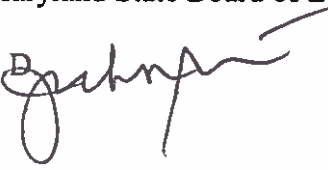




200 West Baltimore Street • Baltimore, MD 21201 • 410-767-0100 • 410-333-6442 TTY/TDD • msde.maryland.gov

**TO:** Members of the Maryland State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Jack R. Smith, Ph.D.   
**DATE:** January 26, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** Assessments Update/Research Capabilities

---

**PURPOSE:**

To share with the State Board examples of external research groups and related activities contracted with MSDE.

**BACKGROUND:**

The State Board expressed an interest in better understanding MSDE's research efforts, capacity, and needs. Example research groups along with descriptions of responsibilities including some past and present activities were collected by various divisions within the Department.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

MSDE has many needs to engage in formal research. To address these needs, MSDE relies primarily on contractual relationships with various research groups such as university-based Center for Early Childhood and Early Intervention, the Maryland Assessment Research Center, and the Center for Application and Innovation Research in Education as well as nationally based groups such as WestEd and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Examples of leveraged partnerships are included as an attachment.

**Building Capacity at the State Department through Federal Grant Opportunities**

The Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Grant Program created by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), has helped propel the successful design, development, implementation, and expansion of longitudinal data systems. Better decisions require better information and the goal of this program is to enhance the ability of States to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data.

The SLDS Grant Program has awarded competitive, cooperative agreement grants to states and Maryland has successfully competed and been awarded 4 grants since the start of the program in 2005. The 2016 grant application required a focus on enhancing the use of data. Maryland successfully competed and was awarded a 7 million dollar grant with a focus in two priority areas; (1) Research and Evaluation; and (2) Instructional Support.

Members of the Maryland State Board of Education

January 26, 2016

Page 2

MSDE has successfully enhanced data collections and built longitudinal data systems over the past several years and the focus of the newly awarded SLDS grant is to build the knowledge and capacity within our own agency to transform data into reports to inform policy and programs. In order for information to be useful results need to be relevant, timely and aligned to current policy priorities. Planned outcomes of the grant will include a research and evaluation needs assessment derived through stakeholder engagement to prioritize internal work and to manage external requests; data tools and rapid turnaround studies to inform policies and programs; and building the capacity of staff to conduct more rigorous research and evaluation through the training on statistical products and the addition of staff with statistical skills.

**ACTION:**

For information only. No action required.

Attachment

Division of Early Childhood Development

**Center for Early Childhood and Early Intervention (CECEI) at the University of Maryland – College Park**

The Center received a grant to conduct an evaluation of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) regarding child outcomes, improvements in program quality, and advancement in Maryland's early childhood education system.

The Center received a research grant to evaluate the ameliorating effects of full-day, high quality prekindergarten for low-income four-year olds as measured by the KRA and Grade 3 Reading and Mathematics PARCC results.

**Center for Technology in Education - Johns Hopkins University**

WestEd – Standards, Assessment, and Accountability Services and Center for Child and Family Studies

Office of Teaching and Learning

**The Center for Application and Innovation Research in Education (CAIRE) at Towson University**

CAIRE is a research and evaluation team supported by faculty and staff from several Maryland universities including Towson University, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Loyola University Maryland, and University of Maryland Eastern Shore. The team was originally created to assist the MSDE with evaluating the activities associated with the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant. Over the course of five years, CAIRE analyzed the Local Education Agencies' transition to the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards through a series of surveys; completed Product/Process evaluations for 52 of 54 RTTT projects; completed ten Impact Evaluations for 22 projects (some evaluations looked at multiple projects and issued one report); and conducted 13 case studies of The Breakthrough Center. The many evaluative efforts allowed MSDE to make course corrections as projects were implemented and sometimes restructured.

Office of Teacher and Principal evaluation

**MidAtlantic Comprehensive Center at WestEd (MACC@WestEd)**

Since its establishment as a separate and coherent project under Race to the Top, the Office of Teacher and Principal Evaluation (OTPE) has enjoyed the technical support of two important independent partners: WestED and the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC). MSDE accessed both through the MidAtlantic Comprehensive Center for which WestED won the contract when reissued in 2012. Thus under the umbrella of the MACC@WestED, as it has been known, these complimentary groups have provided technical support, training, critical materials, statistical analyses, and thought-partnership.

