St. Mary's County Public Schools

Bridge to Excellence Master Plan
2010 Annual Update

Part I

CHARTING A COURSE TO EXCELLENCE

St. Mary's County Public Schools

"Work Hard and Be Nice"

Note: For more information, please visit our website at http://www.smcps.org.

Please direct all inquiries about this document to:
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The 2010 Master Plan Annual Update

Authorization and Purpose

Authorization

Section 5-401, Comprehensive Master Plans, of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland

Purpose

The Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002 (BTE) requires that each local school system reassess and revise its Master Plan as necessary and submit an Annual Update to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for review. Each local school system should submit the Annual Update to the county council, and if applicable, county executive, or county commissioners at least 30 days prior to the final submission to MSDE.[1] MSDE can request revisions to ensure that updated plans are having the effect of improving student achievement, eliminating achievement gaps, and increasing progress toward meeting State performance targets.

Background

In 2002, the State of Maryland strengthened its standards-based education reform model to ensure that Maryland public education was adequately and equitably funded. Perhaps the most important element of this reform effort was the enactment of The Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act (BTE), which resulted in a significant increase in State funding and gave school systems the flexibility to determine the best allocation of those resources. In exchange, school systems are held accountable for the performance of their schools and their students.

As part of the standards-based education reform model, the State established content area and grade level standards for student achievement as well as performance standards to support student learning at high levels. These standards are designed so that all students are proficient or better in reading and mathematics, receive a high school diploma, are taught by highly qualified teachers, and attend schools that are safe, drug-free, and conducive to learning.

Under the Bridge to Excellence Act, each school system was required to develop, adopt, and implement a five-year comprehensive Master Plan linking funding from federal, State, and local sources to strategies designed to improve student achievement and school performance. The plans are updated annually.

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[1] Local school systems are encouraged to convey to county government officials that the performance data included in this annual update submission are preliminary, used for planning purposes only, and amended when final.

2010 Master Plan Annual Update

(Include this sheet as a cover to the submission indicated below)

Part I: The Content

Due: October 15, 2010

Local School System Submitting This Report: St. Mary's County Public Schools

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Local Point of Contact:

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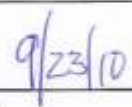
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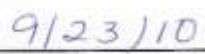
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WE HEREBY CERTIFY that, to the best of our knowledge, the information provided in the 2010 Annual Update to our Bridge to Excellence Master Plan is correct and complete. We further certify that this Annual Update has been developed in consultation with members of the local school system's current Master Plan Planning Team and that each member has reviewed and approved the accuracy of the information provided in the Annual Update.

_____   9/23/10
Signature (Local Superintendent of Schools)   **Date**

_____   9/23/10
Signature (Local Point of Contact)   **Date**

Local Planning Team Members

Use this page to identify the members of the school system's Bridge to Excellence Master Plan Planning Team. Where applicable, include their affiliation or title within the local school system.

Name	Affiliation/Title with Local School System
Mrs. Linda J. Dudderar	Chief Academic Officer, BTE Point of Contact
Mr. Gregory V. Nourse	Chief of Fiscal Services and Human Resources
Mrs. Melissa B. Charbonnet	Exec. Director of Special Education
Mr. James C. Corns, Jr.	Director of Information Technology
Mr. Theo L. Cramer	Director of College and Career Readiness
Mrs. Regina H. Greely	Director of Instructional Technology
Mrs. Kelly M. Hall	Director of Elementary Schools
Mr. Jeffrey A. Maher	Director of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development
Dr. Charles E. Ridgell, III	Director of Student Services
Mr. J. Scott Smith	Director of Secondary Schools
Mr. Dale P. Farrell	Supervisor of Teacher Recruitment
Mrs. Janis R. Taylor	Supervisor of School Improvement and Strategic Planning
Mrs. Rhonda K. Maleen	Coordinator of Fiscal Services

Executive Summary to the 2010 Annual Update

I. INTRODUCTION

Overview

St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) continues to take bold, yet measured, steps in our journey to move our school system from good to great. **Our streamlined mission statement requires that we know the learner and the learning, expecting excellence in both. We commit to educating all students, accepting no excuses, while focusing on rigor, relevance, respect and positive relationships**. All that we do is built on these commitments to our students, teachers, and community. The renewed energy in our school system continues with a focus on building relationships through clear, respectful communication. The epidemic of targeted improvement via strengthened relationships prevails.

Focus

We are focused on targeted, short term cycles of improvement via our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). We are dedicated to making a rapid, significant impact on student achievement. Our theme for the 2010-2011 school year is *Making A Difference, Every Child Matters*! Our practitioners are continuously examining, assessing, and fine-tuning their instructional practice based on assessment results. Our data warehouse provides immediate information regarding student achievement. Our student information system, *eSchool+*, allows another lens to sharpen the focus on individual student progress and to identify the barriers that may hinder that progress.   We have provided in both the 2009 and 2010 school years $70,000 for our collaborative teams to meet at the schools to assure that teachers are learning together and reflecting on and improving upon their practice. In the 2011 school year, we will provide the same level of funding. In the 2009 school year we added four early release days to our calendar dedicated to collaborative planning and PLCs. Our streamlined school improvement plans and process, and the more relevant emphasis on team collaborative plans, have shifted the locus of our strategic planning to the people who truly will make the difference, the teachers in the classroom.

For the 2010-2011 school year, PLC teams are expanding their work with an emphasis on providing *recovery* options. The SMCPS core value that "all children can and will learn" drives our work and is embraced in our mission statement. For this school year, we will see our core belief demonstrated by the work of PLCs and grade level teams once again. Effective teachers implement opportunities allowing students to improve their first efforts and progress towards mastery. This model of teaching encourages students to be persistent in their learning and recognizes that students can demonstrate learning in multiple ways and on differing timelines. Learning does not have an expiration date. Students will be provided opportunities to relearn and then reassess their learning, earning credit for their improved efforts and outcomes. Student work has been sorted into two categories, process and product, and PLCs are working this year to assure a balance of the two so that both formative and summative opportunities abound for each marking period and that grades are truly reflective of student mastery of the information taught.

II.   BUDGET NARRATIVE
School System Priorities and Distribution of Fiscal Resources

Look Back
For FY 2010, we realized a $2,173,909 increase in our general fund operating budget from FY 2009 funding, a 1.012 percent increase. However, this funding increase was specifically due to the influx of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) funding totaling $3,287,845 and $3,165,068 respectively. Without this additional influx of federal funds, the school system budget would have been reduced by $991,159 for a decrease of 0.005 percent. The additional influx of federal SFSF funds precluded the need for draconian cuts to programs and/or personnel but did not provide sufficient latitude for additional compensation items for our employees. Additionally, with the utilization of Special Education ARRA funding, interactive whiteboard systems, document cameras, and response pads, and interactive tablets were purchased for targeted middle school mathematics, Algebra 9/90, English 9/90, and special education classrooms. Employing Title I funds, similar interactive technology packages were purchased for all Title I classrooms. A total of 14.69 positions were added to cover the opening of the new Evergreen Elementary School and the addition of one 4th grade class at the Chesapeake Public Charter School. For budgeting and tracking purposes, a separate fund was established for the charter school to better keep track of personnel and expenses. The funds are reconciled for auditing purposes each year. Fund balance totaling $9,530,402 was utilized to pay off all long term debt obligations, our obligation for Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB), and onetime expenses associated with the opening of the Evergreen Elementary School. Additionally, SMCPS received $8,797,720 in the Capital Budget to support 11 capital projects.

Current Year
For the current fiscal year, we realized a $5,639,210 decrease in our FY 2011 operating budget from our FY 2010 funding for a loss of 3.0 percent. This represents maintenance of effort appropriation on behalf of our local funding authority and the addition of $2,900,388 in SFSF funds. Also included is the utilization of $8 M in fund balance to offset decreasing revenues. Fund balance was utilized for ongoing expenses and is a strategy SMCPS will be utilizing in FY 2012 and FY 2013 to maintain the integrity of the instructional program. A net of 3.55 additional positions were added to the budget primarily for an additional 5th and 8th grade at the charter school. Other additions were offset by the elimination of nine vacant positions in Instruction and Special Education. Funding adjustments (cuts) were made in all categories with the exception of built in costs such as employee health insurance, electricity, transportation, non-public tuition, etc. Negotiations included the give back of step recovery and an additional step in FY 2011 for a total appropriation of $2.0 M. This sets up an additional negotiation obligation of approximately $2.4 M in FY 2012 to balance the budget. The net obligation for OPEB increased by $7.4 M for a total unfunded obligation of $10 M. Additionally, SMCPS received $9,506,522 in the Capital Budget to support 10 capital projects.

Looking Ahead
In developing the FY 2011 operating budget, the Superintendent will again use fund balance to maintain instructional program integrity trusting that additional funds will become available in future years. The new Race To The Top (RTTT) and Educational Jobs bill funding will do little to enhance the revenue picture for SMCPS. RTTT funds are insufficient to fully meet the educational mandate from the federal government and will require additional recurring resources from the school system to meet timeline and

activity requirements. The Education Jobs bill provides onetime funding for personnel needs but sets up an ongoing obligation on the part of the school system. The ever expanding fiscal crisis continues to affect state and local funding authority's ability to preserve current instructional efforts. The next two years represent a fiscal reality that has not been seen since the early 1990's and will present particular difficulties in maintaining our current programs and momentum

Funding Priorities-Educational Pathways
Educational Pathways have been established and take priority to assure that students are given varied opportunities to pursue instructional programs that are tailored to their needs:

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Academies - We are now beginning our fourth year of academies at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The academies serve students from all elementary, middle and high schools across the county. Currently 378 students are enrolled in the program grades 4-12. This rigorous and unique program of study emphasizes the core areas of mathematics and science with an infusion of technology and engineering. The program includes extensive laboratory experiences using the most contemporary technologies for scientific inquiry, mathematical calculation, engineering design, and problem solving techniques. There is an emphasis on critical and creative thinking in an interdisciplinary approach to learning. Culminating projects will provide opportunity for application of learning. Mentorships and internships are supported by our military contract community and the Patuxent River Naval Air Station engineers, scientists, and test pilots.

The Chesapeake Public Charter School (CPCS) - The Chesapeake Public Charter School opened on August 22, 2007 and now accommodates 294 students. CPCS is Southern Maryland's first charter school with a focus on integrated instruction and environmental themes. The school now provides a program for students in grades K-8, with a waiting list of in excess of 200 students. During the 2009-2010 academic year, CPCS officially renewed the charter for another four year term that continues until June 30, 2014. The school now has a full complement of programmatic options including algebra, geometry, and foreign language for the middle school students. CPCS has had consistently high academic achievement results at both the elementary and middle school levels.

Fairlead Academy - Fairlead Academy, which opened in 2008-2009, is a ninth and tenth grade program that is designed to meet the academic needs of more than 130 underachieving students. The students received extended instructional time in mathematics and English. Fairlead Academy also offered small class sizes with a 1:10 student to teacher ratio, a mentoring period each day, monthly academic and enrichment field trips, the infusion of interactive technology, and extensive support and training from central office for teachers. As students transition back to their home high schools for their 11th-12th grade years, they are provided with ongoing support from a college and career readiness coach at each school site. For the 2010-2011 school year, we are increasing our enrollment of rising 10th grade students to 60 - the majority of whom will also begin two or three year programs at the James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center for two periods of their day.

Academy of Finance - The Academy of Finance was implemented beginning in the 2008-2009 school year at Chopticon High School to provide interested students with a focused career pathway in the financial services industry. Students learn about careers in finance, such as banking, insurance, financial planning, business administration, sales, contract oversight, budget analysis, and advertising. The

program provides field opportunities to apply classroom learning. The program also incorporates extracurricular programs related to the career interests of students, such as the Future Business Leaders of America. Students from our other two high schools (Great Mills High School and Leonardtown High School) were able to transfer to Chopticon High School for enrollment in the Academy. Working with the Program Advisory Council to guide the program, we will be exploring increasing the rigor of the program for 2011-2012 to include Advanced Placement courses and a four-year college focus.

Global and International Studies - SMCPS implemented the latest signature program, Global and International Studies, at Leonardtown High School beginning with the 2009-2010 school year. Students from our other two high schools (Great Mills High School and Chopticon High School) were able to transfer to Leonardtown High School for enrollment in the program. The program is designed to provide a rigorous, engaging educational pathway focused on an advanced study of world cultures, contemporary issues, history, and world languages. We currently have a ninth and tenth grade cohort serving over 60 students. Ninth grade students are enrolled in English Honors and Advanced Placement World History as part of the program. Tenth grade students are taking English Honors, Advanced Placement U.S. History, and a dedicated Global and International Studies course. Additional credits for high school graduation, advanced placement courses, an internship, and senior capstone project are part of the program requirements.

Tech Connect - Tech Connect is a program housed at the Dr. James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center (JAFCTC) and aimed at engaging first year freshmen by developing their technology literacy and exposing them to potential graduation pathways at the James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center. The program accepts up to 75 freshmen who had struggled in middle school and showed signs that they may ultimately drop out of school. Students travel to the JAFCTC daily and receive 60 minutes of technology instruction with embedded elements of mathematical fluency and supportive mentorship. The program contains character education to build the skills students need to be successful in school. Completion of the program provides students with their required Career and Technology Education (CTE) credit and a .5 elective mathematics credit. More than half of the Tech Connect students return to the Forrest Center and enroll in one of the 24 programs offered to grades 10-12.

Funding Priorities-Other Initiatives

The Safe Schools Initiative - For the 2009-2010 school year, St. Mary's County Public Schools joined with the Maryland Attorney General's "Community Leadership In Cyber Knowledge and Safety" or "C.L.I.C.K.S." initiative to promote internet safety for our students. Educating our community, including our students and parents, on cyber safety and the proper use of electronic communication devices is the objective and mission of St. Mary's County Public Schools' "Focus On Cyber Use and Safety" or "F.O.C.U.S." initiative, in support of the Attorney General's "C.L.I.C.K.S." program. Our "focus" was to enhance education and awareness of our students of these topics. As a result of our continuing partnerships, a three-point plan included internet safety classroom instruction, student assemblies and public community forums.

Beginning in August of 2010, we launched the Bullying Prevention and Community Awareness Initiative. Since that time, SMCPS has coordinated numerous events resulting in bullying prevention presentations and professional development sessions for our staff, reaching 3,700 middle school students, 2,000 staff members, and over 200 parents, guardians, and concerned community members.

Supported in part by a grant from the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, we were very fortunate to have secured the help of nationally acclaimed bullying survivor, expert, and youth advocate Ms. Jodee Blanco, author of *The New York Times* bestseller, *Please Stop Laughing At Me…One Woman's Inspirational Story*. Ms. Blanco was a keynote speaker at all of our presentations and professional development sessions. Our efforts and the initiative are not just a single event but are part of a long-term plan to continue ongoing efforts to prevent bullying in our schools. SMCPS is very fortunate, as initial reports support, that our number of occurrences is much lower than other school districts in our region. Ms. Blanco's analysis and determination is that we do not have a widespread bullying problem in our district. However, with this in mind, we are taking every step necessary to prevent any increase in reported bullying events and hope to realize a significant decrease. We want to be proactive not reactive.

Beginning in 2002, our school administrators, counselors, and teachers implemented nationally recognized bullying prevention content in student curriculum for our elementary schools and middle schools. This curriculum served to reinforce a three pronged approach in place in all of our schools that emphasizes the importance of prevention through direct intervention, a school climate conducive to learning established through character education, and, finally, deterrence through appropriate discipline and consequences.

During this school year, we will continue implementation of established instructional components and reinforce the current instructional content through enhanced professional development of our staff and improving all levels of communication among school staff, students, parents, and guardians. Our message to students, parents, and guardians this year is clear and concise, **"Prevent bullying, tell someone about it."** We want to ensure clear lines of communication are established and understood by all, encouraging timely reporting and investigation of incidents at all levels within our school system. We have established many reporting mechanisms available to students, staff, parents, guardians, and community members for reporting incidents of bullying. The reporting mechanisms include a *Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form* (available at all school sites and electronically on the SMCPS home page http://www.smcps.org/index.aspx), a Confidential School Reporting Hotline 301-475-4256, extension 150 or 188, and Student Crime Solvers Program in place at all of our high schools.

