focuses on effective practices that prepare students academically for college, assist them in completing the steps to college entry, and improve their likelihood of enrolling in college.

Indicator D. School and Community Engagement

Quality Public Charter Schools maintain shared understandings and commitment to provide positive learning environments and experiences through the engagement of all students, parents, staff and community

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools maintain shared understandings and commitment to provide positive learning environments and experiences through the engagement of all students, parents, staff and community.

Performance Measures:

1. **Parent involvement policies and procedures**

2. **Evidence of parent engagement (active participation in school matters, satisfaction levels, complaints, etc.)**

3. **Evidence of community engagement (number of partnerships, participation in school development, knowledge regarding school goals)**

4. **Evidence of student engagement (surveys, attendance, retention, discipline records, behavioral interventions)**

5. **Descriptions of extracurricular activities and after-school programs for students**

Critical Success Factors:

1. Parents understand and support the school's mission and vision.

2. Parents understand how to best support learning at home.

3. Community resources are identified and utilized to support school development and student learning.

4. The school's strategic plan includes strategies to continuously improve the school's learning environment and student experiences.

5. The school has developed tools to ensure that parents and the community are kept informed about school developments.

6. The school maintains a variety of supports for behavioral interventions, social development, and enrichment of opportunities that encourage student growth and development.

D. School & Community Engagement Indicator

1. PARENTS UNDERSTAND AND SUPPORT THE SCHOOL'S MISSION AND VISION.

As schools of choice, charter schools offer parents a unique form of involvement from the time they decide their child will attend the school. The mission statement defines the main purpose of the school and the vision is a statement about the anticipated future for what the school can become. In effective charter schools, the mission drives every aspect of the school program, and in each case the school program reflects the school's freedom to experiment, to be creative in terms of organization, scheduling, curriculum, and instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The school's vision leads the way for school improvement and development.

For more information about mission and vision, refer to *Maryland Charter School Quality Standards,*

> *Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement, Critical Success Factor 6. on investment in school mission and vision.*

> *Indicator C., Student Learning and Achievement, Critical Success Factor 4. Progress reports to parents.*

Innovations in Parent and Community Engagement

Parent involvement in charter schools can be characterized by:

- the type of activity (e.g., education-related or resource development (fundraising, materials, library, etc.);
- the time of commitment (e.g., the frequency of events or mandated volunteer hours); and
- the nature of the involvement (e.g., formal committee meetings or informal gatherings). (Jennings, et. al., 2000).

In a study of twelve urban charter schools in six state, Smith and Wohlstetter (2009) found that charter schools were introducing changes in parent involvement activities, such as parent contracts, using technology to notify parents of volunteer opportunities and tracking parent involvement, involving parents in school beautification and maintenance, offering wraparound services for students and families, and including parents in decision-making roles.

PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

Using the most recent research and with national expertise, the PTA developed six standards that identify what parents, schools, and communities can do to support student success. The standards include:

1. **Welcoming all families into the school community**: Families are active participants in the life of the school and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

2. **Communicating effectively**: Families and schools engage in regular, two-way meaningful communication about student learning.

3, **Supporting student success**: Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

4. **Speaking up for every child**: Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

5. **Sharing power**: Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

6. **Collaborating with community**: Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

The PTA has developed an implementation guide and assessment guide to assist schools with the standards. See resources.

Types of Family Involvement

Effective parent involvement must be comprehensive and engage parents at many points and in many ways across a school year. (Jennings, et.al, 2000). A comprehensive family-school partnership addresses six types of family involvement (Esptein, et.al., 1997):

1. **PARENTING**:

   Help all families establish home environments to support children as students
   - o Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy).
   - o Family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services.
   - o Home visits at transition points to pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school.

2. **COMMUNICATING**:

   Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about the school's mission, vision, programs and children's progress.
   - o Conferences with every parent at least once a year.
   - o Language translators to assist families as needed.
   - o Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications.

3. **VOLUNTEERING:**

   Recruit and organize parent help and support.
   - o School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents.
   - o Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, resources for families.
   - o Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.

4. **LEARNING AT HOME**:

Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.

- o Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade.
- o Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.
- o Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work.

5. **DECISION MAKING**:

Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

- o Parent representative on Board of Directors.
- o Parent decision-making to support school's mission and vision.
- o Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation.
- o Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.
- o Networks to link all families with parent representatives.

6. **COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY**:

Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

- o Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services.
- o Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.
- o Service to the community by students, families, and schools (e.g. recycling, art, music, drama, and other activities for seniors or others).

Each type of involvement includes many different practices of partnership. Each type has particular challenges that must be met in order to involve all families, and each type requires redefinitions of some basic principles of involvement. Finally, each type leads to different results for students, families, and teachers.

In a study of parent involvement in twelve urban charter schools using the Joyce Epstein's model, Smith and others (2011) found that the charter schools activities fit the model fairly well. However, the strategies the schools used to implement these activities and to attract hard-to reach parents were family innovative and included:

- Offering wrap-around services, incentives, and contracts to enhance and ensure participation;
- Used technology for advertising parent volunteer opportunities; and
- Involved parents in the decision-making and governance of the school.

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships – Johns Hopkins University

The mission of this Center is to conduct and disseminate research, programs, and policy analyses that produce new and useful knowledge and practices that help parents, educators, and members of communities work together to improve schools, strengthen families, and enhance student learning and development.   The Center's Publications List can be accessed at:
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/publications.htm.

National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools

The Center, housed at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), links people with research-based information and resources that they can use to effectively connect schools, families, and communities. It emphasizes connections that directly impact student achievement in reading and mathematics, as well as connections that contribute to the students' overall success in school and in life. The Center reviewed emerging findings and research to develop an online database, annual conferences and annual reports to help advance procedural knowledge and to link research findings to practice.   Access website at: http://www.sedl.org/connections/.

National Parent Teacher Association

PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Implementation Guide

The PTA developed the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Implementation Guide, a tool for empowering people to work together with an end goal of building family-school partnerships and student success. For each of the six National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, there is an online guide that provides:

- An explanation of each standard and its importance
- Insights to help convince educators of the standard's value
- A success story from a school community
- Action steps for your school community
- Resources to enhance your understanding

The full guide, downloadable as a PDF, provides additional details, background, research, and success stories. The guide includes a family survey that can be used by schools.

This guide can assist organizers with implementing programs and policies that encourage these family-school partnerships. Used with the supporting resources, it can help organizers educate their communities about the importance of family involvement and direct the development of effective partnerships. These materials are best used after the formation of an action team focused on promoting family involvement. This team can include parents, other caregivers and family members, school staff, community members, and even students. Access the guide at:
http://www.pta.org/2757.asp**.**

PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

This guide, otherwise known as a rubric, offers specific goals for each Standard, as well as indicators for measuring whether those goals are being met. There are also examples for each indicator to show what good practice looks like at three different levels of development: 1) Emerging, 2) Progressing, or 3) Excelling. Access the guide at http://www.pta.org/National_Standards_Assessment_Guide.pdf.

REFERENCES

Epstein, J.L., Coates, L., Salinas, K.C., Sanders, M.G., & Simon, B.S. (1997*). School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Jennings, W., Adelmann, A., & Smith, N. (2000, November). *Charter schools: Creating and sustaining family friendly schools.* Charter Friends National Network. Produced under a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Available from http://www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs_docs/r/family.htm.

PTA Family-School Partnerships.   (2009). *PTA national standards for family-school partnerships: An implementation guide.* Alexandra, VA: Author. Available from: http://www.pta.org/2757.asp.

Smith, J., & Wohlstetter, P. (2009, October). *Parent involvement in urban charter schools: A new paradigm or the status quo.* Prepared for School Choice and School Improvement: Research in State, District and Community Contexts, Vanderbilt University. Nashville, TN: National Center on School Choice, Vanderbilt University.

Smith, J., Wohlstetter, P., Kuzin, C., & DePedro, K. (2011). Parent involvement in urban charter schools: New strategies for increasing participation. *The School Community Journal,* 21(1), 71-94. Available from ERIC: http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=EJ932201&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=EJ932201.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement (2004, June**). *Innovations in education: Successful charter schools**.* Report produced by WestEd. Washington, DC: Author.

D. School & Community Engagement Indicator

2. PARENTS UNDERSTAND HOW TO BEST SUPPORT LEARNING AT HOME

A quality charter school designs and implements family and community involvement activities to engage family and community members in the education of children. Research shows that schools can improve their students' learning by engaging parents in ways that directly relate to their children's progress (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

A quality charter school recognizes that all parents (regardless of income, education level or cultural background) are involved in their children's learning and want their children to do well in school. A school proceeds on the assumption that families can help improve their children's performance in school and influence other key outcomes that affect performance. Effective schools refrain at all times from blaming families for their children's low performance and never assumes that families do not care about their children (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). In effective schools, staff believes they can learn from families about their expectations for their children's education. (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). A quality charter school embraces a philosophy of partnership with families and is willing to share decision-making with families. A quality school makes sure that parents, school staff and community members understand the responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

One of the standards in the *PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships* (2009) addresses supporting student success: Standard 3: Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively. The second goal of Standard 3 addresses supporting learning by engaging families.

According to Joyce Epstein's types of family involvement, the first one is focused on parenting by helping all families establish home environments to support children as students. The activities may include: parent education and training, family support programs, and home visits.

Blum (2004) identified the following strategies for helping families assist their children with homework:

- Provide parents: information on skills needed for each grade level and course, information on homework and how to monitor it, a calendar of home and community activities that involve parents;
- Develop a homework schedule that requires students to discuss what they are learning with their parents;
- Encourage family reading, mathematics, and science activities;
- Promote family participation in annual student goal setting; and
- Distribute summer learning packets.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Take 15 for the Family

This statewide initiative encourages Maryland families to dedicate at least 15 minutes each day doing everyday activities, like eating dinner together, and turning those moments into learning opportunities. The goals of the program are to build awareness among parents that involvement in their children's education is critical and to provide resources that make this involvement easy and fun. Access resources at:
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/familylit/Take15/overview.

The website includes a parent page with information and resources for parents, activities for families, links to Maryland Public Libraries and other family friendly websites, information on what's new, and corporate sponsors supporting this initiative.

Many materials are in Spanish, Chinese, French, Korean, Russian, and Vietnamese.

OTHER MARYLAND INITIATIVES AND RESOURCES

Maryland Parent and Information Resource Center (PIRC)

The Maryland State Parental Information Resource Center (PIRC) is a place where parents can find information and resources to help their children succeed in school. The website contains links to many resources -- including books, reports, presentations, and training guides -- on strategies for increasing collaboration between parents and educators.

The site contains links to reports, articles, training guides, and other helpful information for parents on issues such as:

- how to find the right school for your child;
- how to interpret tests and report cards; and
- how to help your child with homework; etc.

Many materials are available in Spanish and other languages.

Maryland State Parental Information Resource Center
5272 River Road, Suite 340
Bethesda, Maryland 20816
Phone: (301) 657-7742
Fax: (301) 657-8782
Toll free hotline: 1-877-MD-PARENTS.

Web site: http://www.mdpirc.org/.

OTHER RESOURCES

National Parent Teacher Association

The PTA developed the **National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Implementation Guide,** a tool for empowering people to work together with an end goal of building family-school partnerships and student success. For each of the six National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, there is an online guide that provides:

- An explanation of each standard and its importance
- Insights to help convince educators of the standard's value
- A success story from a school community
- Action steps for your school community
- Resources to enhance your understanding

The full guide, downloadable as a PDF, provides additional details, background, research, and success stories.

This guide can assist organizers with implementing programs and policies that encourage these family-school partnerships. Used with the supporting resources, it can help organizers educate their communities about the importance of family involvement and direct the development of effective partnerships. These materials are best used after the formation of an action team focused on promoting family involvement. This team can include parents, other caregivers and family members, school staff, community members, and even students. Access the guide at: http://www.pta.org.

REFERENCES

Blum, R. (2004). *School connectedness: Improving students' lives*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health. Available from http://cecp.air.org/download/MCMonographFINAL.pdf.

Epstein, J.L., Coates, L., Salinas, K.C., Sanders, M.G., & Simon, B.S. (1997*). School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Henderson, A., & Mapp, K (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement. Annual Synthesis 2002*. Austin, TX: National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

PTA Family-School Partnerships.   (2009). *PTA national standards for family-school partnerships: An implementation guide.* Alexandra, VA: Author. Available from: http://www.pta.org.

3. COMMUNITY RESOURCES ARE IDENTIFIED AND UTILIZED TO SUPPORT SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT LEARNING.

Community organizations can be wonderful resources for charter schools. Partners may include: local community businesses and corporations, other non-profit organizations, colleges, law enforcement, etc. The table below identifies the types of organizations that are commonly partners with charter schools.

Common Charter School Partners

Sector	Types of Organizations
Nonprofit	• Community-based organizations (recreational centers, neighborhood outreach agencies) • Cultural institutions (museums, local performance groups) • Educational institutions (private colleges, universities) • Faith-based organizations (churches) • Race and/or ethnicity-based organizations • Social services providers (child and family welfare agencies) • Private foundations
For-Profit	• Education management organizations (EMOs) • Local businesses
Public	• Cultural institutions (art museums, science museums) • Educational institutions (school districts, community colleges, universities) • Public health providers (hospitals) • Government (city offices, mayor's offices) • Police departments

Source: (Center on Educational Governance, *Charter School Laws and Partnerships: Expanding Opportunities and Resources* (Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, 2004).

An effective school builds strong connections with community organizations (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The school collaborates with community organizations that want to help in improvement efforts and works with community organizations to offer programs that encourage reading, writing and studying during evenings, weekends and summer (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Collaborating with the community leads to the development of partnerships with selected community organizations and agencies. These partnerships promote the sharing of information and resources that are helpful to students and families. Community groups, cultural organizations, volunteer organizations, businesses, senior groups, and religious organizations can provide cultural, recreational, and extracurricular opportunities so that children's lives are enriched.

Well-constructed partnerships can provide needed resources, such as facilities, funding, administrative support, and curriculum and instruction, as well as less tangible benefits, such as increased visibility, governance expertise, and help in getting charter school applications approved. In some cases, members of partner organizations participate on charter school boards. In other cases, the organizations provide or supplement the curriculum that forms the focus of the school. In still other cases, partnerships with social services providers offer wrap-around resources that help meet the needs of students and their families.

Resources Partnerships Provide

Partnerships can provide a host of financial, human, political, and organizational resources:

- Financial resources include grants, loans, gifts, in-kind resources, and fundraising expertise.
- Human resources include board expertise, back-office support, and tutors and mentors for the school's students.
- Political resources include credibility to secure a loan, name recognition to attract students, and legitimacy to aid in charter school application approval.
- Organizational resources include facilities, curriculum, materials, and supplies.
  (Smith, et. al, 2008).

REFERENCES

Education Commission of the States, National Center on Governing America's Schools. (2004). *Charter school laws and partnerships: Expanding opportunities and resources*. Written by University of Southern California, Center on Educational Governance. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. Available from http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/cegov/focus/charter-schools/publications/policy.

Henderson, A., & Mapp, K (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement. Annual Synthesis 2002*. Austin, TX: National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. Available from http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf.

Smith, A. with assistance from Wohlstetter, P. & Hentschke, G. (2008, October**). *Partnerships between charter schools and other organizations: A guide for state policymakers*. Los Angeles, CA: National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance. Available from: http://www.charterresource.org/files/Partnerships_state_guide.pdf.

4. THE SCHOOL'S STRATEGIC PLAN INCLUDES STRATEGIES TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE THE SCHOOL'S LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND STUDENT EXPERIENCES.

A high quality charter school provides a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment characterized by trust, caring and professionalism. The learning environment should be clean, functional, comfortable, and attractive. The school should have a school plant, equipment, and support systems that operate safely, efficiently, and effectively. Problems with facilities are identified, addressed, and resolved in a timely manner (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007).The school should have adequate safety procedures and crisis plans. The school should be free from bullying, the threat of violence, and violence.

A quality charter school has a variety of processes and tools to collect data on student experiences. Some of the processes may include formal and informal surveys of students and parents, input from student and/or parent groups, or input from student council.

The *National Consensus Panel on Charter School Operational Quality* (2009) stated that it is important for schools to assess parent and student satisfaction (as well as needs and desires) for continuous school improvement. The Panel believed that a school, that is committed to engaging its students and parents and actively seeks their feedback, should be able to achieve response rates of at least 80% for students and 75% of parents on satisfaction surveys.

Based on the analyses of data collected from students, parents, and staff, the school's strategic plan would identify priorities, strategies, and activities that focus on improving the learning environment of the school and students experiences.

Other Relevant Sections of the *Implementation Guide*

> Refer to the following section on strategic planning: *Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement, Critical Success Factor 1. Strategic planning is used annually to guide and focus improvement efforts.*

See also Appendix A.3. for a template that can be used for a strategic plan.

<u>REFERENCES</u>

Building Charter School Quality (2009, May). ***A framework for operational quality: A report from the National Consensus Panel on Charter School Operational Quality.*** Washington, DC: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

Murphy, J., Elliott, S., Goldring, E., & Porter, A. (2007). Leadership for learning: A research-based model and taxonomy of behaviors. ***School Leadership and Management***, 27(2), 179-201.

