

Teacher and Principal Evaluation

"Influencing Transformation"

Communication #23

December 12, 2013

Sphere Three Outcomes

By the end of Sphere Three, leadership personnel should know and be able to maintain the annual evaluative workload, to conduct mid-year conferences, and monitor SLO progress.

Refinements

Based on information gathered during the October 30, 2013 Quality Control Webinar, 45% of respondents indicated "increasingly confident" and "fully confident" levels of readiness to proceed with Sphere Three. In response to specific feedback, Sphere Three Technical Assistance and Professional Development trainings will include increased focus on:

1. Management of data and evaluation elements associated with Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)
2. Alignment of SLOs with Common Core Standards to improve teacher performance
3. Capacity of principals to conduct the work associated with Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPE) and particularly SLOs
4. Validation of communication strategies

Quality Control

12/6/13 PSSAM

2/5/14 Quality Control
Session

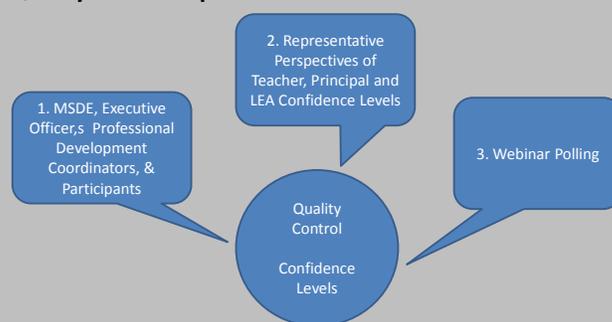
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Quality Control: Sample Response to Input

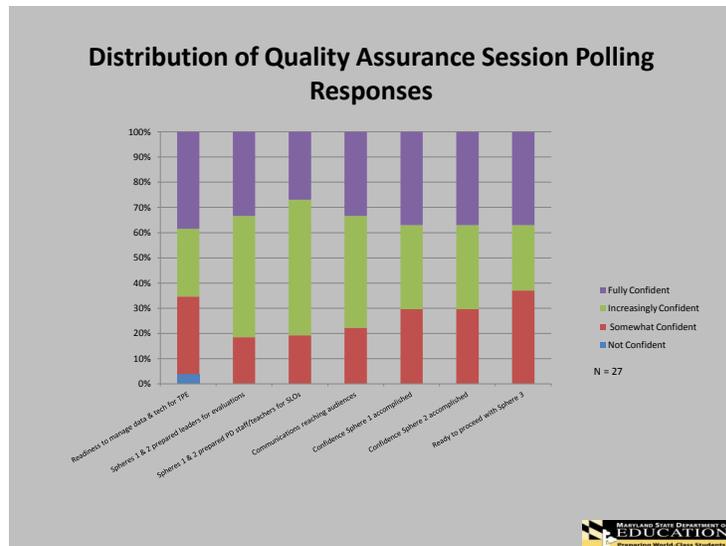
Recall that in late October, the Quality Control Group conducted a webinar to analyze the progress of Spheres of Influence One and Two. The refinements cited in the introductory section of this Communication Bulletin reflect how additional focus will be given to Sphere Three Technical Assistance and Professional Development. These refinements were the result of input gathered from three sources (see following chart):

1. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Executive Officers, Professional Development Coordinators, & Participants – This input resulted from feedback from training session participants, presenter perceptions, and Local Education Agency (LEA)/MSDE reviews.
2. Representative Perspectives of Teacher, Principal, and LEA Confidence – This input resulted from confidence instruments completed in advance of the Quality Control Session by representative members of the LEAs and the teacher, principal, and superintendent associations. The information reflected perceived confidence levels of teachers, principals, and LEAs.
3. Webinar Polling – This input resulted from responses by representative members of the LEAs and the teacher, principal, and superintendent associations to questions polled during the Quality Control Webinar.