Technology Enhancements - We continued to provide enhancements to the technology at each school while meeting the goals of our life-cycle replacement program. Additionally, with the utilization of Special Education ARRA funding, interactive whiteboard systems, document cameras, and response pads, and interactive tablets were purchased for targeted middle school mathematics, Algebra 9/90, English 9/90, and Special Education classrooms. Employing Title I funds, similar interactive technology packages were purchased for all Title I classrooms. The newly constructed Evergreen Elementary School opened with interactive classrooms as well. Professional development opportunities were integrated throughout the year in order to support teachers in the integration of technology. For staff, SMCPS continued to incorporate technology (Teacher Access Center and *Performance Matters* Data Warehouse) as administrative tools for data-driven decision making while providing students and parents with information via the Home Access Center. As a system focus, SMCPS rolled out the use of SharePoint for staff to communicate, manage documentation, and provide a collaborative platform for information sharing via the intranet.

Maintain our Board of Education Class Size Goals - Maintaining classes within our goal structure is a priority. The Board of Education has established class size goals and caps:

Kindergarten   20/23
Grades 1 to 2 21/24
Grades 3-5   23/29
Grades 6-8   25
Grades 7-9   25

In 2009, our average class size was 17.3 in PK; 19.3 in Kindergarten; 20.0 in grades 1 and 2; 21.4 in grades 3-5; 18.1 in middle schools; and 19.1 at high schools. Our graduation rate was 86.27 percent.

In 2010, our average class size was 17.30 in PK; 19.46 in Kindergarten; 20.56 in grades 1 and 2; 22.74 in grades 3-5; 18.56 in middle schools, and 22.03 in high schools. Our graduation rate is 88.83 percent.

Demographics
St. Mary's County Public Schools employs 2,244 staff members; approximately 1,457 of our staff are certificated. The percent of classes taught by highly qualified teachers is 94.8 percent. In the 2009-2010 school year, we served 17,188 students in 27 school settings. We had 17 elementary, 4 middle, 3 high schools, a career and technology center, a public charter school and a ninth grade academy. Our student population was made up of 69 percent white, 20 percent African American, 7 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian, and >1 percent Native American students. Our county average for students who are economically disadvantaged is 26.6 percent. Special education students make up 11.6 percent of the school population.

III.   GOAL PROGRESS

Overview
We have moved from good to great, where actions and attitudes have changed considerably and the contagious effect has impacted our students. Our quest to achieve even greater success has a momentum that is measurable and urgent. Across the board, we must work even harder to assure sustainability for new initiatives that will provide differentiated pathways for our students to find success. Sustainability at present levels of support and resources will be an ever increasing challenge. We must respond to the changing need for more choice as the world changes and the needs of our students and community change. The economic climate will have a significant impact again this year.

School System Successes
Maryland School Assessment/High School Assessment; LEP; AYP; Gap Closing; Safe Schools

Elementary School
- Fifteen of our 17 elementary schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
- At the elementary level, 90.2 percent of "all" students were proficient in mathematics; 89.6 percent of "all" students were proficient in reading.
- 45.06 percent of students scored advanced in mathematics; 36.7 percent of students scored advanced in reading; and 15.4 percent of students scored advanced in science.
- In elementary mathematics, the gap between African American and white students closed by 3 percentage points; in reading the gap closed by 2 percentage points.

- Students receiving basic scores continue to decline with only 10.1 percent scoring basic in mathematics and 10.7 percent scoring basic in reading.

Middle School
- **All four middle schools made AYP for all disaggregated student groups.**
- At several grade levels, special education students saw gains on MSA scores for both reading and mathematics and are closing the achievement gap.
- African American students in 7th grade mathematics rebounded after a 2009 decline.
- In middle school reading, the gap between African American students and white students closed 1 percentage point; in mathematics, the gap closed by 3 percentage points.

High School
- **All three high schools made AYP for all disaggregated student groups.**
- All graduating seniors met the High School Assessment graduation requirement.
- SMCPS had the highest recorded graduation rate at 88.83 percent representing the largest graduating class at 1,145 seniors.

Charter School K-8
- **Made AYP for all disaggregated student groups.**
- Grade 3-8 MSA scores are consistent with our highest achieving schools.

All Schools-Safe Schools
- No persistently dangerous schools.
- No elementary schools with suspension rates exceeding identified limits (10%).
- No schools have a habitual truancy rate that exceeds 6 percent.
- All middle schools reported fewer out of school suspensions.
- System-wide the number of disciplinary incidents declined by 6 percent.
- Fourteen of twenty-seven schools reduced the number of African American students who were suspended from school.
- Ten schools reduced the number of students with an IEP who were suspended from school.
- All active PBIS schools earned recognition for fidelity to the program and for improved academic and discipline data. Six schools earned gold status and two schools earned silver status.

School System Challenges

Elementary School
- Although gaps are closing, there continues to be a double digit gap between African American students and white students; between FARMS students and non-FARMS students; and between special education students and their non-disabled peers in both reading and mathematics.
- Fifteen elementary schools made AYP; two sites did not make AYP. One in special education reading and the other in special education reading and mathematics.
- It is a significant challenge to find additional time within the school day to increase intervention and academic support. Our elementary schools, with guidance and support from the central

office, are working diligently to creatively "find the time and the teachers" to add an additional layer of intervention services for the most academically challenged students.

Middle School
- Although the gap has closed slightly, a 20 percentage point gap persists in mathematics and reading between African American students and white students.
- The achievement gap is closing, but it is still significant. Double digit gaps persist in reading and mathematics for the FARMS, LEP, and special education subgroups.

High School
- The attendance AMO of 90 percent was not reached at the high school level for special education (89.5 percent) and FARMS (89.1 percent).
- Although great effort was rewarded by a rebounding graduation rate at one of our high schools, it still lags 10 percent behind the other two high schools.

Charter School K-8
- Expand programs and offer an assortment of course options, including higher level math and foreign language, with limited staff.

All Schools - Safe Schools
- There is disproportionate representation of some subgroups in our discipline data:
  - Male students represent 71 percent of the out-of-school suspensions and 67.8 percent of the in-school suspensions.
  - African American students accounted for 44.6 percent of the out-of-school suspensions and 37.5 percent of the in-school suspensions.
  - FARMS students are assigned to suspensions out-of-school (51.1 percent) and in-school (42 percent) at a higher rate than they are represented in the school population.
  - Students with disabilities comprise 11.6 percent of our population and accounted for 19.5 percent of those who were suspended out-of-school.

IV. HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF

The percent of classes taught by highly qualified teachers increased from 93.85 percent in 2008-2009 to 94.77 percent in 2009-2010. SMCPS maintains a commitment to recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. In elementary classrooms identified as high poverty, 100 percent of the classes were taught by highly qualified teachers. Schools identified as Title I are staffed entirely by highly qualified teachers. Currently, SMCPS has 34 National Board Certified Teachers, with 15 more in process, with an 83 percent success rate for those seeking certification during their tenure with the school system.

V. CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Educational Technology - With limited funds, SMCPS was effective in providing technology to meet the goals outlined in the Master Plan for both students and teachers. SMCPS provided online resources, software, and professional development for teachers through county and grant funds. Key to our continued growth was ongoing professional development provided for all administrators and staff on the

integration of interactive classrooms in our Title I schools, new elementary school, and our targeted classrooms (middle school mathematics, Algebra 9/90, English 9/90, and special education classrooms). In collaboration with content area supervisors, technology workshops were designed to build teacher and administrator technology literacy by embedding data-driven decision making into lesson design. Overall, our success was measured by the 13 percent growth of student technology proficiency on the state technology assessment.

Education That Is Multicultural - The St. Mary's County Public School System revisited the Superintendent's Blue Ribbon Task Force to Eliminate the Achievement Gap's original recommendations that were presented to the St. Mary's County Board of Education on June 14, 2006. The original objectives were: to develop a plan of site-based, targeted interventions and acceleration programs designed to increase student achievement and eliminate achievement gaps; and to develop a process for the community and the school system to share ideas and communicate strategies to increase student achievement, especially for underperforming students.

The recommendations of both the 2006 and the 2010 Task Forces were created with a direct focus on the following areas: Cultural Diversity, Parents-Community-Business Partnerships, Interventions and Special Programs, Quality Workforce, and Quality Instruction. As a result of the recommendations made by the Task Force's subcommittees, a number of system-wide strategies and initiatives were implemented. Although the implementation of the initiatives and programs has proven to be successful and data supports that gaps are closing, we found the need to revisit the original recommendations and programs to ensure that we are properly identifying and addressing the myriad needs of our students.

During the spring of 2010, the subcommittees reconvened with original and new Task Force members to revisit the recommendations from school year 2006. In addition, the 2010 Task Force included the recommendations of a student subcommittee. Although most of the original recommendations were deemed to be beneficial and still very relevant, the subcommittees did make some new recommendations. The implementation of the recommendations both directly and indirectly addresses *Education That is Multicultural*.

VI.   ADDRESSING SPECIFIC STUDENT SUBGROUPS

Career and Technology Education - The Career and Technology Education (CTE) program is an integral component of the system's initiatives for improving student performance, eliminating achievement gaps and providing a variety of career pathways for every student. There are 23 career pathways available through our CTE program at the Dr. James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center and 10 at our comprehensive high schools. We have one of only five aviation maintenance programs in the nation. Our production engineering program is the model for the state. Our health academy is a three year program providing dual credit with the community college. Our television video production program is visited by colleagues from across the state hoping to replicate our model.

Gifted and Talented - The program of Acceleration, Challenge, and Talent Development (PAC-TD) provides a continuum of Gifted and Talented Services to students at all grade levels. Students receive gifted and talented program services that begin with participation in the Primary Talent Development Early Learning Program in prekindergarten and progress through the Junior Great Books program, and the William and Mary curriculum units for Reading/Language Arts. The 2010-2011 school year marks

the beginning of more rigorous and standardized instruction that incorporates capstone projects each marking period for highly able students. A literacy lab model is presented at the elementary level, which facilitates differentiation for challenge and increased rigor. Mathematics instruction is supplemented with locally developed math extension maps and supplemental materials of instruction which include the *Project M^3*: Mentoring Mathematical Minds series, Interact math simulations, and the *Descartes' Cove* program. St. Mary's County Public Schools continues to evaluate and revise course options for students at the secondary level, beginning with Pre-Algebra in grade 6, and continuing through Pre-AP and the Advanced Placement pathway to ensure that all students are placed in the most challenging courses available. During the 2010-2011 school year, the *Springboard* program will be introduced into middle school Algebra 1 courses to facilitate instruction and ensure that all students leave the middle school having completed Algebra 1. At the high school level, there is an explicit expectation that students will continue with rigorous coursework and "stretch up" to Advanced Placement level courses. Pre-requisites for Advanced Placement courses have been reviewed and obstacles such as screening tests have been removed. In fact, all students taking honors level courses in tenth grade are expected and encouraged to continue to Advanced Placement courses in their junior and senior years.

VII.   SUMMARY

Communication and Collaboration
Collaboration has had a revolutionary impact on the conversations and the norms across our school system. We are committed to building positive and productive relationships within our organization and extended to our parents and community partners. We communicate often via our automated telephone system, enhanced web pages, educational television channel (Channel 96), the student information system, *eSchool+*, with a Teacher Access Center (TAC) and a Home Access Center (HAC). Our Employee Access Center (EAC) has had a tremendous impact on our communication with staff. We have held more parent and community forums such as *What Count's.* The organizational structure of the departments in central administration have been restructured to assure a more efficient flow of information and a more effective and efficient response (time and substance) to and from our schools and our community. We have enhanced our intranet capabilities to include a SharePoint site that allows for electronic collaboration among staff. SharePoint provides templates for setting up a Web site so that workgroups can share documents, calendars, announcements and postings. SharePoint Portal Server is used to build intranet portals and share documents.

Commitment to our students and community
We continue to strive to provide every student with access to academic experiences that will extend their knowledge, prepare them each year for the next level of learning, and assure that they will be competitive as they move beyond high school as college and career ready graduates. We continue to listen to the needs of our community and create pathways of learning that will carry our students to the next level of higher education and to the world of work.

Finance Section

Revenue Analysis
- Did actual FY 2010 revenue meet expectations as anticipated in the Master Plan Update for **2010**? If not, identify the changes and the impact any changes had on the **FY 2010** budget and on the system's progress towards achieving Master Plan goals. Please include any subsequent appropriations in your comparison table and narrative analysis.

St. Mary's County Public Schools realized an increase of $581,347 over projected revenue for FY 2010. This increase was a combination of decreases to local appropriations of $750,000, other revenue of $42,083, federal revenue of $742,901 due to reallocation of grant funding, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and the State Fiscal Stabilization funding. This along with increased revenue realized from state sources of $1,318,288 due to Bridge to Excellence Supplemental grant funding, other resources/transfers of $48,043, and fund balance of $750,000 resulted in the net increase of revenue. The additional funding supported materials of instruction for one-time purchases for the new Evergreen Elementary school and assisted to offset shortfalls in other line items.

Analysis of Actual Expenditures
- Please provide a comparison of the planned versus actual expenditures for each local goal provided in the Prior Year Variance Table. Identify changes in expenditures and provide a narrative discussion of the impact of the changes.

Master Plan Goal 1, Student Achievement realized an increase of $624,029 in expenditures from the projection which supported additional materials of instruction for the Mathematics initiative in the amount of $690,243, additional funding for Parent Involvement in the amount of $48,778, and for the Fairlead Academy in the net amount of $2,262. Although SMCPS spent less on the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) initiative in the amount of $117,254 this program was supported to meet the needs of the students.

Master Plan Goal 3, Highly Qualified Teachers SMCPS spent $21,984 less than anticipated for enhancement, recruitment, retention, and orientation for new teachers and teacher support. St. Mary's County Public Schools did provide targeted professional development to support our continued efforts to obtain and retain highly qualified teachers.

Master Plan Goal 4, Safe and Orderly Schools incurred an additional $20,086 over the projected amount for FY 2010. The additional expenditures were related to enhancement of the criminal background screening of employees, implementation of the *Identicard* system, upgrade and installation of security cameras at specified school locations, upgrade of the emergency communication system between administration, schools, fire and rescue, and law enforcement. This increase in expenditures is providing an enhanced coordinated system to protect our staff and students from threats or environmental disasters.

Master Plan Goal 5, All Students Graduate from High School realized increased expenditures of $2,261 which provided continuing and increased support for the Fairlead Academy.

Mandatory/Cost of Doing Business realized an aggregate decreased expenditure level from the projected amount of $1,412,116. This variance was due to savings in the actual salaries for contractual agreements and new positions for Evergreen Elementary School in the amount of $904,956, support of the Chesapeake Public Charter School of $96,994, non-public special education placements of $339,105, transportation of $1,217,582, utilities of $59,727, and other items deemed necessary by SMCPS of $897,898. There were increased expenditures in materials of instruction for Evergreen Elementary School in the amount of $132,843, and employee benefits in the amount of $1,971,302 which was due to increases in employee and retiree health and life insurance, retirement contribution, and unemployment benefits.

The actual utilization of the aggregate change to funding and utilization of fund balance varied from the projection due to the changes in grant funding received and utilization of the fund balance.

State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Program – Phase I

Planned Use of State Fiscal Stabilization (SFS) Funds

1. Please describe what the influx of flexible ARRA SFS funds has allowed the school system to accomplish this year, regardless whether or not the SFS funds were directly used to fund an initiative.   (For example: A school system plans to use SFS funds to pay for utilities, and that decision, in turn, is allowing the district to allocate funds to a different program or initiative.)

The unrestricted ARRA funds (SFS) were used in a variety of categories to directly and indirectly maintain and enhance the instructional program. The primary areas of focus include non-public placements, utilities, and other post employment benefits. These include the following:

- Enhancement of the tuition reimbursement program to allow for increased teacher training and educational opportunities at two area colleges;
- Providing additional funding for non-public school placements to offset state cuts to this activity and maintain needed services;
- Assisting the funding of other post employment benefits that will strengthen our financial position and support our recruitment and retention of quality personnel;
- Contracted therapists for students with special needs;
- Additional materials for ESOL students;
- Maintaining transportation support; and
- Funding for utilities.