5. THE SCHOOL HAS DEVELOPED TOOLS TO ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY ARE KEPT INFORMED ABOUT SCHOOL DEVELOPMENTS.

Effective communication is particularly critical for schools of choice and schools pursuing nontraditional programs. To sustain a family-friendly atmosphere, charter school leaders need to communicate about individual student and whole school progress honestly and thoroughly. They must also seek to improve their school's programs and responsiveness to family and community members. Several strategies can be employed to communicate effectively with families (Jennings, et. al, 2000).

Effective two-way communication between schools and homes is crucial for real partnerships. A recent *National Parent Teacher Association* (PTA) publication emphasizes the need for *all* school staff to be involved in creating a friendly, welcoming environment for parents at a school. In addition to teachers' role, administrators need to guide support staff (secretaries, custodians, and security personnel), on welcoming parents with their tone of voice, body language, and friendliness. Standard 2, Communicating Effectively, of the *PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships* (2009), identifies that families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

Families, as well as the broader community (including the sponsor, state officials, the media, and the general public) are interested in how charter schools are doing. Charter schools have the flexibility to use many communication vehicles. The most common methods for communication are: annual reports, reports on standardized tests including state-mandated tests, parent conferences, and individualized report cards or student progress reports. Other reporting methods include reports in local newspapers, portfolios, public presentations, direct parent/teacher communication, weekly newsletters, and parent satisfaction surveys. Consider portfolios, public presentations, widely distributed newsletters, and media releases about specific school accomplishments.

Other Relevant Sections of the *Implementation Guide*

Refer to the following section on communication systems: *Indicator E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures, Critical Success Factor 7. Effective and transparent communication systems are implemented.*

<u>**REFERENCES**</u>

Jennings, W., Adelmann, A., & Smith, N. (2000, November). *Charter **schools: Creating and sustaining family friendly schools**.* Charter Friends National Network. Produced under a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Available from http://www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs_docs/r/family.htm

PTA Family-School Partnerships.   (2009). ***PTA national standards for family-school partnerships: An implementation guide.*** Alexandra, VA: Author. Available from: http://www.pta.org/.

6. THE SCHOOL MAINTAINS A VARIETY OF SUPPORTS FOR BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND ENRICHMENT OF OPPORTUNITIES THAT ENCOURAGE STUDENT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

Effective schools provide structures and activities that engage students meaningfully and assist students and families in forming personal ties to the school and to appropriate adult role models (Murphy, et. al, 2007).

Student Connectedness to Schools

Research has demonstrated that when students feel connected to schools, there is increased classroom engagement, school attendance, academic performance, and completion rates (Blum, 2004). Students who feel connected to their school develop a sense of belonging to the school, develop good friendships, perceive their teachers and staff are caring and supportive, believe the discipline is fair and effective, participate in extracurricular activities, and engage in current and future academic progress (Blum, 2004). Schools can increase students' connectedness by:

- Implementing high standards and expectations and providing academic support to all students;
- Providing a curriculum that is relevant to students' experiences and lives and uses multiple instructional methods (e.g. cooperation learning, experiential learning);
- Applying fair and consistent disciplinary policies and classroom management practices that are collectively agreed upon and enforced fairly;
- Creating trusting relationships among students, families, teachers, staff, and administrators;
- Ensuring that every student feels close to at least one supportive adult in school;
- Opportunities for students to be involved in cross-age and peer-led tutoring activities, buddy programs, and welcome programs; and
- Fostering high parent/family expectations for school performance and completion through improved communication (Blum, 2004).

Safe, Orderly School Climate

A safe, orderly school climate is one characteristic of schools that consistently report good student performance. Positive relationships among students and school staff are necessary for school cultures that promote students' academic and social development (Blum, 2004). Research and practice have shown that a disciplined school climate, that conveys order, a sense of community, and higher expectations for behavior for both staff and students, has a positive effect on student learning. An effective school ensures that school rules are consistently and fairly enforced across all school staff (Murphy et. al., 2007). They monitor the school's operations and rules on a regular basis.

The *Maryland Model Performance Contract*, *Section 1.24* Student Conduct and Discipline, states that the charter school shall comply with all applicable state, federal laws and the County Board's guidelines related to student discipline, including due process provisions, and comply with student suspension and expulsion procedures in the charter. *Section 1.25 Student Welfare and Safety*, states that charter schools shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws concerning student welfare, safety, and health, including the reporting of child abuse, truancy, accident prevention, and disaster response, and any applicable state and local regulations governing the operation of school

facilities. *Section 1.19, Special Education Services*, identifies the requirements for providing special education services to students with disabilities.

Social Emotional Learning Skills and Programs

A number of schools are addressing students' social development through a variety of programs. Some of these programs address social emotional learning skills. Social emotional learning skills include: recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. They are the skills that allow children to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make ethical and safe choices.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), has the following guidelines for effective programming in social emotional learning:

1. The program is based on sound theories of child development and includes approaches that demonstrate the beneficial effects on children through scientific research.
2. The program uses systematic instruction and application of learning to everyday situations.
3. The program builds connections to school through caring, engaging classroom and school practices.
4. The program offers developmentally and culturally appropriate instruction.
5. The program helps schools coordinate and unify programs to promote the social, emotional, and academic growth of all students.
6. The program enhances school performance by addressing the affective and social dimensions of learning.
7. The program involves school staff, peers, parents, and community members in applying and modeling SEL-related skills and attitudes.
8. The program establishes organizational supports and policies that foster success, including leadership, active participation in planning, adequate time and resources, and alignment with school, district, and state policies.
9. The program provides high-quality staff development and support.
10. The program incorporates continuing evaluation and improvement.

The 2013 CASEL Guide identifies 23 school-based programs that successfully promote students' self-control, relationship building, and problem solving, among other social and emotional skills. See resource section for more information.

Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support

A number of schools in Maryland are implementing schoolwide positive behavioral intervention and support system through the *Maryland Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Initiative*. A defining feature is to build a continuum of behavior supports within the school environment.

At the core of the process is building "universal" behavior supports that apply to all students, all staff, and all settings. Universals are a clearly defined set of positively stated rules (e.g., "Respect yourself, "respect others," "respect property") and an accompanying set of explicit positively stated behavior exemplars of each rule based on current behavior concerns across common school settings (e.g., hallways, cafeteria, playground). Each behavior exemplar is then taught to all students across the school year by all school staff and students are acknowledged for mastery of targeted skills. Research has shown that approximately 80% of the student body can be successful, as defined as one

or fewer office discipline referrals, with universal supports in place (Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005).

The second level of the continuum focuses on at-risk students who will not be successful with universal supports alone. At this level the focus is on providing "small group" or "targeted" interventions for groups of students who are displaying similar behavior patterns. Common small group/targeted strategies include social skill instruction, self-management strategies, mentoring and academic supports. Research has shown that approximately 10-15% of the student body will require small group supports (Horner et al., 2005).

The third level of the continuum is individualized and intensive. The focal point at this level is conducting a functional behavior assessment and designing an individual plan that may include other specialized resources such as mental health or special education. Research has shown that approximately 5% of the student body will require individualized interventions (Horner et al., 2005).

Maryland State Department of Education Resources

Student Services and Alternative Programs Branch

The Student Services and Alternative Programs Branch (SSAP) is responsible for providing leadership and technical assistance to local school systems with the implementation of programs and initiatives to facilitate the emotional, mental, social, and physical health of all students. These programs and initiatives include guidance and career development, school psychology, pupil personnel, school social work, school health services, safe and drug-free schools, dropout prevention and alternative programs, home instruction, and initiatives to reduce disruption and violence, address at-risk behaviors, and facilitate achievement. The branch works collaboratively with other agencies, community organizations, and stakeholder groups around these initiatives. Web site: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/studentschoolsvcs/student_services_alt/overview.

Maryland Model Bullying Policy

The Maryland State Board of Education adopted a model bullying policy on February 24, 2009. The policy addresses prohibiting bullying, harassment, or intimidation in schools.   Access the policy at: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org.

Maryland Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Initiative

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in partnership with Sheppard Pratt Health System (www.sheppardpratt.org) and Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health (www.jhsph.edu) oversee and support the statewide implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in Maryland. The partnership, known as PBIS Maryland, is responsible for providing training and technical assistance to local schools systems. Each of 24 local school systems is partners in the initiative and provides local leadership and coaching to support participating schools. More information is available from http://pbismaryland.org/ **.**

OTHER RESOURCES

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

The Collaborative is a nonprofit organization that works to advance the science and evidence-based practice of social and emotional learning (SEL). Social emotional learning skills include: recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. They are the skills that allow children to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make ethical and safe choices.

The web site has a variety of resources (articles, tools, publications, videos) addressing: schools and school practices, selecting evidenced-based programs, assessing school-based social and emotional learning, and parent resources and tools for families. Access the web site at: http://casel.org/about-us/.

Sustainable Schoolwide SEL Implementation Guide and Toolkit

CASEL Practice Rubric for Schoolwide SEL Implementation. This tool helps schools assess their progress through three main stages of implementation

The toolkit also includes a personal assessment and reflection tool for school leaders (tool 6); an SEL teacher competencies assessment form (tool 25); a self-assessment tool for identifying existing school practices (tool 13); and an instructional strategies checklist (tool 33), as well as a variety of professional development and implementation planning tools.

Self-Assessment Guide Originally appearing in CASEL's book, *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators*, this guide is designed to help schools reflect on SEL practices. The questions ask about SEL goals and activities, classroom-based SEL skills instruction, SEL coordination and integration, and SEL planning and evaluation.

10 Guidelines to Effective SEL Practice. Use the CASEL Guidelines as an SEL practice checklist.

2013 CASEL Guide Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs: Preschool and Elementary School Edition

The 2013 CASEL Guide identifies well-designed, evidence-based social and emotional learning programs with potential for broad dissemination to schools across the United States. Based on CASEL's work in research and practice spanning nearly two decades, there is a systematic framework for evaluating the quality of classroom-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs. In addition, the Guide shares best practices for district and school teams on how to select and implement social and emotional learning programs. Access the guide at**:** http://casel.org/guide/ **.**

National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

The National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and supports provides a variety of resources (on-line library, newsletters, PowerPoint presentations, articles, video clips, manuals, and tools) as well as conferences and networks. The Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. More information is available from http://www.pbis.org/ .

School-wide Positive Behavior Support: Implementers Blueprint and Self-Assessment.

Sugai, G., Horner, R.H., Algozzine, R., Barrett, S., Lewis, T., Anderson, C., Bradley, R., Choi, J. H., Dunlap, G., Eber, L., George, H., Kincaid, D., McCart, A., Nelson, M., Newcomer, L., Putnam, R., Riffel, L., Rovins, M., Sailor, W., Simonsen, B. (2010). *School-wide positive behavior support: Implementers' blueprint and self-assessment*. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon.

The purpose of this blueprint is to provide implementers with definitions, descriptions, and guidelines that allow for accurate and durable implementation of school-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) practices and systems. Access the blueprint and self-assessment at: http://www.pbis.org/implementation/implementers_blueprint.aspx.

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/ .

An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):

- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and
- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom

Epstein, M., Atkins, M., Cullinan, D., Kutash, K., and Weaver, R. (2008). R*educing behavior problems in the elementary school classroom: A practice guide* (NCEE #2008-012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Designed for elementary school educators and school- and district-level administrators, this guide offers prevention, implementation, and schoolwide strategies that can be used to reduce problematic behavior that interferes with the ability of students to attend to and engage fully in instructional activities. Available from*:* http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.

REFERENCES

Blum, R. (2004). ***School connectedness: Improving students' lives***. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health. Available from http://cecp.air.org/download/MCMonographFINAL.pdf.

Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., Todd, A. W., & Lewis-Palmer, T. (2005). School-wide positive behavior support: An alternative approach to discipline in schools. In L. M. Bambara & L. Kern (Eds.), ***Individualized supports for students with problem behaviors***. *(pp. 359-390)*. New York: Guilford Press.

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2009). *Maryland charter schools: Model performance contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Murphy, J., Elliott, S., Goldring, E., & Porter, A. (2007). Leadership for learning: A research-based model and taxonomy of behaviors**. *School Leadership and Management***, 27(2), 179-201.

Sailor, W., Barrett, S., Dunlap, G., Massanari, C., Putnam, R., Sugai, G., Scott, T., Horner, R., Lewis, T., Eber, L., Kincaid, D., Nelson, C., Algozzine, R. (2004**). *School-wide positive behavior support: implementers blueprint and self-assessment***. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon, OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

D. School & Community Engagement Indicator Glossary

Mission - The mission statement defines the main purpose of the school. The mission reflects the vision, values, and beliefs of the school.

Parent involvement - Parent involvement in charter schools can be characterized: by: the type of activity (e.g., education-related or resource development (fundraising, materials, library, etc.); the time of commitment (e.g., the frequency of events or mandated volunteer hours); and the nature of the involvement (e.g., formal committee meetings or informal gatherings). (Jennings, et. al., 2000).

Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support – A broad range of systemic and individualized strategies for students to achieve important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behaviors with all students. It is a compilation of effective practices, interventions, and systems change strategies that have a long history of empirical support and development and individually have been demonstrated to be empirically effective and efficient (Sailor, Barrett, Dunlap, Massanari, Putnam, Sugai, Scott, Horner, Lewis, Eber, Kincaid, Nelson, and Algozzine, 2004).

Strategic plan - A strategic plan is the road map that helps the school reach its vision. The strategic plan begins with the mission statement. The vision and mission is the cornerstone for the school's strategic plan, goals, strategies, and decisions.

Vision - The vision statement helps the school community to picture what they want the school to become.

Resources by Critical Success Factors

1. PARENTS UNDERSTAND & SUPPORT SCHOOL MISSION & VISION.

<u>OTHER RESOURCES</u>

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships – Johns Hopkins University

The mission of this Center is to conduct and disseminate research, programs, and policy analyses that produce new and useful knowledge and practices that help parents, educators, and members of communities work together to improve schools, strengthen families, and enhance student learning and development. The Center's Publications List can be accessed at http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/publications.htm .

National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools

The Center, housed at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), links people with research-based information and resources that they can use to effectively connect schools, families, and communities. Access website at http://www.sedl.org/connections/.

2. PARENTS SUPPORT LEARNING AT HOME

<u>**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES**</u>

Take 15 for the Family

This statewide initiative encourages Maryland families to dedicate at least 15 minutes each day doing everyday activities, like eating dinner together, and turning those moments into learning opportunities. The goals of the program are to build awareness among parents that involvement in their children's education is critical and to provide resources that make this involvement easy and fun. Access resources from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/familylit/Take15/overview .

The website includes a parent page with information and resources for parents, activities for families, links to Maryland Public Libraries and other family friendly websites, information on what's new, and corporate sponsors supporting this initiative.

<u>**OTHER MARYLAND RESOURCES**</u>

Maryland Parent and Information Resource Center (PIRC)

The Maryland State Parental Information Resource Center (PIRC) is a place where parents can find information and resources to help their children succeed in school. The website contains links to many resources -- including books, reports, presentations, and training guides -- on strategies for increasing collaboration between parents and educators, such as:

- how to find the right school for your child;
- how to interpret tests and report cards; and
- how to help your child with homework; etc.

Many materials are available in Spanish and other languages.

Maryland State Parental Information Resource Center
5272 River Road, Suite 340
Bethesda, Maryland 20816
Phone: (301) 657-7742. Fax: (301) 657-8782
Toll free hotline: 1-877-MD-PARENTS. Web site: http://www.mdpirc.org/ .

2. PARENTS SUPPORT LEARNING AT HOME CONTINUED

<u>**OTHER RESOURCES**</u>

National Parent Teacher Association

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Implementation Guide

The PTA developed the **National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Implementation Guide,** a tool for empowering people to work together with an end goal of building family-school partnerships and student success. For each of the six National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, there is an online guide that provides:

- An explanation of each standard and its importance
- Insights to help convince educators of the standard's value
- A success story from a school community
- Action steps for your school community
- Resources to enhance your understanding

The full guide, <u>downloadable as a PDF</u>, provides additional details, background, research, and success stories.

This guide can assist organizers with implementing programs and policies that encourage these family-school partnerships. Used with the supporting resources, it can help organizers educate their communities about the importance of family involvement and direct the development of effective partnerships. These materials are best used after the formation of an action team focused on promoting family involvement. This team can include parents, other caregivers and family members, school staff, community members, and even students. Access the guide at: <u>http://www.pta.org/2757.asp</u> .

PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

This guide, otherwise known as a rubric, offers specific goals for each Standard, as well as indicators for measuring whether those goals are being met. There are also examples for each indicator to show what good practice looks like at three different levels of development: 1) Emerging, 2) Progressing, or 3) Excelling. Access the guide at <u>http://www.pta.org/National_Standards_Assessment_Guide.pdf</u>.

6. SCHOOL SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS.

<u>MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES</u>

Student Services and Alternative Programs Branch

The Student Services and Alternative Programs Branch (SSAP) is responsible for providing leadership and technical assistance to local school systems with the implementation of programs and initiatives to facilitate the emotional, mental, social, and physical health of all students. These programs and initiatives include guidance and career development, school psychology, pupil personnel, school social work, school health services, safe and drug-free schools, dropout prevention and alternative programs, home instruction, and initiatives to reduce disruption and violence, address at-risk behaviors, and facilitate achievement. The branch works collaboratively with other agencies, community organizations, and stakeholder groups around these initiatives. Web site: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/studentschoolsvcs/student_services_alt/overview .