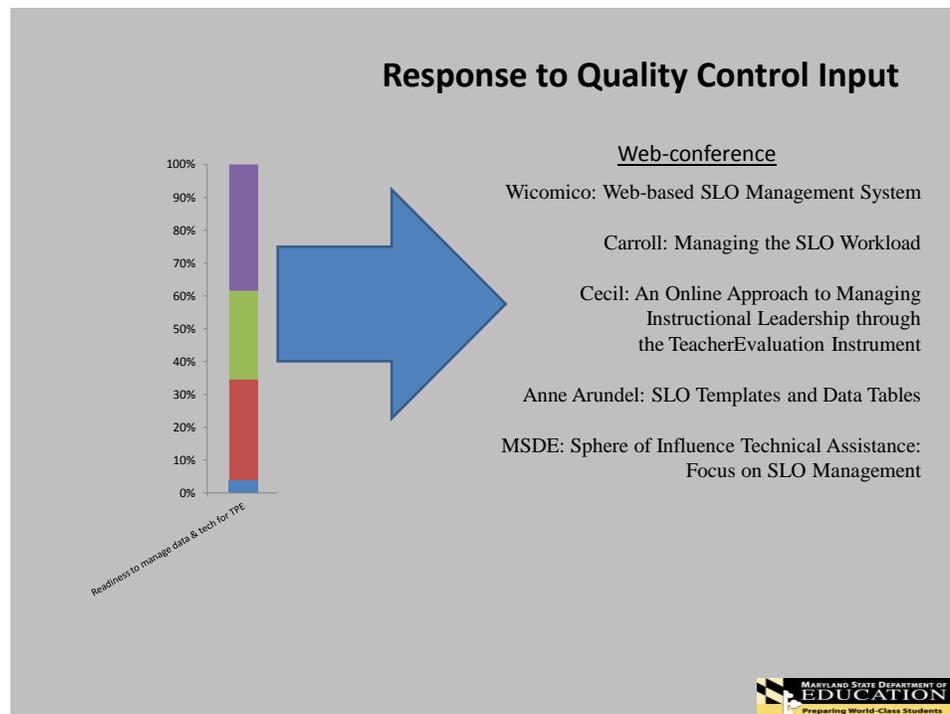
Quality Control Input



A review of the polling responses (see chart below) provides an excellent example of how the Quality Control process is being used by MSDE to respond immediately to LEA concerns.



The first polling question (first colored bar in above chart) implied that there were LEAs that were fully confident in their management of the TPE data and technologies and others that were with less confidence. Further inquiry by MSDE indicated that managing the SLO process by LEAs within unique data platforms was a contributing factor. It was evident that connecting those LEAs with high levels of confidence and similar platforms with those less confident and using the same platforms would provide purposeful and usable solutions. The chart below depicts these relationships and the web-conference that was crafted to facilitate this interest in less than two weeks.



This is an excellent example of how an intentional Quality Control process can continuously close the response loop and contribute to differentiated, immediate, and targeted strategies. We will be employing similar thinking with the other refinements and as we revisit Quality Control after Sphere Three. By repeating the work of TPE and the Quality Control process, we hope to improve the confidence levels of teachers, principals and LEAs over the year.

ESEA Extension

Earlier this fall, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) offered states the opportunity to renew their ESEA Flexibility Waivers. Recall that this Waiver provided relief from Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) and that its principles are intricately linked to Race to the Top (RTTT). With leadership from the TPE Team, a sub-committee of the ESEA Renewal Committee was investigating how to collate the pending RTTT amendments, the proposed Flexibility Amendments, and the interests the sub-committee gathered from LEAs and representative groups into guidance that would inform the greater ESEA Renewal Committee in their crafting of a comprehensive ESEA/TPE Flexibility Waiver Renewal. Subsequent to the sub-committee completing their work, USDE withdrew the ESEA Renewal offer and replaced it with a less onerous offer to allow states to simply extend their current ESEA Flexibility Waiver for an additional year – 2014-2015. As Maryland plans to pursue this ESEA Waiver Extension, the work of the sub-committee will now be used to direct the greater ESEA Extension Committee in crafting amendments to the existing Flexibility Waiver. Conditional to the Extension of the Flexibility Waiver, USDE further requires that states demonstrate their intentions for continuing the work of TPE beyond July 2015. The ESEA Extension Committee will take this into consideration as they construct the amendments to Maryland's ESEA Extension request.

