

Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPE)

"Influencing Transformation"

Communication #19

August 20, 2013

As TPE moves from model design and field testing to full model implementation, the focus of the work shifts to Quality Control, Technical Assistance, Leadership Development, and Communications. This shift is reflected in "Maryland's Plan for Preparing Educators to Implement and Sustain Teacher and Principal Evaluation" (attached) and in the format of these Communication Bulletins going forward.

For consistency, the Bulletins will mimic the design of next year's work on "Influencing Transformation." As you will see in the attachment, there are five "Sphere of Influence" cycles that drive the work and the accountabilities behind the work.

The Communication Bulletins will be constructed in four sections that will complement these "Spheres of Influence."

1. **Quality Control** – This section will provide insight on the "big picture" issues, compliances, and accountabilities that affect the ongoing TPE project.
2. **Technical Assistance** – This section will deal with the work that Ben Feldman will be conducting to assist LEAs with the technical elements that accompany the implementation of local or State models. Particular attention will be given to the assurances that the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) is seeking in the mini-grants, the technical compatibilities that will be required of Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and the continued evolution of evaluative models. As part of this process, artifacts will be collected throughout the year to validate our work and to construct project accountabilities in advance of the completion of Race to the Top (RTTT).
3. **Leadership Development** – This section will focus on the execution of those parts of "Influencing Transformation" that prepare teachers and principals to implement and sustain TPE. Particular attention will be given to Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and the elevation of evaluator skill sets that are common to all local models.
4. **Communications** – This section will be used to support information sharing and common messaging. The Communications section will also serve as a means for sharing information concurrent to the transitioning and integration of the Common Core State Standards and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessments.

Readiness Quick Check

As the school year begins...

- are teachers and principals fully aware of your local school system's TPE Plan?
- is a communications plan in place to inform internal and external stakeholders?
- have teaching staffs been divided into three cohorts?
- have MSA scores been translated into percent point values for each teacher's evaluation?
- have administrators been trained to craft SLOs with teachers?
- does the school have a work plan for completing this year's TPE work?
- are teachers fully prepared to implement the Common Core State Standards?

Quality Control

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Year 4: TPE Plan

Attached to Communication #19 is "Maryland's Plan for Preparing Educators to Implement and Sustain Teacher and Principal Evaluation." Using the cyclical evaluation model that was shared with LEAs in March and the lag data application that was described in April, the TPE Action Team has crafted this year's service delivery around the tagline of "Influencing Transformation." In a state where local autonomy is highly valued, a premium is placed on influence rather than compliance. Over the past year, the TPE Action Team has employed influence that is based on collaboration, discovery, and change to increasingly bring school systems and the State to evaluative commonalities. By replicating this approach, we hope to generate the collective influence that will shift the paradigm and transform evaluation from a subjective and static process to one that is more measurable and dynamic. To facilitate this transformation, next year's work has been divided into five "Spheres of Influence." Each Sphere is designed to provide information and training in advance of the work that is required in each stage of the annual evaluation cycle. Within each Sphere, information is gradually released and training is sequentially translated to leaders, practitioners, and those being evaluated. As the work becomes more precise, this plan further differentiates topics within user-specific groups. Technical training meetings and professional development sessions will be built around three constructs:

- What the LEAs need to learn from the State
- What the State needs to learn from the LEAs
- What LEAs and the State can learn from each other

Please refer to the attached plan for greater detail explaining how this model will function during the year. It is critical that LEAs send the correct representative to the appropriate meeting and that the LEA Point of Contact is knowledgeable about the school system's implementation plan and is empowered to weigh-in on progress and needs during the Quality Control sessions. With thoughtful consideration, it is our hope that no individual need be committed to more than one role or obligated to join more than five meetings.