## **WestED**

A national research entity, has provided statistical muscle behind the analysis of the CTAC annual studies. Moreover, WestED delivered an independent inferential analysis of the first full year of consequential TPE ratings. In addition to confirming the accuracy of MSDE's own analyses, WestED began testing the integrity and consistency of LEA efforts. WestEd continues to be a partner in this work.

## **Community Training and Assistance Center**

CTAC has held the lead role in assisting MSDE with the roll out of the Student Learning Objective (SLO) initiative. Used to comply with the Reform Act's requirement for multiple measures of student growth, SLOs create a vehicle to reach accountability through collaboration and consensus while forging strategies leading to "big wins" for students. CTAC is the foremost organization working on SLOs, the author behind the preponderance of the research in this emerging area, and an outstanding hands-on partner in the development of capacity. In addition to training Maryland educators at all levels, CTAC has conducted an annual assessment of the state of the field via surveys, interviews, focus groups, and LEA case studies. They will do so again in spring 2016.

## **The Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) based in Arlington, Virginia**

During winter and spring of 2016, the Office of Teacher and Principal Evaluation (OTPE) will have additional support from a research team from CNA. CNA was originally the Center for Naval Analysis but over its history has expanded to encompass an institute for public research which has a major focus on education. The primary resource to the OTPE will be Dr. Stephen Lee, supported by his colleagues Dr. Thomas Geraghty and Dr. Daniel Leeds. CNA will provide advanced psychometric assistance to probe questions that go beyond descriptive analyses previously provided to the State Board of Education. Among the possible research questions will be understanding the characteristics of highly effective and ineffective teachers that persist across LEAs, ascertaining if it is possible to provide broad guidance in constructing rating discrimination points, assessing the quality of implementation across LEAs, and helping to map the path forward to affirm whether TPE outcomes correlate with student performance. Deliverables will include an annotated briefing for MSDE that summarize the data, methods, and results of the research within the limitations of the data as configured at present.

## **Division of Student, Family, and School Support**

### **The Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health and University of Virginia Curry School of Education**

MSDE was awarded an MDS3 grant by the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools at the United States Department of Education in 2011. The Initiative was funded to develop a sustainable state-wide system to measure school climate, the school environment, student engagement, and school safety in high schools. Participating schools received training, resources, support, and coaching in the implementation of evidence-based programs (EBPs) to meet the needs of their students and school community. The MDS3 Initiative provides the opportunity to improve school climate and reduce discipline problems, bullying, and substance use problems through the implementation of multi-tiered interventions. Sheppard Pratt Health System and Johns Hopkins University collaborated with MSDE in the implementation and evaluation of the Initiative. The partnership also includes analytical work on predictive models to support the identification of at-risk students as well as on time graduation

and evaluative work to determine the impact of implementing the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program.

#### Division of Accountability and Assessment

##### **Maryland Assessment Research Center for Education Success (MARCES) at University of Maryland, College Park**

MARCES continues to assist MSDE with its research needs and testing programs. In general, MARCES provides advice to the Department, conducts research on issues the Department has determined are of interest, evaluates various Department programs, meets with district personnel to clarify elements of the state assessment program, presents at state sponsored venues on critical research and testing issues, summarizes various psychometric and assessment literature so that the Department can understand and deal with important issues.

##### **Maryland State Assessment Program Technical Advisory Committee (MdTAC)**

MdTAC provides psychometric services related to the state assessment program. This includes providing support and feedback to the activities related to the development, administration, scoring, and reporting for the state assessments. Currently the MdTAC is reviewing recommendations for graduation cut scores for the PARCC assessments. Also, the MdTAC is reviewing the technical manual for the PARCC assessments and the RFP for the new High School Assessments (Government and Biology) to ensure technical merit.

#### Division of Early Childhood Development

##### **Center for Early Childhood and Early Intervention (CECEI) at the University of Maryland – College Park**

The Center received a grant to conduct an evaluation of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) regarding child outcomes, improvements in program quality, and advancement in Maryland's early childhood education system.

The Center received a research grant to evaluate the ameliorating effects of full-day, high quality prekindergarten for low-income four-year olds as measured by the KRA and Grade 3 Reading and Mathematics PARCC results.

