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Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Announces Maryland Leads Grant Program

Maryland Leads to Provide More Than \$150 Million in Funding to Local Education Agencies to Implement Targeted, Transformational Change

BALTIMORE, MD (February 9, 2022) – The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) announced today it will launch a new grant initiative designed to support Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in utilizing more than \$150 million in federal funds to overcome the learning loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, accelerate student learning to narrow opportunity and achievement gaps, and provide more targeted support for historically underserved students and their communities. Maryland Leads also attends to the longstanding need to establish and strengthen teacher pipelines and development.

The Maryland Leads grant initiative is centered around seven high-leverage strategies proven to be effective and transformative for schools and school systems: Grow Your Own Staff, Staff Support and Retention, the Science of Reading, High-Quality School Day Tutoring, Reimagining the Use of Time, Innovative School Models, and Transforming Neighborhoods through Excellent Community Schools.

“The pandemic emphasized what we already know to be true – we have a lot of work to do to ensure that every Maryland student, regardless of race, income, or background, has access to high-quality educational opportunities that lead to excellent outcomes. Success hinges on our ability to ensure every student is proficient in reading by third grade. Maryland Leads will seed the transformational change our children need and deserve,” said State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. “Maryland Leads empowers districts to scale evidence-based programs that can drive results, particularly for children who need the most support and who were most disproportionately affected by the pandemic. We identify concrete, actionable focus areas, exemplar program models, related research, and the funds and partnership necessary to implement those strategies immediately. There is no time to lose.”

MSDE calculated local grant funding amounts through a formula that guarantees that each LEA can receive enough funds to implement, at minimum, programs related to two of the Maryland Leads strategy areas. In addition, LEAs can unlock \$2,000,000 in bonus funds for either agreeing to implement the Science of Reading focus areas or demonstrating the existence of an exemplary Science of Reading program already in

place. LEAs can unlock a similar bonus of \$1,000,000 for implementing a Grow Your Own Staff program. MSDE will match, dollar-for-dollar up to and including \$1,500,000 in additional funds if a LEA chooses to supplement the program with local funds. The goal of local matching funds is to establish a mechanism for the long-term investment in and subsequent sustainability of Maryland Leads programs in each LEA.

“It’s exciting to see Maryland leading through this new program that aims to use American Rescue Plan funds in innovative ways. I’m heartened that Maryland Leads will help districts and schools both respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic and seize the opportunity our current moment offers to reimagine education,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. “Maryland can build a better, stronger public education system for our students’ future. I’m looking forward to seeing how these efforts—including using literacy strategies grounded in the science of reading, investing in supports for educators, diversifying the educator workforce, and developing high-quality community schools—can expand educational excellence and opportunity to more students in the state.”

In advance of the application window, today MSDE released [grant guidance documentation](#), including detailed information about each strategic area, and its plan for a series of general and strategy-specific information sessions. The application window opens February 15, 2022 and will close April 7, 2022. Please monitor the MSDE Maryland Leads website (<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MDLeads>) for updated information pertaining to the grant program, information sessions, and more.

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