Quality Control Group

During the first two years of the TPE project, LEAs provided cross-interest teams that participated in monthly TPE Field Test meetings. This structure served the developmental nature of those years' work well. These meetings were essential to fostering a continuous content and process dialogue across LEAs around model design, problem resolution, and communications. As the expectation for RTTT Year 4 focuses on full implementation of State or local TPE plans, the priority of such a group shifts from design to practice and with that shift, gravitates towards fidelity and quality control. With this in mind, the LEA Field Test meetings of the past two years will transition into audience-specific meetings that facilitate professional development and technical assistance and to a quality control group that will provide feedback and direction. This charge requires a group membership that includes local and statewide interest groups directly involved with LEAs, superintendents, principals, and teachers. These meetings will be stock-take in nature and held near the end of each "Sphere of Influence" (see attached plan). They are intended to gauge the impact of the completed Sphere activities and to identify readiness needs for the subsequent Sphere. This process will close the feedback loop five times during the upcoming year. The make-up of the quality control group will be as follows:

LEA Point of Contact	24
MSEA	2
MASSP	1
MAESP	1
PSSAM	2
MSDE TPE Lead	1

Representative voices from higher education will be added in late fall as issues associated with TPE sustainability begin to be addressed.

The first meeting of the Quality Control Group will occur on August 29, at which time they will determine their operational protocols.

USDE Waivers: June 2013

In June 2013, USDE offered states two waivers associated with RTTT and the ESEA Flexibility Waiver which have the potential to affect TPE. The first waiver would prohibit double testing, allowing Maryland to limit testing to either the MSA or the PARCC assessment for each student. The second waiver would allow Maryland to defer using the MSA testing data portion of evaluation (20 percent of the total rating or scaled up) to make personnel decisions for one year. Dr. Lowery, State Superintendent of Schools, has been working with a group composed of local superintendents and representative of the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA), the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland (PSSAM), the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and the Governor's Office. Without dissent, the group supported seeking each waiver, endorsed a method for extracting the 20 percent MSA from evaluations for personnel decisions, and agreed to a process for crafting the actual waiver applications. With an allowed period for public comment, the group plans to forward the two waiver applications to USDE by September 30, 2013.

Draft TPE Guidebook

In June, 2012, MSE posted the first official version of the TPE Guidebook. At that developmental stage, much of the Guidebook was dedicated to research citations, definitions, and the processes by which TPE moved from regulation to policy and then to implementation. During the course of 2012-2013, clarifications, interpretations, and determinations contributed to changes which, over time, have altered the content in the original Guidebook. LEAs requested that the document be updated and revised into a more practitioner-effective format. With archival extractions and hyperlinks, the new TPE Guidebook has been streamlined into a more purposeful and concise reference for LEAs. The current Draft TPE Guidebook has been shared with local superintendents and is attached.

TPE Amendments

Amendments specific to TPE were forwarded to USDE at the end of Year 3 (see Communication Bulletin #17 Year 3 Stocktake). MSDE has received preliminary approval of the budget amendments and anticipates receiving formal approval. Programmatic amendments also appear to be in order with determinations forthcoming. Formal approval of the budget amendments will allow us to proceed with distributing the additional mini-grant funds.

MACC@WestEd

Since late spring, the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center (MACC@WestEd) has been surveying Maryland educators and interviewing select superintendents. As an independent third-party observer, they will be compiling feedback to determine Maryland's readiness for full TPE implementations and to identify needs. They are scheduled to share initial findings with Dr. Lowery in early September.

Technical Assistance

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Taking Stock

School year 2013-14 coincides with the fourth and final year of the RTTT grant. Many Maryland systems prepare to open with new leadership teams. This preceding year saw the TPE project reformed and refocused, and the project emerged with a settled State Model and with systems having approved qualifying plans. This dynamic work was conducted in open collaboration with the LEAs. The State and the LEAs had to be nimble in a fluid policy environment. Because so much evolved over this last year, the TPE Action Team takes this opportunity to review the major events that have led the LEAs and MSDE to the present status. USDE further believed that LEAs and those new to the conversation would benefit from a detailed account of how various decisions were made during last year.

Moving the State Model from a Default to a Standard

The Education Reform Act of 2010 required LEAs to design and implement TPE models that meet minimum standards: an equal split between professional practice and student growth, the four Danielson-like domains for teachers and the eight Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework outcomes for principals, a 20 percentage point presence of the MSA, and the HSA included as a data point within an SLO as appropriate. (The HSA requirement was introduced by USDE in January 2013 and is not part of the Act.) To be acceptable, the local model had to have the endorsement of the local collective bargaining unit. This union endorsement is the salient distinction between the State and local models. As COMAR Title 13A.07.09.05.A specifies, "If the LEA and the exclusive employee representative do not reach agreement on an LEA Evaluation System, the Model State Performance Evaluation Criteria shall be adopted by the LEA."

