Teacher and Principal Evaluation

"Influencing Transformation"

Communication #21

October 9, 2013

By the end of Sphere 1, leadership personnel should know and be able to conduct beginning of the year pre-evaluation conferences that include reporting the teacher's or principal's MSA translation scores, the setting of teacher or principal Student Learning Objective (SLOs), and a basic understanding of how to construct three year-cohorts, and plan the evaluation workload for the 2013-2014 school year.

Sphere Two

By the end of Sphere 2, leadership personnel should know and be able to effectively establish goals and expectations for purposeful school visits, organize a plan to reflect the strengths and needs of individual principals and their schools, and implement and monitor SLOs through the connection of the SLO to the observable evidence of effective professional practice criteria.

Readiness Quick Check
- ✓ Executive officers have a method in place for crafting SLOs and incorporating them into a principal's evaluation pre-conference
- ✓ 100% of principals have crafted the Local Education Agency's (LEA's) necessary SLOs with their executive officers (local model contingent)
- ✓ 100% of principal pre-conferences have been completed
- ✓ Principals have a method in place for crafting SLOs and incorporating them into a teacher's evaluation pre-conference
- ✓ 50% of teachers have crafted the LEA's necessary SLOs with their principals (local model contingent)
- ✓ 50% of teacher pre-conferences have been completed with the teachers informed of the MSA translation score in their evaluation
- ✓ 20% of required teacher observations have been completed

Quality Control

9/25-11/10 LEA Direct
                Assistance Window

10/30 Quality Control Session

Dave Volrath
dvolrath@msde.state.md.us

Influencing Transformation
From the beginning, Maryland has committed to the position that teacher and principal evaluation is about improving the instructional craft of teachers and the leadership craft of principals. To that end, the outcome of Influencing Transformation is purposeful professional development. The current work of our second Sphere of Influence supports this mission and advances those evaluative practices that support principal and teacher development of SLOs and the processes needed to effectively incorporate SLOs into conversations critical to pre-conferencing and target setting. After careful study and debate, teachers, principals, and LEAs have embraced the potential for SLOs to generate instructional conversations around measures that directly impact cohorts of students personally associated with the work of the teacher(s) of record and the principal. The SLO process provides a flexible methodology for employing local assessments, portfolios, surveys, and similar measures of student growth into a common application across models. This methodology further insures that essential components of the School Progress Index, such as Gap Reduction, Achievement, and College and Career Readiness can find their way into improvement measures within LEA Master Plans and School Improvement Plans and ultimately into teacher and principal evaluations While SLOs can be constructed around lag measures, they are most valuable when written for annual student growth measures that contribute to student performance within the current school year. Combining SLOs that are constructed within the current school year with the lag data that is

generated by state or standardized testing, insures a balanced and continuous evaluative cycle of component measures and relevant professional development. Often, in the interest of efficiency and standards, LEAs gravitate towards SLOs constructed at the district, school, subject, or grade level. While this may be a necessity at the start, it should be recognized the greatest potential for SLOs emerges when teachers exercise ownership and craft SLOs with their principals at the classroom level. Performance targets that are predicated exclusively by top-down processes, lag data, and shared results will be limited and questionable in their ability to evaluate or motivate individual teacher or principal performance. SLOs represent an engaging and collaborative evaluative approach to engineering the professional growth of individual teachers and principals and as such the State recommends that LEAs use extreme caution when compromising this value in the interests of expediency or reducing the number of SLOs.

LEA Direct Service Windows
The TPE Team has been delivering LEA-unique professional development and technical assistance to districts across the State on topics covered during the first two Spheres of Influence. These training sessions are being well received, and when coordinated with existing local professional development calendars, relieve districts of unnecessary stress on their existing resources and personnel. The work has particular value as principals and teachers collaborate to construct SLOs and determine levels of attainment. These visits can also provide consultative service to district principals on mapping-out and distributing the school year's workload. Please contact any member of our TPE team to arrange for this service.

LEA TPE Implementation Grants
Providing support in the form of resources is essential to leveraging Quality Control and, to that end, TPE Implementation Grants have been issued covering July 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014. Legitimate costs which align with the LEA plan as described in the assurance document and which are encumbered and paid between July 1, 2013 and now can be paid with the implementation funds. As this is an "Implementation" grant, the projects should be those which support the critical assurances that enable implementation to proceed as planned. At the writing of this Communication, 21of 22 LEAs have submitted their C-125s, including an acceptable plan as delineated using the assurance document. As quickly as possible, the Notice of Grant Awards (NOGAs) will be issued. LEAs should contact Ben Feldman, who will be tracking and collating these documents.