Maryland Council on Educator Effectiveness

The final meeting of the Maryland Council on Educator Effectiveness was conducted on November 13, 2013. At the direction of Governor Martin O'Malley, the Council has served in an advisory capacity; meeting every six months to inform the work of Teacher and Principal Evaluation. MSDE and the TPE Team wishes to thank the members of the Council for the service they have given and are appreciative of the counsel and the forum that was provided. It is our hope that the representative members of the Council will still receive TPE Communication Bulletins through their networks and we welcome their continued interest and advocacy for the work on Educator Effectiveness.

Technical Assistance

2/26/14 Technical Assistance Meeting

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On Friday, November 15, 2013, the TPE Action Team tried a novel format to address an emergent issue. During the last Quality Control Session at the conclusion of Sphere of Influence Two, Managing SLOs emerged as a topic of broad interest. For some LEAs, SLO management remains a challenge; for others, this is an arena in which they have made considerable progress. Four LEAs with promising solutions agreed to share the status of their efforts, building on the presentation given by Charles County of their vendor-developed solution at the September 25, 2013 Technical Assistance Session.

Wicomico County demonstrated a locally developed solution which sits on their existing Student Information Management systems. Their web-based solution provides a mechanism to manage the process, to populate real-time rosters, to make SLOs visible to administrators and curriculum specialists, and to streamline the process for teachers and principals. Carroll County also addressed these needs and provided a sophisticated mechanism to capture artifacts and data to support development, monitoring, and grading of SLOs. Cecil County's solution is extremely fluid and melds with their overall academic management system. Moreover, their system provides powerful tools to schedule, monitor, and assess the work of managing SLOs and classroom observations. Anne Arundel County introduced a template approach to develop SLOs, six different versions. This structured approach, using templates, greatly facilitates the task for teachers, but at the same time introduces consistency, quality, and precision, a win on all sides. Lastly, Anne Arundel's templates will be loaded into Performance Matters, a vendor that already serves many Maryland LEAs.

All four sessions were enthusiastically received. They provided ideas for some and affirmed work-in-progress for others. The take home lesson was surely that while the task of managing SLOs is perceived as demanding, the work to accomplish this is already well advanced and sophisticated.

The links for all sessions are provided below:

Wicomico: Web-based SLO Management System
<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/731525618>

Carroll: Managing the SLO Workload
<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/610097426>

Cecil: An Online Approach to Managing Instructional Leadership through the Teacher Evaluation Instrument
<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/510615666>

Anne Arundel: SLO Templates and Data Tables
<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/121260274>

MSDE: Sphere of Influence Technical Assistance: Focus on SLO Management
<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/209224442>

The most powerful technical solution is of limited usefulness if the underlying operationalization of constructs is weak. As mentioned above, a particular strength of the Anne Arundel County Public Schools tool is a series of templates that structure the writing of the SLO. Audiences who have seen the AACPS approach have been impressed and have requested the materials, graciously provided and posted here: [AACPS SLO Targets](#).

This November, as every year since 2011, there was an update on Teacher Principal Evaluation at the Maryland Assessment Group Conference in Ocean City. This year's presentation took stock of model changes, particularly since last year, results of the all-LEA field test, status of setting cut scores, distribution of the Implementation Grants, and implications for future work. The presentation PowerPoint may be found here: [TPE MAG 2013 Presentation](#).

In two weeks, USDE will conduct on-site ESEA Part B monitoring visits. Questions addressed to TPE include these:

- Have there been changes or adjustment to the SEA's approved teacher and principal evaluation and support guidelines?
- Where is the state in the process of developing, adopting, piloting, or implementing teacher and principal evaluation support systems in LEAs?
- How is the state determining or planning to determine that the development, adoption, piloting, or implementation of the TPE and support systems in LEAs is on track to meet timelines in the approved ESEA flexibility guidelines?
- What obstacles or challenges are anticipated in continuing implementation?
- What are the challenges to continued engagement with educators?