A year ago, this was interpreted that the State needed to construct a theoretical model which would meet the letter of the law, but which would not necessarily be attractive to LEAs. For example, the State Model had a technique for converting student scale score points on the MSA to contribute to the teacher's rating, but this technique was broadly criticized by most audiences. Alternately, the State Model relied heavily on the new School Progress Index (SPI), an untested measure developed pursuant to the ESEA Waiver. The SPI was designed for institutional accountability and whether or not it was a good fit for individual accountability was unknown.

The main virtue of this approach was that LEAs were pushed to think through local conditions and craft local models. Attractive differences in allowed models included differential weighting of elements within professional practice, exclusion of the SPI, substitution of alternate whole school measures such as local School Wide Indices (SWIs), and novel uses of SLOs, such as portfolio or other performance demonstrations. But this discarded approach—to allow the State Model to be less than a best practice model—was a missed opportunity. As the 2012-13 school year unfolded, there was a real possibility that some LEAs might not reach consensus with their unions, and default seemed more than a remote contingency.

In November 2012, Dr. Lowery, the newly appointed State Superintendent of Schools, tasked Dave Volrath to form a small Action Team with the exclusive charge to unify all TPE efforts, to direct all possible resources toward the LEAs, and to bring forward State products that would be aspirational standards, not worst case scenarios.

Although at the present time it appears that all LEAs will be use local models, they hew very closely to the State Model. Moreover, the State Model is transparent, flexible, accurate, and attractive to diverse audiences.

Settling the MSA Translation

At the inception of RTTT, Maryland's grant application described a variety of paths the State could follow to make the MSA tests applicable to a TPE model. These included retrofitting a vertical scale and considering a full-blown Value Added Model such as the TVASS system used in Tennessee. Both of these paths were dead ends. The State modeled Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs), an approach which garnered admirers and still does. Easily understood and intrinsically fair, SGPs, nevertheless, came up short; SGPs return a descriptive statistic that does not answer the "effectiveness question" adequately. Transformation or Value Matrices were the next approach considered, and of these, a complex version known as Transition, Status, and Growth or TRSG was the form endorsed by the National Psychometric Council. Attractive and subtle in concept, it failed face validity tests with virtually all LEA-based practitioners and advocates. These stakeholders insisted TRSG would return false positives and negatives. Critics posited that teachers who started with strong students would get benefits regardless of their contributions, and teachers who started with challenged students would get short shrift even when making considerable progress. In fact, once subjected to stress testing with actual LEA data, these concerns were confirmed. TRSG had to be discarded.

The version that is part of the State TPE Model is dubbed the Maryland Tiered Achievement Index, M-TAI. It is a consolidation of elements from several LEAs, tested against real data, and adjusted to actual State grade and subject distributions. M-TAI rewards progress and mastery, does not skew for the prior ability of the students, avoids false negatives and positives, and carefully adjusts the diagonal where the State distributions are most dense. Students are loaded into the matrix to generate a teacher mean. This mean is referenced against the statewide means and standard deviations by grade and subject to return an assignment to one of four performance categories: above expected and commendable; expected and acceptable; slightly below expected and concerning; and significantly below expected and unacceptable. MSDE recommends awarding points thus: 20, 16, 12, 10 (or half these values that if two subjects are in play). This point awarding scheme resulted from concurrent independent analyses in LEAs which generated convergent results. Other point awarded methods are in use, for example, a 1,2,3,4 GPA approach. However, the 20,16,12,10 works well, especially if the LEA is using a point accumulation model to generate a summary score.

Understanding Problems with Common and Shared Measures

The State Default Model incorporated the SPI as an effort to address the original proposal in the RTTT grant, that the State would provide 30 percent of the student growth measures. The SPI was developed to replace Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), an opportunity Maryland availed itself of under the ESEA waiver. The SPI is nuanced and complex. It is also a longitudinal measure, which while appropriate for institutional and principal accountability, is not necessarily a good fit for teacher accountability.