Maryland Model Bullying Policy

The Maryland State Board of Education adopted a model bullying policy on February 24, 2009. The policy addresses prohibiting bullying, harassment, or intimidation in schools. Access the policy at: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/0700B064-C2B3-41FC-A6CF-D3DAE4969707/19401/ModelBullyingPolicyDRAFT102108.pdf .

Maryland Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Initiative

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in partnership with Sheppard Pratt Health System (www.sheppardpratt.org) and Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health (www.jhsph.edu) oversee and support the statewide implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in Maryland. The partnership, known as PBIS Maryland, is responsible for providing training and technical assistance to local schools systems. Each of 24 local school systems are partners in the initiative and provide local leadership and coaching to support participating schools. More information is available from http://pbismaryland.org/ **.**

6. SCHOOL SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS CONTINUED

<u>**OTHER RESOURCES**</u>

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

The Collaborative is a nonprofit organization that works to advance the science and evidence-based practice of social and emotional learning (SEL). Social emotional learning skills include: recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. They are the skills that allow children to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make ethical and safe choices.

The web site has a variety of resources (articles, tools, publications, videos) addressing: schools and school practices, selecting evidenced-based programs, assessing school-based social and emotional learning, and parent resources and tools for families. Access the web site at: <u>http://casel.org/about-us/</u> .

Sustainable Schoolwide SEL Implementation Guide and Toolkit

<u>CASEL Practice Rubric</u> for Schoolwide SEL Implementation. This tool helps schools assess their progress through three main stages of implementation

The toolkit also includes a personal assessment and reflection tool for school leaders (tool 6); an SEL teacher competencies assessment form (tool 25); a self-assessment tool for identifying existing school practices (tool 13); and an instructional strategies checklist (tool 33), as well as a variety of professional development and implementation planning tools.

<u>Self-Assessment Guide</u>. Originally appearing in CASEL's book, *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators*, this guide is designed to help schools reflect on SEL practices. . The questions ask about SEL goals and activities, classroom-based SEL skills instruction, SEL coordination and integration, and SEL planning and evaluation.

<u>10 Guidelines to Effective SEL Practice</u>. Use the CASEL Guidelines as an SEL practice checklist.

2013 CASEL Guide Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs: Preschool and Elementary School Edition

The 2013 CASEL Guide identifies well-designed, evidence-based social and emotional learning programs with potential for broad dissemination to schools across the United States. Based on CASEL's work in research and practice spanning nearly two decades, there is a systematic framework for evaluating the quality of classroom-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs. In addition, the Guide shares best practices for district and school teams on how to select and implement social and emotional learning programs. Access the guide at**:** <u>http://casel.org/guide/</u>.

National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

The National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and supports provides a variety of resources (on-line library, newsletters, PowerPoint presentations, articles, video clips, manuals, and tools) as well as conferences and networks. The Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education.   More information is available from http://www.pbis.org/.

School-wide Positive Behavior Support: Implementers Blueprint and Self-Assessment.

Sugai, G., Horner, R.H., Algozzine, R., Barrett, S., Lewis, T., Anderson, C., Bradley, R., Choi, J. H., Dunlap, G., Eber, L., George, H., Kincaid, D., McCart, A., Nelson, M., Newcomer, L., Putnam, R., Riffel, L., Rovins, M., Sailor, W., Simonsen, B. (2010). *School-wide positive behavior support: Implementers' blueprint and self-assessment*. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon.

The purpose of this blueprint is to provide implementers with definitions, descriptions, and guidelines that allow for accurate and durable implementation of school-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) practices and systems. Access the blueprint and self-assessment at: http://www.pbis.org/implementation/implementers_blueprint.aspx.

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

Access web site at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/aboutus/.

An initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC):

- Produces user-friendly practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms;
- Assesses the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies), giving educators the tools to make informed decisions;
- Develops and implements standards for reviewing and synthesizing education research; and
- Provides a public and easily accessible registry of education evaluation researchers to assist schools, school districts, and program developers with designing and carrying out rigorous evaluations.

Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom

Epstein, M., Atkins, M., Cullinan, D., Kutash, K., and Weaver, R. (2008). *reducing behavior problems in the elementary school classroom: A practice guide* (NCEE #2008-012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Designed for elementary school educators and school- and district-level administrators, this guide offers prevention, implementation, and schoolwide strategies that can be used to reduce problematic behavior that interferes with the ability of students to attend to and engage fully in instructional activities. Available from*:* http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=4 .

Indicator E. Governance, Leadership and Organizational Structure

Quality Public Charter Schools implement structures and processes that support effective organizational and learning environments.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools implement structures and processes that support effective organizational and learning environments.

Performance Measures:

Board Governance

1. **Evidence of recruitment and sustainability of a diversely skilled governing board**

2. **Board of Directors membership, meeting schedules, agendas, meeting notes**

3. **Bylaws and policies and procedures with evidence of the adherence to and implementation of state and federal laws and regulations**

4. **Evidence of active engagement of the governance board in financial, instructional, organizational planning and accountability**

5. **Job descriptions, roles and responsibilities of board of directors and school leadership**

Fiscal Management

6. **Budgeting policies, procedures, and practices**

7. **Financial audits**

Management

8. **Allocation and organization of resources**
9. **School accountability/improvement plan**
10. **Evidence of effective communication systems**
11. **Professional development records for leadership team and board**
12. **Evidence of effective management structures and practices, including internal business and financial controls**
13. **Evidence of safe, clean, effective environment**
14. **Student enrollment rates**
15. **Staff qualifications**
16. **School's promotion and exit standards**

Critical Success Factors:

Board Governance

1. The school's governing board includes representation of parents and school community. The school governing board meets regularly and has developed appropriate bylaws for conducting effective meetings. The board has developed appropriate school plans and policies to ensure school and student success.

2. The school's board employs a strong governance structure to promote the vision and mission of the school and ensures the following:

   - adequate resources for programming are provided and that resources are tightly aligned to support school goals;
   - strong relationships with the chartering authorizer, within the school, and external stakeholders are developed and secured;
   - a clear plan exists for hiring, retaining, supporting and evaluating the school administrator is developed and implemented in collaboration with the local educational agency;
   - adopted policies and practices are in alignment with state laws, state rules, and district policies (unless waived) to promote consistency to the implementation of the school's vision and mission;
   - guidance is provided in program assessment and renewal processes;
   - governing and leadership structures are closely aligned to the approve school's charter;
   - bylaws have been developed and implemented to ensure effective board functions and meetings;
   - roles and responsibilities of the school's leadership are clearly delineated and distinct from the board; and
   - accountability by reviewing and monitoring results, and ensuring that infrastructures effectively support improvement goals.

Fiscal Management

3. Effective use of sound budgeting practices is implemented:

   - the budget does not exceed school resources and assets; and
   - all appropriate revenue and program costs clearly reflected in the budget.

4. Revenue is secured to ensure stable programming:

   - adjustments are made to reduce operating costs to cover any deficit as; and
   - additional resources are secured to augment per pupil revenue and increase revenue to address unforeseen shortfalls.

Critical Success Factors Continued

Management

5. Clearly defined processes to ensure the equitable allocation, integration, and organization of resources in the school are implemented:

   - the use of resources is maximized to support achievement;
   - school staff is efficiently allocated and organized;
   - master schedule provides all students equal access to curriculum; and
   - individual student needs are met and students not meeting learning standards are identified and provided additional learning opportunities.

6. A collaborative process is used to develop the school's vision, mission, and goals and guides decision-making. The School Accountability Committee provides input into the school improvement plan.

7. Effective and transparent communication systems are implemented that are top-down as well as bottom-up for the board, school leadership, school staff, parents, students, and related external agencies.

8. Quality and needs-based professional development that supports their own development is planned and implemented for the governing board and leadership team.

9. Organizational effectiveness and efficiency is maintained as follows:

   - internal business and financial controls are developed and implemented to ensure operational integrity; and
   - a systemic plan of checks and balances is developed and implemented for all accountability areas including: fiscal, operational and academic responsibility**.**

10. A safe, clean and effective learning and work environment is provided for all staff and students.

11. Leadership ensures that all instructional staff has access to resources needed.

12. Student enrollment rates align with the school's charter.

13. In collaboration with the local educational agency, the employed staff meets all state and federal qualifications and standards.

14. Internal measures linked with the school's promotion and exit standards have been developed and implemented.

<p align="center">**E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures Indicator**</p>

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools implement structures and processes that support effective organizational and learning environments.

Board Governance

Critical Success Factor 1:   Board Recruitment, Representation and Expertise, Meetings, and Bylaws

The school's governing board includes representation of parents and school community. The school's governing board meets regularly and has developed appropriate bylaws for conducting effective meetings. The board has developed appropriate school plans and policies to ensure school and student success.

Every charter school as a nonprofit public organization must have a board of directors that is ultimately responsible for how the school operates. Board members should be diverse in terms of their backgrounds and perspectives. Diversity of the board that reflects the charter school community is especially important. Membership on the board may include parents of children attending the school and representatives of the community.

The *Maryland State Charter School Model Application* asked for the following information about the board: Articles of Incorporation, Maryland Certificate of Good Standing from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation, copy of IRS form, proposed charter school board of directors, governing board assurances, By-laws, schedule for meetings .and school policies.

The *Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract*, Section 1.2.5, states that annually the charter school shall provide the County/City Board of Education an updated list of membership and officers, including their business addresses.

Board Expertise

The *National Association of Charter School Authorizers* (NACSA) (Cornell-Feist, 2007) recommends that governing board members have expertise in the following areas:

- academic oversight;
- human resources;
- strategic planning;
- public relations and marketing;
- legal and financial affairs; and
- real estate.

Board members should have the knowledge and skills needed to effectively carry out its responsibilities as well as an enthusiasm for and a commitment to the charter school's mission.

See also the Management section, *Critical Success Factor 8. Quality and needs-based professional development that supports their own development is planned and implemented for the governing board and leadership team.*

Stages of Board Development

A 2006 report by the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence differentiates the primary tasks inherent in three stages of a board's development:

- **Founding Board**: At this early stage, the board should be small and homogeneous, with the primary task of overseeing the development of the charter, submitting the application and creating an accountability plan.

- **Governing Board**: During this stage, the board is tasked with fulfilling the accountability plan, sharing work with the school leader and distributing the governance tasks to committees.

- **Sustaining Board**: At this point, the tasks broaden to include fundraising and attracting new members with access to key funders and donors. This board may have expanded to include the creation of an executive committee as well as patrons or members who serve an advisory role. (Source: BoardSource).

The school governing board should have developed well written up-to-date bylaws. The board should meet on a regular basis using its bylaws.

Development and Implementation of ByLaws

Quality charter schools develop and implement bylaws to ensure effective board functions and meetings.

According to Section 1.5.2 of the *Charter School Governance* of the ***Maryland Charter Schools Model Performance Contract*,** the charter school's governing board shall adopt Bylaws and operate in accordance with the Bylaws. The charter school is to submit to the County/City Board of Education a current signed copy of the ByLaws in accordance with Pre-opening and reporting requirements, and any time the Governing Board of Directors amends it ByLaws.

Bylaws contain provisions on the school's legal status, board composition, board structure and roles, meeting frequency and procedures, and the process to amend the bylaws.

Board Policies

The board helps to create the vision for how the school should operate. The board should be committed to and have an active role in the school's strategic planning. In addition, the board should develop appropriate school plans and policies to ensure school and student success

There should be a formal process for policy development by the board. Legally, the board oversees the operations of the school and makes sure the school follows federal and state laws and requirements and is financially sound.

An effective board sets policies regarding finances, enrollment, program evaluation, and other operational aspects. Written policies have two purposes: they provide direction to the board and staff in implementing the school's goals; and they ensure the school meets legal requirements.

Policies and practices should be in alignment with state laws, state rules, and district policies (unless waived).

According to the federal definition of a public charter school, a public charter school should be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution.

Here are general types of policies a charter school governing board should consider:

- **Legal policies**
  - ✓ Such as school safety, liability/risk, conflicts of interest, and confidentiality.

- **Internal board policies**
  - ✓ Policies that provide more detail than the bylaws in regard to election of board members (e.g., board recruitment, orientation, and training) and a policy on how the board will adopt policies, for instance holding two hearings before final adoption.

- **Financial and procurement policies**
  - ✓ Such as internal audits, signature authority and maximum spending levels without board approval.

- **Instructional program policies**
  - ✓ Such as the type of methodology used to deliver the curriculum, instructional beliefs, and assessment belief, school schedule, discipline policy and dress code for students, grading and grade level structures

- **Facilities/emergency policies**
  - ✓ Such as how and when the community can use the facilities, emergency policies and plan.

- **Personnel policies**
  - ✓ Such as how many hours a part-time employee must work in order to be included in benefits, staff records

- **Parent and student policies**
  - ✓ Such as student recruitment, admissions/lottery, enrollment, student's rights, student records, how a parent (or community member) can get something on the board's meeting agenda, and student conduct.

- **Services policies**
  - ✓ Such as transportation, food services, health services

(Colorado Department of Education, 2010; Maryland State Charter School Model Application, 2012; and Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract, 2012).

Board Meetings

Board meetings should be regularly held during the year. According to a Board Source survey, 17 percent of boards indicate that they meet just about every month; 25 percent say they meet every other month. 24 percent say they meet 5-6 times per year. On the average boards meet 6.9 times per year. These statistics do not capture how much work is done in the committees, whether an executive committee meets separately, or how effective these meetings are in achieving their objectives. Whether the board meets quarterly or once a month is not the issue. Meeting regularity should be based on the amount of work to be done and how efficiently the meetings are organized.

Section 1.5.4 of the *Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract* states that the charter school shall maintain Board-adopted policies, meeting agendas and minutes; and shall make such documents available for public inspection and shall conduct meetings consistent with the Open Meetings Law, State Government Article, Section 10-501.

Effective Boards may use the following time management practices to increase the meeting's effectiveness:

- Include time estimates on board-meeting agendas.
- Start on time and end on time.
- Remind the board of time limits.
- Track use of board meeting time. (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Office of School Innovations

Maryland State Model Charter School Application

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application.* **Baltimore,** MD: Author. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org.

Maryland Charter Schools Model Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Contact Office of School Innovations.

OTHER RESOURCES

The Colorado charter school handbook: A guide for starting and operating a charter school

Colorado Department of Education. (2010). ***The Colorado charter school handbook: A guide for starting and operating a charter school***. Denver, CO: Author. Available from http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/CSHandbook.pdf.

 National Charter School Resource Center

The Center has a variety of resources on governing boards that are available under the category of charter school operations. Available from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/priority-area/charter-operations.

National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance

The Center, funded by U.S. Department of Education, is a collaborative effort of the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California, The Finance Project, and WestEd. Resources include: research reports, articles, tools and toolkits; links to research and policy organizations, state departments of education, state charter school associations, and charter advocacy groups, and state policy guides. Access website at: www.CharterResource.org.

REFERENCES

BoardSource*. (no date). **Q&As: How often should a board meet?** Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.boardsource.org/Knowledge.

Butler, E., Smith, J., & Wohlstetter, P. (2008, November) ***Creating and sustaining high-quality charter school governing boards***. Los Angeles, CA: National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance. Retrieved from http://www.charterresource.org/files/Governing_Board_v3.pdf.

Colorado Department of Education. (2010). ***The Colorado charter school handbook: A guide for starting and operating a charter school***. Denver, CO: Author. Retrieved from http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/CSHandbook.pdf .

Cornell-Feist, M. (2008). Good to govern: Evaluating the capacity of charter school founding boards. *NACSA Authorizer Brief*, 15. Retrieved from http://www.qualitycharters.org/files/publicIssueBrief15.pdf .

Martinelli, F. (2000*). **Creating an effective charter school governing board**. Charter Friends National Network. Retrieved from http://www.uscharterschools.org/governance/contents.htm .

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). ***Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course toward excellence: Model performance contract***. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). ***Maryland State Model Charter School Application***. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org.

New York City Center for Charter School Excellence. (2006, May). ***NYC charter schools governance and board development guidebook.*** New York: Author. Retrieved from http://www.defendcharterschools.org/NYCGuidebook.pdf .

Wohlstetter, P., Smith, J., Farrell, C., & O'Neill, P. (2009). ***Maximizing effectiveness: Focusing the microscope on charter school governing boards.*** Los Angeles, CA: National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance. Retrieved from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/maximizing-effectiveness-focusing-microscope-charter-school-governance-boards .