By utilizing SFS funding for these expenditures St. Mary's County Public Schools was able to support planned initiatives supporting our student population.

2. If the State Fiscal Stabilization (SFS) funds are being used for specific construction projects, please provide a list of the specific construction projects (ARRA Division, A, Section 14008) and the corresponding resource allocations.

The State Fiscal Stabilization (SFS) funds were not used for specific construction projects.

3. Please describe, if applicable, one-time uses of SFSF funds. Include individual activities and corresponding resource allocations in your description. After the ARRA funds run out, is there a plan of sustainability? If so, please briefly describe the plan.

Discussions regarding the "funding cliff" were central to the development of the FY 2011 operating budget and will continue into 2012 and 2013. Approximately $4.8 million was cut from existing programs and initiatives in order to balance the budget. Without the influx of SFS funding, the school systems budget would have experienced a 4 percent decrease and additional program and personnel cuts would have been necessary. With the development of the FY 2012 operating budget, discussions are already underway to adjust program and personnel needs in order to develop a budget which will address the current and future fiscal realities facing the school system.

1. Improve student achievement for ALL students. Work to eliminate the achievement gap for all identified groups of students. Ensure that all subgroups meet Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO). Implement Educational Pathways.

2. Ensure that all learning environments are safe, orderly, nurturing and healthy.

3. Teach EVERY child to read, on-grade level, by the beginning of grade 3.

4. Frequently monitor student progress (weekly, monthly, and quarterly) in READING and MATH.

5. Develop and utilize local assessments that align with state standards and exams.

6. Align Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment with the state standards with an emphasis on teaching for learning with high expectations for ALL students.

7. Increase student performance at the high school level through a focus on HSA's, increased participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses with a score of 3 or higher on the AP exams, and participation on SATs.

8. Promote, recruit, and retain a quality and diverse workforce. Foster professional learning and leadership capacity of the entire workforce.

9. Strengthen partnerships with the community, businesses, military, and local colleges.

10. Expand the use of technology to increase student learning and to analyze our student data via our data warehouse and the Home Access Center.

11. Ensure that all students graduate and ensure that each child attends school every day.

12. Ensure that early childhood and after school programs are of high quality.

13. Develop intervention plans for students not meeting state standard and not performing on grade level in reading and math. Ensure that no schools are placed in school improvement status as defined by the State of Maryland.

14. Develop extensive and meaningful parent and community relationships and communicate regularly and often with all stakeholders. Promote a customer service approach.

15. Provide strong instructional leadership that is supported by ongoing professional development with a focus on knowing the curriculum, knowing the pedagogy and knowing the learner. Focus on continuous improvement and job embedded professional development.

Maryland School Assessment

Reading

Based on the Examination of AYP Reading Proficiency Data for Elementary Schools (Table 2.1) and Middle Schools (Table 2.2):

1. Describe where progress is evident. In your response, identify progress in terms of grade band(s) and subgroup(s).

Elementary Reading Data
At the elementary level, from 2006-2010 the scores for proficient plus advanced students increased in the All Student group by 8.9 percentage points. White students increased by 6.6 percentage points. The achievement gap is closing dramatically as evidenced by African American students gaining 20.4 percentage points, American Indian/Alaskan Native students gaining 18 percentage points, FARMS students 19.3 percentage points, and special education students gaining14.4 percentage points during the same time period.

Proficient and advanced scores for all students in grades 3, 4, 5, are 87.1, 89.1, and 91.8 percentage points respectively, exceeding the state averages at each grade level. The difference between these scores and the top district scores of other districts in the state are only 6.9, 4.6, and 3.4 percentage points, respectively.

Notably, in grade 5, 53.3 percent of all students achieved a score of Advanced.

Middle School Reading Data
At the middle school level, from 2006-2010 the overall scores for proficient and advanced students increased by 12.9 percentage points. African American students gained 18.1 percentage points, FARMS students gained 20.6 percentage points, and special education students gained 30.1 percentage points, which significantly reduced the achievement gap when compared to the white students' gain of 11.7 percentage points. American Indian/Alaskan Native students gained 8.3 percentage points, Asian /Pacific Islander students gained 10.3 percentage points, and Hispanic students 8.3 percentage points. Other positive indicators were evidenced by Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, and white student groups exceeding the AMO at the middle school level.

Proficient and advanced scores for all students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are 87.9, 86.7, and 83.1 percentage points respectively, exceeding the state averages at each grade level. The difference between these scores and the top district scores of other districts in the state are only 6.5, 6.1, and 7.6 percentage points, respectively.

2. Identify the practices, programs, or strategies to which you attribute the progress. Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

Consistent Instructional Expectations

In the 2009-2010 school year the SMCPS curriculum guides for grades 3-8 were reformatted and clarified so that SMCPS educators had a clear and concise tool with which to plan instruction and to

ensure that consistency across grade level teams and across schools was maintained. By clearly documenting the instructional expectations, giving teachers and staff access to these documents, and using them for professional development, it helped form the basis for a more consistent and higher level of instruction. Although prior iterations of the document included all of the objectives in the Maryland State Curriculum and was arranged in a readable and easy to use format, the new version included the St. Mary's County Public Schools instructional expectations for each part of the 135 minute reading language arts block (90 minutes in middle school).

- One of the most important components of the plan was that it conveyed that one objective should be chosen to be taught and assessed during the whole group lesson each day. Although this sounds simplistic, language arts can be challenging to teach because the content strands are layered and intertwined. If the teachers do not clearly delineate the targeted objective of the lesson, it is hard to ascertain if the students have grasped the concept.
- Independent work should be meaningful and rigorous. Students were assigned work that would require creative thought and questioning would moving beyond the literal i.e. not just repeating what was written in the text.
- Guided reading takes place daily for all students in all grade levels, grades 1 - 8. Guided reading was defined as instruction in the skills and processes of reading in a small group setting using leveled texts with instruction matched to the needs of the students. During this time teachers were to take notes on reading miscues and reading behaviors they observed during the guided reading sessions. The purpose was to look for patterns that could serve as future lessons and mini-lessons. More importantly, by discovering the specific misunderstandings students have, the teachers would have the opportunity to intervene immediately.
- The rigor of instruction is increased. Teachers were asked to eliminate "down time" when students are not engaged and replace certain activities, such as unfocused worksheets, with tasks requiring higher order thinking. To increase the reading volume, more attention was focused on novels and trade books in addition to the Houghton Mifflin leveled texts already being used. An increase in reading volume of students during school breaks was to be encouraged at the school/classroom level.
- Consistent purpose-setting prior to reading is taught and practiced by students until the concept is internalized (i.e., read the question before reading the passage).

Other resources were shared with all language arts staff members and addressed during professional development opportunities throughout the 2010-2011 school year.

- Passage maps are provided for each of the stories taught in both core programs, Houghton Mifflin Reading in grades K-5 and McDougal Littel Language of Literature in grades 6-8. The passage maps suggested several objectives that fit each reading selection, and gave an example assessment item for each one in both selected response and BCR formats. There are in excess of 1,700 assessment items included in the passage maps.
- Sample language arts schedules that illustrated best practices for the reading/language arts block.
- Whole group instruction descriptions, which offered guidance and support for teachers.
- Principal "Look Fors," which provide sample observational evidence of best practices that supervisors and administrators can use when visiting and observing lessons.
- Sample lessons offering sample exemplar model lessons were created for use in applying the understandings and integrated curricular models.

- Pacing guides are provided to middle school language teachers to ensure that students benefit from the exposure to the variety of genre provided in the core program at a brisk pace, designed to keep their interest levels high. Teachers chose how many days to devote to each selection in the anthology as a whole class lesson, as long as they did not exceed the recommended number of days listed on the pacing guides.

Writing and Grammar
Writing took the "center stage" as the six trait writing model continued to be refined across the district. Many teachers participated in the voluntary professional development in the six traits of writing and the local assessments showed a clear and dramatic increase in scores for grade levels 2-8 in all six traits; ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions.

A new grammar program was introduced during the 2009-2010 school year to aid students in their ability to produce written work clearly and accurately. Approximately twelve essential grammar concepts were identified, defined, and outlined for the teachers at each grade level to avoid the occurrence of reteaching the same information year after year. Although these concepts are aligned with the Content Standard 5 strand in the state curriculum, they were also back mapped from the high school level to ensure a consistent alignment to the high school curriculum and to meet the future requirements of the HSA.

Instructional Differention Based Upon Data
St. Mary's County Public Schools used *Performance Matters* county assessment data to track and monitor all sub-group achievement and performance. Interventions were designed to be targeted and prescriptive. Instruction was provided intensively, directly, explicitly, and systematically. Grade level teams at individual schools used this data to plan instruction.

Using the assessment data listed above, students continued to be placed in the appropriate interventions approved by St. Mary's County Public Schools, which are research based, systematic, explicit, and targeted to the needs of each student. Differentiation helped address the individual needs of the students who were in subgroups. Intervention decisions were data based using the universal screening and benchmarking data housed in *Performance Matters*. Instructional interventions were targeted and prescriptive, based on the identified deficit area. Additional leveled book collections were added to the Literacy Labs to support small group directed instruction, providing high interest choice to middle school students.

- *DIBELS* - The Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills was administered to all elementary students from kindergarten through grade 5.
- All middle school students who did not meet the proficient or advanced levels on MSA were identified and monitored using various measures of benchmarking and progress monitoring. All middle school students were assessed using the *AIMSweb MAZE* to determine their application of comprehension skills and to identify those students who may need additional instructional supports. Instructional interventions and progress were monitored and tracked with grade level materials using *AIMSweb* passages. Additional *AIMSweb* benchmarking also measured decoding, fluency rate and automaticity.

- The *REWARDS* Generalization test was also administered to assess the ability to read multi-syllabic words.

Assessment	DIBELS PSF DIBELS ISF	DIBELS NWF AIMSweb (MS only) REWARDS Pretest	DIBELS ORF AIMSweb (MS 0nly)	DIBELS WUF	DIBELS ORF DIBELS RF AIMSweb maze (MS only)
Instruction	Houghton Mifflin Reading PreK -5	Houghton Mifflin Reading PreK -5	Houghton Mifflin Reading PreK-5 Trade books and leveled texts- Grades 1-8	Houghton Mifflin Reading PreK-5 The Language of Literature 6-8	Houghton Mifflin Reading PreK-5 K-6 The Language of Literature 7-8
Recommended Interventions	Phonemic Awareness for Young Children by Marilyn Jager Adams et. al Road to the Code	Fundations Grades K-5 Rewards Program Grades 4-9 Wilson Reading System Grades 6-9 (intensive need)	Read Naturally Grades 1-12 Six Minute Solution to Fluency Grades 3-12 Other program or fluency practice with any text is acceptable	Continue exposure to new words through the core reading program	Bridges to Literature Grades 8, 9, 10 Academic Literacy classes Soar to Success- all grades

Professional Development
To ensure that the above instructional practices were understood and implemented, professional development took place for all teachers of language arts.
- All classroom teachers and special educators were required to attend a session on the above mentioned documents during one of the fall professional days.
- The instructional resource teachers met in the fall of 2009 and were challenged to devise a plan to address strategies to support the school teams in implementing the instructional plan.
- Increased communication was provided through the *BLAB* (Biweekly Language Arts Bulletin).
- Professional development courses offered through the Department of Professional Development were aligned with the current models of instruction.

Research Partner
In addition to the initiatives listed above, SMCPS also continued its partnership with the University of Maryland to study the motivation of middle school students. A major focus of the study was a close

observation of "choice" and "success" and other indicators that play a significant role in what makes a successful reader.

3. Describe where challenges are evident. In your response, identify challenges in terms of grade band(s) and subgroup(s).

At the elementary level the African American, FARMs and special education student groups did not meet the AMO. At the middle school level African American, LEP and special education students groups did not meet the AMO.

The lack of increase of Oral Reading Fluency remains a concern for grades 3-5, although the phonemic awareness, and phonics subtests for grades K-2 remain strong as indicated by DIBELS. In comparison, the Oral Reading Fluency rates for grades 3-5 have not improved significantly in the past few years.

Grade		At Risk	Some Risk	Low Risk
3	Oral Reading Fluency	15%	24%	62%
4	Oral Reading Fluency	19%	19%	63%
5	Oral Reading Fluency	17%	16%	66%

Because the Oral Reading Fluency involves decoding, automaticity, using context and its score is strongly linked to comprehension, it was imperative that the students in all grade level bands reach or exceed benchmark.

4. Describe the changes or adjustments that will be made to ensure sufficient progress. Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations, and incorporate timelines where appropriate.

SMCPS recognized a lack of specific interventions to address decoding gaps between *The Wilson Reading System* and *REWARDS*. As a result, *Just Words*, published by Wilson, was placed in all elementary and middle schools in Fall of 2010. This intervention addresses the six syllable types, and will provide an excellent bridge from Fundations, which is used in elementary school, to *REWARDS*. Three separate training sessions were offered in June 2010 to provide at least one staff member with the information needed to screen students and to implement this new intervention. The training was held in partnership between the Department of Special Education and the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development. During this training, a portion of time was allocated to developing a packet of independent lessons on the six syllable types. In the fall of 2010, these lessons were incorporated into the curriculum for grades 3-5. It was determined that all levels of students can benefit from this targeted instruction in order to correct misconceptions, prepare students for the increase in multi-syllabic wordage found in higher level texts, and to also serve as a screening for students who need the new intervention.

For 2010-2011, the literacy lab model will be introduced as a means to provide students the time daily for intensive reading and writing at their instructional levels. In middle school, Literacy Lab is the portion of time allocated for small group reading and writing instruction. This block is 45 minutes long which is half of the 90 minute language arts block. The students are grouped strategically so that they are working on the skills and processes of reading and writing through differentiated assignments. The teacher facilitates small groups, works with individual students, takes frequent running records on oral

reading as appropriate, and conferences with students about their writing. The teacher may also choose to teach whole group mini-lessons related to writing such as grammar, usage, and mechanics or six trait writing. It is possible, although not required, that students can switch to another teacher in order to allow homogeneously grouping. The advantage of this model is that the student spends a greater amount of time reading and writing. They also spend time discussing what they have read or written. There is more student ownership of the learning. This model has been successful at the middle school level, as evidenced by the steady growth in MSA scores from 2006-2010. The reading supervisor will be working closely with the supervisors in special education, as well as the supervisor of the gifted/talented programs in order to ensure that all learners' needs are addressed.

In order to make the necessary changes consistent across the district, teachers in grades 3-5 will be provided with a transitional curriculum with instructional practices that fully support a rigorous blend of the content area objectives, as well as increased eyes on print, independence, and higher order thinking. A large emphasis will be placed on vocabulary instruction, six trait writing, and six syllable instruction. The curriculum will be personally introduced by the reading supervisor by meeting will the instructional staff at the eighteen elementary schools prior to the school year beginning. Professional development sessions closely aligned to the individual curriculum modules will start on the September professional development day and will be offered throughout the year through minicourses for MSDE credit or stipends.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are fully addressed in this transitional curriculum. After performing a gap analysis was performed between the state curriculum and the Common Core State Standards, the grades 3-5 curriculum was formatted and written to include the critical components of the CCSS. For grades 1-2, the teachers will have the opportunity to attend "Explore the Core" sessions September professional development day. These sessions are designed to let them gain familiarity with the Common Core Standards and appendices A, B, and C. During the 2010-2011 school year, the teachers will be invited to participate in sessions to develop a transitional curriculum products similar to the one being placed in grades 3-5. A similar professional development session for kindergarten teachers is being planned collaboratively with the reading supervisor and the early childhood supervisor.

The supervisory assignments have been realigned to allow the reading supervisor more time to concentrate at the elementary level.

Maryland School Assessment

Mathematics

Based on the Examination of AYP Math Proficiency Data for Elementary Schools (Table 2.4) and Middle Schools (Table 2.5):

1. Describe where progress is evident. In your response, identify progress in terms of grade band(s) and subgroup(s).

The percentage of all students making AYP at the elementary level went from 88.3 percent to 90.2 percent for a gain of 1.9 percentage points. While an achievement gap still exists, African American students, FARM students and special education students have made significant gains in closing the achievement gap. African American students showed a gain of 5.2 percentage points, FARMS students showed a 4.0 percentage point gain, and special education students showed a 3.4 percentage point gain.