The TPE Action Team in concert with several LEAs tested how the State Model would calculate a summary score using different combinations of MSA, SLOs, and the SPI. A 20 percent MSA/10 percent SPI/20 percent SLO version was compared with a 20 percent MSA/30 percent SLO model and with a 10 percent MSA/ 10 percent SPI/ 30 percent SLO model. The results were compelling and unequivocal. Teachers were disproportionately harmed by including the SPI – as much as three quarters of teachers negatively affected in the most dramatic analysis. Moreover, the negative impact was of a greater magnitude than was the positive impact for the one quarter of teachers who benefitted by inclusion of the SPI.

As one LEA summarized these analyses, the SPI allowed weak teachers to hide in strong schools and punished strong teachers in weak schools.

The Action Team also tested Grade Level Indices (GLIs), in which all teachers in a grade shared all students whether or not they had provided direct instruction. The results, as expected, indicated regression to the mean, a flattening of the data, and a loss of discrimination.

Preserving the Value of Whole School Measures

As the preceding discussion suggests, the SPI should not be part of the Maryland TPE Teacher Model. Student growth is better captured using the MSA in concert with the SLOs. This does not mean, however, that the philosophical underpinnings—that a faculty is the proxy for the school, and everyone should take ownership of the school's success—was wrong. The present position is twofold. First, the SPI is a primary resource to develop SLO priorities and targets. Although it should not be used as a direct measure in developing a teacher score, it should be studied carefully. Second, SLOs should be layered and nested. At least one should focus on classroom specific priorities, but another SLO should reflect school-level (or grade within school level) priorities. Several LEAs require a third SLO to reflect a district-level priority.

There is another important learning. If a salient issue is embedded within the SPI, the potential benefits for the teacher, even if his or her efforts are perfectly executed, are limited and dependent on the efforts of others. For example, the SPI illustrates that an urgent need addresses the performance of a Special Education subgroup. Within the SPI, this would likely show up as an event in the Gap tier. The SPI is built of three tiers plus the total score. Thus, of the 10 or 15 percentage points in play in the SPI if that were used, moving the Special Education group might hold the potential to benefit the teacher by very few points. The efforts to address this gap could be considerable, diluted, and unobtainable. However, if the SPI finding is elevated into an SLO worth 15 percentage points, the teacher can direct vigorous efforts to actual affected students and capture all 15 points for the summary rating.

Resetting the Means and Standard Deviations for the Spring 2013 Data

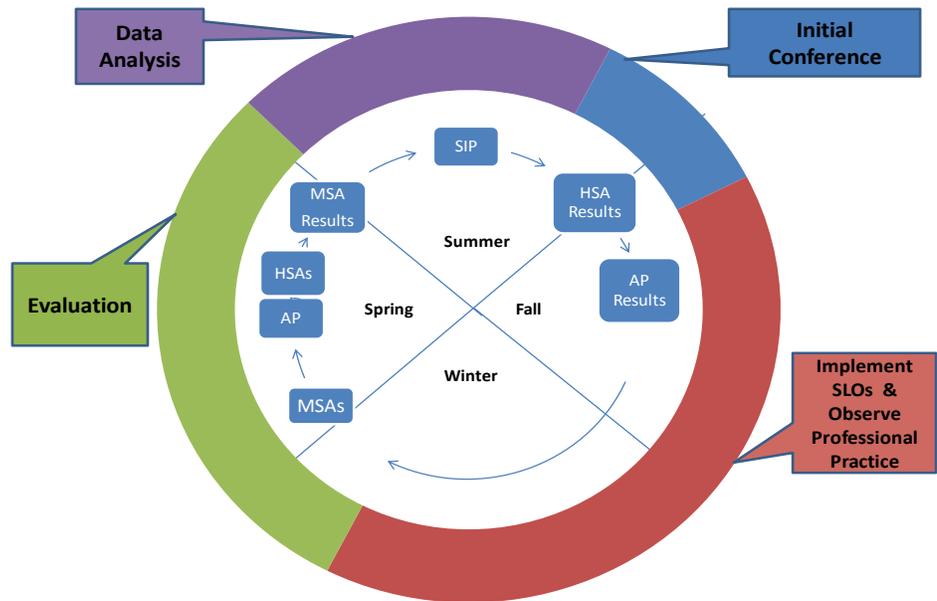
This past year, Maryland systems, schools and teachers launched the move toward the Common Core State Standards. The spring 2013 MSA scores evidence this shift, especially in mathematics where there are considerable differences in curriculum sequence between the Maryland State Curriculum and Common Core. Scores showed downward pressure across the State, affecting even traditionally strong systems, schools, and student groups. Similar declines occurred in other states that got a jump on Common Core.