E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures Indicator

Critical Success Factor 2: Board Governance Structures

The school's board employs a strong governance structure to promote the vision and mission of the school and ensures the following:

- adequate resources for programming are provided and that resources are tightly aligned to support school goals;
- strong relationships with the chartering authorizer, within the school, and external stakeholders are developed and secured;
- a clear plan exists for hiring, retaining, supporting and evaluating the school administrator is developed and implemented;
- adopted policies and practices are in alignment with state laws, state rules, and district policies (unless waived) to promote consistency to the implementation of the school's vision and mission;
- guidance is provided in program assessment and renewal processes;
- governing and leadership structures are closely aligned to the approve school's charter;
- bylaws have been developed and implemented to ensure effective board functions and meetings;
- roles and responsibilities of the school's leadership are clearly delineated and distinct from the board; and
- accountability by reviewing and monitoring results, and ensuring that infrastructures effectively support improvement goals.

According to Hill and Lake (2006), governance is the set of processes, customs, policies, laws and institutions by which an organization is controlled. It defines the relationships among the many stakeholders in an organization's activities and outcomes.

Although they are related, a clear distinction must be made between "governance" and "management" responsibilities for a charter school:

- **Governance** deals with major policy-making decisions or setting the overall direction of the school.

- **Management** deals with the allocation and deployment of the school's resources on a daily basis to achieve the school's goals. (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

Quality Charter schools have boards that have developed governance structures, policies, and procedures to be consistent with their vision, mission, goals, authorizer requirements, applicable laws, and the governance philosophy of their leadership program (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

Board's Primary Responsibilities

The primary responsibilities of the board include:

- **Providing oversight functions and ensuring charter requirements.** The board is responsible for ensuring that school's programs and operation comply with the terms of its charter:
  - Complies with statutory and regulatory requirements;
  - Has competent professional staff; and
  - Has a successful academic program, as measured by internal and external assessments.

- **Promoting the charter school's mission.** The board should be comprised of individuals who support and promote the charter school's mission and educational philosophy.

- **Leading the planning and policymaking.** The board must initiate the strategic planning process and develop policies and procedures consistent with the education laws of the State of Maryland.

- **Ensuring the school is financially solvent.**

- **Raising funds.** Board members should be proactive in building a group of private and business financial supporters who regularly donate resources to the school to help implement the school's educational program (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

Based on a national review of 30 charter schools in nine states, the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota found the following key elements for successful governance structures:

- Adopt a structure that stays true to the school's mission, goals, and objectives;
- Design a structure that reflects state charter law;
- Use some form of shared decision-making;
- Create committees to address specific areas and issues;
- Document which decisions are made and by whom (governing board, school leader, committee);
- Involve a variety of people in the governing board or in committees;
- Use board training activities, conferences, and/or retreats;
- Focus on generating a vision and plan for school improvement;
- Have a relatively simple organization without multiple levels of bureaucracy;
- Be flexible to adapt to changing situations; and
- Consider the students' needs at all times. (New York City Center for School Excellence, 2006).

See the end of Critical Success Factor 2 for resources and references. (Pages 24-26)

Board Committees

The charter school board may authorize members to serve on a subcommittee or to act as an official board representative on matters of school business or policy. Typical committees and their key responsibilities are identified in the table below.

Typical Board Committees	Key Responsibilities
Board of Directors	Conducts the affairs of the school, subject to applicable education law; not for profit corporation law; and the school's charter and bylaws.
Executive Committee	Facilitates effective decision-making by all board members.
Finance Committee	Coordinates the board's financial oversight responsibilities.
Personnel Committee	Evaluates the school leader and oversees employee grievance procedures.
Board Development Committee	Recruits new board members and oversees ongoing training of existing board members.
Resource Development Committee	Plans and implements the school's fundraising programs.
Facilities Committee	Assesses the charter school's short and long-term facilities needs and presents a long range facility plan to the board.

Source: *SmartStart Guide™ Charter Schools Board Governance, First Edition*. (Hollins, 2004)

The *Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract*, under *Section 1.5 Charter School Governance*, delineates that the Board is responsible for complying with and carrying out the provisions of the Contract, including compliance with applicable laws and regulations and all reporting requirements.

The *National Consensus Panel on Charter School Operational Quality* (2009) identified eight measures of board performance (see below). Metrics "specify a quantification, calculation method or formula for a given measure." (National Consensus Panel on Charter School Operational Quality).

Eight Measures of Board Performance

Measures	Metrics
Board-member skills, knowledge, and commitment	Collective years of board member experience in the following critical areas as a minimum: finance, legal, education, and board leadership/governance. Percentage of board members who attend more than 80% of board meetings.
Setting expectations	Percentage of short- and long-term, board-approved academic and operating performance goals, including at least one goal in: • student achievement • student academic growth over time • financial health • operational efficiency • organizational development

Measures	Metrics
Ethical conduct	Absence of violations of authorizer approved board policy governing ethical matters including conflicts of interest.
Regulatory and reporting compliance	Percentage of all required filings that are complete, accurate, and on time. Absence of violations of any regulatory or reporting requirements.
Leadership oversight and evaluation	Clear lines of authority, responsibility and reporting. Board monitoring of school leadership performance throughout the school year. Annual evaluation of school leadership performance against established performance expectations.
Contract management and oversight	Fulfillment of terms of charter school contract. Effective management and oversight of all service contracts, including any contracts for education/management services, as evidenced by, at a minimum: I. Clear sound contracts that articulate roles and responsibilities; academic and operational (as applicable) performance goals, measures, timelines and terms; and consequences for inadequate performance; and II. Oversight that focuses on contractually-agreed performance outcomes and quality service.
Public Accountability and transparency	Clear, accurate communication by the school on its academic and operating performance to key constituencies and the public through a variety of means that maximize access and understanding.
Securing the future/continuous improvement	Documented board and leadership attention to significant changes in the school's environment, including authorizing chances and legislative, regulatory, and policy activity.

Source: Building Charter School Quality Consortium (2009, June). *A framework for operational quality: A report from the National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality*. Washington, DC: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

See the end of Critical Success Factor 2 for resources and references. (Pages 24-26)

Charter School Board Ensures Adequate Resources for Programming Are Aligned to Support School Goals.

A high quality charter school board ensures that the school has adequate resources for programming that are tightly aligned to support school goals.

The Charter School Board has the ultimate responsibility for the charter schools' financial viability. Charter schools should have a long-term financial plan (budgets for both capital projects and operating expenses). The financial oversight function consists of three main responsibilities:

1. The Board determines the financial goals of the charter school, approves a budget that reflects the school's goals and board policies, and monitors management's progress in achieving those goals.

2. The Board establishes sound financial policies and monitors whether the charter school's activities adhere to those policies by reviewing monthly or quarterly financial statements.

3. The Board reviews the charter school's financial control systems to safeguard the school's resources (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

Refer to the *Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract*, *Section 3.0 Financial Accounting and Reporting* and *Exhibit 8.4, Scope of Audit Protocol and Financial Accountability* in the *Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract*.

Schools are required to submit budgets and cash flow projection annually and to submit revised budgets when a material change in the school's program occurs (e.g., enrollment increases/decreases or additions to the grade levels offered).

Other Relevant Sections of the *Implementation Guide*

See also the following *Maryland Charter School Quality Standards Implementation Guide*:

> *Indicator C. Student Learning and Achievement, Critical Success Factor 8. School policies, procedures, and resources are aligned to support student learning.*

> *Indicator D. School & Community Engagement, Critical Success Factor 3. Community resources are identified and utilized to support school development and student learning.*

> *Indicator E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures, Critical Success Factor 5. Clearly defined processes to ensure the equitable allocation, integration, and organization of resources in the school are implemented.*

See the end of Critical Success Factor 2 for resources and references. (Pages 24-26)

Charter School Board Ensures Strong Relationships among Authorizer, within School, and External Stakeholders.

Quality Charter School Boards ensure that strong relationships with the chartering authorizer, within the school, and external stakeholders are developed and secured.

Relationship with Authorizer

In Maryland, each local school system is to identify an Charter School Liaison. The LEA Charter school is the main representative of the authorizer who serves to design, implement, and provide guidance in all chartering functions. The primary functions of the liaison are:

I. Build upon and utilize the school system's capacity and infrastructure to adequately fulfill authorizing responsibilities using best practices.
II. Design and implement a comprehensive application process that follows fair procedures and rigorous criteria and grants charters only to those developers who demonstrate capacity for establishing and operating a quality charter school.

III.   Assist legal counselor in the negotiation of the contract with charter schools and ensures clearly articulated rights and responsibilities of each party regarding school autonomy, expected outcomes, measures for evaluating success or failure, performance consequences and other material terms.
IV.   Conduct contract oversight that evaluates performance, monitors compliance, informs intervention and renewal decisions, and ensures autonomy provided under applicable law.
V.   Design and implement a transparent and rigorous process that uses comprehensive data to make merit-based renewal decisions.
VI.   Meets regularly with the Superintendent to provide updates on charter school progress and prepares reports to the local board upon the request of the superintendent to assist them in fulfilling their capacity, as the local authorizer of charter schools. (Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations, 2012).

It is recommended that a charter school board establish a strong, positive relationship with the local educational agency's Charter School Liaison.

Board and School Leader Relationship

An effective board-school leader relationship should reflect the distinction between "ends decision-making" by the board and the means used by staff to achieve those ends. Major board decisions include setting the budget, determining the strategic plan, formulating major policy, and interpreting laws and regulations with which the charter school must comply. These decisions create the managerial areas in which the school leader has the authority to act. (Martinelli, 2000; The New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

The following practices can be used to strengthen the relationship between the school board and the school leader:

- **Effective hiring or selection process.** Hiring the school's leader is one of the most important board decisions. When looking for a new (or first) school leader, the board must assess the charter school's specific needs, and then seek a qualified individual who has the skills and experience to guide the charter school in meeting those needs**.**

- **Written job descriptions for board members and the school leader.** For an effective board-staff relationship, roles and responsibilities should be clarified. This also will make recruitment easier as it clearly explains roles and expectations to prospective board members and school leaders.

- **Clear definition of the relationship between the board and school leader.** An effective working relationship between the board and school leader has its roots in the approach used by the board to select the school leader. There should also be a written description that shows at a glance the corresponding and complementary roles and relationship of the board and the school leader. (Martinelli, 2000).

Relationships with External Stakeholders

Refer to *Indicator D. School & Community Engagement Indicator, Critical Success Factor 3. Community resources are identified and utilized to support school development and student learning.*

See the end of Critical Success Factor 2 for resources and references. (Pages 24-26)

Communication between Board and School Leader

Effective communication is one of the keys to an effective working relationship between the board and school leader (Martinelli, 2000). The following procedures can increase the effectiveness of communications between the school's board and school leader.

- **Involve the school leader in strategic planning.** During the strategic planning process, the board and the school leader should discuss the major issues facing the charter school over the next several years and explore a range of options for future action. Conversely, if the strategic plan is defined in isolation, differences of opinion are not discussed and resolved, which can lead to problems down the road.

- **Maintain a mutually supportive relationship.** The board and the school leader should meet regularly to discuss the issues facing the charter school and the progress in meeting current goals and objectives.

- **Explain roles during board recruitment and orientation.** The relationship of the board to the school leader should be thoroughly explained during recruiting and orientation. It may be that a new member was involved in an organization where the board micromanaged and may assume that this is the role the board plays in the charter school.

- **Maintain clarity about board policy and oversight functions.** Periodically review the definition of the roles of the board and school leader to ensure there is agreement and make adjustments, if necessary.

- **Evaluate the charter school leader's performance.** This evaluation can play a key role in clarifying and strengthening the working relationship between the board and the school leader and offers an opportunity to identify challenges, provide recognition to the school leader, and strengthen the charter school's overall management. (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

See the end of Critical Success Factor 2 for resources and references. (Pages 24-26)

Clear Plans for School Administrator Hiring, Retention, Support, and Evaluation in collaboration with the local educational agency.

In collaboration with the local educational agency, Quality Charter School Boards develop and implement a clear plan for hiring, retaining, supporting, and evaluating the school administrator.

Hiring a School Administrator

Hiring the school administrator is one of the most important decisions of the board. When looking for a school administrator, the board needs to assess the charter school's specific needs and seek a qualified individual who has the skills and experience to meet those needs (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006). It is the responsibility of the board to recruit and support a competent school leader who can provide the necessary vision and leadership.

In developing a school administrator hiring process, consider the following:
- Establish clear selection criteria;
- Identify "non-negotiable traits" (e.g. strong knowledge of teaching and learning, unyielding focus on goals and results); and

- Develop a multi-modal selection process aligned to the school's values (an interview process that screens candidates against mission-aligned criteria). (New School Ventures Fund, 2008).

Supporting a School Administrator

To support the school administrator, consider on-the-job supports such as: coaching/mentoring, targeted training, and/or collaborative learning with peers (NewSchool Ventures Fund, 2008). New principals cite individualized coaching as the most valuable form of on-the-job support. It is important for administrators to protect time on the calendar for coaching/mentoring sessions. Effective coaching/mentoring sessions need to be frequent, structured, and focused. Some charter schools hold monthly conference calls among administrators to share and discuss challenges and issues. Other charter schools promote membership in professional organizations. Targeted training strategies may include off-site conferences or workshops, on-line professional development opportunities, or visits to other charter schools.

Evaluating a School Administrator

The board should also periodically evaluate the performance of the school leader in carrying out the decisions of the board and other assigned responsibilities. Charter school boards need to become familiar with the performance review process used in the school system and timetable with performance expectations. In Maryland charter school staff are employees of the local school system, it is therefore required that the board become aware of collective bargaining contractual requirements when evaluating the administrator. Additional type of evaluation input a charter school can use may include any of these elements:

- Written input from all individual board members
- Written input from staff members
- Self-evaluation
- Intermittent observations
- A formal rating system
- Linkages to measures of student performance
- Open-ended discussions of career goals
- Opportunities for the charter school administrator to respond (Martinelli, 2000).

Other Relevant Sections of the *Implementation Guide*

The board may want to refer to the following:

> *Indicator A., Culture of Continuous Improvement, Critical Success Factor 7. The school's administration effectively implements instructional leadership strategies* and *Maryland's Instructional Leadership Framework.*

> *Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation Guidebook* at http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/race_to_the_top/tpeg .

See the end of Critical Success Factor 2 for resources and references. (Pages 24-26)

Adopted and Aligned Policies and Practices with State Laws, Rules, and District Policies.

Quality Charter school boards adopt policies and procedures that are in alignment with state laws, state rules, and district policies (unless waived) to promote consistency to the implementation of the school's vision and mission.

Maryland Requirements

The Maryland Public Charter School Program was adopted into law by Maryland's General Assembly in 2003 through Title 9, §101-110 of the Education Article of the Code of Maryland. Section 9-102, Public school charter, states that charter schools are subject to federal and State laws prohibiting discrimination, is in compliance with applicable health and safety laws, and is in compliance with Section 9-107, Responsibilities of public chartering authority.

Maryland State Charter School Application, under Section B. Organizational Plan, required submission of school policies.

Maryland Model Performance Contract. The *Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract*, under *Section 1.5 Charter School Governance*, delineates that the Charter School is responsible for carrying out the provisions of the agreement, including the compliance with applicable law and regulation and all reporting requirements. One tool that can be used by the Board is the *Charter School Assessment Framework* in the *Maryland Charter Schools Model Performance Contract*. The Evaluation Framework has been revised to align with the Maryland Charter School Quality Standards.

Federal requirements

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Section 5210(1) states that a charter school complies with: (1) Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the American with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; (2) all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements; and (3) operates in accordance with State law.

Board Provides Guidance in Program Assessment and Renewal Processes.

Quality Charter School Boards provide guidance in program assessment and renewal processes. A quality charter school governance board operates with a clear set of goals for the school. The board has a set of tools for understanding the school's progress toward meeting those goals. The board regularly and systematically assesses the performance of the school in meeting these goals and key indicators of success.

See also later sub-section on Board ensures accountability by reviewing and monitoring results and ensuring infrastructures effectively support improvement goals. (Page 23)

See the end of Critical Success Factor 2 for resources and references. (Pages 24-26)

Governing and Leadership Structures Aligned with Approved Charter

Quality Charter Schools closely align governing and leadership structures to the approved school's charter.

The *Maryland Model Charter School Application,* Section B. Organizational Plan asked for descriptions of the school governance and organizational structures.

The approved charter of the school should have identified governing and leadership structures. The governing and leadership structures should be closely aligned with those identified in the charter.

The *Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract*, under *Expectations of the charter school regarding the establishment of this agreement,* delineates in 1.2.9, that the charter school shall operate with the terms of the charter, the performance contract and applicable laws, and shall govern and manage the charter school in a fiscally responsible manner, and shall achieve the pupil outcomes set out in the charter and the agreement.

Bylaws Developed and Implemented

Quality charter school boards develop and implement bylaws to ensure effective board functions and meetings.

According to the *Quality Standards for Charter School Operations*, charter school boards should have fully adopted a set of bylaws that include policies, such as: conflict of interest policies; meetings, protocols and procedures; and formal delineations of roles and authorities within the charter school.

The *Maryland State Charter School Model Application* required the submission of the organization's bylaws.

The *Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract*, under Section *1.5 Charter School Governance*, delineates that the governing board shall adopt Bylaws and operate in accordance with the Bylaws. In Section 1.5.3, the Performance Contract states that charter schools will have a formal conflict of interest policy that is consistent with applicable law, including any Charter School Conflict of Interest Policies adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education, and that the School will abide by the policy.

The school governing board should have developed well written up-to-date bylaws. The board should meet on a regular basis using its bylaws.