Amendments to ESEA Flexibility Waiver
The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) proposes to delay personnel decisions based upon new the evaluation systems for one additional year. The genesis of this proposal is found in Race to the Top Project 29/48, Teacher and Principal Evaluation, which requires LEAs to enact evaluation systems that incorporate significant measures of student growth.

Maryland's approved ESEA flexibility request for Principle 3.B. did not specifically mention the timeline for personnel decisions related to the implementation of new teacher and principal evaluation systems. During 2013-2014, Project 29/48 would have LEAs complete their evaluation processes according to their approved plans. Maryland school systems intended to use their new evaluation systems to inform personnel decisions for 2014-15 and to further frame the LEAs' study of the effectiveness of their intended evaluation system. Additionally, throughout 2013-2014, the State would be implementing "Influencing Transformation: Maryland's Plan for Preparing Educators to Implement and Sustain Teacher and Principal Evaluation." This plan addresses elements of Technical Assistance, Leadership Development, Communications, and Quality Control that are critical to executing local evaluation plans, increasing the capacity of internal and external stakeholders, and elevating confidence in the evaluations as a developmental process. Non-participating Race to the Top LEAs are not included in the amendment but remain bound to join flexibility timelines and expectations for 2015-2016.

This amendment will allow LEAs and the State to extract the MSA-related growth measures from their plans and to use the remaining portions of the evaluation to inform personnel decisions for one year: 2014-2015. This process will build teacher and principal confidence in the accuracy and fairness of State and local evaluation processes in advance of their application to personnel decisions. Test measure components would be reinstated into evaluations conducted during 2014-2015 and used to inform personnel decisions for the subsequent school year.

Teachers and Principals
Given the developmental nature of this year's work, the Quality Control group recognized at their August planning meeting a need to determine how this project could maintain the voices of teachers and principals in this conversation. It was further recognized that such a process would need to be varied in format, representatively authentic, and sensitive to the demands on teachers and administrators. Beyond these periodic Communication Bulletins, which we encourage recipients to share with their constituent and collegial groups, we are pursuing multiple strategies to connect with educators across the State. We will join with the Maryland State Education Association as they conduct teacher focus groups in November and deliver the most current information on SLOs at their State conference on October 18. Similarly, the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals and the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals are prepared to engage their members in readiness checks and have invited the TPE Team to participate in Executive Committee sessions and to present at their fall and spring conferences. Building capacity and developing the common skill sets of principals is essential to maximizing the reliability of evaluators.

Sphere 2: Quality Control
The next Quality Control meeting will be conducted on October 30th from 1-3 PM and it will include a Webinar option for participants (see Communications Section below). The purpose of this meeting will be to gauge the progress of LEAs towards maintaining pace with the annual evaluation timeline. An agenda with directions and relevant documents will be forwarded to LEA Points of Contact (POCs) by Monday, October 28. In advance, POCs and group representatives should prepare to offer perceptions on the degree of attainment of Sphere 1 and Sphere 2 outcomes. Similar information will be provided by session presenters and TPE Team members. Our critical friend, MAAC@WestEd, will report out on the information they gleaned this summer from educator surveys and superintendent interviews. Collectively, these pieces of information should be able to provide a sense of how this project is currently positioned and how we should proceed in Sphere 3. We are also providing, at the beginning of each TPE Communication Bulletin, a list of "Readiness Quick Checks" for LEAs and educators to use as "think-alouds" in their work. Understand that these percentages and targets are not intended to be concrete and are provided merely for consideration and planning purposes.

| **Technical Assistance**

11/15 LEA Technical Assistance

Ben Feldman
bfeldman@msde.state.md.us | **Technical Assistance Meeting**

2012-13 Pilot Data
TPE had data for 8,047 teachers and for 243 principals, about 20 and 18 percent of the State total population respectively. Collapsing data from all LEAs which studied the State Model in detail, the median for "highly effective" falls just above 80 basis points. An alternate way of considering these data is for LEAs to rank their teachers and study the performance of their top 18-20 percent of all teachers. Many LEAs are engaging in these retrospective analyses and sharing their results. The pilot data reveal a fair amount of precision about the top of the scale. During 2013-14, there should be a greater understanding of the entire distribution.