Of importance to TPE, the school strands—the outcome from the SPI—also fell, in some cases by several levels. These declines provide an additional argument for removing the SPI from the TPE State Teacher Model. Detailed analysis in a fourth of the State's LEAs already indicated that the SPI had a disproportionately negative impact on total teacher ratings, in the most dramatic cases by three to one. As school strands tended to sink statewide, the SPI "drag" is magnified. It has the effect of lowering the overall distribution of teacher scores. More important, it limits the amount of growth and control available to teachers who strive to improve their ratings. Because school strands fell, points from the SPI strands are simply not on the table.

The TPE Team anticipated this situation and prepared for it by issuing a new set of statewide means and standard deviations based on 2013. Although the original plan had been to hold means and STDS constant through the remaining life of the MSAs, this would have tied LEAs to an adequacy framework out of sync with the new performance realities. Systems that do not use the ESEA SPI in their TPE Teacher Models but continue to use M-TAI with the new means and STDS will have a continuing accurate representation of educator success anchored to overall State performance.

Using Lagged Data to Inform a New Approach to Evaluation

From the start of the TPE project, the intractable problem of lagged data was raised repeatedly. Student performance data on State assessments comes late, after the evaluation deadlines required by collective bargaining agreements have passed. If participants adhere to the practice that evaluation of staff is an end-of-year event, there remains the persistent problem that conversations will include assessment scores that will be a year old. How could this be recast so that the exercise is useful? The Maryland TPE model evolved an alternate approach which is to treat the evaluation as a continuous work-in-progress with many events, as illustrated in the following diagram.



The innermost area indicates when assessments occur and results are available. The administrative year is divided into four unequal reiterative portions: conference, implement SLOs and observe professional practice, evaluation, data analysis, followed by conference again. The table below suggests the tasks that align to the application of the State Model. For example, at the beginning of the school year, results of the spring MSA are presented to the teacher while the prior year's students remain fresh in memory. These data are evaluated and can be used to structure the setting of new SLOs. When late spring arrives, the MSA portion of the evaluation is already complete. SLO outcomes are discussed in spring and at this moment, the coming fall attribution roster is agreed upon. Evaluation ceases to be a once-a-year event, but becomes a continuous professional development exercise leading to improved conversation, reflection, practice, and outcomes. The following table shows suggested sequential tasks for TPE cycles.

Cycle	Teacher	Principal
Initial Conference	<p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data and SLOs from Previous Evaluation Conference Lag Data Set Goals and Strategies Including SLOs Determine Weight for Each Domain Establish Professional Development Focus 	<p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data and SLOs from Previous Evaluation Conference Lag Data Set Goals and Strategies Including SLOs Determine Weight for Each Domain Establish Professional Development Focus

Implement SLOs and Observe Professional Practice	Conduct Classroom Visits/Observations (at least 2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide formal feedback Collect Evidence of Professional Practice and Student Growth Hold Mid-Interval Conference to Review Progress Towards Goals and SLOs 	Conduct School Visits and Observations (at least 2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide formal feedback Collect Evidence of Professional Practice and Student Growth Hold Mid-Year/Mid-Interval Conference to Review Progress Towards Goals and SLOs
Evaluation	Complete Evaluation and Hold Conference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score Professional Practice Carry forward MSA/HSA % Affirm Attribution Review and Score SLOs Complete Rating Set new Professional Practice Goals Discuss possible SLOs for Next Year Review Professional Development Focus and Identify Needs 	Complete Evaluation and Hold Conference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score Professional Practice Carry forward MSA/HSA % Affirm Attribution Review and Score SLOs Complete Rating Set new Professional Practice Goals Discuss possible SLOs for Next Year Review Professional Development Focus and Identify Needs
Data Analysis	Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers' Qualitative and Quantitative Data Teachers' Performance Ratings 	Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School's Qualitative and Quantitative Data Principal's Performance Rating, School's Performance, and Information about Principal's Leadership

SLOs: The Overarching Framework

The most dramatic evolution over the course of the RTTT grant has not been the use of the MSA for individual accountability, but rather the emergence of SLOs as the major change agent in the reform. SLOs give individuals a voice in their accountability plan. SLOs are where complexity factors find a landing. They nest, they are flexible, they are amenable to refinement over the year, they harvest information from the SPI, and they reward risk-taking and creativity.