There should be a formal process for policy development by the board. Legally, the board oversees the operations of the school and makes sure the school follows federal and state laws and requirements and is financially sound.

See the end of Critical Success Factor 2 for resources and references. (Pages 24-26)

Roles and Responsibilities of School Leadership Clearly Delineated and Distinct from the Board.

Quality Charter School Boards clearly delineate distinct roles and responsibilities of the school's leadership from the board.

Quality Charter schools have written roles and responsibilities of the board and the school leadership. The board is responsible and has the authority to develop the school leadership's job description based on requirements for the position. There should also be a written description that shows the corresponding and complimentary roles of the board of directors and school leadership.

The *Maryland State Model Charter Application*, under Section B. Organizational Plan, required the submission of organizational structures.

Board Ensures Accountability by Reviewing and Monitoring Results, and Ensuring that Infrastructures Effectively Support Improvement Goals.

For a charter school to succeed, it must form a board that is committed to the school's mission, possesses substantial leadership skills and expertise, sets policy that guides the school's work, and evaluates both the school and itself with an eye toward continuous improvement (National Charter School Network).

School-level governing boards can play important roles in internal accountability. Clarifying relationships between the school's governing board and its management is a key to the development of internal accountability. A report from the *National Consensus Panel on Charter School Operational Quality* identified that an effective board focuses on policy and governing, and not managing day-to-day operations. The board's role is to delegate authority to the school head and ensure accountability (Carpenter, 2007). Having delegated authority, the board has the obligation of ensuring that the school leader is held accountable for the school's performance.

A quality charter school governance board operates with a clear set of goals for the school. The board has a set of tools for understanding the school's progress toward meeting those goals. The board regularly and systematically assesses the performance of the school in meeting these goals and key indicators of success.

Performance management consists of methods, metrics, process, and systems needed to manage the performance of a charter school (Performance Management Institute, CREDO, Stanford University). Performance management provides schools and authorizers needed metrics and data to measure student and school performance so they can make management decisions based on real-time performance and make mid-course corrections when necessary.

The *National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality* (2008) developed a *Framework for Academic Quality* to serve as a foundation for school evaluation. The framework is built around four essential indicators of academic quality: (1) Student learning and achievement level (status); (2) student progress over time (growth); (3) Postsecondary readiness and success for high schools; and (4) student engagement. The Framework also includes associated measures which are general instruments or means to assess performance in each indicator, metrics (quantification, calculation method or formula for a given measure), and benchmark comparisons (performance against exemplars). Targets are quantifiable objectives that set expectations or define what will constitute success on particular measures within a given period of time.

In addition to the above, a charter school board should examine the effectiveness and outcomes of the implementation of an improvement plan, activities and/or strategies, and resources. The *Maryland Charter Schools: Chartering a Course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract* has a section, *Charter School Assessment Framework* that includes key questions to ask in terms of the school providing the appropriate conditions for success. The board should ensure the current infrastructure, resources, and strategies are supporting the school's accomplishment of improvement goals.

An essential aspect of sustainability and success of charter schools is a robust charter support infrastructure of improvement (National Charter School Policy Forum, U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Charter leaders need an array of services—including finance, insurance, and legal supports—to operate effectively. Where authorizers are the main source of charter support services, the challenge is that school leaders may be reluctant to seek help, revealing their weaknesses to the entity that can close their schools. When districts are the primary source of services, charter schools may face a different challenge: if districts require them to purchase services that do not meet their needs, precious funds are squandered. An infrastructure that is voluntary, responsive, diverse, and dynamic will best meet the needs of charter schools while continuing to promote school autonomy and agility.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application.* Baltimore, MD: Author.

Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/.

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Contact Office of School Innovations.

Maryland State Department of Education. (2012, April). *Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation Guidebook.* Baltimore, MD: Author.

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

OTHER RESOURCES

National Charter School Resource Center

A variety of resources on governing boards are available under the category of charter school operations. Available from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/priority-area/governing-boards .

National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance (NRC)

The Center has a variety of resources on charter school finance and governance. Resources include: research reports, articles, tools and toolkits; links to research and policy organizations, state departments of education, state charter school associations, and charter advocacy groups, and state policy guides. Available from http://www.charterresource.org/national-resource-center..

REFERENCES

Building Charter School Quality Consortium (2008, June). *A framework for academic quality: A report from the National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality*. Washington, DC: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Retrieved from http://www.publiccharters.org/publication/.

Building Charter School Quality Consortium (2009, June). *A framework for operational quality: A report from the National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality.* Washington, DC: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Retrieved from http://www.publiccharters.org/publication/.

Carpenter, B. (2007). *The seven absolutely universal, non-negotiable, unchanging principle of good charter school governance*. Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, Central Michigan University, National Charter Schools Institute.

Hill, P., Lake, R., Celio, M., Campbell, C., Herdman, P., & Bulkley, K. (2001, June). *A study of charter school accountability: National Charter School Accountability Study*. Conducted by the Center on Reinventing Public Education for U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Hollins, S.(2004) *SmartStart charter schools board governance: A resource guide for developing board governance: philosophy and governance policies.* First edition. Concord, NH: Author.

Martinelli, F. (2000*). Creating an effective charter school governing board*. Charter Friends National Network. Retrieved from http://www.uscharterschools.org/governance/.

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations, (2012). *LEA Charter School Liaisons Job Description*. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations, (2012). *Maryland state charter school model application*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/.

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations, (2009). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract.* Baltimore, MD: Author.

NewSchools Venture Fund (2008, June). *Principal development: Selection, support & evaluation: Key strategies from NewSchools'* Portfolio Ventures. San Francisco, CA: Author. Retrieved from http://www.newschools.org/files/PrincipalDevelopment.pdf .

The New York City Center for Charter School Excellence (2006, May). *NYC charter schools governance and board development guidebook*. New York: Author. Retrieved from http://www.defendcharterschools.org/NYCGuidebook.pdf .

National Resource Center on Charter School Finance & Governance. (2008, November). *Creating and sustaining high-quality charter school governing boards*. Los Angeles, CA: Author. Retrieved from http://www.charterresource.org/files/Governing_Board_v3.pdf .

Performance Management Institute, CREDO, Stanford University. (no date). ***Performance management***. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University, Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO).

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement (2008). ***A commitment to quality: National Charter School Policy Forum Report.*** Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/admins/comm/choice/csforum/report.

E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures Indicator

STANDARD: Quality Public Charter Schools implement structures and processes that support effective organizational and learning environments.

Fiscal Management

Critical Success Factors 3: Budgeting Practices

3. Effective use of sound budgeting practices is implemented:

- the budget does not exceed school resources and assets; and
- all appropriate revenue and program costs clearly reflected in the budget.

Budgets

A budget is a systematic method of allocating financial, physical, and human resources to achieve strategic goals (*2012 Maryland State Charter School Model Application*). As part of the Business Plan section of the application, applicants had to submit budgets for the proposed charter term and opening year cash-flow analysis.

A well-developed charter school budget includes projected revenues and expenditures, and ideally reflects the mission, vision, and design principles of a school.

Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract Requirements

The ***Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract***, *Exhibit 8.3 Scope of Audit Protocol and Financial Accountability* states that is critically important for the school to maintain a balanced budget and suitable accounting process to meet accountability needs and requirements. Schools are required to submit budgets and cash flow projection annually and to submit revised budgets when a material change in the school's program occurs.

Section *1.5.5 Charter School Governance*, delineates that the Governing Board is responsible for sound fiscal management of the charter school. *Section 3.0, Financial Accounting and Reporting*, delineates the reporting requirements and the submission of an annual audit.

Sound Fiscal Plan and Management Practices

A sound fiscal plan should include: start-up cash flow budget, cash flow projection, longer-term (e.g., 3-5 years) balanced operating budget, budget versus actual monthly report, balance sheet summary of assets and debts, statement about assumptions (e.g., enrollment projections, teacher salaries), and description of budget development and oversight process.

According to Carpenter (2006), the first and foremost element of sound fiscal management is that every board member understands that it is the board that is ultimately responsible for the school's finances.

Carpenter (2006) identifies seven practices for sound fiscal management for the Board:

1. Establish internal controls so that the school management is limited on what is free to do with the school's money and assets and there are segregation of duties among personnel so that no one or two people have total or near total control of finances.
2. Rigorously monitor compliance with fiscal policies.
3. Develop financial reporting interpreting skills so that every board member understands: balance sheets, income and expense statements, budget vs. actual expenses, and cash flow projection.
4. Develop accurate budgets that are driven by the mission of the school.
5. Recognize red flags (e.g., irregularity in financial reports, lack of openness of personnel to answer questions).
6. Minimize risk (e.g., precautions on credit cards, two copies of back statements with one copy to a board member).
7. Hire its own independent auditor.

A study of financial management in New York charter schools (Brent, Finnigan, with Stewart, 2008) also identified sound fiscal management practices in the following areas:

1. Generating resources (securing funds, investment and endowment funds, fundraising, grants, and debt);
2. Allocating resources (preparing strategic plans, using decision analyses techniques, creating and managing budgets, evaluating program efficacy);
3. Managing and reporting financial information (accounting for financial transactions, generating financial reports, monitoring key financial variables to assess financial condition, understanding audit procedures and practices);
4. Safeguarding resources (developing comprehensive written financial policies and procedures, developing and managing internal control systems, risk management/insurance, identifying and disclosing related party transactions, identifying and implementing cost-reduction strategies, employing competitive bidding practices); and
5. Specific functional areas (managing compensation and benefits/personnel records, food services, transportation, facilities, and procurement/purchasing).

Audits

Public funds must be spent appropriate and with transparency. Charter schools are required to have an annual financial statement audit, and if applicable, a Federal Single Audit. In addition, each school is subject to an audit by the Maryland State Department of Education.

The **Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract**, *Section 3.0 Financial Accounting and Reporting*, delineates the reporting requirements and the submission of an annual audit. *Exhibit 8.4, Scope of Audit Protocol and Financial Accountability* provides additional information on requirements.

Office of School Innovations

Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract.* Baltimore, MD: Author. Contact Office of School Innovations.

Maryland State Model Charter School Application

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application*. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org

<u>OTHER RESOURCES</u>

National Charter School Resource Center

A variety of resources on finance and fundraising are available under the category of charter school operations. Available from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/priority-area/charter-operations .

National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance (NRC)

The Center has a variety of resources on charter school finance and governance. Resources include: research reports, articles, tools and toolkits; links to research and policy organizations, state departments of education, state charter school associations, and charter advocacy groups, and state policy guides. Available from http://www.charterresource.org/ .

<u>REFERENCES</u>
Brent, B., Finnigan, K. with Stewart, T. (2008, December). *Financial management in New York charter schools*. Prepared for the New York Education Finance Research Corporation. Albany, NY: New York Education Finance Research Corporation. Retrieved from http://www.albany.edu/edfin/documents/CharterSchoolFinancialManagementFinal.pdf .

Carpenter, B. (2006). *Let's do the numbers: Seven practices for sound fiscal management of charter schools*. National Charter Schools Institute**.** Retrieved from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/lets-do-numbers-seven-practices-sound-fiscal-management .

Maryland State Department of Education, (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application***.** Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/.

Fiscal Management Continued

Critical Success Factor 4: Revenues Secured

Revenue is secured to ensure stable programming:

- adjustments are made to reduce operating costs to cover any deficit as; and
- additional resources are secured to augment per pupil revenue and increase revenue to address unforeseen shortfalls.

According to the National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance Resources, a sound revenue base has five characteristics:

- *Stability* - means the funding sources are not likely to be reduced or eliminated in the near future.
- *Diversity*- means the school's portfolio includes diverse federal, state, local, and private funding sources.
- *Flexibility*- means the funding sources do not have stringent restrictions on their use.
- *Sufficiency* - means ample resources exist to meet the school's identified short- and long-term needs.
- *Consistency with the school's mission* - means the goals of the funding sources align with core school goals. (Keller & Hayes, 2009)

Charter school leaders should engage in revenue planning processes well before they face any urgent gaps in funding. Identifying and evaluating funding sources will likely involve two or three months of data collection, analysis, discussion, and planning. Once school leaders identify fundraising targets and develop fundraising strategies, they should plan on taking several months to a year to secure funding. It is critical that charter school leaders have a clear understanding of funding needs that are likely to arise in the coming two or three years and plan ahead.

The National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance Resources has developed a *Revenue Planning Tool for Charter School Operators* (Keller & Hayes, 2009). See later section on resources for fiscal management for more details and how to access the planning tool.

Office of School Innovations

Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Contact Office of School Innovations.

Maryland State Model Charter School Application

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org

OTHER RESOURCES

National Charter School Resource Center

A variety of resources on finance and fundraising are available under the category of charter school operations. Available from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/priority-area/charter-operations .

National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance (NRC)

The Center has a variety of resources on charter school finance and governance. Resources include: research reports, articles, tools and toolkits; links to research and policy organizations, state departments of education, state charter school associations, and charter advocacy groups, and state policy guides. Available from http://www.charterresource.org/ .

Assessing Fiscal Health: A Financial Benchmarking Tool for Charter Schools

Crocker, J., Lavallee, R., and Stewart, N. (2009, December). *Assessing Fiscal Health: A Financial Benchmarking Tool for Charter Schools*. Los Angeles, CA: National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance. Available from *http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/assessing-fiscal-health-financial-benchmarking-tool-charter-schools* .

The Fiscal Health Toolkit is designed as a resource for charter school leaders to use. It defines fiscal Health as the ability of a charter school to successfully meet the terms of its charter and maintain a budget that effectively supports its operations. It can be used as a self-assessment tool or as a tool to be used by authorizers and funders to provide technical assistance and evaluate a school's readiness for reauthorization.

Revenue Planning Tool for Charter School Operators

Keller, E., & Hayes, C. (2009, August*). A revenue planning tool for charter school operators*. Los Angeles, CA: National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance.

Available from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/revenue-planning-tool-charter-school-operators .

This revenue planning tool is one in a series of tools on charter school finance and governance. The series of tools was created to support efforts to ensure successful and sustainable charter schools through effective finance and governance practices. The NRC designed the revenue planning tool to help charter school operators identify and evaluate prospective funding sources that are applicable to their unique needs and situations. Several worksheets walk charter school operators through the process of collecting and evaluating information about funding sources so they can make sound decisions about which ones will help them establish a sound and reliable revenue base for their school.

REFERENCES

Brent, B., Finnigan, K. with Stewart, T. (2008, December). *Financial management in New York charter schools*. Prepared for the New York Education Finance Research Corporation. Albany, NY: New York Education Finance Research Corporation. Retrieved from http://www.albany.edu/edfin/documents/CharterSchoolFinancialManagementFinal.pdf .

Carpenter, B. (2006). *Let's do the numbers: Seven practices for sound fiscal management of charter schools*. National Charter Schools Institute**.** Retrieved from http://www.asbcs.az.gov.

Keller, E., & Hayes, C. (2009, August*). A revenue planning tool for charter school operators*. Los Angeles, CA: National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance. Retrieved from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/revenue-planning-tool-charter-school-operators .

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract***.** Baltimore, MD: Author.

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application***.** Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org.

E. GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES INDICATOR

STANDARD: **Quality Public Charter Schools implement structures and processes that support effective organizational and learning environments.**

Critical Success Factors:

Management

5. Clearly defined processes to ensure the equitable allocation, integration, and organization of resources in the school are implemented:

   - the use of resources is maximized to support achievement,
   - school staff is efficiently allocated and organized,
   - master schedule provides all students equal access to curriculum,
   - individual student needs are met and students not meeting learning standards are identified and provided additional learning opportunities.

6. A collaborative process is used to develop the school's vision, mission, and goals and guides decision- making. The School Accountability Committee provides input into the school improvement plan.

7. Effective and transparent communication systems are implemented that are top-down as well as bottom-up for the board, school leadership, school staff, parents, students. and related external agencies.

8. Quality and needs-based professional development that supports their own development is planned and implemented for the governing board and leadership team.

9. Organizational effectiveness and efficiency is maintained as follows:

   - internal business and financial controls are developed and implemented to ensure operational integrity; and
   - a systemic plan of checks and balances is developed and implemented for all accountability areas including: fiscal, operational and academic responsibility**.**

10. A safe, clean and effective learning and work environment is provided for all staff and students.

11. Leadership ensures that all instructional staff has access to resources needed.

12. Student enrollment rates align with the school's charter.

13. Staff employed meets all state and federal qualifications and standards.

14. Internal measures linked with the school's promotion and exit standards have been developed and implemented.

E. GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES INDICATOR

Management

Critical Success Factor 5: Allocation, Integration, and Organization of Resources.

High quality charter schools have clearly defined processes to ensure the equitable allocation, integration, and organization of resources in the school are implemented:

- the use of resources is maximized to support achievement;
- school staff is efficiently allocated and organized;
- master schedule provides all students equal access to curriculum; and
- individual student needs are met and students not meeting learning standards are identified and provided additional learning opportunities.

One of the most challenging tasks that charter schools must address is the allocation, integration, and organization of resources effectively. High quality charter schools have clearly defined processes for the management of resources.