In middle school the percentage of all students making AYP went from 82.5 percent to 83.2 percent for a 0.7 percentage point gain. African American students showed a gain of 3 percentage points, FARMS students showed a 3.4 percentage point gain, and special education students showed a 5 percentage point gain.

Of even more interest this year, was the increase in advanced scores. In grade 3, the advanced scores rose over 10 points, from 35.3 percent to 45.7 percent.   In grade 5 they rose 4.5 points, from 28.7 percent to 33.2 percent.   The rise in grade 4 was less significant, but still perceptible with an increase of .9 percentage points from 55.4 percent to 56.3 percent.

In the aggregate, grades 7 (-0.5 percent) and 8 (-1.5 percent) saw a decrease in the number of advanced and proficient students while grade 6 saw an increase of +2.1 percent. Disaggregately, there were gains across all middle grades for all grades 6-8 subgroups such as African American (+3.6 percent), FARMS (+3.4 percent), LEP (+20.3 percent) and special education (+5.0 percent). The subgroups and grade-bands that demonstrated the greatest year to year gains from last year's MSA of those students that were either advanced or proficient were 6th grade FARMS (+9.5 percent); 6th grade African American (+9.1 percent); 7th grade special education (+4.3 percent); and 8th grade special education (+5.9 percent).

Additionally, our 2010 MSA aggregate mathematics scores place SMCPS 5th in the state for grade 6th; 10th for grade 7; and 6th for grade 8, respectively, across the 24 LEA's in the State of Maryland. This is a distinct change from years past as a few short years ago, specifically, in 2006, our aggregate MSA mathematics scores for 2006 placed SMCPS 9th in grade 6; 12th in grade 7; and 17th in grade 8, respectively, across the state.

Moreover, our advanced percentage scores on the 2010 MSA mathematics portion rank SMCPS competitively across the state as well as our 6th graders placed 2nd among the 24 LEA's; grade 7 placed 9th; and grade 8 placed 5th, respectively.

With regard to the achievement gap for those students receiving services and minority students, SMCPS was able to cut said gap for the following subgroups and grade bands: grade 6 African American (cut by

6.2 percent); 7th grade African American (cut by 2.1 percent); 7th grade special education (cut by 4.9 percent); 8th grade special education (cut by 7.1 percent); 6th grade FARMS (cut by 7.3 percent); and, finally, 8th grade FARMS (cut by 2.8 percent). While the existence of any achievement gap is not acceptable, the trend for mitigation is certainly positive.

2. Identify the practices, programs, or strategies to which you attribute the progress. Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

SMCPS believes in a balanced approach to mathematics. Students develop understanding conceptually, and move to procedural efficiency. Computational speed and accuracy are built on a foundation of conceptual understanding.

Investigations in Number, Data and Space is our core program for grades one through three. It is supplemented by the pedagogy of *Cognitively Guided Instruction* (CGI) to form the basis for flexibility and accuracy in grades 1-4. In grade four students use a combination of core programs, *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space* and *Math Connects* in order to provide a smooth transition and articulation to a more traditional, procedurally efficient program at middle school. *Math Connects* is a balanced, but traditional program that is used in grades 4-8.

Balanced Instruction
Strong materials of instruction are aligned with the State Curriculum (SC). Curriculum maps, pacing guides, and assessments are aligned to the SC with embedded instructional notes including detailed guidance regarding differentiation, extensions, and concept development. District assessments, with a high correlation to MSA success and a high predictability for individual student success, are administered on a regular basis. The beginning of the year and middle of the year assessments provide predictive information for MSA success. Teachers use the information from these assessments in addition to formative assessments to provide data driven intervention and enrichment for students

A clear articulation plan for the elementary to middle school transition builds from conceptual understanding to procedural efficiency. *Investigations* is used in grades 1-4, and *Math Connects* is used in grades 4-8. A combination of programs is used in grade 4 in order to provide a smooth transition for students. In 2009-2010, SMCPS implemented a systematic collaboration between elementary school and middle school teachers facilitated by Pat Turner, formerly of MSDE. In order to ensure pedagogical articulation between the grade levels, regular collaborative/professional development sessions for all teachers of grades 5 and 6 were held. Substitutes were provided so that teachers could attend facilitated sessions where they were provided with professional development in order to help them plan units and lessons that bridged student's background experiences and the expectations of middle school. This also facilitated teacher collaboration between levels and better articulation between elementary school and middle school.

Title II funds were spent on substitutes for grade 5 and 6 teachers to attend the collaborative/professional development sessions for the purpose of articulation. Additional general funds paid for a consultant, Pat Turner, to work with grades 5 and 6 teachers. Money was also spent allowing teachers to participate in curriculum mapping workshops.

Weekly *Math Memos* are sent to all elementary teachers providing timely professional development regarding instruction and implementation of the Six Expectations (Balanced Instruction, Data Driven

Decision Making, Calendar Math, Guided Math Structure for the 90 minute math block, Use of Synthesizers for Recursive Review, and Differentiation for all Students) at all grade levels.

Data Driven Decision Making
Easy access to an extensive data warehouse system *(Performance Matters)* with data that is detailed and easy to sort facilitates data driven decision making by professional learning communities (PLCs). Schedules are created so that all teachers at a grade level have the same planning time and are able to plan collaboratively. This data is used to drive instruction on a programmatic level and an individual level. Regular assessments aligned to the SC and formative assessments provide data for these collaborative meetings.

Additionally, using regression analysis, we can then take a student's performance on one of the following three data points from our data warehouse (Grade-Level Diagnostic; Grade-Level Weighted Average; and Benchmark #3 – MSA Predictor) and generate a projected MSA score for each individual. Periodically, this will be done for every student in our system (in grades 3 through 8) and our disaggregated population performance will, especially, be monitored and analyzed. As a result of data mining last year's MSA performance, we determined that each subgroup exhibits their own idiosyncratic statistical tendencies and by differentiating the data analysis and prognostication for 2010, this will help to more acutely address underperformance across subgroups.

Approximately 100 assessments aligned with the State Curriculum were generated and administered. Title II money provided substitutes for collaborative planning based on student data. Additional general fund money was spent to pay teachers to create a Counting Profile Assessment and Counting Profile training video in order to train early childhood teachers in administering the assessment and adjusting instruction in response to the results.

St. Mary's County Public Schools built four early release days into the calendar to provide time for Professional Learning Communities in all content areas to collaborate.

Calendar Math
Every Day Counts: Calendar Math, a 15 minute morning math routine, was purchased for all classrooms in grades K-5 for a full implementation of the program in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 5th and in all 6th and 7th grade On-Grade Level and Pre-Algebra Mathematics classrooms.

The continuous review and building of concepts from all the content strands provided multiple opportunities for access for all students. This is critical for students who may not get the material the first time it is presented. For them, the concept and evolving nature of the discussion was important. The focus on discourse promoted language development for all students. This was especially important for our ELL students, special education students and students from poverty. The comprehensive nature of the program provided opportunities for students to preview and review concepts taught in the regular mathematics class. This provided a different approach to the content for students who may not get it during mathematics class; prior knowledge for students to tap into when confronted with new material; review and connections after the material had been taught creating stronger neural pathways in the brain. For students who struggle with learning, this was an important aspect of the program.

Every Day Counts: Calendar Math also provided articulation and consistency across schools and across grade levels as students moved within the district and advanced in their academic careers. This provided consistency for all students, but is especially important for our ELL students, African American students, economically disadvantaged students, and special education students as the language and routines stayed the same.

Tremendous resources and support went into making the implementation of the program effective. Multiple professional development opportunities were offered. Support was offered by grade level, month, and content in a weekly Math Memo. St. Mary's County assessments included Calendar Math items. As a result, Calendar Math was fully and successfully implemented in St. Mary's County.

Guided Math Structure for the 90 minute math block
Students receive 90 minutes of math instruction daily. This time is divided between whole group on grade level instruction and "guided math" time where differentiation occurs.

The Use of Synthesizers and Recursive Review
Math Synthesizers (Grades 3-8) provided an item bank that reviewed grade level material in MSA format. Each student received a hard copy of the synthesizers. Teachers were also able to access the synthesizers electronically in word and/or in interactive *Turning Point* format in order to meet student needs. *Turning Point* technology allowed for rapid review of SC objectives with immediate feedback.

Differentiation for all Students
Classroom teachers, instructional resource teachers (content specialists), and special education teachers met regularly to discuss student performance based on data in *Performance Matters*, formative assessments, and anecdotal records. Instructional decisions were made based on that information and students were monitored closely.

A training video and book were produced to support the Counting Assessment and Counting Profile for early childhood students. In addition, a book describing students' computational strategies with instructional suggestions was also produced. Resources were spent to pay teachers to create a Counting Profile Assessment and Counting Profile training video in order to train early childhood teachers in administering the assessment and adjusting instruction in response to the results.

Materials for intervention were purchased last year but did not arrive until April. All schools partially implemented *Do The Math* and *FASTT Math* in the spring with the understanding that full implementation would occur in the fall of 2010.

The explosive academic growth that SMCPS has experienced in middle school mathematics since 2007 has been the direct result of a myriad of things, beginning with the allocation of a full 90 minutes of mathematics instruction for most students and establishing small class sizes for all on grade level mathematics classes. These two facets facilitate the teacher-student relationship and create a differentiated learning environment that is delivery-specific to students' needs and abilities. These aforementioned tenets, coupled with the following shifts in philosophy and protocol have fueled the positive movement in our middle school math students over the last few years:

- A revamped March to March curriculum (as opposed to a traditional August to May) that is *drilled down to indicators and outcomes with appropriate scaffolding in Pre-MSA instruction* and *focused on backfilling and articulation in Post-MSA instruction.*
- The implementation of SMART board technologies in every middle school math and/or intervention classroom.
- A weekly commitment by teachers and/or course teams to *flex group* using a quick and easy formative assessment (i.e., "4-Square Quiz") to help identify students – by ability – as an "Introductory", "Developing", or "Advanced" student so that the instruction is delivered specifically to student need and ability.
- Establishing a "Course Leader" at each school house for each mathematics course that would serve as the course expert for their building, be the conduit with the supervisor of mathematics with their team so that the instructional responsibility is shared, and would serve as the embedded staff developer at the site that would oversee all common assessment writing and administration, flex grouping, and data analyses.
- Administering a "Problem of the Week" that is a constructed response and *commonly* administered and scored at each school house by each grade-level team under the tutelage of the "Course Leader".
- Undergoing an intensive 6th grade placement process for all sitting 5th graders that differentiates a student's placement commensurate with one's specific mathematical acumen.
- Revamping our Middle School Program of Studies for Mathematics
  - Offering a formal "Pre-Algebra" course at all grade levels in middle school that is focused on *appropriate* rigor for each student
  - Moving away from heterogeneously scheduling students to a scheduling process that is much more homogenous and differentiated
  - Encouraging students to move towards enrolling in rigorous coursework (like pre-algebra in 6th and 7th grade and algebra in 7th and 8th grade) and adequately supporting students that initially struggle with rigor.

3. Describe where challenges are evident. In your response, identify challenges in terms of grade band(s) and subgroup(s).

The African American, LEP and special education student groups did not meet the AMO at the elementary and middle school levels. Additionally, the FARM students group did not meet the AMO at the middle school level.

Transition to the Common Core State Standards:
The Common Core State Standards were adopted by the State Board of Education in June 2010. Over the next three years SMCPS will need to transition its materials of instruction and assessments to the new Common Core State Standards as they appear in the new State Curriculum. All grade bands and subgroups will be affected.

Closing the Achievement Gap:
Despite the overall improvement in the percentage of special education students making AYP, SMCPS fell short at two elementary schools.   In addition there was a slight decrease in the proficiency of our Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students and our American Indian/Alaskan Native students.   It continues to be a challenge to meet the needs of students who struggle. We will be putting interventions in place for our special education students that will also be available and effective for all students struggling in mathematics.

Meeting the Needs of Our Advanced Learners:
The percentage of students who scored advanced has risen dramatically. The challenge is to more systematically meet the needs of those students.

Our main challenges reside in 7th and 8th grade, respectively, in the both the aggregate and disaggregate. Our 7th (-0.5 percent) and 8th grade (-1.5 percent) aggregate in SMCPS slightly regressed on the 2010 MSA mathematics (from our 2009 performance) despite all of the ancillaries, new mapping, and technology infused into all schools. Disaggregatedly speaking, SMCPS will focus on the following challenges in terms of grade band(s) and subgroups: 7th grade FARMS (2.5 percent decrease from 2009 MSA mathematics) and 8th grade African American (4.6 percent decrease from 2009 MSA mathematics).

Additionally, SMCPS will want to reverse the negative trend of the widening of the achievement gap for students either receiving services or minority students with their white peers for the following subgroups and grade bands: 8th grade African American (widen by 3.8 percent); 6th grade special education (widen by 2.8 percent); and, finally, 7th grade special education (widen by 3.4 percent).

4. Describe the changes or adjustments that will be made to ensure sufficient progress.   Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations, and incorporate timelines where appropriate.

Transition to the Common Core State Standards:
The Common Core State Standards are gradually being introduced into the Curriculum Maps and Assessments. We are capitalizing on what we have in place and making small adjustments to put us in a position to make a smooth transition. Common Core Standards that have an excellent match to the State Curriculum are being embedded in the Curriculum maps and assessments. Funding was provided for teachers to meet in the summer of 2010 to study the Common Core State Standards; write Measurement Modules for grades 3 and 4; and write enrichment documents based on those standards.

We will continue to implement Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) with its emphasis on students' computational strategy development and attention to the context in which problems are presented in our elementary schools.   Each teacher will do at least one CGI problem per week with students.   We will develop a training video and revise current resources to match the CCS more closely for implementation next year. Resources will be used to align the SMCPS Cognitively Guided Instruction Resource Book to the Common Core State Standards and create a training video.

Every prekindergarten and kindergarten child will be administered the Counting Assessment at the beginning of the year, in addition to at risk grade 1 students. Existing training materials and supporting resources will be revised to completely align to the Common Core Standards for implementation in 2011-

2012. Resources will also be used to revise the SMCPS Counting Assessment, Counting Profile, the training video and the resource book to completely align to the CCSS.

Measurement activities attached to the science units and to be done during math time are being developed and implemented in grades 3 and 4. One activity will be implemented per semester in grade 3; one will be developed per quarter in grade 4. These activities align with measurement objectives in the Common Core State Standards.

Enrichment documents to meet the needs of our advanced students are being developed and implemented for each unit. These are based on the more rigorous of the Common Core State Standards and represent an extension of what the State Curriculum requires at this time. Many of those standards will be moved to the general curriculum map the following year.

A recovery model will be implemented following each county assessment. Teachers will use data from *Performance Matters* to identify areas in need of review for each student. Differentiated instruction will take place followed by reassessment. Students will have the opportunity to recoup points on the county assessment by successfully completing the review activity. These activities will be designed and implemented by grade level teams at each school.

Closing the Achievement Gap:
In 2009-2010, St. Mary's County Public Schools applied for an American Rehabilitation and Recovery Act (ARRA) grant to purchase intervention materials for mathematics. The *Do the Math* and *FASTT Math* materials did not actually arrive until April 2010. The full implementation of the materials in 2010-2011 should have a significant impact on the performance of all students who struggle, whether they are special education students or not. The grant provides materials for special education students, but schools can purchase additional workspaces for any other student at risk.

The four Title I schools have built upon the intervention plan for students in grades 3-5 by creating a proactive dual use plan with *Investigations* (the core program*)* and *Do the Math* addition and subtraction modules for the majority of their grade 2 students. Students will be pre-assessed. Students, who do not qualify for the program because their scores are too high or too low, will receive appropriate alternative instruction. All other students will receive proactive, preventative whole group instruction in the intervention in order to better prevent students from getting behind. Dual use of the programs provides at risk students with explicit direct, instruction in alignment with the recommendations in the report used to select the interventions.

Do the Math and *FASTT Math* were selected by a team of elementary and middle school classroom teachers, special education teachers, and supervisors (recommendation 2). A rubric based on the *USDE Clearinghouse Report on What Research Says is Effective Regarding Mathematics Response to Intervention* was used. All students will be screened for intervention using the district pre-assessment and mid-year assessment (recommendation 1).