To address questions, of which these are only a few of a much larger review, MSDE must provide evidence. Among the documents provided to address the above, MSDE will share the Implementation Grant Assurance Narratives and approved C-125s. These documents are a de facto needs assessment from LEAs of where resources need to be positioned. A further body of evidence is the collection of artifacts requested at the September 25, 2013 Technical Assistance Convening. These artifacts include brief responses to a few critical questions, proof that MSA-translations have made it to schools, a description of the three-cohort approach to make the work manageable, and proof that such cohorts have been created and are available in the schools. At present, artifacts are in hand from three quarters of the RTTT LEAs. If you have not submitted yours, please send them to Ben Feldman at bfeldman@msde.state.md.us. Do not hesitate to call him at 410 767 0142 if your need assistance.

Leadership Development

**1/7/14 Professional
Development
Coordinators
Meeting**

**2/18/14 Executive Officers
Summit**

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Summit III in the Influencing Transformation series of professional development sessions for executive officers continued the best practices established in the earlier Summits by providing the executive officers with timely training in the next steps in the principal evaluation process. At this stage in the evaluation process cycle, executive officers are gathering evidence through purposeful school visits and observations in order to establish and verify criteria for determining the 50% professional practice portion of a principal's evaluation. As with all of the Summits, this session was designed to provide relevant, timely training and discussion to Executive officers to help them prepare for the mid-year conferences that they will be holding with their principals.

Summit III began with a self-assessment in the form of a readiness checklist, a guidepost for executive officers to determine what had been accomplished so far in their LEAs as set out in the evaluation process cycle. Noting that the checklist was a means of self-analysis to determine benchmarks that had been reached as well as those that still need to be reached, executive officers understood that each LEA would be at its own spot in the process during this first year. Executive officers had time both to discuss with their colleagues and to reflect on their progress so far. The second part of the readiness checklist dealt with the steps in the process yet to come and queried participants as to their level of preparation to complete the later stages of the process cycle. Again, executive officers had time to reflect and to plan with their LEA counterparts. It should be noted that portions of the same checklist given to the executive officers, sections dealing with those steps in the process already completed, were presented to principals in various professional development venues (Principals' Advisory Council, MASSP Executive Board) for their feedback as well. This was done in an effort to triangulate results from the executive officers and to get a better-rounded picture of the actual TPE implementation process at various levels throughout Maryland.

Executive officers then were given an opportunity to discuss with their colleagues the various topics to be considered in the preparation for the mid-year conference, the feedback to be given during the conference and the follow-up steps for their principals to refine their goals and to guide their professional development for the remainder of the school year.

Following the case study approach utilized throughout the Summits, each executive officer was asked to come to the session prepared to present one of his/her principals, anonymously, to executive officer colleagues. Participants discussed their principals in terms of goals established, implementation of SLOs and the Common Core State Standards, quantitative and qualitative data to be considered, evidence gathered, and next steps to be pursued. Colleagues then had the opportunity to ask questions, offer feedback, and discuss the principal in question. In this way, each executive officer had the opportunity to present, discuss, and reflect with colleagues as well as to receive feedback and suggestions for conferencing with his principal. Discussions were deep and rich, and all participants appreciated the chance to collaborate with colleagues from other LEAs on this crucial event in the evaluation cycle.

The last activity of the Summit gave participants an opportunity to practice gathering evidence during a purposeful school visit through a common experience as they watched a video of an Instructional Leadership Team with a focus on determining how the meeting met effective criteria for Outcome 2 from the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework: Align All Aspects of a School Culture to Student and Adult Learning. Executive officers were able again to discuss with colleagues the effectiveness of a principal's professional practice as it related to the Framework, the basis for the professional practice portion of the State evaluation model.

During Sphere Three, the TPE Professional Development team also had the opportunity to meet with the Principals' Advisory Council, a group composed of an elementary and secondary principal from each LEA. At the Council meeting, principals were given an overview of the State evaluation model for principals and teachers as well as an update on the professional development sessions, the Influencing Transformation Summits that had been held for their executive officers. As mentioned earlier, principals were also given the opportunity to review and

react to the Readiness Checklist that was completed by their executive officers. Discussions evidenced the concerns and angst felt by principals across the State in regards to the demands being placed upon them by the new reforms of evaluation, curriculum, and assessment.