##### **Center for Technology in Education - Johns Hopkins University**

WestEd – Standards, Assessment, and Accountability Services and Center for Child and Family Studies

#### Office of Teaching and Learning

##### **The Center for Application and Innovation Research in Education (CAIRE) at Towson University**

CAIRE is a research and evaluation team supported by faculty and staff from several Maryland universities including Towson University, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Loyola University Maryland, and University of Maryland Eastern Shore. The team was originally created to assist the MSDE with evaluating the activities associated with the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant. Over the course of five years, CAIRE analyzed the Local Education Agencies' transition to the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards through a series of surveys;

completed Product/Process evaluations for 52 of 54 RTTT projects; completed ten Impact Evaluations for 22 projects (some evaluations looked at multiple projects and issued one report); and conducted 13 case studies of The Breakthrough Center. The many evaluative efforts allowed MSDE to make course corrections as projects were implemented and sometimes restructured.

## Office of Teacher and Principal evaluation

### **MidAtlantic Comprehensive Center at WestEd (MACC@WestEd)**

Since its establishment as a separate and coherent project under Race to the Top, the Office of Teacher and Principal Evaluation (OTPE) has enjoyed the technical support of two important independent partners: WestED and the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC). MSDE accessed both through the MidAtlantic Comprehensive Center for which WestED won the contract when reissued in 2012. Thus under the umbrella of the MACC@WestED, as it has been known, these complimentary groups have provided technical support, training, critical materials, statistical analyses, and thought-partnership.

### **WestED**

A national research entity, has provided statistical muscle behind the analysis of the CTAC annual studies. Moreover, WestED delivered an independent inferential analysis of the first full year of consequential TPE ratings. In addition to confirming the accuracy of MSDE's own analyses, WestED began testing the integrity and consistency of LEA efforts. WestEd continues to be a partner in this work.

### **Community Training and Assistance Center**

CTAC has held the lead role in assisting MSDE with the roll out of the Student Learning Objective (SLO) initiative. Used to comply with the Reform Act's requirement for multiple measures of student growth, SLOs create a vehicle to reach accountability through collaboration and consensus while forging strategies leading to "big wins" for students. CTAC is the foremost organization working on SLOs, the author behind the preponderance of the research in this emerging area, and an outstanding hands-on partner in the development of capacity. In addition to training Maryland educators at all levels, CTAC has conducted an annual assessment of the state of the field via surveys, interviews, focus groups, and LEA case studies. They will do so again in spring 2016.

### **The Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) based in Arlington, Virginia**

During winter and spring of 2016, the Office of Teacher and Principal Evaluation (OTPE) will have additional support from a research team from CNA. CNA was originally the Center for Naval Analysis but over its history has expanded to encompass an institute for public research which has a major focus on education. The primary resource to the OTPE will be Dr. Stephen Lee, supported by his colleagues Dr. Thomas Geraghty and Dr. Daniel Leeds. CNA will provide advanced psychometric assistance to probe questions that go beyond descriptive analyses previously provided to the State Board of Education. Among the possible research questions will be understanding the characteristics of highly effective and ineffective teachers that persist across LEAs, ascertaining if it is possible to provide broad guidance in constructing rating discrimination points, assessing the quality of implementation across LEAs, and helping to map the path forward to affirm whether TPE outcomes correlate with student performance. Deliverables will include an annotated briefing for MSDE that summarize the data, methods, and results of the research within the limitations of the data as configured at present.

## Division of Student, Family, and School Support

### **The Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health and University of Virginia Curry School of Education**

MSDE was awarded an MDS3 grant by the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools at the United States Department of Education in 2011. The Initiative was funded to develop a sustainable state-wide system to measure school climate, the school environment, student engagement, and school safety in high schools. Participating schools received training, resources, support, and coaching in the implementation of evidence-based programs (EBPs) to meet the needs of their students and school community. The MDS3 Initiative provides the opportunity to improve school climate and reduce discipline problems, bullying, and substance use problems through the implementation of multi-tiered interventions. Sheppard Pratt Health System and Johns Hopkins University collaborated with MSDE in the implementation and evaluation of the Initiative. The partnership also includes analytical work on predictive models to support the identification of at-risk students as well as on time graduation and evaluative work to determine the impact of implementing the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program.

## Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

### **University of Maryland: Study of the Birth to Five Service Delivery Models in Maryland**

The study examines how a coordinated and comprehensive system of services is being realized within each of the twenty-four jurisdictions in the State of Maryland. Specifically, researchers are multi-method approach that capitalizes on quantitative and qualitative measures to explore how systems were developed, coordinated and delivered to children and their families.