Do the Math, by Marilyn Burns, was selected because of its focus on whole number operations and rational numbers (recommendation 2); reliance on visual representations (recommendation 5); focus on explicit, systematic instruction (recommendation 3); frequent monitoring of progress, with the opportunity for the student to move in and out of the intervention.

FASTT Math, by Scholastic was selected because it provides ten minutes of fact fluency practice per day (recommendation 6). At least one computer in every grade 3-5 classroom is used for this computer based fact fluency program.

The collaborative nature of the ARRA grant is critical to the interventions' success. Teams composed of special education teachers, Instructional Resource Teachers and classroom teachers are required to meet to discuss student progress and transfer of learning into the general education classroom. Significant funding is provided for substitutes, stipends and professional development to support the collaborative nature of the program.

Meeting the Needs of Our Advanced Learners:

There will be an increased emphasis on the Guided Math structure for the 90 minute math block this year with the focus on differentiation, especially for our students identified as needing more of a challenge. The first 45 minutes of the math block are to be spent in heterogeneous whole group instruction of the State Curriculum with selected Common Core State Standards objectives embedded.

In grades1-4, beginning of the year diagnostic assessment data and unit by unit pre-assessment data will be used to identify students who are in need of more rigorous work. Additional students may be identified through ongoing formative assessments, anecdotal records, and teacher observations during the course of the unit. Identified students will be held accountable for between two and four identified additional or extended objectives in the unit. These objectives will come from the Common Core State Standards from that grade level. An extension document written by a team of teachers and supervisors will be written for each unit. This document will identify the additional or extended objectives; ways to adapt activities currently in *Investigations* or *Math Connects* to meet those objectives; and sample assessment items. The SMCPS unit assessments will include assessment items for those objectives for identified students.

In grade 5, the same Guided Math structure will be in place, but format will be more structured. After the 45 minute heterogeneous whole group instruction, students will flexibly move to a more homogeneous placement for the second 45 minutes. Students will be grouped based on multiple data points including: the SMCPS beginning of the year assessment, grade 4 MSA scores, the Math Level Indicator assessment; mastery of the previous unit's material, and a pre-assessment of unit content. Students will be grouped (regrouped) after every SMCPS content assessment and placed according to need. Students who are struggling will receive additional instruction in prerequisite concepts and skills, work on grade level material, and do problem solving applications. Students on grade level will participate in instruction, activities, and applications reinforcing the whole group instruction. Students who are ready for more rigorous work will be in classroom groups that are learning extended objectives many of which will be from the Common Core Standards. This instruction will be delivered through the use of specified units from *Interact* and *Project M*^{3}. Students, whose needs are not being met by these programs, will be placed in *DesCartes Cove*, an interactive problem solving middle school computer program put out by the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth. These groups are flexible and will change after every SMCPS unit assessment with the goal being inclusiveness and a more rigorous preparation for middle school course options.

Professional Development Support (Third Thursdays):

In order to continue to support teachers in all of last year's initiatives and this year's initiatives, a regular vehicle for providing professional development will be put in place. Every third Thursday of the month will be set aside for elementary mathematics professional development and collaboration. A menu of Third Thursday sessions will be offered at one location throughout the year. The menu will include sessions devoted to supporting the system initiatives outlined in the Master Plan. Examples would include Calendar Math, the Counting Profile Assessment, and Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI). Other sessions will be offered in response to teacher requests. Third Thursdays will also be available as a regular time and location for teacher collaboration on potential topics such as: looking at student work (range-finding BCRs on the district assessment); working through the implementation of the Title I *Do the Math* second grade plan; and lesson studies. Presenters will be paid and participants may receive one MSDE Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credit for attending all sessions.

To continue to address the achievement gap, each middle school mathematics course that has 90 minutes of instruction was to reallocate their instructional delivery time into a "60-20-10 split" and our newly revised curricular maps would reflect this change, given as follows:
- 60 minutes of new instruction
- 20 minutes of recursive teaching
- 10 minutes of intensive intervention or extension

As a consequence, teachers will be able to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of all learners, per student performance on formatives, drilled down to the indicator level, especially for those students in our disaggregated subgroups. Moreover, our teachers have been instructed to think about this newly created split in less of a discrete way and more in terms of a weekly allocation of time. That is, rather than looking at this instructional model daily, teachers and teams can plan weekly and use 300 minutes of time for new instruction (60 minutes a day x 5 days a week); 100 minutes of weekly recursive teaching; and 50 minutes of weekly intensive intervention/extension. As a result, teachers have the latitude to squarely address performance weakness and error patterns in students and not feel as if time factors restrict their ability to do this. Moreover, this gives mathematics level teams (which includes special education teachers) an opportunity to collaborate on appropriate flex groupings across classrooms to further differentiate instruction for those students that are "introductory", "developing", or "advanced" per a student's performance on weekly, common, formative assessments that are built by said grade-level mathematics teams. Additionally, this 50 minute period of intensive intervention/extension (10 minutes a day x 5 days a week) gives our grade level mathematics teams an opportunity to fully interface with our *Math Triumphs* mathematics series without pullouts which, as we know, can be occasionally disruptive and withholding for special education students from receiving the full classroom experience as their regular education peers.

As a result of our newly retooled curriculum maps for each course is the creation of an additional column in each that includes the reverse correlation for the curricular topic in *Math Triumphs*. This will allow our teachers – both regular educators and special educators alike – the ability to more easily access resources for our special education students and assist in addressing their learning gaps, especially within this recursive (100 minutes a week) and intervention (50 minutes per week) time.

In the meantime, all schools were tasked to begin the year with a new activity of identifying their "greatest area of need" (GAN) within their building based on lagging and anecdotal data. This was done with collaboration within their mathematics department and prioritized accordingly. Consequently, each teacher was then asked how they can specifically address (and mitigate) this "greatest area of need" within their own classroom and these artifacts will be revisited quarterly to ascertain whether or not said need(s) is (are) being met. Even the supervisor of mathematics has his own GAN sheet and, not surprisingly, reflects what most schools have reported as their GAN: the lagging achievement of disaggregated populations – namely, special education students across each grade level.

After the county's GAN was determined to be special education students and their corresponding achievement gap, all of our pre-service and in-service trainings throughout the 2010-2011 school year will be focused on building the capacity of special educators (in terms of mathematical content) and regular educators (in terms of differentiating the instruction). Both cohorts of teachers will, jointly, engage in activities that promote and foster more effective co-teaching practices, fully embedding SMART technology into all classrooms with a high degree of efficacy, and collecting and using data from our Turning Point software to create ability groups for the purpose of flex grouping.

With this increased focus on disaggregated population performance and GAN, comes the need to extend our breakdown of data for these learners as well with a much more intensive analysis of their classroom performance. As a result, what will be done is a quarterly review of each subgroup's performance on each of our summative benchmarks, beginning with the grade-level diagnostic. That is, each subgroup's performance (including the aggregate) on our quarterlies will be quantified aggregately (within the disaggregated population) and individually, using a regression analysis and longitudinal studies to analyze their performance, heretofore, and to summarily predict the likelihood of 2011 MSA proficiency. Using lagging data from last year on our local assessments and a student's subsequent performance on the 2010 MSA, we can quantify, with a reasonably high degree of accuracy, a student' performance on the 2011 MSA since most of our local assessments (summative benchmarks) have only been slightly modified. Please be advised that this is done in both the aggregate and disaggregate so that we can monitor the achievement of each of our three large subgroups (African American; FARMS, special education) and compare this to our baseline (aggregate).

Regarding specific intervention and extension material, the mathematics office has paired up with special education to embrace MobiusMath's Mathematical models that help students visualize, organize, and extend their mathematical thinking. Mobius also focuses on utilizing models that extend across the grade levels. We believe that the combination of their interactive web-based modules with hard copy consumable print pages will help students develop strong proportional reasoning skills and are an excellent model for middle school topics such as; equivalent rates, ratios and proportions, calculations with percents, and decimals.

Additionally, Mobius' Strategy Building Question Sequences will be used to help students develop from very informal strategies to more formal (and often more efficient) strategies. The process of developing strong conceptual understanding and efficient strategies is a key basis for powerful critical thinking skills.

Lastly, with the assistance of Mobius personnel, our office will strategically offer professional development that is rich in content and instructional strategy modeling. Also, emphasizes how strong mathematical models and a focus on strategy and critical thinking help students build mathematical

fluency and stronger foundations for advanced mathematics. SMCPS will be using Mobius not to drive instruction; rather, to complement our existing eclectic framework and mathematics curriculum.

SMCPS has purchased 400 licenses for the new SMART Notebook Math tools to further complement the existing SMART boards purchased last year via ARRA money. Licensures will continue to assist teachers in making the mathematics more relevant and tactile with their students.

SMCPS has also revamped the curriculum maps again with a focus on rigor, especially for 7th grade and 8th grade students. All 7th and 8th grade maps will reflect a focus on acquiring 8th grade linear algebra skills that seamlessly segue into algebra's Core Learning Goals. Moreover, our middle school algebra maps will now embrace College Board's *Springboard* program, which will continue our county's quest to develop our future Advanced Placement students and this process will begin in middle school.

Maryland School Assessment

Science

Based on the Examination of 2009 Maryland School Assessment Science Data for Grade 5 (Table 2.7) and Grade 8 (Table 2.8):

1. Describe your school system's results. In your response, identify the successes in terms of grade level(s) and subgroup(s).

Grade 5
Student performance on the Grade 5 Science MSA improved by 5.6 percentage points in 2010.   Grade 5 students scoring in the advanced range increased by 4.5 percentage points.   African American achievement increased by 15.3 percentage points at grade 5, an increase far greater than the white population (+1.3 percentage points).   This demonstrates significant movement toward closing the achievement gap.   The populations of American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic are very small in St. Mary's County. Yet, each of these groups showed improvement as well on the Grade 5 Science MSA. Large increases were seen in the performance of students with Free and Reduced Meals at grade 5 (+16.2 percentage points).

Grade 8
Student performance on the Grade 8 Science MSA improved by 2.1 percentage points since last year. Grade 8 students scoring in the advanced range increased by 5.0 percentage points. In grade 8, increases were seen in the American Indian/Alaskan Native Population (+31.8 percentage points) and the Hispanic population (+8.0 percentage points) over the past year. Achievement of special education students increased 4.1 percentage points in grade 8. Large increases were seen in the performance of students with Free and Reduced Meals at 5 grade 8 (+7.9 percentage points).

2. Identify the practices, programs, or strategies that are designed to ensure progress.   Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

- County assessments are implemented in grades 3-8. These assessments are modeled after the Science MSA, including both selected response and constructed response items. Data from these assessments is posted in *Performance Matters*.   Teachers use the data to address academic challenges related to the assessed objectives and design review to readdress these concepts. Meetings are held individually with school administrators to discuss data related to school performance on county assessments.
- New teacher orientation in August, and follow-up sessions throughout the year, address science pedagogy, initial units, and strategies for addressing identified needs. These sessions are funded through Title II funds.
- Walk-throughs by the science instructional resource teacher are used to identify needs and to address challenges related to science instruction. Suggestions for improvement are shared with the principal, the school instructional resource teacher and the teacher observed.
- Updates and science instructional strategies are shared as appropriate throughout the year at the monthly instructional resource teacher' meetings. The instructional resource teachers then take this

information back to their school and communicate it to their staff. This is accomplished in grade level teams or at staff meetings after school.

- The science supervisor meets with principals and assistant principals to share suggestions and strategies for success on Science MSA. This is accomplished during the monthly Administrative and Supervisory Meetings.

At the elementary level:
- Curriculum writing, resulting in units complete with all relevant activities, is ongoing. All units will be completed this year. Unit-writing is done under the guidance of the science instructional resource teacher and/or the supervisor of instruction for science. All units are fully aligned with the Science State Curriculum and follow the 5-E lesson model. All units are project-based; at least one unit at each grade level is identified as a "STEM for All" unit and includes engineering design. Unit-writing is funded through the general fund or through Title II funds. Training on new models takes place on the August and September Professional Days. Schools provide the Materials of Instruction needed for the implementation of the units. Central Office equipment funds provide higher cost equipment such as kits, balances, hot plates, microscopes, etc.
- Grade level teams have been developed into efficient Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Collaboration between teachers through this venue has resulted in the development of new teachers and mutual support for all teachers within the PLC.

At the middle school level:
- Middle school teachers receive targeted professional development county-wide on the August, September, and May professional days. Topics on these days include the inquiry approach to instruction, assessment writing, high level thinking questions, use of technology, differentiation, reading strategies, performance tasks, vertical alignment, and other topics as needed or requested. There is no additional cost to this training.
    o Additional professional development has included unit-writing, assessment-writing, accessing high level thinking, and a vertical analysis of Skills and Processes.
    o At grade 8, training has also included using data to identify objectives in need of review prior to Science MSA, using technology in the classroom, and identification of activities that could provide needed review for students.
    o Products from these workshops are compiled and posted for teachers to access electronically on Share Point (Intranet). These workshops are supported through general funds or Title II funds.

3. Describe where challenges are evident. In your response, identify challenges in terms of grade level(s) and subgroup(s).

At the elementary level:
- Subgroups with low achievement include African American (60.4 percent), Free and Reduced Meals (64.0 percent), LEP (33.3 percent), and special education (43.4 percent). LEP is a very small group of only nine students county-wide.

At the middle school level:

- Subgroups with low achievement include African American (52.2 percent), Free and Reduced Meals (58.4 percent), LEP (37.5 percent), and special education (42.7 percent). LEP is a small group of only eight students county-wide.

4. Describe the changes or adjustments that will be made to ensure sufficient progress. Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations, and incorporate timelines where appropriate.

At the elementary level:

- Curriculum writing will continue with the completion of the final elementary units this fall. Funding will be provided through Title II and general funds.
- If funding is available for the 2011-2012 budget year, committees for the examination of elementary leveled readers for science will take place. These committees will review text materials throughout the year in terms of alignment and format to best meet the needs of students in science. This project may also depend upon the status of the new national standards for science.
- Based upon school inventories, schools will be receiving equipment such as triple beam balances, microscopes, and hot plates. A concentrated effort to reach equity among schools with this equipment will be made. This equipment will be provided through general funds. Training on the use of this equipment is being provided to IRTs and through the monthly science newsletter which is provided electronically by the science instructional resource teacher at the central office.
- A reteaching/recovery model will be implemented following each county assessment. Teachers will use data from *Performance Matters* to identify areas in need of review for each student. Differentiated instruction will take place followed by reassessment. Students will have the opportunity to recoup points on the county assessment by successfully completing the review activity. These activities will be designed and implemented by grade level teams at each school. Additional funding is not necessary.

In middle school:

- Creation of assessment banks will take place for each grade level. The assessment banks will be posted on Share Point for all to use. Teachers will be meeting to write and revise items to include in these assessment banks. Assessment writing will be supported through the General Fund and/or Title II funds.
- County assessments in grades 6, 7, and 8 will be modified based upon previous data and teacher input. Significant revisions will take place as we move from end of semester exams to exams embedded within the quarters. All assessment writing is funded through the General Fund and/or through Title II funds.
- Instructional strategies will be provided to individual schools to address the needs of demographic groups that have lower levels of achievement. This will be done through department meetings, grade-level meetings, and/or with individual teachers using appropriate data in *Performance Matters*. This will be done during regularly scheduled duty times and will not require additional funding. Meetings will take place throughout the year following county assessments.

Our approach to impacting student learning has been a system-wide focus on the process of teaching, assessing, re-teaching, and recovering. As part of this process, teachers are being encouraged to adjust their grading practices in order to place more of an emphasis on the products, or evidence of student learning.

A recovery model will be implemented following each county assessment. Teachers will use data from *Performance Matters* to identify areas in need of review for each student. Following county science assessments, students will note the objectives on which they need additional review based upon data from the assessment. Among these, they will prioritize the objectives and participate in review/recovery activities related to these specific objectives in the order of priority. Differentiated instruction will take place followed by reassessment. Students will have the opportunity to recoup points on the county assessment by successfully completing the review activity. These activities will be designed and implemented by grade level teams at each school.