Summit IV will be held for executive officers in February and will be designed to help them prepare for the holding the final evaluation conference and determining a rating for their principals.

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

As we network with other states, the conversation around SLOs continues to grow and Maryland is contributing significantly to that dialogue. Teachers and administrators alike are embracing the potential that SLOs may offer as a meaningful measure of student growth. That potential takes on increased value as Maryland considers methods for using available State assessment measures during the transition from MSA to PARCC. This transition presents LEAs the opportunity to gradually refine their application of SLOs in evaluation prior to the availability of PARCC growth measures.

In response to refinements from the Quality Control Webinar, increased attention will be given to making the alignments between the Common Core Standards and the construction of SLOs. Developing practices that will make the connections between identifying the standards within the Common Core, the crafting of SLOs around those standards, and the recognition of those relationships in the planning, delivery, and observation of instruction, are critical to linking the attainment of an aligned SLO target to a measure of student growth as well as a measure of professional practice. Sphere Four work with Professional Development Coordinators will continue to explore how teachers and content experts may foster these practices and elevate these relationships.

Communications

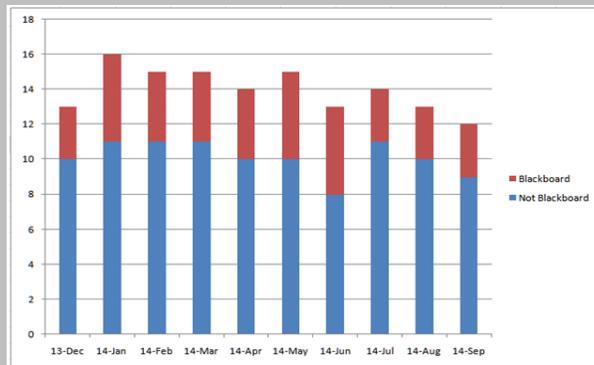
2/10 Communication
Bulletin #24

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Comprehensive Training Plan (CTP)

There are currently 24 RTTT projects that involve technical proficiencies for various LEA end-users. These can range from dashboard navigation, to Blackboard utilization, to information storage and recovery. In August 2013, USDE required MSDE to demonstrate a strategy for assisting LEAs to implement these projects and recently the TPE Team was asked to assume the responsibility for developing a comprehensive training plan for the gradual preparation of LEAs to integrate and fully utilize these electronic resources. The expectation is that such a plan would recognize dependencies and operational deadlines across projects and coordinate training to reduce redundancies and minimize individual project demands on the LEAs. An example of one such proficiency thread can be observed in the area of projected Blackboard training (see chart below):

Presently Known Training Events per Month, Reliance on Blackboard versus Not Blackboard



While actual training will still be delivered by specific RTTT Project Managers, our goal is to construct monthly training web-conferences that will collate and collapse training commonalities into a more time sensitive delivery plan. Coordinating this effort is a highly complex challenge. A master matrix was developed to identify training commonalities and has been explained to local Superintendents and Project Managers. LEA project-associated personnel will be briefed after the winter holidays.

Educator Confidence Levels

Obtaining unbiased, credible, and accurate information from Teachers and Principals remains an obstacle to determine the confidence levels of Teachers and Principals. With support from the Mid-Atlantic Assessment Consortium (MAAC@WestEd), the TPE Team is partnering with Superintendents and professional associations to identify some effective strategies to further validate educator confidence levels. We will update this outreach as it becomes available.

MPT Education Town Hall Broadcast Program Now Online

The Maryland Public Television (MPT) and MSDE Education Town Hall television program, "Today's Students, Tomorrow's Workforce", which originally aired on November 21, is now available to view online. The one-hour show provides an informative look at Maryland's new College and Career Ready Standards and how Maryland students are being prepared in today's classrooms for college, career and the workplace of tomorrow. To watch "Today's Students, Tomorrow's Workforce," go to: <http://video.mpt.tv/video/2365127270/>