The overarching goal of this study is to document the service delivery models in Maryland. Throughout the data collection phase researchers aim to understand the necessary conditions, supports, facilitators, barriers and challenges that affect the design and delivery of each model. The current study will be the first of a three-phase project that will consist of: (1) examination and reporting of existing systems of service delivery; (2) examination of the interventions offered within each delivery model to include the frequency and intensity of interventions; and (3) an examination of the outcomes for children who were on an extended IFSP and children who moved to an IEP (to include an examination of factors that resulted in parents choosing one plan over the other).

This study is housed in the Department of Human Development, Learning and Quantitative Methodology (HDQM) at The University of Maryland. The HDQM is designed to advance knowledge and practice through teaching and research related to human development and learning, and to quantitative methodologies critical to measurement, statistics, and evaluation in the educational, social, and behavioral sciences. The Department's graduate programs prepare students for careers in research and industry settings, as well as teaching in academic and non-academic environments. The Department offers an undergraduate major in early childhood education, a minor in human development, and courses in development across the lifespan, learning and educational psychology, and quantitative methods.



## **Johns Hopkins University: Longitudinal Tracking of the Outcomes for Youth and Families Receiving Special Education Services in Maryland**

This study provides a longitudinal tracking of the outcomes for youth and families receiving special education services in Maryland with a focus on the areas of impact and strategic leadership. Data from this study contributes to the Maryland Federal Reporting Indicators.

The study uses databases and Scorecards to evaluate programs, educational outcomes, parental satisfaction and to model; instructional leadership. All children who have an Individualized Education Program in Maryland are served by this study.

This study is housed in the School of Education (SOE), established in 2007, at the Johns Hopkins University is grounded in the Johns Hopkins tradition of research and innovation, SOE currently receives more funded research than any other graduate school of education in the United States. Ranked first nationally among graduate schools of education by U.S. News & World Report, the SOE offers doctoral and other graduate programs and is engaged in a variety of research and development activities that are making lasting improvements in student achievement – from early childhood to the adult learner.

## **Johns Hopkins University, Center for Technology in Education: Longitudinal Accountability and Decision Support System**

This study develops, maintains and implements data based applications and solutions that compose a Longitudinal Accountability and Decision Support System (LADSS). Specifically the study puts practical, state-of-the-art performance support tools into the hands of educators across the State, local school system/public agency, and school levels that are used to analyze student demographic and performance data from a wide-range of data sources. These data are used to seek clear understandings of student learning profiles and the implications for curricular and instructional interventions. The Maryland Online Individualized Education Program (MOIEP), Student Services Information Systems (SSIS) and Maryland Federal Reporting Indicators are included in this study to inform administrators and teachers with the data to examine student progress, determine barriers to learning, and ascertain what educational services and interventions are needed to improve educational programming and learning among students with disabilities.

This study is housed in The Center for Technology in Education (CTE) founded as a partnership of the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to combine the research and teaching expertise of JHU and the leadership and policy support of MSDE to improve the quality of life for children and youth, particularly those with special needs, through teaching, research, and leadership in the use of technology.

**Towson University, Department of Family Studies & Community Development:  
Study of Autism Waiver**

This study is focused on conducting ongoing research to learn more about the impact of services provided by the Maryland Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Results of studies show that Maryland's Autism Waiver show positive outcomes in areas including: overall family quality of life, child's independence and social and academic progress. Maryland is a national model for this unique HCBS Waiver to provide specific home and community services for eligible children with ASDs and their families. The Autism Waiver, a joint DHMH and MSDE project, provides intensive individual support services (IISS), therapeutic integration services, residential habilitation, respite care, accessibility adaptations including physical adaptations to the home, family training and service coordination to avoid a more costly institutional level of care for 1000 children and their families.

**Division of Accountability and Assessment**

**Maryland Assessment Research Center for Education Success (MARCES) at University of Maryland, College Park**

MARCES continues to assist MSDE with its research needs and testing programs. In general, MARCES provides advice to the Department, conducts research on issues the Department has determined are of interest, evaluates various Department programs, meets with district personnel to clarify elements of the state assessment program, presents at state sponsored venues on critical research and testing issues, summarizes various psychometric and assessment literature so that the Department can understand and deal with important issues.

**Maryland State Assessment Program Technical Advisory Committee (MdTAC)**

MdTAC provides psychometric services related to the state assessment program. This includes providing support and feedback to the activities related to the development, administration, scoring, and reporting for the state assessments. Currently the MdTAC is reviewing recommendations for graduation cut scores for the PARCC assessments. Also, the MdTAC is reviewing the technical manual for the PARCC assessments and the RFP for the new High School Assessments (Government and Biology) to ensure technical merit.