These myriad benefits explain why SLOs are the common currency of the Maryland LEA models and, indeed, of TPE plans across states in the country.

During the last year, extensive SLO training has been provided and online resources have been developed. These are discussed more fully in the new TPE Guide and are available on the [TPE homepage](#). Additional modules are anticipated for the coming year. Meanwhile, very creative products are starting to emerge from the LEAs. There is an aspect of the current work that deserves attention. Recall that a major challenge to the work has been to get a grasp on using lagged data in a meaningful way. Lagged data are a fact of life for MSA and HSA teachers. The new State Model proposes that every educator should have one lagged element worth 20 percent, which will introduce consistency, equity, and objectivity into the TPE project as it is applied across the board. For those in unassessed areas, the SPI becomes the resource to develop this element.

By framing this lagged element as an SLO, it should be apparent that all of student growth can now be viewed as an SLO enterprise. Even the MSA translation through M-TAI can be construed as an SLO for which clear parameters are already established.

Nevertheless, this is messy work, terra incognita for many. The lessons from the national literature indicate that the initiative gets better as practitioners develop experience and techniques for writing and evaluating good SLOs and as LEAs and states develop encyclopedias of SLOs. At present, the call in Maryland is for exemplars. The next big push will be for the development of quality assessments that will ensure quality assurance and consistency across locations.

Late Negotiations: The MSA/SPI Split

In late spring, there were discussions to explore flexible parameters around the requirement that where a State assessment existed, it had to be part of the TPE model; that is, the 20 percent MSA

requirement. The proposed compromise model was a moving combination of the MSA with the SPI over a three year phase in. In the first year, the MSA and SPI could be combined in a 10/10 split. In the second year, the MSA (or at this point, PARCC) would be 15 and the SPI 5. And in the third year, the assessment would regain the full 20 basis point value.

As the TPE approach to MSA translation became more precisely crafted and better understood, more and more LEAs adopted this technique or something close to it. Upon submission of qualifying plans in June 2013, only three LEAs availed themselves of any version of the MSA/SPI split. On the contrary, LEAs that included the SPI within their approved models are now awaiting policy guidance to amend approved plans by removing the SPI, more closely aligning with the revised State Model (presently under USDE review) that has the SLO framework described above.

An Evolving Policy of Common Practice

Returning to the language of the Reform Act and of the RTTT grant application, it is remarkable how far the State and LEAs have moved forward from the intentions that were delineated in these seminal documents. Three guiding questions were always implicit but not fully answered. These questions are: Can student growth be measured? Can students be attributed to teachers? Can this process be fair? The answer to all three is yes. Nevertheless, most would agree that if the Reform Act and RTTT application were being rewritten now, the language would be informed by three years' hard learning.

The Act required that student growth be treated as significant. Three years on, there is a firm model that defines that. The Act provides many protections for fairness, and these have served Maryland well. Important controls, such as the three prong test for including a student in aggregations, have received universal acceptance. The issue of attribution and what this means is not addressed robustly in the Act or the RTTT application, yet this is the undoubtedly the heart of the reform. The national expectation for public education is that educators need to be accountable for the results of their instruction and leadership provided to students. Moreover, it has now been tested in other states that this means accountable for direct efforts to specific students. The statistical weaknesses of shared and common measures have already been addressed. The perceptual issues, the fairness issues, and the legal issues are better understood and are reflected in the approved qualifying plans that have been brought forward. This unfolding conversation now formalized in qualifying plans constitutes a Policy of Common Practice.

Leadership Development

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Summits

The TPE Action Team will provide professional development to a variety of educators during the 2013-14 school year. "Influencing Transformation" includes a series of "Five Summits for Executive Officers" (those leaders who are directly responsible for the supervision and evaluation of principals), which began with Summit I held at the Talbot County Board of Education on July 9 and at the Meeting House in Columbia on July 10. The series of Summits are designed to follow and reinforce the timeline for principal evaluation and provide practitioner information on the evaluators of principals. Each session hones in on essential aspects of the work required during the particular stage of the evaluation cycle, with a continuous focus on the Executive Officers' skill in providing leadership for a quality evaluation system.