Teachers use Performance Matters to identify challenges within various subgroups. Students identified as having challenges related to science receive specific supports such as modified readings and strategies, groupings to support learning, increased personal support by the instructor or special educator, additional support time beyond the class period, parental involvement, and other interventions as identified according individual student need. Also, a review/recovery initiative targets specific objectives that are weak for each individual student following county assessments. Teachers design review activities to differentiate instruction for each student. Students are reassessed and grades on assessments are adjusted. This initiative is applied to all students. However, those with the most challenges receive the most benefit since they have the potential to recover the most learning. Therefore, subgroups will see the most benefit and we should see increased achievement among these groups, further reducing the achievement gap.

High School Assessments (HSA)

English

<u>Based on the Examination of AYP Proficiency Data for English (Table 2.3):</u>

1. Describe where progress is evident. In your response, identify progress in terms of subgroups.

Our overall pass rate did increase from 85.6 percent to 87.7 percent from 2008 to 2009. We have experienced considerable and consistent progress in almost all of our student subgroups. African American student scores increased to 76.9 percent in 2009 from 71.9 percent in 2008. Hispanic student scores increased to 88.9 in 2009 from 84.2 in 2008. FARM student scores increased to 75.6 percent in 2009 from 70.1 percent in 2008. Special education students have also made progress with a 9.5 percentage point gain between 2008 and 2009 While the overall percentage passing rate for this particular subgroup is still not where we would like it to be, their progress has been consistent over the past three years, and we will continue to focus our efforts to ensure that this is a trend that continues next year. Our overall pass rate did increase from 78.3 percent to 81.2 percent from 2008 to 2009, and 83.5 percent of the 2008 cohort have taken and passed the English HSA.

2. Identify the practices, programs, or strategies to which you attribute the progress. Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

Much of our success can be attributed to the continuing work of our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Teachers worked collaboratively over the past several years to use benchmark and classroom data in order to target specific indicators and objectives for instruction and re-teaching. Special education teachers played an integral role in the PLCs, offering their expertise in the areas of differentiating instruction and adjusting instructional practices to meet the needs of at-risk student subgroups. The procurement of additional resources, including coach books and Study Island, and teacher stipends were funded by a grant from Special Education.

In order to assist teachers with collecting summative data, quarterly county benchmarks were administered in grades 9-12. The data was disseminated to teachers through *Performance Matters* which enabled teachers to identify specific areas where student learning was not evident. While some of the data analysis was done in PLC meetings, targeted central office support was provided to all teachers in October, January, and March. At full-day sessions, these teachers analyzed the data from county benchmark assessments to identify areas for targeted instruction and to assess and improve instructional practices.

In order to support our developing teacher leaders, the English Leadership Team (ELT), consisting of PLC leaders and English department chairpersons, continued their work from 2008. This group met six times throughout the year to collaborate on matters that included data analysis, instructional planning, and strategies for increasing collaboration with members of their PLC and department. This group provided the link between central office and the classroom teachers that was critical in improving communication and ensuring implementation with fidelity of system-wide initiatives, such as PLCs. Teachers received stipends for their participation in after school ELT and PLC meetings.

3. Describe where challenges are evident.   In your response, identify challenges in terms of subgroups.

Our special education student group did not meet the AMO. Although this subgroup has demonstrated consistent improvement over the past three years, we would like to see the scores of special education students be more equitable to our other student subgroups. Our Asian/Pacific Islander subgroup did experience a decrease in scores between 2008 and 2009. Their pass rate in 2008 was 86.2 percent and in 2009 it was 85.3 percent. Their cohort scores, however, reveal that 100 percent of this subgroup has taken and passed the English HSA.

4.   Describe the changes or adjustments that will be made to ensure sufficient progress. Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations, and incorporate timelines where appropriate.

At our quarterly data analysis meetings with teachers, increased attention will be given to the performance of these subgroups on county benchmark assessments, and this data will be used to make decisions regarding instruction and professional development relating to differentiation. Special education teachers will continue to be an integral part of the PLC. PLCs will be required to provide re-teaching and grade recovery opportunities for all students following county quarterly assessments on low-performing indicators. Teachers will also more frequently monitor the learning of all students, providing at least one process and product grade for every five days of instruction. Instructional and administrative walk-throughs will occur regularly in an effort to identify best practices and provide feedback for improving the quality of classroom instruction. The feedback and subsequent professional development will be conducted through monthly PLC meetings, bi-monthly English Leadership Team meetings, quarterly data analysis sessions, and designated system-wide professional development days.

We will look very closely at the HSA performance of eleventh grade students and subsequent subgroups in order to provide support for individual students prior to the January administration of the HSA. This support will be provided to classroom teachers by the HSA lead/bridge teachers in each building. These teachers will implement alternative instructional strategies (i.e., Study Island, MSDE on-line course materials, parallel bridge projects) to support eleventh grade teachers by providing individualized support for eleventh grade students who still have not passed the HSA. For those students who were not able to pass the HSA in their junior year, a bridge plan has been fully implemented for seniors; bridge teachers in each building will provide instruction that is targeted to the needs of each bridging senior in order to support their success not only on their bridge projects, but also in their future attempts at taking the HSA in the fall and spring. At the other end of the spectrum, an English 9/90 class continues to be in place at each high school in order to ensure the future success of our 9th grade struggling readers; 45 minutes of the 90 minute class is dedicated to providing individualized reading interventions.

Based on the Examination of 2009 High School Assessment (HSA) Results for English (Tables 3.1 and 3.2):

1. Identify any additional challenges that are evident.

While we experienced significant gains among our tenth grade students, the eleventh grade pass rate on the HSA continues to be a challenge. Even though 83.5 percent of our juniors have already passed the HSA, the group that has not yet passed continued to struggle on the HSA last year. One hundred forty-

four of our juniors have attempted the test twice and not yet passed, which equals 14 percent of the students in the class of 2012. Of this 14 percent, students with the lowest pass rates are special education students (50 percent), African American students (32.7 percent), and FARMS students (29.9 percent). Another challenge for us is in the number of students who have not yet taken the test. Thirty-four tenth graders and 13 eleventh graders have not yet attempted to take the test, which could present problems for us as these students approach their senior year; the concern would be in qualifying for the bridge plan.

2. Describe the interventions that the school system has in place to support students in passing the English HSA. How effective are they? What evidence do you have of their effectiveness? Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

A concerted effort was made last year and continues to be made this year to support eleventh grade students who have not passed the HSA. Administrators and HSA lead teachers worked together to determine the best way to provide support to this particular group of students. In all of our high schools, eleventh grade students who did not pass the HSA in 2009 will receive additional enrichment in a designated class. Additionally, money was available (via a grant) to purchase HSA targeted resources, and several schools took advantage of this money last year by purchasing additional workbooks to be used in regular classroom settings. These efforts seem to be effective, especially since only 15 percent of our current juniors have not taken or not passed the English HSA, which is down from 21.7 percent in 2008. These eleventh grade teachers were able to decrease the number of students from 238 in 2008 to 157 in 2009.

Also firmly in place is our bridge program, which supports seniors who still need to pass the HSA or earn the combined score required for a diploma. Each content area has a bridge teacher who has time designated in his/her day to work specifically with seniors who are working on bridge projects as well as with assisting teachers and students with other means of remediation. At each school, this team of teachers met regularly to discuss the individual needs of seniors and to strategically map out a plan for completing the necessary bridge projects. Additional curriculum materials were in place last year and continue to be in place this year in order to assist our classroom teachers.

In terms of the ninth and tenth grade teachers, our interventions have been mainly in the form of support and professional development in the areas of data analysis, data-driven decision making, and best practices. In the past, we have pulled teachers for full day sessions following the county benchmark assessments to analyze data and plan instruction according to the results. We did implement these data-driven decision making and instructional planning meetings for all teachers last year, and we are going to continue this practice in 2010-11 using Title II money to pay substitutes. In addition to these data meetings, the English instructional resource teacher facilitated quarterly planning sessions with ninth and tenth grade teachers at our most challenging school. Our steady increase in HSA scores in all sub-groups over the past three years is proof that our efforts with collaborative planning are effective. The combined success of the data analysis sessions with full implementation of professional learning communities will allow us to continue to make significant progress in HSA scores across the board next year.

3. Describe what, if anything, the school system will do differently than in past years to address the challenges identified. Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

In order to ensure that 11th graders who have not taken the HSA meet graduation requirements, we have several things currently in place. All of our 11th grade English classes have common course syllabi, which are aligned to the Maryland State Curriculum and the Core Learning Goals; therefore, all students enrolled in 11th grade English will receive instruction that is aligned to the standards being assessed on the HSA. Additionally, all 11th grade students who have either not taken or not yet passed the HSA are required to take the test in the first October administration. Teachers will use the resulting data to target areas for focused instruction. Our four county-generated quarterly assessments, which are also aligned to the Maryland State Curriculum and the Core Learning Goals, provide more timely formative data to inform instruction. We also have a grade recovery model in place this year, which involves students self-analyzing their assessment results and completing follow-up activities that are targeted for their areas of weakness as demonstrated on these assessments. Teachers will also provide re-teaching opportunities to both small groups and whole class based on the data results from these assessments as part of the grade recovery model.

The biggest challenge for English this year, aside from transitioning to the Core Standards and responding to education reform, will be in targeting our efforts with our PLC so that they will directly impact student learning. The English supervisor is now supervising teachers in grades 6-12. The English Leadership Team has been expanded in 2010 to include middle school department chairs and instructional resource teachers. With the new Core Standards looming on the horizon, we have begun to realign our efforts in order to create a 6-12 vertical team, which directly aligns with the Core Standards. All of our instructional units for grades 6-12 have been revised for 2010 to include common content and targeted objectives providing our teachers with a transition into the new Core Standards. Additionally, the quarterly assessments have been revised to align to the new standards and content, and performance assessments have been created (and continue to be created) in order to allow students opportunities to demonstrate learning in ways that are alternative to standardized, multiple choice assessments.

Our approach to impacting student learning has been a system-wide focus on the process of teaching, assessing, re-teaching, and recovering. As part of this process, teachers are being encouraged to adjust their grading practices in order to place more of an emphasis on the products, or evidence of student learning. In the same vein, supervisors and administrators continue to stress to teachers the importance of re-teaching and grade recovery following assessment. Our professional development focus this year is on both the processes and products of student learning, as well as on best practices for delivering instruction and monitoring student learning

High School Assessments (HSA)

Algebra/Data Analysis

Based on the Examination of AYP Proficiency Data for Algebra/Data Analysis (Table 2.6):

1. Describe where progress is evident. In your response, identify progress in terms of subgroups.

The overall performance of our students was at a combined 91.3 percent proficient on the 2009 Algebra/Data Analysis HSA. Sixty-seven point nine percent of special education students made proficiency with an increase of 12.8 percentage points over 2008 disaggregated HSA results and have increased 23.98 percentage points over three years. Eighty-four point two percent of FARM students made proficiency with an increase of 8.1 percentage points over 2008 disaggregated HSA results and have increased 13.8 percentage points over three years. Eight-three point four percent of African American students made proficiency with an increase of 3.1 percent percentage points over 2008 disaggregated HSA results but have increased 19 percentage points over three years. The achievement gap continues to narrow for special education, FARMS, and African American students in comparison to their white counterparts.

2. Identify the practices, programs, or strategies to which you attribute the progress. Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

Our Algebra curriculum is acutely aligned with the Core Learning Goals of Maryland's State Curriculum (SC). In addition, curricula for elementary school mathematics foundation courses and high school coursework have been aligned with state and national standards as well, effectively building a prekindergarten through grade 14 articulated program for our students that was forward and backward mapped from Algebra. This comprehensive approach to developing our curriculum was designed to prepare all students for success on both the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) and the High School Assessment for Algebra/Data Analysis and culminated for the 8th grade on grade level middle school mathematics student sitting for a formal Pre-algebra class (in preparation for their 9th grade Algebra experience).

Our primary strategy that SMCPS' employed to a high degree of success was the navigation of our data warehouse system – *Performance Matters* – in ways that allow our teachers to plan instruction that is more data-driven. Using the results from quarterly, and countywide assessments, teachers and their collaborative teams were able to drill down to the indicator level and focus explicitly on an item that was a "non-performing." Employing a number of recursive, formative assessments (entitled "4-Square Quizzes"), teachers and teams were able to assimilate the strengths and weaknesses of their students and juxtapose these results with those demonstrated on the countywide assessments for the purposes of separating students in one of three levels (i.e., introductory, developing, and advanced) and then differentiating their instruction to either remediate or extend said instruction in homogeneous learning levels for that non-performing item. This method was also encouraged to be employed with flexible groups with teachers that were parallel scheduled throughout the duty day.

Regarding the data analysis that was done throughout the year, teachers had been instructed to employ two specific data metrics when analyzing student performance: Proficiency Metric and Value-Added Growth Metric.

The Proficiency Metric was used to evaluate mean score proficiency on all local assessments while the Value-Added Growth Metric was applied to the same assessments to measure the learning growth, by student/class/cohort/school/district on each specific Core Learning Goal. Using both data metrics, teachers were able to gauge a more true measure of learning in each student and were able to more accurately predict future performance on the HSA. Moreover, aggregate (grade level) and individual (specific) HSA predictions based on lagging data were made for all students using linear regression analysis and formulated mid April so that teachers could further adjust their instruction to meet the needs of their learners so that they, in turn, could meet proficiency on the HSA.

This past year, our mathematics office also administered a formal "mock HSA" and uploaded the results into our data warehouse (*Performance Matters*). Using this disaggregated information and collating the results of our students' strengths and weaknesses on specific Core Learning Goals, teachers and teams would more strategically prepare for the May 2010 HSA for Algebra/Data Analysis.

Additionally, SMCPS offered a "Twilight School" in both the Fall and Spring to not only assist our more challenged populations like special education students to prepare for the HSA but also to allow students to "recover" grades and percentage points on quarter transcript reporting marks. While simultaneously offering this formal grade recovery to students, our instructors were also able to scaffold the instruction so that students were also preparing for the upcoming 2010 HSA in a manner slightly different and more tactile than in the traditional day setting with a very specific focus on each individual student.

Moreover, our county began to use the sub score results in a more formal fashion for students who had previously taken the HSA for Algebra/Data Analysis and registered a score of less than a 412. This process began in the Fall of 2009 for students enrolled in our Intermediate Algebra course – a course designed for students who had received an algebra credit the year before but who had not yet achieved a score of 412. Teachers, with the assistance of the supervisor, would use disaggregate data supplied from MSDE from the four sub scores in algebra to help drive the specific remediation. Using both an online Algebra course and, specifically, accessing the resources available at www.MDK12.org, our teachers were able to move our most challenged students germane to their specific Core Learning Goal strengths and weaknesses.

Finally, as a consumable, "synthesizing" resource, all students were provided with an *HSA Synthesizer* before Winter Break and used through the end of the year that focused on the two overarching Goals assessed on the HSA. The resource allowed students to assimilate the algebra/data analysis in a venue that was goal-specific so that students were able to subtly piece together learning connections.

3.   Describe where challenges are evident.   In your response, identify challenges in terms of subgroups.

Our major challenges continue to reside in our disaggregated subgroups of special education, FARMS, and African-American students where an achievement gap remains. Additionally, the achievement gap

(given in the following parentheses) continues to exist for our African American (-7.9 percent), FARMS (-7.1 percent), and special education (-23.4 percent) respectively, as compared to the aggregate.

4. Describe the changes or adjustments that will be made to ensure sufficient progress. Include a discussion of the corresponding resource allocations, and incorporate timelines where appropriate.

There are a few major initiatives and changes that we are incorporating into our Algebra approach for school year 2010-2011, the first of which is our revision and modification of all curricular maps and guides, especially in our middle school Algebra 1 CM (Honors) coursework which will reflect more of traditional Algebra flavor, specifically highlighting non-linear exposure for students with a focus on rigor. All revisions were done by teachers for teachers by a cadre of instructional leaders in our county.