Demonstrated Solutions
At the 9/25 LEA convening at MSDE, Charles County demonstrated a data management solution that is a reflection of their TPE work at present. This application holds the parts of the Charles model with drill down allowing subcomponents of scores to be unpacked, students who |

compose an MSA aggregate to be examined and confirmed, and SLOs to be housed and managed. Charles County will repeat this demo for the Maryland Assessment Group (MAG). Concurrently, other LEAs are working with external or internal service providers with either local or broad representation in Maryland. They are engaging in conversations – conversations which, out of necessity, have a certain consistency across boundaries. LEAs are encouraged to have contacts with their colleagues to ensure their discussions with common service providers are as productive as possible. The TPE Team will assist any LEAs that wish to open a forum to collaborate on common data/technology issues.

Technical Assistance: Quality Control

<u>CCSSO Meeting in Raleigh</u>
Recently, two days were devoted exclusive to educator evaluation at the CCSSO conference hosted by SAS, the developer of the EVAAS product used in Tennessee and elsewhere. Major themes were understanding the precision and limitations of value added models, communications and messaging, and preparing for transition from state assessments to the Smarter Balanced or PARCC assessments. An interesting thread of conversation concerned the extent that TPE work elevates the profession. At the end of this reform cycle locals, states, and the nation need to ask not only if student achievement has improved, but also whether educator perception of their work has been elevated. MSDE will be curious to learn how we might be able to capture such information from teachers and principals.

<u>Quality Evaluation Rollout (QER) Group</u>
QER is a subgroup of the Reform Support Network that Maryland joined last summer. There will be a national convening at the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) on October 11th. MSDE anticipates that LEA dashboards and State scorecards will be the focus. The TPE Team promises to share any promising models that are made available.

<u>Sphere of Influence Evidence and Artifacts</u>
Sphere of Influence written responses to critical questions including supporting artifacts are being collected. The TPE Team will alert LEAs if they have a gap in their submissions. In principle, LEAs are situated correctly as all conversations indicate students were attributed to teachers, MSA scores were translated, evaluation cohorts were established, and the work is proceeding on pace. Dr. Feldman coordinates this work and will collate and report on the first sweep of artifacts.

Leadership Development

11/13 Executive Officers Summit 3

11/6 LEA PD Coordinators

Ilene Swirnow
iswirnow@msde.state.md.us

Linda Burgee
lburgee@msde.state.md.us

Joe Freed
jfreed@msde.state.md.us

Executive Officer Summit 2

Summit 2 of the series entitled "Influencing Transformation: A Series of Summits, Leadership for a Quality Evaluation System" was held on September 24 for executive officers from Maryland school systems. Summit 2 introduced the use of a case study approach that will carry through the remaining summits and is designed so that executive officers may directly apply the professional development to the actual principal evaluation cycle that they must conduct.

The principal evaluation cycle that had been introduced in Summit 1 was reviewed. Having conducted analyses of their schools during the summer and held initial conferences with principals to review school needs, principal goals, and SLO development, executive officers shared their initial conference experiences with principals. The executive officers were able to gain ideas from and provide helpful information to colleagues who were going through the same experiences.

At Summit 2, the concept of <u>Purposeful School Visits</u> was introduced. It emphasizes, for the executive officer, the importance of doing an analysis of the specific areas of improvement for each school and principal, rather than a generic focus. As a result, the structure, focus, and

Frank Stetson
fstetson@msde.state.md.us

activities related to school visits and observations of principals may be more readily established and analyzed with the intent that the focus on specific areas will emphasize the deeper cause and effect relationships rather than only a surface level examination. As a result, the supervisory activities, conversations, resources, and professional development experiences will have their greatest meaning and impact and will be aligned with the focus of the work of the school.

Additionally, organizing tools developed for elementary, middle, and high school to assist the executive officer in identifying specific needs and recording pertinent information were shared. Executive officers also participated in a sharing activity to identify the best means to collect evidence for specific focus areas and to observe the practices of principals for depth and detail related to the identified goals. The related topic of implementing and monitoring SLOs, including approving the principal's SLO and connecting the SLO to professional practice, was also an area of focus for Summit 2.

Ultimately, the Summit emphasized the following foundational elements that must occur in the present timeframe of the overall framework for the evaluation process for principals:
- Holding the initial conference with principals
- Approving the principals' SLOs
- Scheduling of Purposeful Visits to schools to gather quality evidence of each principal's professional practice

As a follow-up to Summit 2, the team met with professional development coordinators on September 26. The coordinators play a key role in the implementation of initiatives at both the school and system levels. After each Summit, there will be a follow-up meeting with the coordinators so that they have similar information regarding evaluation and are armed with the requisite knowledge to provide the level of needed assistance. The coordinators focused greatly on the development of SLOs by principals, as they will undoubtedly be providing assistance in the development and application of SLOs.