At the first Summit, Executive Officers received training to help them become more prepared to:

- Develop a plan to effectively manage the TPE process from June to September
- Plan for the initial conference with the principal
- Differentiate performance criteria for professional practice based upon the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework
- Analyze and utilize relevant data to assist in goal setting, SLO creation, and the initial conference

Summit II for Executive Officers will be held at Anne Arundel Community College on September 24, 2013 from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. This session will continue to focus on the next part of the principal evaluation cycle. At Summit II, the Executive Officers will receive training to help them become more prepared to:

- Organize the work plan
- Establish goals and expectations for purposeful school visits
- Implement and monitor SLOs
 - Approving the principal’s SLOs
 - Connecting SLOs to professional practice

The remaining Summits for Executive Officers will be held at Anne Arundel Community College from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM on the following dates:

- November 13, 2013
- February 18, 2014 (Snow date –February 25, 2014)
- June 10, 2014

Another series of training sessions will be targeted to the Professional Development (PD) Coordinators of the local school systems. These are the educators who are responsible for training personnel from their school system on aspects of TPE. The first session is scheduled for *September 26, from 9:30AM -12:30 PM at Anne Arundel Community College.* They will receive an overview of the information presented to the executive officers.

The remaining sessions will be conducted as part of the PD Coordinators’ meetings at the Carver Staff Development Center in Anne Arundel County on *November 6 from 9:00 AM– 3:00 PM; January 7, 2014 from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM; and April 22, 2014 from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM.* Topic information will be sent as we get closer to the actual dates.

Communications

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Outreach

This year as we embark on the full statewide implementation of the Common Core State Standards, we are providing communication resources to support outreach to various audiences. The higher academic expectations of the Common Core Standards bring a number of changes to our classrooms. To help prepare stakeholders to address the questions of parents, teachers, and others, MSDE prepared flash drives containing a variety of materials to communicate those changes. Flash drives were mailed to every school principal, superintendent, local board president, assistant superintendent for instruction, public information officer, and major education organizations such as MSEA, the Baltimore Teachers Union, the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, higher education officials, and others. These resources are also posted on the MSDE website [here](#). It is MSDE’s hope that these resources will assist educators in their efforts to engage and inform their school communities.

Copies of the new handout “The Top Ten Things Parents Need to Know about the Common Core” were given to every principal for distribution at back-to-school events. Additionally, this document has been translated into Spanish, French, Chinese, Vietnamese, Amharic, and Korean. The English and translated versions are now available [here](#).

MSDE’s new Back to School Common Core video, which features the Governor, teachers, a principal, and State Board member, Dr. James Gates, provides key messages to parents on the Common Core. The video is less than five minutes in length, and explains what will be happening in classrooms as we open the school year. You can view the video by clicking on one of these two links [here](#) or [here](#).

MSDE’s summer Educator Effectiveness Academies were the focus of a National Public Radio (NPR)

story that aired on July 23. The reporter, Cory Turner, personally attended an Academy and in his piece, "Teachers Hit the Books to Master New Education Standards," he outlines how the Academies help teachers share best practices to ensure their students are ready for Common Core. To read or listen to NPR's piece on Maryland's Educator Effectiveness Academies click [here](#).

TPE Communication Bulletins

In 2013-14, two Communication Bulletins will be published during the course of each Sphere of Influence – one to advance the content of the Sphere and a second to monitor the progress of the TPE project. The 10 Communication Bulletins will be released on:

- August 19
- September 2
- October 1
- November 4
- December 2
- February 10
- March 10
- May 5
- June 12
- July 7 (Annual Stocktake)

Transitions and Integration

Maryland is a governing state in the PARCC consortium, an alliance of states working together to develop common assessments serving nearly 24 million students. PARCC's work is funded through a four-year, \$185 million dollar grant from USDE. Partners include over 700 higher education institutions and systems representing hundreds of campuses across the country that will help develop the high school component of the new assessment, and then put it to good use as an indicator of student readiness. PARCC is led by its member states and managed by Achieve, a non-profit group with a 17-year track record of working with states to improve student achievement by aligning K-12 education policies with the expectations of employers and the postsecondary community. PARCC's ultimate goal is ensure all students graduate from high school college- and career-ready. For more information, visit www.parcconline.org.