Schools need to regularly revisit whether their financial, human, and time resources are being allocated in the most effective ways given the school's performance and goals (McREL, 2003). In 2008, Hawley Miles and Frank recommended that schools:

1. assess current resource use in new ways that go beyond the typical budget;
2. organize resources more creatively and flexibly;
3. craft a master schedule that works; and
4. connect resource allocation to student and school performance.

The authors developed a strategic school resource diagnostic tool that assists schools in determining: How well does your school organize its time, talent, and attention? The tool includes a guiding resource strategy, leading indicators and questions to consider, and sections for interpreting the data and issues for investigation. See reference section for citation and web site for the tool.

Resource Strategies

Hawley and Miles (2008) identified the following resource strategies:

1. Invest in teaching quality through hiring, professional development, job structure, and common planning time.
   A. Hire and organize staff to fit the school's needs in terms of philosophy, expertise, and schedule;
   B. Integrate significant resources for well-designed professional development that provides expert support in implementing the school's core instructional design;
   C. Design teacher work schedules so teachers use effectively blocks of collaborative planning time to improve classroom practice; and
   D. Enact systems that promote individual teacher growth through induction, leadership opportunities, professional development planning, evaluation, and compensation.

2. Create individual attention and personal learning environments.
   E. Assess student learning to adjust instruction and support;
   F. Create smaller group sizes and reduce teacher loads in high needs areas; and

G. Organize structures that foster personal relationships between students and teachers.

3. High-performing schools use student time strategically, emphasizing core academics and literacy.
   H. Maximize time, including longer blocks of uninterrupted time that students spend on academic subjects; and
   I. Vary time and instructional programs to ensure all students meet rigorous academic standards.

A study of financial management in New York charter schools (Brent, Finnigan, with Stewart, 2008) also identified sound fiscal management practices in the following areas related to resources:

1. Generating resources (securing funds, investment and endowment funds, fundraising, grants, and debt);
2. Allocating resources (preparing strategic plans, using decision analyses techniques, creating and managing budgets, evaluating program efficacy);
3. Managing and reporting financial information (accounting for financial transactions, generating financial reports, monitoring key financial variables to assess financial condition, understanding audit procedures and practices);
4. Safeguarding resources (developing comprehensive written financial policies and procedures, developing and managing internal control systems, risk management/insurance, identifying and disclosing related party transactions, identifying and implementing cost-reduction strategies, employing competitive bidding practices); and
5. Specific functional areas (managing compensation and benefits/personnel records, food services, transportation, facilities, and procurement/purchasing).

Strategies Used in High Performing Schools

A study of nine small urban, high-performing high schools (including charter schools) (Shields & Hawley Miles, 2008) found that leading edge schools create customized strategic designs that organize resources – people, time, and funds – to advance a clearly defined instructional model that reflects the school's vision, learning goals, and student population. The instructional model is as a set of decisions that schools make about how they organize and deliver instruction. The schools organize their resources to support their instructional model by investing in teaching quality, using student time strategically, and creating individual supports for students.

High performing schools use student time strategically, by purposefully aligning the school's schedules with their instructional model and students' needs (Shields & Hawley Miles, 2000). The schedules serve as a key tool for student success. The schools maximize the time on academic subjects by including longer blocks of uninterrupted time. Schools may use various strategies: different lengths of time for classes for different subjects, block schedules, rotating bell schedules, and staggering start times for different cohorts of students. By continuously measuring and monitoring student learning and performance, schools can identify specific student needs and vary times and programs/activities to support each student's progress. Many of these schools developed individualized student schedules that accommodated students' changing needs so that if a student needed intense academic support, there were opportunities built into the regular schedule.

Other Relevant Sections in the *Implementation Guide*

Refer to the following sections of the *Maryland Charter Schools Quality Standards Implementation Guide:*

> *Indicator C. Student Learning and Achievement, Critical Success Factor 9. School policies, procedures, and resources are aligned to support student learning.*

> *Indicator D. School and Community Engagement, Critical Success Factor 7. School maintains a variety of supports for behavioral interventions, social development, and enrichment of opportunities that encourage student growth and development.*

<u>**RESOURCES**</u>

Education Resource Strategies

This nonprofit organization works extensively with urban public school systems to rethink their use of school-level and district-level resources and build strategies for improved instruction and performance. Their web site has a variety of resources and reports. A variety of resources are available from <u>http://erstrategies.org/resources/featured/</u>.

Strategic School Resources by Hawley Miles and Frank include:

- Strategic School Resource Diagnostic Tool
- Resource Measurement Worksheet – Elementary Grades
- Resource Measurement Worksheet - Secondary

Available from: <u>http://erstrategies.org/resources/details/the_strategic_school/</u>.

<u>**REFERENCES**</u>

Brent, B., Finnigan, K. with Stewart, T. (2008, December). *Financial management in New York charter schools*. Prepared for the New York Education Finance Research Corporation. Albany, NY: New York Education Finance Research Corporation. Retrieved from <u>http://www.albany.edu/edfin/documents/CharterSchoolFinancialManagementFinal.pdf</u> .

Hawley Miles, K. and Frank, S. (2008). *The strategic school: Making the most of people, time and money*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Retrieved from <u>http://erstrategies.org/resources/details/the_strategic_school/</u> .

Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McCrea). (2003). *Sustaining school improvement: Resource allocation.* Aurora**,** CO: Author.

Shields, R., and Hawley Miles, K. (2008). *Strategic designs: Lessons from leading edge small urban high schools.* Watertown, MA: Education Resource Strategies. Retrieved from <u>http://www.educationresourcestrategies.org/documents/FINALREPORTSTRATEGICDESIGNSERS_5-19.pdf</u> .

Management Continued

Critical Success Factor 6: Collaborative Processes to Develop Vision, Mission, Goals, and Guide Decision-Making.

A collaborative process is used to develop the school's vision, mission, and goals and guides decision-making. The School Accountability Committee provides input into the school improvement plan.

Collaboration is a process of participation through which people, groups and organizations work together to achieve desired results (National Network for Collaboration, 1995).

The vision helps the school community picture what they want the charter school to become. The mission defines the main purpose of the school. It reflects the vision, values, and beliefs of the school.

"Experts agree that the single most important attribute of a successful charter school is a clear sense of purpose or mission shared by parents, students, staff, and the school's board of trustees. A common vision of what it means to be educated and how one becomes educated forms the basis of a coherent school design. It guides the school's decision-making in every aspect of planning and operations" (Millot & Lake, 1996).

To create a shared vision of what is important and why, school stakeholders need to engage in ongoing conversations. Creating a shared vision is a dynamic, living process in which the stakeholders share and express their hopes for the future of the school (Senge, 1990). People in every role of the school should be able to speak from the heart about what really matters and be heard.

The following is a list of characteristics of a shared school mission and vision statements. The list may be used when developing the statements, or to examine existing ones.
The school's mission and vision:

- Is developed collaboratively by students, staff, families, and community members.
- Is expressed in clear language that is inspirational and free of jargon.
- Is known, understood, and owned by the whole school community.
- Is continually affirmed, celebrated, and made public to the whole school community.
- Forms the basis for the school community to assess progress indicators in achieving goals.
- Is revisited regularly. (Center for Collaborative Education, no date).

School Accountability Committee

High Quality charter schools are organized so that they have a variety of committees, including a school accountability committee or school improvement committee. Typical membership on this type of committee includes: administrator, teachers representing different grade levels or content areas, parent representative, and others. A School Accountability Committee or its equivalent provides input into the school improvement plan. A School Accountability Committee is responsible for the academic performance goals, non-academic performance goals, and support within the organizational and operational goals.

Other Relevant Sections in the *Implementation Guide*

Refer to the following *Maryland Charter School Quality Standards Implementation Guide* on staff investment in the school's vision and mission and the link between vision, mission, and goals with the strategic plan:

> *Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement, Critical Success Factor 6. Staff investment in school mission, vision, and supporting the process of continuous improvement.*
>
> *Indicator B. Innovative Practices, Critical Success Factor 1. Vision and mission of the school is clearly defined and supported by the school's strategic plan, culture, and infrastructure.*

<u>**REFERENCES**</u>

Center for Collaborative Education. (no date).   ***The essential guide to pilot schools: Leadership and governance.*** Boston, MA: Author. Retrieved from http://www.ccebos.org/Pilot_Guide_Leadership.pdf

Millot, M. & Lake, R. (1996). ***So you want to start a charter school? Strategic advice for applicants: Recommendations from an expert workshop.*** Seattle, WA: University of Washington/RAND. Retrieved from Education Resources Information Center's website: http://www.eric.ed.gov.

Senge, P. (1990). ***The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization***. New York: Doubleday.

Management Continued

Critical Success Factor 7: Effective, Transparent Communication Systems.

Effective and transparent communication systems are implemented that are top-down as well as bottom-up for the board, school leadership, school staff, parents, students and related external agencies.

In an age of instantaneous access and demand, schools must be able to manage the flow of information to and from key stakeholders, including the board, school leadership and staff, parents, students, community, and external agencies. In addition, according to the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) (2006), administrators must be able to handle the news media's asking about incidents texted from student cell phones or to respond to queries about school performance reports posted on the web.

The NSPRA recommends that schools must first talk to — and listen to — parents, community groups, business leaders and others with a stake in the learning of its students. Any strategy must accommodate the diverse language, cultural needs, lifestyles and schedules of all parties. This means the school often must take the initiative in reaching out to its community and parents.

Effective transparent communication systems are the foundations for building strong relationships with parents and the community. The charter school board identifies those groups, particularly parents and the community, to whom it is most accountable – the key stakeholders. Then, an effective charter school board will look for a variety of ways to link with these stakeholders to build loyalty and confidence in the charter school's mission and educational program. Linking is a two-way street: the board listens to parents and the community, and it also communicates and reports to them about the charter school. Here are some examples of the board listening to parents and community members:

- Sending a survey to parents to solicit input before a major policy decision.
- Convening a series of parent and community forums, chaired by board directors, to discuss a major challenge facing the charter school.
- Hosting monthly parent coffees to create informal opportunities to meet and hear parent concerns.
- Designing the strategic planning process for the school so that there are ample opportunities for parents and community leaders to participate and help shape priorities for the future. (Martinelli, 2000).

Here are some examples of board reporting activities to parents and community members:

- Conducting a breakfast briefing for civic leaders to describe the charter school's unique educational program and its positive impact on student achievement.
- Writing personalized letters to all major donors that contributed to the new building campaign.
- Including a column written by the board president in the monthly parent newsletter outlining key issues facing the school.
- Organizing the series of personal interviews by board directors with the leaders of youth and family serving agencies in the community in order to explore opportunities for collaborative programs benefiting children enrolled in the charter school and their families. (Martinelli, 2000).

Recommendations for Communication Systems

The National Public School Public Relations Association (2006) recommends the following:

- **Plan the school's communication system.**

Look at the various parent and community segments in the school; seek their input on the best ways to reach them and then follow-through. Schools may be able to write the same messages but some stakeholders will prefer e-mail or a listserv, while others prefer the "backpack method" or delivery through their churches or community and social centers. It will take time, but a school needs to assess what works best for the community and the school.

- **Establish assessment and evaluation procedures of the communication system.**

Ask parents and the community how the school's communication system is working. How can the school improve the communication system? How can the school assess the effectiveness of the communication system? Will the effectiveness be measured by the following: Attendance at parent meetings, rising test scores, better student attendance and feedback from teachers that parents are more involved are all factors of increased and effective communication?

Other Relevant Sections in the *Implementation Guide*

Refer to the following *Maryland Charter School Quality Standards Implementation Guide* on communicating with parents and the community:

> *Indicator D. School and Community Engagement Standard, Critical Success Factor 5. The school has developed tools to ensure that parents and the community are kept informed about school developments.*

<u>**RESOURCES**</u>

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools is a leading national nonprofit organization committed to advancing the charter school movement**.**

The Charter School Communications Playbook

Larson, G. (2008, December). *The charter school communications playbook*. Prepared for the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools by Gary L. Larson, founder of Larson Communications. Washington, DC: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Available from http://www.larsonpr.com/download_resources/playbook112408.pdf .

The playbook explains how to: develop a strategic communications plan, identify key messages, work with the media, deal with a crisis, and create an effective media calendar. In addition, this playbook will help charter schools understand the strategic importance of communications and public relations.
.

National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA)

NSPRA is a non-profit, professional association founded in 1935. As the Leader in School Communications, NSPRA provides professional development, products and services to: Build public support for the best educational opportunities and achievement for all students; and Promote better public understanding of the objectives, accomplishments and needs of education in a diverse society.

National School Public Relations Association (2006). ***How strong communication contributes to student and school success: Parent and family involvement.*** Rockville, MD: Author.   Available from http://www.nspra.org/files/docs/Strong_Communication_Students_School_Success.pdf

REFERENCES

Martinelli, F. (2000*). **Creating an effective charter school governing board**. Charter Friends National Network. Retrieved from http://www.uscharterschools.org/governance/contents.htm

National School Public Relations Association (2006). ***How strong communication contributes to student and school success: Parent and family involvement****. Rockville, MD: Author. Retrieved from http://www.nspra.org/files/docs/Strong_Communication_Students_School_Success.pdf

Management Continued

Critical Success Factor 8: Professional Development of Governing Board and Leadership Team.

Quality and needs-based professional development that supports their own development is planned and implemented for the governing board and leadership team.

An effective board demonstrates a strong commitment to continuous improvement by engaging in professional development and training.

Board Development

As most charter schools have three-to-five year contracts, there should be corresponding three-to-five year plans for board leadership development. The goal is to have from five to ten board leaders ready, as the needs arise, to chair the board, committees, task forces and workgroups.

The board, as a whole, and the board development committee, in particular, needs to ask the following questions when selecting potential board members:

- Who do we want to lead the charter school board in the future?
- What is our plan to identify new leadership?
- What is our plan to develop and prepare new leaders to serve now and in the future?

One of the responsibilities of a board development committee is to assess the current board leadership on a systematic basis. Then, in collaboration with the board chair and the school leader, provide project assignments, committee rotations and educational opportunities to prepare leaders for greater responsibility in the future. Some boards also assign mentors to aspiring board leaders to further support their development.

The book, *Improving the Performance of Governing Boards*, by Chait, Holland, and Taylor (1996) recommends the following:

New board member orientation. Each new board member should receive information on: the school's mission and history, unique characteristics, current environment, financial information, and detailed information about the school's educational program. The focus should be on the information that will help board members address the board's major decisions and policy questions.

Ongoing board education and training. Link ongoing board education and training to the critical strategic issues facing the charter school. In addition, ask board members what they need to know to be actively involved in board activities.

Incorporate training into each board meeting. Training during the regularly scheduled meetings—often using an outside presenter—provide an opportunity to present new information that the board will need to discuss pertinent issues. This type of training is most effective if the sessions are short, focused, and well prepared.

Cited in New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006.

Leadership Team Development

An effective board has an ongoing, multi-year commitment to continuing leadership development. The Board works with the charter school leadership team to identify professional development needs. Once the needs are identified, the Board and leadership team develop a professional development plan to address these needs. The Board also provides resources for the members of the leadership team to engage in professional development activities.

Other Relevant Sections of the *Implementation Guide*

Refer to the following *Maryland Charter School Quality Standards Implementation Guide* on professional development, distributed leadership, continuous leadership and board development, and board governance structures:

> *Indicator A. Culture of Continuous Improvement, Critical Success Factor 4. Professional Development and Critical Success Factor 5. Distributed leadership is valued and encouraged.*

> *Indicator B. Innovative Practices, Critical Success Factor 3. Infrastructure supports continuous teacher leadership, instructional leadership, and board development.*

> *Indicator E. Effective Organizational and Learning Environment, Critical Success Factor 2. Board Governance Structures*

RESOURCES

Charter School Governing Board Training Handbook

DeHoff, R. (2011, August). *Charter school governing board training handbook*. Denver, CO*:* Colorado Department of Education.

The purpose of this guide is to equip present and future board members with the knowledge they need to fulfill their duties, as board leadership is a key component in successful charter schools. The handbook was developed through the combined efforts of the Colorado Charter School Institute, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Schools of Choice Unit, and the Colorado League of Charter Schools with guidance from charter school founders, board members, and administration. Available from http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/Bd_Trng_HBk_051007.pdf.

REFERENCES

The New York City Center for Charter School Excellence (2006). **NYC** *charter schools governance and board development guidebook.* New York: Author. Retrieved from http://www.defendcharterschools.org/NYCGuidebook.pdf .

Management Continued

Critical Success Factor 9: Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency.

Organizational effectiveness and efficiency is maintained as follows:

- internal business and financial controls are developed and implemented to ensure operational integrity; and
- a systemic plan of checks and balances is developed and implemented for all accountability areas including: fiscal, operational and academic responsibility**.**

The expectations referenced here relate to the financial processes under *Indicator E: Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures, Critical Success Factors 3 and 4*. As part of the requirements described in that section – especially the seven practices for sound fiscal management (Carpenter, 2006) – this critical success factor focuses on elements that make the business management process effective and efficient. For both the charter school board and administrator, the desired end result is operational and fiscal accountability that ultimately supports the school's mission and student achievement. To achieve this, financial controls must be put into place that prevents mismanagement and fraud.