Additionally, to take advantage of the relationships formed at the middle school, SMCPS will be piloting a 90 minutes of Algebra course for students in 8th grade where pre-algebra (8th grade MSA topics) will be married with Algebra/Data Analysis topics reflected on the HSA. Normally, this cohort would be enrolled in only Pre-Algebra 8; however, based on teacher recommendation, performance on 7th grade end-of-course assessments focused on backfilling and articulation with 8th grade material, and a student's individual performance on the 2010 MSA for 7th grade mathematics, certain students were moved into our Algebra Comprehensive (i.e., 90 minutes of Algebra) in 8th grade without having completed a formal pre-algebra course. As a result of this pilot, our county now has five different algebra cohorts with four different curricular maps in algebra to reflect the differentiated instructional needs of each respective cohort.

Again, as was the case last year, all middle school curricula continue to reflect a "March to March" calendar as opposed to the traditional "August to May" instructional window. This facilitates a natural "backfilling and articulation" for grade level instruction; that is, "backfilling instruction" for persistent non-performing indicators before/after the MSA administration per a data review and "articulation instruction" for helping students prepare for their next mathematics coursework. This instructional paradigm shift will be especially helpful for those rising high school Algebra students presently sitting in an 8th grade Prealgebra class.

Additionally, there will be an acute focus on special education students and reaching their learning potential through a variety of mediums. Regular and special educators will be collaborating on core instruction through the full implementation of the *Math Triumphs* series through the 8th grade at all sites and the adoption of an eclectic mix of algebraic resources at the high schools. As a result of the collaboration, the mathematics supervisor will be regularly in-servicing both the regular and special education cohorts while conducting more frequent data analyses throughout the year and sharing the results monthly to a joint audience.

Students who enter high school not yet ready for the rigor of our Algebra 1 CM course enroll in our Algebra Comprehensive course. This class meets every day for two consecutive 45 minute periods. This gives students more time to process the mathematics and thus a greater opportunity to learn. All the while, stronger student-teacher classroom relationships are forged. Students are selected for this course based on two criteria: their performance grade in 8th grade Prealgebra and their 8th grade MSA score. The MSA scores are used for placement, in conjunction with grades, as there exists a strong

correlation as students that demonstrate proficiency on the 8th grade MSA (i.e., higher than a 412) have a pass rate of 96 percent the Algebra/ Data Analysis HSA in 9th grade.

To further support the instructional delivery of the extended time period for Algebra, technology in the form of SMART boards have been purchased for all middle school mathematics, HSA Algebra/Data Analysis, LAP, and SAIL classrooms for the sole purpose of giving traditionally underperforming students an alternative modality with which to interface.

Lastly, what has changed from years past is that our most proficient teachers are now volunteering to lead our algebra classes for our most challenged learners and local administrators are more appropriately master scheduling their building to reflect the differentiated learning opportunities (like co-taught Algebra classrooms with special educators, parallel scheduling algebra classrooms, and synchronizing our Intermediate Algebra course for our most challenged students with some of our most-qualified teachers).

Our approach to impacting student learning has been a system-wide focus on the process of teaching, assessing, re-teaching, and recovering. As part of this process, teachers are being encouraged to adjust their grading practices in order to place more of an emphasis on the products, or evidence of student learning. In the same vein, supervisors and administrators continue to stress to teachers the importance of re-teaching and grade recovery following assessment. Our professional development focus this year is on both the processes and products of student learning, as well as on best practices for delivering instruction and monitoring student learning

Based on the Examination of 2009 High School Assessment Results for Algebra/Data Analysis (Tables 3.3 and 3.4):

1. Identify any additional challenges that are evident.

Primarily, the biggest challenge is moving the HSA Algebra/Data Analysis and all of its curricula and testing to the 9th grade. SMCPS initiated this testing protocol for the past school year as we attempt to collapse our two-year Algebra 1 course and enroll our most challenged students in the two-period Algebra course entitled "Algebra Comprehensive" during their 9th grade year. This curriculum shift in Algebra has mitigated the percentage of students (down to 4 percent from 5.8 percent - 43 total) that have not taken the HSA by the end of their 10th grade year; the figure is much lower for our 11th graders whose overall percentage who have not as of yet taken the HSA for Algebra/Data Analysis (1.6 percent per Table 3.3). Of the 4 percent (43 total) of 10th grade students that have not sat for the HSA as of yet, 44.2 percent (19 total) of these students are African-American; 51.1 percent (22 total) are white (non-Hispanic); 27.9 percent (12 total) are special education students; and 23.3 percent (10 students) are FARMS.

Three of four (75%) LEP seniors still need to pass the Algebra HSA and two of three (66.6%) LEP juniors need to pass the HSA one of which has not yet taken the test. In recognition of this challenge, SMCPS had dedicated an instructional supervisor position to ESOL and World Languages beginning with the 2020-11 school year. Her responsibilities include addressing LEP success on the HSA.

What is more challenging is the number of students that populate these subgroups (sometimes multiple times) that have taken the HSA and failed. Ten point two percent (down from 14.5 percent the year before) of our 10th graders have taken and not passed the HSA by the end of their 10th grade year. Of the 10.2 percent of these students, 41.3 percent (33.5 percent the year before) are African-American; 53.2 percent are white, non-Hispanic (10.6 percent the year before); 26.6 are special education students (41 percent the year before); and 38.5 percent are FARMS (30.2 percent the year before). These results speak to a breakdown in both instruction and student responsibility and, unfortunately, the percentages within these cohorts have all increased over the past year.

As we move to Table 3.4, 16 students of our 11th graders (or 1.6 percent) have yet to sit for the Algebra/Data Analysis HSA. This percentage of students has decreased since last year 0.7 percent when 2.3 percent of our 11th graders had not sat for the HSA. Additionally, within this cohort of 11th grade students, all African American, special education, and FARM students had taken the HSA for Algebra/Data Analysis.

We have closely reviewed the records of our seniors who did not have HSA scores recorded during their junior year. We have determined a portion of these students have transferred into SMCPS from another state or private school, have completed Algebra, and need to have an exempt score recorded. The remaining students are working with the HSA lead teacher at each high school to ensure they are making adequate progress toward completing the HSA requirement.

2. Describe the interventions that the school system has in place to support students in passing the Algebra/Data Analysis HSA. How effective are they? What evidence do you have of their effectiveness? Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

Students who pass our Algebra 1 course but fail the Algebra/Data Analysis HSA will be asked to enroll in our Intermediate Algebra course. This course's curriculum was once again revised this past spring and summer and focuses on the Core Learning Goals. Since this course is just for one semester, it will be fast paced. Approximately 10 of the 18 weeks will be devoted to the indicator and objectives in Goal 1: Algebra and Functions and the remaining eight weeks will be dedicated to teaching the indicators and objectives in Goal 3: Data Analysis and Probability. Since these classes will be quite small, approximately 10 – 15 students per section, teachers can tailor the instruction to the individual needs of their students. Students in the aforementioned HSA Review Course will sit for the HSA in January. The second semester of Intermediate Algebra will consist of assisting students with non-linear algebra topics as they matriculate into Geometry while they wait for their January HSA scores to be recorded.

Another program, a grade-recovery program entitled "Twilight School," provides additional Algebra instructional time after the regular school day. Each school's program varies somewhat. Generally, Twilight School begins about 10 weeks prior to the test administration and meets from one to three times a week for an hour or two. The Algebra teachers re-address the topics that were covered previously. The instruction is very focused and drilled down to non-performing indicators/Core Learning Goals. HSA public release items are a primary source of material used during the program. Students are allowed to improve their previous quarter(s) grades based on their achievement in Twilight School.

Also, new for this past year was the implementation of a 7 day HSA Preparatory Course for the July Administration of the HSA in which students who were within 10 points of passing the HSA on the May Administration were invited to participate in a very concentrated review that was entirely data-driven based on a student's lagging sub-score data.

3. Describe what, if anything, the school system will do differently than in past years to address the challenges identified.   Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

Our school system is making three major changes in how to address our challenges.   First, all high schools are making a major effort to highly recommend the enrollment of the HSA Review Course for those students who have passed Algebra 1 and have failed the HSA.   As previously stated, the instruction will be highly focused on algebraic weakness and student-centered for the sole purpose of helping students achieve proficiency on the HSA.

Secondly, summer school protocol for HSA coursework will be slightly modified so that Algebra credit can be recovered with a few more tie-ins to HSA proficiency.   That is, summer school Algebra credit will not be awarded to students unless they sit for the HSA and score higher than a 412 during the July administration.   This slight change in credit recovery will, hopefully, allow students to pay more acute attention throughout the year and not wait for our summer school to recover a year's worth of curriculum/instruction.

Finally, the office of special education has acquired grant monies for helping their cohort of students become more proficient on the HSA.   This has facilitated collaboration between our offices so that our message to teachers of both Regular and special education becomes more streamlined and focused.   The procurement of said monies will be allocated for collaborative planning (with a focus on common assessment, drilled down to Core Learning Goal), the implementation of a "Twilight School" at each site, and the purchasing of an eclectic mix of resources in the hopes of finding the right mix for students to make sense of the Algebra.

With this increased focus on disaggregated population performance and greatest area of need, comes the need to extend our breakdown of data for these learners as well with a more intensive analysis of their classroom performance.   As a result, what will be done is a quarterly review of each subgroup's performance on each of our summative benchmarks, beginning with the grade-level diagnostic.   That is, each subgroup's performance (including the aggregate) on our quarterlies will be quantified aggregately (within the disaggregated population) and individually, using a regression analysis and longitudinal studies to analyze their performance, heretofore, and to summarily predict the likelihood of 2011 HSA proficiency.   Using lagging data from last year on our local assessments and a student's subsequent performance on the 2010 HSA, we can quantify, with a reasonably high degree of accuracy, a student' performance on the 2011 HSA since most of our local assessments (summative benchmarks) have only been slightly modified.   Please be advised that this is done in both the aggregate and disaggregate so that we can monitor the achievement of each of our three large subgroups (African American; FARMS; special education) and compare this to our baseline (aggregate).

As a final aside, our high schools are all making concerted efforts to place the most effective teachers in HSA classrooms.   Heretofore, many teachers would opt out of these classes for a myriad of reasons – and principals would allow this to occur.   Recently, many highly skilled teachers who would normally be slated for teaching Honors or AP coursework are being tapped to not only teach the HSA

Algebra/Data Analysis curriculum but also to take the lead in facilitating collaborative planning and intervention/remediation groups. By this time next year, every one of our highest-able teachers will be teaching at least one HSA class.

High School Assessments (HSA)

Biology

Based on the Examination of 2009 High School Assessment Results for Government (Tables 3.5 – 3.6

1. Identify the challenges that are evident.

- Challenges were met with a high degree of success in 2009 for both cohorts with 84.7 percent and 92.5 percent pass rates. The lowest achievement was among LEP students (25 percent) and special education students 46.8 and 67.2.
- Performance of African American (69.1 and 81.3 percent) still lags behind white students (89.1 and 94.6 percent).
- A gap remains among Free and Reduced Meals students as compared to all students.

2. Describe the interventions that the school system has in place to support students in passing the Biology HSA. How effective are they? What evidence do you have of their effectiveness? Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

- Biology Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are highly effective. Teachers meet biweekly or more often to plan lessons, write common assessments, discuss instructional strategies, analyze data from classroom and county assessments, design review, discuss differentiation strategies and other relevant activities targeting student needs. These meetings occur during the duty day and do not require additional funding.
- Biology PLC Leads have reduced teaching schedules and use the extra time to analyze data, support other teachers, and address individual or small groups of students who have specific needs. These students may be scheduled with this teacher or may be occasionally pulled from other classes. This has resulted in additional teachers being hired to maintain reasonable class sizes. Biology PLC Leads met regularly throughout the year with the supervisor of science following bridge scoring to address needs and to share strategies between schools.
- New teachers receive an immense amount of support from the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development in the form of ongoing New Teacher Workshops, mentor support throughout the year, PLC support, and administrative support which includes school administrators as well as supervisor support. This ensures that these teachers are proficient from the beginning. This support has been highly successful and in nearly all cases, there are very few differences in student achievement among new teachers as compared to veteran teachers. Title II funds are used for professional development of new teachers.
- Review following assessment is designed to address the challenges identified by the assessment data. This occurs during the school day throughout the year, but is most intense prior to the quarterly county assessments and prior to Biology HSA. In some cases students are hand-selected to temporarily move to another classroom for targeted review.
- Review outside of the school day includes several approaches:
  - "Twilight School," provides additional instructional time after the regular school day. Students are allowed to improve their previous quarter(s) grades based on their achievement in Twilight School.

- o Credit recovery after school during the second semester for students who failed the first semester
  - o after school review sessions which may happen any time during the year with specific teachers, but consistently occur in the weeks just prior to Biology HSA.
  - o Use of Biology HSA review materials individually or with certain groups of students during class, after school, or for homework
  - o Saturday school in which targeted review is provided for students who are specifically invited to attend
- Students passing Biology class, but failing the Biology HSA are expected to retake this assessment at every possible administration. Prior to the reassessment, review is implemented in one or more of the ways mentioned above.
- Fairlead Academy was opened in the fall of 2008 for the purpose of addressing the needs of incoming grade 9 students who were below grade level in reading and mathematics. In science, they took a pilot class (Explorations in Science). This course introduced students to all Core sciences with a specific focus on biology and the connections between the sciences. Development of skills and processes were also a focus. Many of these students moved back to their home school as sophomores. Those who remained at Fairlead took biology in small classes (10-15 students) and received targeted support.
- Biology PLC Leads met with the science supervisor throughout the year to discuss strategies, identify students who are at risk of failing the Biology HSA, and to discuss data in general. Most of this time took place during the duty day. Biology PLC leads also worked on county assessments. In a few cases if meeting time extended past the duty day, stipends were provided for the extra time from either General Fund or Title II funds.
- Vertical alignment with middle school continues to be a focus ensuring that students enter high school with the foundational knowledge and skills needed to be successful in high school science courses. This is accomplished through four county-wide professional days in which all secondary teachers meet with the supervisor. Training based upon observed need and teacher request is provided related to science instruction. At one of the professional days, the focus is vertical alignment and middle school teachers are grouped with high school teachers in content strands. During this past year STEM applications, technology in the classroom, and skills and processes were a specific focus. Since this occurs on regularly scheduled professional days, additional funding is not required.

3. Describe what, if anything, the school system will do differently than in past years to address the challenges identified. Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

- Explorations in Science will continue to be offered in all high schools. Teachers will meet to provide feedback on the new course and to make some sequencing changes. This was funded through General Funds or through Title II Funds.
- Supervisory support will continue with all Biology PLCs. Increased focus will be on teachers with low performing classes on county assessments based upon data in *Performance Matters*. Specific data meetings will be held with individual teachers. These meetings will happen throughout the year, especially following quarterly assessments. Data review and strategies for improving achievement will be discussed.
- A new initiative requiring teachers to provide reteaching/review following county assessments is being implemented. Teachers will use *Performance Matters* data to identify areas of need for each student. Differentiated review will take place and students will be given an opportunity to recoup missed points on the county assessment by way of a follow-up assessment targeted at the objectives

in which they performed poorly. The review strategies were created collaboratively with Biology PLC Leads through either General Fund or Title II Funds.

High School Assessments (HSA)

Government

Based on the Examination of 2009 High School Assessment Results for Government (Tables 3.7 – 3.8):

1. Identify the challenges that are evident.

Student group performance remains a challenge as we seek to ensure all students are learning and earning proficient scores on the Government assessment. In the class of 2011, the overall student performance was 84.7 percent on the 2009 Government assessment. The disaggregated data shows that only 69.5 percent of African American students earned proficiency; there was a 19.3 point gap between the African American student group and the white student performance. The special education students earned a 43 percent proficient score on the HSA, causing a 41.7 point gap between the special education and regular student performance. Another challenge is that only 66 percent of FARMS students achieved proficient on the 2009 assessment.