The PARCC consortium is made up of 21 states and the District of Columbia. Nineteen of those states have committed to participate only in PARCC and administer the PARCC assessments in the 2014-2015 school year. The K-12 chief state school officers from those 19 states serve on the Governing Board. The June 26 meeting included an open, public session and an executive session. Two important votes were held at the meeting. The opening session was a joint session of the Governing Board and PARCC's Advisory Committee on College and Career Readiness where the joint body voted to approve grade- and content-specific performance level descriptors for both English language arts/literacy and mathematics, which articulate the knowledge, skills and practices that students performing at a given level on the PARCC assessments should be able to demonstrate at each grade level and content area.

The PARCC Governing Board met on June 26, 2013. The board meets quarterly to make major policy and operational decisions on behalf of the consortium related to the overall design of the assessment system, PARCC's procurement strategy, and other significant issues.

In the afternoon session, the Governing Board voted to approve the first edition of the accessibility and accommodations manual, which is a comprehensive policy document that will support local educators in the selection, administration and evaluation of accommodations for the assessment of students with disabilities and English Language Learners on the PARCC End-of-Year, Performance-Based, and Mid-Year assessment components.

"We are developing PARCC as a next generation assessment system that will allow states to assess new college and career ready standards," said Massachusetts Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester, who chairs the PARCC Governing Board. "Field testing is an integral part of every testing program, and in the case of PARCC, will help us better understand how well this new assessment assesses a broader range of the skills and competencies we value in the standards."

The announcement of PARCC's field testing plans was also unveiled. Earlier this year PARCC concluded successful trial runs of assessment items and questions with 2,300 students in six states. This summer, additional trial runs with 4,800 students in four states will allow PARCC states to continue testing the quality of assessment items and their accessibility for students.

The PARCC Field Test will be administered in spring 2014 to over one million students across PARCC states. The field test is designed to ensure items are accurately measuring the knowledge and skills tested and that the questions provide a valid and reliable result of what students know and can do. The PARCC Field Test will help inform test development, in preparation for the first operational administration of PARCC in 2014-2015, and will give schools and districts the opportunity to experience the administration of PARCC assessments.

During summer 2013, PARCC will select schools for the field test to comprise a representative sample of students across PARCC states. Schools will be notified of their selection in August. After the schools' participation is finalized in fall 2013, a sample of classrooms will be selected to participate from each school. The field test sample size for each state will be proportional to each state's student enrollment (with a minimum sample size). More information is at <http://www.parcconline.org/field-test>.

The vast majority of students participating in field testing will only take about one-quarter of the PARCC test, and no student participating in field testing will take the full assessment. In a session on PARCC progress, the chiefs were provided an update around a previous Governing Board decision to revisit the development timeline for PARCC's non-summative components to ensure adequate time for quality review and feedback from states. The revised timeline - which has been established through an amendment to the Race to the Top Assessment grant - will allow PARCC an additional year to complete the Diagnostic Assessment, K-1 Formative Tools and the Speaking and Listening Assessment. PARCC will field test all three components in the 2014-2015 school year and deliver them to states and districts in the summer of 2015.

PARCC will deliver the summative assessment (which includes the Performance-Based Assessment and the End-of-Year Assessment), the Partnership Resource Center and Professional Development Modules for educators in the 2014-2015 school year, as scheduled.

A solicitation for contractors to develop the PARCC Diagnostic Assessment and K-1 Formative Tools was released through PARCC's Fiscal Agent state of Florida ([LINK](#)). A solicitation to build the Speaking and Listening Assessment will be released in the next few weeks.

The next PARCC Governing Board meeting is scheduled for September 25 in the Washington, D.C. metro area with a site yet to be determined.

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Principals and Assistant Principals

In repeated forums around the topics of TPE, the Common Core Standards, the PARCC assessments, communications, and technology, the role of school-based administrators continually emerges as key to the success of each initiative. With that in mind, MSDE is launching a dialogue

across initiatives to identify effective strategies for informing and preparing principals and assistant principals to do this work. MSDE will be collaborating with the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals (MAESP) and the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) to explore networking and training possibilities. The TPE Action Team welcomes input from school-based administrators on this initiative.