Professional Development Coordinators

The September meeting with professional development coordinators represented yet another response to partnering across divisions at MSDE in the nurturing of TPE and particularly as the SLO components relate to specific content areas of instruction. Much of the content of this session is represented in this month's edition of Maryland Classroom, which we encourage you to read: www.msde.state.md.us/mdclassroom/Vol19_No1_092013.pdf

We have recognized the strong connections that must occur between what is taught (curriculum based on the Common Core Standards) and what is planned, delivered, and observed during instruction. Content professionals are essential to assisting teachers in making these connections within their local curricular structures. They will play an equally important role in assisting evaluators to validate these connections in their observations of classes and the eventual ratings of teacher performance.

Professional Development: Quality Controls

Members of the TPE Team will be working with executive officers and professional development coordinators to determine the kinds of evidence and artifacts that may be collected to validate the ongoing work within each Summit and training session.

Integration and Transitions

Common Core Guide from the Aspen Institute
The Aspen Institute has released a new resource for principals, "Implementation of the CCSS: A Transition Guide for School-Level Leaders." The Guide is an action-planning springboard for school leadership teams to help ensure that the many interconnected components of CCSS implementation take hold. Built around seven indicators of a high-quality transition, the Guide provides specific, high-impact actions, measures and tools for school leaders; and includes three vignettes to illustrate how the indicators appear in day-to-day practice.

Creating Classroom Transparency around Common Core
Occasionally we come across articles that reduce complex issues that are based upon misinformed opinions to understandable statements from practitioners in the field. This recent article from a teacher about the Common Core Standards may be such an example.
http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/teaching_ahead/2013/09/a.html

Maryland Classroom issue on SLOs
The newly released, September 2013, 4-page issue of Maryland Classroom is focused solely on Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) – providing information on the components of and steps necessary to develop high-quality SLOs, the benefits of using SLOs in teacher and principal evaluations, as well as a message from MSDE's SLO expert, and former Frederick County Public Schools Superintendent, Linda Burgee, on the most important things teachers need to know about SLOs. *Maryland Classroom* is the educator newsletter that has been the key channel for communicating important school reform information to local board members, central office, and school-based staff for over 18 years. To view the September 2013 issue of Maryland Classroom, go to www.msde.state.md.us/mdclassroom/Vol19_No1_092013.pdf. Please share this publication with your colleagues, staff, or other interested stakeholders.

Outreach

Meeting Formats – Webinars
As described in "Influencing Transformation: Maryland's Plan for Preparing Educators to Implement and Sustain Teacher and Principal Evaluation," the TPE Team will deliver information and training to differentiated LEA leadership groups throughout the 2013-2014 school year. These convenings are critical to ensuring that all LEA staff that work on the various aspects of TPE within their local school system have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the work required in each stage of the annual evaluation cycle. MSDE is conscientious of the fact that it can be difficult for staff from distant LEAs to travel to MSDE for these meetings and is working to provide the option of participating via webinar for those meetings where in-person attendance is not vital to the work. The first meeting that will offer the option to participate via webinar will be the October 30, 2013 Quality Control meeting. Members of the Quality Control group have the option to attend in-person at MSDE or join the webinar (specific webinar details to be provided as the date of the Quality Control meeting nears). The TPE Team is working with technology specialist at MSDE to make the webinar as interactive and engaging as possible. The Team is also looking into the possibility of adding video conferencing elements in the future.

Comprehensive Training Plan
MSDE is developing a Comprehensive Training Plan to ensure that the State's new technology systems, online tools and resources, and education improvement initiatives (such as TPE, Common Core, and the PARCC assessments) are being rolled out to LEAs and other stakeholders in a coherent and coordinated fashion. The training plan will help guide and align the State's efforts to provide training, professional development, and/or outreach to stakeholders on these new initiatives, specifically aiming, when possible, to provide training on multiple related initiatives at one time so as to reduce the impact on LEAs, while ensuring that they still receive

the guidance and support they need. An early, high-level version of the Plan was presented to LEA staff during two webinars and shared with representatives from the Governor's Office and numerous State education organizations, such as the Maryland PTA, the Maryland Business Roundtable, the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals, the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Maryland State Education Association. Feedback from the webinars and discussions is being used to inform the continued development and enhancement of the Comprehensive Training Plan. To view the webinar delivered on August 15, 2013, go to https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/254124266

Next Communications Bulletin
TPE Communications Bulletin #22 will be released during the week on November 4, 2013. It will include feedback from the first *full* Quality Control meeting, which will be held on October 30.