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers issued a generic model draft of the *NACSA Financial and Organizational Performance Frameworks and Guidance* in June, 2012. It is a framework that provides authorizers and charter schools with key data to assess the financial health and viability of charter schools. The measures include:

1.a. Current ratio (current assets divided by current liabilities)
1.b. Days cash (Unrestricted divided by total expenses - cash flow and cash flow projections and monthly)
1.c. Enrollment variance (actual enrollment divided by enrollment project in charter school board-approved budget)
1.d. Debt Default
2.a. Total Margin (net income divided by total revenue and aggregated total margin by totaling 3 year net income divided by total 3 year revenues)
2.b. Deft to asset ratio (total liabilities divided by total assets)
2.c. Cash flow sustainability (three year cash flow and one year cash flow)
2.d. Debt service coverage ratio (net income + depreciation+ interest expense/(principal and interest payments)

The framework includes indicators, measures, metrics, targets, and ratings.

Checks and Balances

Internal controls, that reduce the risk of mismanagement and fraud, are often referred to as "checks and balances." One of the simplest methods for instituting checks and balances is to establish policies and job duties/roles that prevent only one or two people from having control of the school's finances (Carpenter, 2006). For example, while the school's business manager or bookkeeper may be responsible for most daily financial tasks, one or two board members should review the school's bank statements on a monthly basis and review more detailed financial paperwork (e.g., invoices and employee payroll) periodically to verify that money is being used properly and there are no questionable transactions.

Typically, this is the function of the board treasurer or member of the Finance Committee. However, all board members should develop a basic understanding of the key financial reports that they must read, adopt and monitor, such as operating budgets, income and expense statements, cash flow projections, and the annual audit.

Fiscal policies are directly related to operational and academic policies, since the budget relates to all school functions and reflects its mission and priorities. It is the board's responsibility to rigorously monitor all aspects of the school's operations to ensure that policies are being followed (Carpenter, 2006). One method for keeping abreast of major activities, related to the organization's policies, is to have the administrator provide and present a written monthly report to the board. It is important that this report be presented in person, so that board members can ask questions and request additional information for future reports, if desired.

<u>**REFERENCES**</u>

Carpenter, B. (2006). ***Let's do the numbers: Seven practices for sound fiscal management of charter schools***. National Charter Schools Institute**.** Retrieved from http://www.uscharterschools.org/cs/r/view/uscs_r s/2167.

National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA). (2012, June). ***NACSA financial and organizational performance frameworks and guidance: Generic model draft***. Chicago, IL: Author.

E. GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES INDICATOR

<u>**Management Continued**</u>

Critical Success Factor 10: Safe, Clean, Effective Learning and Work Environment.

A safe, clean and effective learning and work environment is provided for all staff and students.

State Board of Education Regulation 13A.01.04.03 (2003) states that, "All students in Maryland's public schools, without exception and regardless of race, ethnicity, region, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, socioeconomic status, age, or disability, have the right to educational environments that are safe, appropriate for academic achievement, and free from any form of harassment."

Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract

The *Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract, Section 1.25 Student Welfare and Safety,* states that the charter schools shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws concerning student welfare, safety, and health. These include, but are not limited to, state laws regarding the reporting of:

- child abuse;
- truancy;
- accident prevention;
- disaster response; and
- any applicable state and local regulations governing the operation of school facilities.

Charter schools in Maryland are required to have the following evidence of compliance with health and safety laws:

- Certificate of Occupancy;
- City/County Health/Safety Inspections;
- Fire Safety Inspections;
- Fire, Safety, and Evacuation Plans;
- Evacuation and Fire Drill Records; and
- Staff training records on evacuations and emergency procedures.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

School Facilities Branch

The School Facilities Branch is responsible for providing leadership and technical assistance to Maryland's school systems with regard to long-range facility planning; capital improvement program development; educational specifications; and the design, construction, and maintenance of school facilities. This Branch administers the review and approval of locally funded school construction projects and leases by the State Superintendent of Schools. This Branch is responsible for developing guidelines and standards for the planning, construction, and maintenance of school facilities. The Branch reviews the facilities sections of the school systems' Bridge to Excellence Master Plans and Annual Updates, conducts the periodic Facilities Assessment Survey of all public schools in Maryland, and assists with the development of capital projects for the Department. The website includes a variety of facilities planning guidelines and technical bulletins, addressing planning and design, telecommunications, building ecology, and indoor air quality. Website: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/bus_svcs/sf/

Student services technical assistance guide

Maryland State Department of Education, Equity Assurance and Compliance Branch, (2006). *Student services technical assistance guide*. Baltimore, MD: Author.

For information on state laws related to selected student welfare, safety and health issues, see the *Student Services Technical Assistance Guide* at: http://www.msde.maryland.gov.

The guide includes information on:

- Educational records, health insurance portability, and accountability privacy rule, psychological assessment protocols and test instruments;
- Health – school health requirements, administration of medication, minor's capacity to consent, substance abuse, and communicable diseases;
- Student Welfare – kinship care, homeless students, child abuse and neglect, emancipated students, and social security number;
- Safety – discipline policies, search and seizure, reportable offenses, corporal punishment, harm to self and others; and miscellaneous safety; and
- Appendices – that include notification of rights under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), notification of rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), student record release forms, informal kinship care authorization, informal kinship care affidavit, individual employee responsibilities for reporting child abuse, and child abuse and neglect: know your responsibility.

Making Wellness Work Guide: A Guide to Implementing and Monitoring School Wellness Policies in Maryland

Maryland State Department of Education, School and Community Nutrition Programs Branch (2009). *Making wellness work guide: A guide to implementing and monitoring school wellness policies in Maryland*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Available from http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/school_wellness/mww.

The Making Wellness Work Guide was developed by a team representing Maryland State Department of Education, school food and nutrition services, health education, and physical education from Maryland school systems. The guide was tested by school systems in Maryland and released at the April 2009 conference on wellness. The U.S. Department of Agriculture required that schools participating in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs have Wellness Policies at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. All Wellness Policies are required to have goals for at least four components:

- nutrition guidelines;
- physical education/activity;
- nutrition/health education; and
- other school based activities

Maryland School Wellness Policy Implementation Plan Self Checklist

Available from http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/school_wellness/ .

The chart is excerpted from the Guide to Implementing and Monitoring Wellness Policies in Maryland. The major components of Wellness Policies included in this checklist are: Nutrition Guidelines, Nutrition/Health Education, Physical Activity/Physical Education, and Other School Based Activities to promote student health. The Checklist is aligned with the Guide to Implementing and Monitoring Wellness Policies in Maryland and should be completed by the School Wellness Chair and the Wellness Team. An evaluation of each school's progress should be completed by school personnel during each school year. Using this Checklist, the school system's Wellness Team should determine how well particular activities of the wellness policy are being conducted. A robust implementation plan should include specific activities, steps, outcomes, and monitoring activities organized by goal area.

Maryland Office of School Innovations

Maryland State Model Charter School Application

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application*. Baltimore, MD. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org .

Maryland Model Charter School Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD

REFERENCES

Maryland State Department of Education, Equity Assurance and Compliance Branch, (2006). ***Student services technical assistance guide***. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from http://www.msde.maryland.gov.

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). ***Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract***. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Maryland State Department of Education, School and Community Nutrition Programs Branch (2009). *Making wellness work guide:* ***A guide to implementing and monitoring school wellness policies in Maryland.*** Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/school_wellness/mww.

Maryland State Department of Education, School Facilities Branch. Description of the Branch from the website. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/bus_svcs/sf/.

E. GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES INDICATOR

Management Continued

Critical Success Factor 11: Instructional Staff Access to Needed Resources.

Leadership ensures that all instructional staff has access to resources needed.

Quality charter schools develop policies and procedures for requesting, ordering and purchasing, and inventorying instructional resources.

Having effective instructional staff begins with the hiring process of highly qualified individuals, as described under *Critical Success Factor 13, Qualified Staff,* below. Once a charter school has assembled its teaching team, it must ensure that instructors have the materials and other resources they need to teach the required subject matter and to perform all functions associated with student learning and achievement.

The general categories of instructional resources include, but are not limited to:

- Core and supplemental curricula in the form of textbooks, multimedia and digital resources;
- Assessment tools (screening, diagnostic, formative, summative) and analysis of assessment results that can be used to inform instruction;
- Technology tools, such as computers, projectors or white boards, etc.;
- Professional development related to implementation of curricula and assessments, and computer hardware and software; and
- Classroom supplies (e.g., paper, pens/pencils) and
- Related services (e.g., photocopying).

Other Relevant Sections of the *Implementation Guide*

Refer to the following *Maryland Charter School Quality Standards Implementation Guide* on alignment of school resources to support student learning and the allocation, integration, and organization of resources:

> *Indicator C. Student Learning and Achievement, Critical Success Factor 8. School policies, procedures, and resources are aligned to support student learning.*

> *Indicator E. Governance, Leadership, and Organizational Structures, Critical Success Factor 5. Clearly defined processes to ensure the equitable allocation, integration, and organization of resources.*

Management Continued

Critical Success Factor 12: Student Enrollment Rates Align with the School's Charter.

Student enrollment rates align with the school's charter. Student enrollment is a major driver of charter school revenues. Charter school boards and leaders rely on projected enrollment as a key assumption for financial decisions. Under-enrollment can lead to devastating financial consequences (Building Charter School Quality Consortium, 2009).

Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract

The *Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract, Section 1.22 Student Recruitment and Enrollment,* states that the enrollment of the charter school shall be consistent with the plan presented in the charter.

In addition, under *Section 1.22.1* of the *Model Performance Contract*, charter schools are to submit projected, current, and final student enrollment information in accordance with the Reporting Requirements. See *Exhibit 8.3 Pre-opening and Reporting Requirements* in the *Model Performance Contract*.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Office of School Innovations

Maryland Model Charter School Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Contact Office of School Innovations

REFERENCES

Building Charter School Quality Consortium (2009, June). ***A framework for operational quality: A report from the National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality***. Washington, DC: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Retrieved from http://www.publiccharters.org/publication.

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). ***Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course toward excellence: Model performance contract***. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Management Continued

Critical Success Factor 13: In collaboration with the local educational agency, the employed staff meets all state and federal qualifications and standards.

In collaboration with the local educational agency, a quality charter school ensures that all employed staff meets all state and federal qualifications and standards.

Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract

The *Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract, Section 1.15, Employment Matters* states the employment of teachers and other staff are employees of the charter school and employees of the local school system, according to Maryland Education Code, Section 9-101, seq.et.

Section 1.15.2 of the *Model Performance Contract* further explains that the charter school will follow the personnel policies of the local school system. The local school system is to make every effort to respect the charter school's ability to select candidates for interviews and hiring if the candidate meets qualification requirements.

Further Section 1.15.3 of the *Model Performance Contract* states that the charter school will comply with applicable federal statutory and regulatory requirements for highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals used for instructional support as set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act. Teacher certification will be maintained by the local school system.

Innovations in Staffing

Charter schools are more likely to experiment with unconventional staffing, scheduling, and compensation arrangements (Lake, 2008). In a study by Christensen and Rainey (2009), charter schools were more likely to use one or more alternative structures for their classes (e.g., grouping multiple ages or grades together, looping classes of students with teachers over multiple school years, or having teams of teachers together). Christensen and Rainey also found that charter schools employed unique grade span configurations, extended the school day or year, provided flexible scheduling, and offered more off-site programs.

Division of Certification and Accreditation

For information related to administrative and teaching staff qualifications, see the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Certification and Accreditation at http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/

Office of School Innovations

Maryland State Model Charter School Application

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application***.** Baltimore, MD. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org.

Maryland Charter Schools: Chartering a Course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Contact Office of School Innovations.

OTHER RESOURCES

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality

The Center, housed at the American Institutes for Research, was funded by the U.S. Department of Education from 2005 to 2012. The TQ Center was created to serve a national resource to which the regional comprehensive centers, states, and other education stakeholders turn for strengthening the quality of teaching—especially in high-poverty, low-performing, and hard-to-staff schools—and for finding guidance in addressing specific needs, thereby ensuring highly qualified teachers are serving students with special needs. The Center has a variety of resources on its web site. Web site: http://www.tqsource.org/

Center on Great Teachers and Leaders

In September, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education funded a new center, Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, housed at the American Institutes for Research. Watch for the announcement of its web site.

REFERENCES

Christensen, J. & Rainey, L. (2009, May). Custom tailored: Trends in charter school educational programs. *Inside Charter School Research Brief*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington, Center on Reinventing Public Education. Retrieved from http://crpe.edgateway.net/cs/crpe/view/csr_pubs/279

Lake, R. (2008, April). *In the eye of the beholder: Charter schools and innovation*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington, Center on Reinventing Public Education. Retrieved from *http://www.crpe.org/cs/crpe/download/csr_files/jrn_ncsrp_innovrsrch_apr08.pdf*

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations, (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course toward excellence: Model performance contract.* Baltimore, MD: Author.

Management Continued

Critical Success Factor 14: Internal Measures linked with School's Promotion and Exit Standards.

Internal measures, linked with the school's promotion and exit standards, have been developed and implemented.

Quality charter schools develop and implement policies and procedures addressing student promotion and exit standards.

Section 7-204(a) of the Public School Laws of Maryland states the promotion of students in a public school and graduation from a public high school shall be in accordance with: (1) Policies established by the County board; and (2) The rules and regulations of the State Board. The Superintendent of each local unit is responsible for establishing policies and specific provisions regarding the progression of students from grade to grade." Please refer to the local school system's policies and procedures.

The Maryland High School Graduation Requirements are currently undergoing revisions (September, 2012).

The *Maryland Charter School Model Application* requires developers to submit student grading and promotion standards.

Measures linked to Standards

The school also identifies and uses internal measures that are linked with these standards and policies. According to the National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality (2008), measures are: "general instruments or means to assess performance in an area defined by an indicator. Measures require the application of specific metrics or calculation methods." (p. 7). For example, measures may include: student attendance, student performance on school assessments, and performance on high school exit exams.

The National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality (2008) discussed the pervasive problem of students being passed along through every stage of K-12 schooling without meaningful promotion or graduation standards. Ultimately students graduate from high school without the knowledge and skills necessary for higher education, or for joining the workforce. The Panel encourages the use of promotion and exit standards, end-of-course assessments, and/or gateway exams, while recognizing these as decisions for schools, districts, or states (p. 9).

Office of School Innovations

Maryland State Model Charter School Application

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application.* Baltimore, MD: Author. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org.

Maryland Charter Schools Model Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course toward excellence: Model performance contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Contact Office of School Innovations.

REFERENCES

Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 7-204(a).

National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality (2008, June). *A framework for academic quality: A report from the National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality*. Retrieved from http://www.uscharterschools.org/cs/r/view/uscs_rs/2430.

E. Governance, Leadership and Organizational Structures Indicator

Glossary

Board of Directors

Development **–** A process in which a charter school provides its board members orientation and ongoing training.

Founding Board **-** At this early stage, the board is small and homogeneous, with the primary task of overseeing the development of the charter, submitting the application and creating an accountability plan (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

Governing Board - During this stage, the board is tasked with fulfilling the accountability plan, sharing work with the school leader and distributing the governance tasks to committees. (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

Sustaining Board - At this point, the tasks broaden to include fundraising and attracting new members with access to key funders and donors. This board may have expanded to include the creation of an executive committee as well as patrons or members who serve an advisory role. (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

Budget – A systematic method of allocating financial, physical, and human resources to achieve strategic goals. (Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations, 2012).

Bylaws - Rules that govern the organization structure and operations pertaining to the board including holding meetings, the process for electing the board of directors, the selection of officers, and often a definition of standing board committees. The bylaws also establish the duties and powers of the organization's board of directors. (Colorado Charter School Governing Board Training Handbook Glossary of terms)

Collaboration - A process of participation through which people, groups and organizations work together to achieve desired results (National Network for Collaboration, 1995).

Fiscal management - The planning, directing, monitoring, organizing, and controlling of the monetary resources of an organization.

Fiscal plan – The plan includes: start-up cash flow budget, cash flow projection, longer-term (3-5 years) balanced operating budget, budget versus actual monthly report, balance sheet summary of asses and debts, statement about assumptions, and description of budget development and oversight process.

Governance - The major policy-making decisions or setting the overall direction of the school. (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

Management - The allocation and deployment of the school's resources on a daily basis to achieve the school's goals. (New York City Center for Charter School Excellence, 2006).

Measures - General instruments or means to assess performance in an area defined by an indicator. Measures require the application of specific metrics or calculation methods. (National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality, 2008).

Metrics - specify a quantification, calculation method or formula for a given measure. (National Consensus Panel on Charter School Academic Quality, 2008)

Organizational Effectiveness - Degrees to which an organization is successful in accomplishing their objectives or fulfilling their administrative, instructional, or service functions.

Organizational Efficiency - Organizational efficiency of charter schools, often referred to as productivity, is the extent to which educational inputs (teachers, students) produce desired student outcomes. Increased efficiency means achieving better student outcomes with the same level of inputs, or the same student outcomes with fewer inputs. (Ni, Y. 2007. *The Impact of Charter Schools on the Efficiency of Traditional Public Schools: Evidence from Michigan.* University of Utah).

Performance Management - Methods, metrics, process, and systems needed to manage the performance of a charter school (Performance Management Institute, CREDO, and Stanford University).

Master List of Resources by Critical Success Factors

Critical Success Factor 1.   Board Representation, Meetings, and Bylaws

<u>MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES</u>

Office of School Innovations

Maryland State Model Charter School Application

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application*. Baltimore, MD. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org.

Maryland Charter Schools Model Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD.

<u>OTHER RESOURCES</u>

The Colorado charter school handbook: A guide for starting and operating a charter school

Colorado Department of Education. (2010). *The Colorado charter school handbook: A guide for starting and operating a charter school*. Denver, CO: Author.   Available from http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/CSHandbook.pdf.

National Charter School Resource Center

The Center has a variety of resources on governing boards that are available under the category of charter school operations. Available from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/priority-area/charter-operations.

National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance

The Center, funded by U.S. Department of Education, is a collaborative effort of the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California, The Finance Project, and WestEd. Resources include: research reports, articles, tools and toolkits; links to research and policy organizations, state departments of education, state charter school associations, and charter advocacy groups, and state policy guides. Access website at: www.CharterResource.org.

Resources by Critical Success Factors

Critical Success Factor 2.   Board Governance Structures

<u>**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES**</u>

Maryland State Model Charter School Application

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application***.** Baltimore, MD. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org.

Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract***.** Baltimore, MD.

Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation Guidebook

Maryland State Department of Education. (2012, April). *Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation Guidebook***.** Baltimore, MD. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/race_to_the_top/tpeg.

<u>**OTHER RESOURCES**</u>

National Charter School Resource Center

A variety of resources on governing boards are available under the category of charter school operations. Available from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/priority-area/governing-boards.

National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance (NRC)

The Center has a variety of resources on charter school finance and governance. Resources include: research reports, articles, tools and toolkits; links to research and policy organizations, state departments of education, state charter school associations, and charter advocacy groups, and state policy guides. Available from http://www.charterresource.org/national-resource-center.htm.

Fiscal Management

Critical Success Factor 3.   Effective Use of Sound Budgeting Practices

Office of School Innovations

Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Contact Office of School Innovations.

Maryland State Model Charter School Application

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application*. Baltimore, MD. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org.

National Charter School Resource Center

A variety of resources on finance and fundraising are available under the category of charter school operations.   Available from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/priority-area/charter-operations.

National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance (NRC)

The Center has a variety of resources on charter school finance and governance. Resources include: research reports, articles, tools and toolkits; links to research and policy organizations, state departments of education, state charter school associations, and charter advocacy groups, and state policy guides. Available from http://www.charterresource.org/.

Critical Success Factor 4.   Revenues Secured

Office of School Innovations

Maryland Charter School Model Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Contact Office of School Innovations.

Maryland State Model Charter School Application

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application*. Baltimore, MD. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org.

OTHER RESOURCES

National Charter School Resource Center

A variety of resources on finance and fundraising are available under the category of charter school operations. Available from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/priority-area/charter-operations.

National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance (NRC)

The Center has a variety of resources on charter school finance and governance. Resources include: research reports, articles, tools and toolkits; links to research and policy organizations, state departments of education, state charter school associations, and charter advocacy groups, and state policy guides. Available from http://www.charterresource.org/.

Assessing Fiscal Health: A Financial Benchmarking Tool for Charter Schools

Crocker, J., Lavallee, R., and Stewart, N. (2009, December). *Assessing Fiscal Health: A Financial Benchmarking Tool for Charter Schools*. Los Angeles, CA: National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance. Available from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/assessing-fiscal-health-financial-benchmarking-tool-charter-schools.

The Fiscal Health Toolkit is designed as a resource for charter school leaders to use. It defines fiscal Health as the ability of a charter school to successfully meet the terms of its charter and maintain a budget that effectively supports its operations. It can be used as a self-assessment tool or as a tool to be used by authorizers and funders to provide technical assistance and evaluate a school's readiness for reauthorization.

Revenue Planning Tool for Charter School Operators

Keller, E., & Hayes, C. (2009, August*). A revenue planning tool for charter school operators*. Los Angeles, CA: National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance. Available from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/revenue-planning-tool-charter-school-operators.

This revenue planning tool is one in a series of tools on charter school finance and governance. The series of tools was created to support efforts to ensure successful and sustainable charter schools through effective finance and governance practices. The NRC designed the revenue planning tool to help charter school operators identify and evaluate prospective funding sources that are applicable to their unique needs and situations. Several worksheets walk charter school operators through the process of collecting and evaluating information about funding sources so they can make sound decisions about which ones will help them establish a sound and reliable revenue base for their school.

<u>**Management**</u>

Critical Success Factor 5: Allocation, Integration, and Organization of Resources

Education Resource Strategies

This nonprofit organization works extensively with urban public school systems to rethink their use of school-level and district-level resources and build strategies for improved instruction and performance. Their web site has a variety of resources and reports. A variety of resources are available from http://erstrategies.org/resources/featured/.

> *Strategic School Resources* by Hawley Miles and Frank include:

> - Strategic School Resource Diagnostic Tool
> - Resource Measurement Worksheet – Elementary Grades
> - Resource Measurement Worksheet - Secondary

> Available from: http://erstrategies.org/resources/details/the_strategic_school/.

Critical Success Factor 7: Effective, Transparent Communication Systems

<u>**OTHER RESOURCES**</u>

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools is a leading national nonprofit organization committed to advancing the charter school movement**.**

The Charter School Communications Playbook

Larson, G. (2008, December). *The charter school communications playbook*. Prepared for the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools by Gary L. Larson, founder of Larson Communications. Washington, DC: National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Available from http://www.larsonpr.com/download_resources/playbook112408.pdf.

The playbook explains how to: develop a strategic communications plan, identify key messages, work with the media, deal with a crisis, and create an effective media calendar. In addition, this playbook will help charter schools understand the strategic importance of communications and public relations.

National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA)

NSPRA is a non-profit, professional association founded in 1935. As the Leader in School Communications, NSPRA provides professional development, products and services to: Build public support for the best educational opportunities and achievement for all students; and Promote better public understanding of the objectives, accomplishments and needs of education in a diverse society.

National School Public Relations Association (2006). *How strong communication contributes to student and school success: Parent and family involvement.* Rockville, MD: Author. Available from http://www.nspra.org/files/docs/Strong_Communication_Students_School_Success.pdf.

**Critical Success Factor 8:   Professional Development of Governing Board and
                                Leadership Team.**

<u>**OTHER RESOURCES**</u>

Charter School Governing Board Training Handbook

DeHoff, R. (2011, August). *Charter school governing board training handbook.* Denver, CO*:*
Colorado Department of Education.

The purpose of this guide is to equip present and future board members with the knowledge they need
to fulfill their duties, as board leadership is a key component in successful charter schools. The
handbook was developed through the combined efforts of the Colorado Charter School Institute, the
Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Schools of Choice Unit, and the Colorado League of Charter
Schools with guidance from charter school founders, board members, and administration. Available
from http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/Bd_Trng_HBk_051007.pdf

Critical Success Factor 10.   Safe, Clean, Effective Learning and Work Environment

<u>**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES**</u>

School Facilities Branch

The School Facilities Branch is responsible for providing leadership and technical assistance to
Maryland's school systems with regard to long-range facility planning; capital improvement program
development; educational specifications; and the design, construction, and maintenance of school
facilities. This Branch administers the review and approval of locally funded school construction
projects and leases by the State Superintendent of Schools. This Branch is responsible for developing
guidelines and standards for the planning, construction, and maintenance of school facilities. The
Branch reviews the facilities sections of the school systems' Bridge to Excellence Master Plans and
Annual Updates, conducts the periodic Facilities Assessment Survey of all public schools in Maryland,
and assists with the development of capital projects for the Department. The website includes a variety
of facilities planning guidelines and technical bulletins, addressing planning and design,
telecommunications, building ecology, and indoor air quality. Website:
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/bus_svcs/sf/

Student services technical assistance guide

Maryland State Department of Education, Equity Assurance and Compliance Branch, (2006).
Student services technical assistance guide. Baltimore, MD: Author.

For information on state laws related to selected student welfare, safety and health issues, see the
Student Services Technical Assistance Guide at http://www.msde.maryland.gov.

The guide includes information on:

- Educational records, health insurance portability, and accountability privacy rule, psychological assessment protocols and test instruments;
- Health – school health requirements, administration of medication, minor's capacity to consent, substance abuse, and communicable diseases;
- Student Welfare – kinship care, homeless students, child abuse and neglect, emancipated students, and social security number;
- Safety – discipline policies, search and seizure, reportable offenses, corporal punishment, harm to self and others; and miscellaneous safety; and
- Appendices – that include notification of rights under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), notification of rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), student record release forms, informal kinship care authorization, informal kinship care affidavit, individual employee responsibilities for reporting child abuse, and child abuse and neglect: know your responsibility.

Critical Success Factor 10: Safe, Clean, Effective Learning and Work Environment Cont'd

Making Wellness Work Guide: A Guide to Implementing and Monitoring School Wellness Policies in Maryland

Maryland State Department of Education, School and Community Nutrition Programs Branch (2009). *Making wellness work guide: A guide to implementing and monitoring school wellness policies in Maryland.* Baltimore, MD: Author. Available from http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/school_wellness/mww

The Making Wellness Work Guide was developed by a team representing Maryland State Department of Education, school food and nutrition services, health education, and physical education from Maryland school systems. The guide was tested by school systems in Maryland and released at the April 2009 conference on wellness. The U.S. Department of Agriculture required that schools participating in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs have Wellness Policies at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. All Wellness Policies are required to have goals for at least four components:

- nutrition guidelines;
- physical education/activity;
- nutrition/health education; and
- other school based activities

Maryland School Wellness Policy Implementation Plan Self Checklist

Available from http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/school_wellness/

The chart is excerpted from the Guide to Implementing and Monitoring Wellness Policies in Maryland. The major components of Wellness Policies included in this checklist are: Nutrition Guidelines, Nutrition/Health Education, Physical Activity/Physical Education, and Other School Based Activities to promote student health. The Checklist is aligned with the Guide to Implementing and Monitoring Wellness Policies in Maryland and should be completed by the School Wellness Chair and the Wellness Team. An evaluation of each school's progress should be completed by school personnel during each school year. Using this Checklist, the school system's Wellness Team should determine how well

particular activities of the wellness policy are being conducted. A robust implementation plan should include specific activities, steps, outcomes, and monitoring activities organized by goal area.

Maryland Office of School Innovations

Maryland State Model Charter School Application

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org.   mast

Maryland Model Charter School Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Contact Office of School Innovations.

Critical Success Factor 13:   In collaboration with the local educational agency, the employed staff meets all state and federal qualifications and standards.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Division of Certification and Accreditation

For information related to administrative and teaching staff qualifications, see the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Certification and Accreditation at http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/.

Office of School Innovations

Maryland State Model Charter School Application

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations (2012). *Maryland State Model Charter School Application*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/.

Maryland Charter Schools: Chartering a Course toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Contact Office of School Innovations.

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality

The Center, housed at the American Institutes for Research, was funded by the U.S. Department of Education from 2005 to 2012. The TQ Center was created to serve a national resource to which the regional comprehensive centers, states, and other education stakeholders turn for strengthening the quality of teaching—especially in high-poverty, low-performing, and hard-to-staff schools—and for finding guidance in addressing specific needs, thereby ensuring highly qualified teachers are serving students with special needs. The Center has a variety of resources on its web site. Web site: http://www.tqsource.org/.

Center on Great Teachers and Leaders

In September, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education funded a new center, Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, housed at the American Institutes for Research. Watch for the announcement of its web site.

Critical Success Factor 14:   Internal measures linked with school's promotion and Exit standards.

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

Office of School Innovations

Maryland Charter Schools: Chartering a Course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract

Maryland State Department of Education, Office of School Innovations. (2012). *Maryland charter schools: Chartering a course Toward Excellence: Model Performance Contract*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Contact Office of School Innovations.

GENERAL APPENDICES

I. QUICK REFERENCE LIST OF MARYLAND AND NATIONAL STANDARDS

<u>**MARYLAND STANDARDS**</u>

Maryland Common Core State Curriculum

Information on Maryland's adoption of the Common Core Standards is available from http://mdk12.org/instruction/commoncore/index.html

Maryland English Language Development Standards

Information is available on MSDE's web site at http://www.msde.maryland.gov/MSDE/programs/title_III/elp_s_a

Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards

Information is available on MSDE's web site at http://www.msde.maryland.gov.

Maryland State Content Standards

Information on Maryland State Standards is available from http://mdk12.org/assessments/vsc.

Maryland STEM Standards of Practice *(STEM – science, technology, engineering, and mathematics)*

Available from http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/stem/

Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards

Information on Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards is available from http://mdk12.org/instruction/professional_development/.

Maryland Teacher Technology Standards

Information is available from the Maryland Technology Literacy Consortium at http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/techlit/.

Maryland Technology Literacy Standards for Students

Information is available from the Maryland Technology Literacy Consortium at
http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/techlit/.

Maryland Technology Standards for Teacher Professional Development
Information on Maryland Technology Standards for Teacher Professional Development
is available from http://mdk12.org/instruction/professional_development/.

Maryland Technology Standards for School Administrators
Information is available from the Maryland Technology Literacy Consortium at
http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/techlit/.

NATIONAL STANDARDS

College Board Standards for College Success

Information on College Board Standards is available from
http://professionals.collegeboard.com/k-12/standards.

College Readiness Standards from American College Testing Program (ACT)

Information on College Readiness Standards from ACT is available from
http://www.act.org/standard/.

Common Core State Standards Initiative

Information on Common Core State Standards is available from
http://www.corestandards.org/.

National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Standards

Information on NACSA Principles and Standards are available from
http://www.qualitycharters.org/policy/principles-and-standards.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Information is available from the website of the National Board
http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards.

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Principles and Standards for School Mathematics

Information is available at the following web site:
http://www.nctm.org/standards.

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

Information is available at the web site of the National Council for the Social Studies
http://www.socialstudies.org/standards.

National Educational Technology Standards

The web site of the International Society for Technology in Education has additional
information from http://www.iste.org/STANDARDS.

National Standards for Arts Education

Information is available from the following web site of the Kennedy Center
http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/standards.aspx.

National Standards for Civics and Government

Information is available from the website of the Center for Civic Education
http://www.civiced.org.

National Standards for Foreign Language Education

Information is available from the website of the American Council on Teaching Foreign
Languages

http://www.actfl.org

National Standards for Online Courses, Teaching, and Programs

Information on the standards is available from the International Association for K-12
Online Learning website http://www.inacol.org/research/nationalstandards/.

National Standards for Physical Education

Information is available from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education
Website http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/nationalstandards/pestandards.cfm.

Next Generation Science Standards for Today's Students and Tomorrow's Workforce

More information is available from http://www.nextgenscience.org/.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA) National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

Information on National Standards for Family-School Partnerships is available from
http://pta.org/2757.asp.

Standards for Professional Learning

Learning Forward (formerly known as the National Staff Development Council) website
has information on the standards http://www.learningforward.org/standards-for-
professional-learning.

II. QUICK REFERENCE LIST OF OTHER RELEVANT RESOURCES

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (USED) CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Information on the Charter School Program is available from USED, Office of Innovations and Improvement, website
http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/csp/

Information on Program Guidance and Policy Letters is available from
http://preview.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/resources/info/guidance.html

MARYLAND LEGAL RESOURCES

Maryland Charter School Law

Information on the Maryland Charter School Law is available from
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/charter_schools/docs/md_charter_school_laws

Maryland Senate Bill 75

Information on senate bill 75 that established charter schools in Maryland is available from mlis.state.md.us

Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)

Information on COMAR is available from
http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar//2003rs/billfile/sb0075.htm

Court of Appeals of Maryland Ruling on Charter Schools

Information on the ruling by the Court of Appeals of Maryland is available from
various charter schools v city school board

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

General web site http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/stateboard/

Appeals to the Maryland State Board of Education

Information on necessary content and guidelines as outlined in COMAR is available from: http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/13a/13a.01.05.02.htm.

Appeal Decisions

Information on appeal decisions (scroll down to subject matter Charter School is available from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/stateboard/legalopinions/subject_index.htm

Waiver Decisions

Information on waiver decisions is available from http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/charter_schools/docs/SBoE_Waiver_Decisions

Policy: Public Charter School Program
Information on the Maryland State Board of Education's 2010 policy on the Charter School Program is available from
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (MSDE)

General Web site http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE

Office of School Innovations Web site

http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/charter_schools/

MARYLAND CHARTER SCHOOL NETWORK

Information on publications produced by the Maryland Charter School Network is available from http://www.mdcharternetwork.org/res_publications.html

NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES

Building Charter School Quality

http://www.charterschoolquality.org/

Center for Education Reform

http://www.edreform.com/

National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

http://www.publiccharters.org/

National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA)

http://www.qualitycharters.org/index.php

National Charter Schools Institute

http://nationalcharterschools.org/

National Charter School Resource Center

http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/

National Charter School Research Project (Center on Reinventing Public Education)

http://www.crpe.org/charter-schools-and-public-school-choice