2. Describe the interventions that the school system has in place to support students in passing the Government HSA. How effective are they? What evidence do you have of their effectiveness? Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

Comprehensive Intervention System: St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) implements a comprehensive intervention system to ensure students are learning and earning a passing score on the Government assessment. The intervention system designed for Government is an integrated process consisting of assessments and data-driven instruction. The detailed components of the system are locally developed benchmarks, professional learning communities (PLC) formative assessments, synthesizing activities, locally developed review course material, co-taught classes, and classroom intervention projects. One important component is identifying students by using locally developed benchmarks. These assessments are aligned to the learning targets that are provided by the Maryland State Curriculum. These formative assessments model the High School Assessment as well as align with the local curriculum maps and assessment limits. For example, Government administers four assessments as well as a pre-assessment to assist with monitoring student progress and identifying learning targets that need to be re-taught within the classroom. Even though the four assessments are based on the pacing of the curriculum map, these assessments are enhanced to include underperforming items based on the results from previous assessments. This will drive instruction based on student need in relation to the Maryland State Curriculum and provided data for targeted interventions for students. Using *Performance Matters* data reports, PLCs are able to design instruction to meet the specific needs of each student and use flexible grouping to deliver the intervention. In addition, the filtering capability of *Performance Matters* provides teachers with the ability to analyze students in groups and individually. Interventions include reading and writing strategies, peer review of constructed responses, use of graphic organizers, and tutoring.

PLC Assessments. Another facet to the intervention system is PLC assessments that check for student learning. Using an Assessment Planning Guide and reviewing the locally developed curriculum maps based on the Maryland State Curriculum, PLCs draft and administer common assessments.

This process allows teachers to collaborate and address essential questions that focus on determining power standards and the most appropriate method to assess student progress on understanding the designated learning targets. For example, PLCs develop "quick-checks" which are an assessment of learning. They consist of four drafted selected response items consisting of current learning targets as well as poor performing items. This type of assessment allows the PLCs to make data-driven instruction decisions.

Co-teaching Model: Besides the development of the assessments, another component of the intervention system is the implementation of the co-teaching model. This instructional model includes special education students within the general education classroom as well as the social studies teacher and the special education teacher who is certified in social studies. These classrooms are also equipped with the SMART Board technology. This allows these classes to utilize the clickers to chart student progress on the different assessment limits and engage students in the assessment process. In addition, the SMART Board increases the level of classroom engagement with the interactive technology and access to the online Government course material.

Synthesizing and Outsourcing Activities: The fourth component is the development of synthesizing and outsourcing activities that align with curriculum maps and integrate within the classroom instruction. This is an important segment of the system because it allows students to process and transfer the knowledge in a meaningful manner. It also provides students an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding by using the information they have learned in some manner. Examples of synthesizing activities include: Pairs to Squares, Expert Groups, and Mindmaps, Thinking at Right Angles, Fishbone, and Venn diagrams. These activities are designed to promote comprehension of the declarative knowledge by clustering. This means providing strategies to help organize the pieces of information into meaningful units. It also includes helping students to actively transfer knowledge and become more aware of themselves as learners by actively monitoring their learning as they complete the various activities.

Classroom Modules: Another component to produce student achievement growth is the administration of the classroom modules that present information in a different format for students as well as re-assess students on a differentiated approach. Classroom modules are designed based on the data from previous years that are problematic to students such as limited and unlimited government, and monetary and fiscal policy. These classroom modules work from the premise of emphasizing a student-centric approach that addresses literacy skills and building content knowledge through vocabulary. Each module scaffolds the information to meet the needs of the diverse population and provides the classroom teacher the flexibility to make modifications to the scaffolding to better meet the needs of students. In addition, each learning activity checks for understanding as the student progresses towards the summative assessment. This process allows the student an opportunity to reflect on their learning as well as challenge their prior learning experience. In addition, the different formative assessments allow the classroom teacher to make informed instructional decisions as they assist students who are experiencing challenges with the declarative knowledge. For instance, a classroom teacher can design a parallel lesson as the students are working towards completing the classroom intervention module. This intervention approach personalizes the classroom experience for students as the classroom teacher addresses their individual needs.

Twilight School: Another intervention element is a grade-recovery program entitled "Twilight School." This program provides additional Government instructional time after the regular school day. Each school's program varies somewhat. Generally, Twilight School begins about 10 weeks prior to the test administration and meets from one to three times a week for an hour or two. The Government teachers

re-address the topics that were covered previously. The instruction is very focused and drilled down to non-performing indicators/Core Learning Goals. HSA public release items are a primary source of material used during the program. Students are allowed to improve their previous quarter(s) grades based on their achievement in Twilight School.

Special education and Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students**:** Besides these different factors that are outlined above, this intervention system has several additional components that are targeted for the Special education and LEP students.   Special education students are in the general education classroom based on the decisions made by the IEP team.   Since many students within this student group face challenges with reading, classroom teachers have received significant training in reading in the content area. Reading strategies are regularly implemented to assist students with reading challenges. Kurzweil software is used to assist students with reading disabilities and all local benchmarks are available using the software. Special education teachers participate in all professional development activities, including professional development days, quarterly data meetings, professional learning communities, and the vertical articulation day. In addition, special educators participate in the Governor's Academy and other professional development opportunities offered by the Maryland State Department of Education. To assist English Language Learners within the classroom, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers provide support as needed once or twice per week as indicated by the student's level of proficiency. This support consists of assistance with the text and with writing or other assignments as needed.

Using a multifaceted and multidimensional approach to generate achievement growth, SMCPS has helped students accomplish proficient scores on the Government HSA. Many of the approaches as outlined above are centered on mastery of the content knowledge rather than completing the steps within the task. In addition, students are not just learning to organize the knowledge, but also learning how to assess their own learning.   As a result, student achievement increased.   This achievement growth increase is reflected when comparing the tenth and eleventh grade populations. For instance, the tenth and eleventh grade 2009 disaggregated data demonstrates significant student improvement. Eleventh grade African American 2009 passing rate was 82.6 percent, which is a 13.1 point increase when compared to the tenth grade African American population. The eleventh grade African American population proficient score increased 13.1 points when compared to the tenth grade African American population. Another example highlighting student success is the FARMS population. The passing rate for the FARMS population increased by 14.5 points. In sum, the student achievement data demonstrates PLC and classroom teacher effectiveness to produce student learning as well as meet the needs of a diverse student population.

3. Describe what, if anything, the school system will do differently than in past years to address the challenges identified.   Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

SMCPS will continue to implement the curriculum-embedded assessment system with minor amendments that are grounded on the understanding that assessments play a critical role in teaching and learning. Under this conceptual framework, assessments reflect that learning is a process of taking in information, interpreting it, connecting it to the existing knowledge, and reorganizing the information based on previous understanding. This approach requires educational stakeholders to play an active role in establishing the learning goals, developing success criteria based on the standards, providing descriptive feedback, monitoring the learning progress, and adjusting instruction to foster an effective learning environment. The fundamental shift allows the classroom teacher to become an active agent in the classroom, meaning the classroom teacher provides the necessary support and scaffolding as students

develop the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge to become independent learners. Through this assessment process, students construct their own meaning of the knowledge and become active participants in the assessment process.

The minor amendments to the existing curriculum-embedded assessment model are as follows:

- *Unit Sheets*: The unit sheets have been developed for students; they contain essential vocabulary terms for each unit as well as focus questions. The rationale for developing the vocabulary terms is based on current educational research. The research has clearly demonstrated that in order to unlock content knowledge students must have an understanding of the essential terms. Another reason for placing an emphasis on vocabulary development is students are able to acquire knowledge from informational text and create meaning.

- *Essential Terms:* The essential terms were selected based on the learning targets as stated in the SC. In addition, these terms were backwards mapped into previous grade levels as aligned to the courses. Through this planned approach, it provides students multiple opportunities to engage with essential terms over an extended period of time to ensure mastery.

- *Performance Based Assessments*: Based on anecdotal data and statistical data collected from *Performance Matters,* students are experiencing challenges when using information from informational text and integrating the information to their existing knowledge. In addition, students are experiencing difficulty applying the knowledge to a new situation as well as articulating written responses. Working from this understanding, performance based assessments (PBA) were designed based on an inquiry model that promotes critical thinking and aligns to the 21st century habits of mind. This, in return, emphasizes the following elements:

  - Comprehension, which includes comprehending a variety of sources and understanding the context.
  - Analysis and Interpretation, which includes comparing and contrasting information, analyzing causes and effects, and understanding multiple perspectives.

  - Decision-Making, which includes identifying the issue and relevant information, and evaluating the best stance to address the situation.

This approach recognizes that students' conceptual understanding does not advance just based on the body of knowledge. Instead, students must be engaged in authentic learning experiences that demand students to question, explore, and test their understanding.

Another element of the performance based assessments is use of the *zone of proximal development,* or ZPD, as an instructional model to support dialogue between students and teachers to promote student learning. ZPD support network allows students to discuss ideas associated with the question. With the classroom teacher facilitating, student teams challenge each other thinking. Through this struggle, each student constructs new schema. As stated in the above paragraphs, knowledge acquisition is a fluid product composed by the discussion within the collaborative learning. It also illustrates that acquiring knowledge is an active process and knowledge development is social.

This methodology creates a student-centric approach that cultivates a supportive learning for the different student groups. Having this ZDP instructional framework, students are arranged in collaborative learning groups and the classroom teacher provides guidance during this process of

challenging their assumptions. The teacher's responsibilities are to listen and be responsive by asking critical questions to provide students within their ZPD. The questions serve as the guidance for the classroom and the classroom transforms into a community of inquiry. In return, the development of knowledge makes the learning process engaging and participants are valued for their contribution for the learning.

- *Recovery Product:* After students are administered county level interim assessment, students have an opportunity to be re-assessed on areas that were challenging to them.

This process increases student involvement in the assessment and grading process. Thus, students have opportunities for self-assessments as well as to demonstrate evidence of their learning through differentiated assessments as by the PLCs. This supportive learning environment illustrates responsive teaching and personalization as PLCs and classroom teachers design creative and innovative lessons to meet the needs of all learners. The outcome yields student achievement growth and fosters positive attitudes about learning.

High School Assessments (HSA)

HSA Graduation Requirement

Class of 2010

<u>Based on the Examination of Data for 2010 Graduates Who Met the High School Assessment Graduation Requirement by Option and Bridge Projects Passed (Tables 3.9 and 3.10):</u>

1. Describe your school system's results.   In your response, please report on the implementation of the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation.

   For the 2010 school year we saw an increase in the number of students utilizing the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation. This option was made available after all others were exhausted and it was apparent that the student had little chance of success in a traditional testing model. While students worked on their Bridge Projects, we continued to have them take the HSA test for that content. Several students ended up earning a passing score on the HSA as they worked through the process.

2. Identify the strategies to which you attribute the results. Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

   SMCPS implemented a comprehensive plan for the administration of the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation. At each of the three county high schools, a highly qualified teacher was identified and assumed primary responsibility for reviewing student data to ensure all students had an appropriate plan for meeting this graduation requirement. The lead teachers met daily with students during dedicated periods in their schedule. They used *Performance Matters* data warehouse, to select the best projects for students and then guided them through the process with relentless encouragement. St. Mary's County Public Schools provided time for all Bridge to jointly score projects and share success and challenges.

3. Describe where challenges were evident.

   The greatest challenge was with students who transferred into SMCPS in their junior or senior year who had not successfully earned a credit in Biology, Government, or Algebra. Those students who have not successfully completed the course cannot begin a Bridge project. This timeline added stress for a handful of our most at risk students. Furthermore, as we have seen that student understanding is often clarified by completing these projects, it makes little instructional sense to withhold this option of demonstrating mastery until the student has failed repeatedly.

Class of 2010

Based on the Examination of Data for Juniors (Rising Seniors) Who Have Not Yet Met the High School Graduation Requirement as of June 30, 2010 (Table 3.11):

1. Identify the challenges that persist.

   Again, our greatest challenge is with students who transferred into SMCPS in their senior year who have not successfully earned a credit in Government. These students have no alternative option other than passing the course and the HSA the first time.

2. Describe the changes or adjustments that will be made to support those juniors (rising seniors) who have not yet met the HSA graduation requirement in passing the High School Assessments. Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations.

   Our current seniors, class of 2011, who have not met the HSA graduation requirement have been identified over the summer and began the 2011 school year with schedules tailored to their needs – including HSA remediation courses and HSA Bridge classes. As more than 93 percent of our seniors have met the HSA graduation requirement, we can focus intensely on the remaining 73 identified students who need assistance. At each of the three high schools, dedicated, highly qualified English, Biology, Government, and Algebra teachers worked with these students. We also have a lead administrator at each school coordinating remediation, Bridge, and HSA testing efforts.

Limited English Proficient Students

No Child Left Behind Goal 2: All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.

> **No Child Left Behind Indicator 2.1: The percentage of limited English proficient students who have attained English proficiency by the end of the school year.**

> **No Child Left Behind Indicator 2.2: The percentage of limited English proficient students who are at or above the proficient level in reading/language arts on the state's assessment, as reported for performance indicator 1.1.**

> **No Child Left Behind Indicator 2.3: The percentage of limited English proficient students who are at or above the proficient level in mathematics on the state's assessment, as reported for performance indicator 1.2.**

This section reports the progress of Limited English Proficient students in developing and attaining English language proficiency and making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). School systems are asked to analyze information on Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs):

- **AMAO 1** is used to demonstrate the percentages of Limited English Proficient students progressing toward English proficiency. For making AMAO 1 progress, Maryland uses a composite score obtained from the LAS Links assessment. The composite score is derived from equally weighted sub scores from each of the four domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students are considered to have made progress if their overall test score on the LAS Links composite is 15 scale score points higher than the composite score from the previous year test administration. In order to meet the target for AMAO 1 for school year 2009-2010, 58 percent of ELLs will make progress in learning English.

- **AMAO 2** is used to demonstrate the percentages of Limited English Proficient students attaining English proficiency by the end of each school year.   For calculating AMAO 2, Maryland uses a composite score obtained from the LAS Links assessment. The composite score is derived from equally weighted sub scores from each of the four domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing. For the purpose of AMAO 2 (accountability), a composite cut score of 5 on the ELP assessment with a minimum cut score of 4 in each domain is used to determine proficiency level for each grade. The AMAO 2 target for school year 2009-2010 is 16 percent of ELLs will attain proficiency in English.

- **AMAO 3** represents Adequate Yearly Progress of LSSs for the Limited English Proficient student subgroup.

Note: *Where responses in this section are similar or linked to those provided under Section I.D.i or Attachment 10 (Title III, Part A), local school systems may reference with page numbers, or copy and paste as appropriate.*

Limited English Proficient Students

- Based on the Examination of AMAO 1, AMAO 2, and AMAO 3 Data (Tables 4.1- 4.3):

   1. Describe where progress is evident.

   In 2009-2010, 85.1 percent of English Language Learners (ELL) made progress in learning English compared to 55 percent in 2008-2009. This increase of 30 percentage points is significant and clearly documents that our ELLs are progressing toward the proficiency target. The enrollment for ELLs in elementary school remains significantly higher than the enrollment for secondary schools; however, 97 students out of 114 met the AMAO 1 target compared to 55 students out of a total of 107 in 2008-2009. For the 2009-2010 school year, English Language Learners exceeded the target for AMAO 1.

   In 2009-2010, 24.3 percent of ELLS met the target for AMAO 2 compared to 26 percent in 2008 – 2009. Thirty-eight students out of 108 met the target for AMAO 2 in 2008 – 2009 compared to 35 students out of 144 meeting the AMAO 2 target in 2009 – 2010. The decline of 2 percentage points with students making AMAO 2 is not significant. English Language Learners in St. Mary's County met the target for AMAO 2.

   English Language Learners in St. Mary's County made AYP in all areas and therefore met AMAO 3.

   2. Identify the practices, programs, or strategies to which you attribute the progress of Limited English Proficient students towards attaining English proficiency.

   English as a Second Language staff continued to monitor the progress of their students in mainstream classes and were able to identify areas that needed to be targeted when planning instruction. Utilization of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model for monitoring ELL students has been effective. ELL teachers continued to collaborate with mainstream teachers to ensure targeted, aligned, and direct instruction. An ELL Parent Conference Night was held to showcase student work and to talk with parents/guardians about ways that they can help their child at home. Resources available to parents of ELLs learning English were shared.

   3. Describe where challenges are evident in the progress of Limited English Proficient students towards attaining English proficiency by each domain in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

   Below are the challenges that still require focused attention:
   - Listening-Rate of speech by the native speaker makes it difficult for ELLs to process information and to understand what they hear.
   - Speaking-ELLs content specific vocabulary, also referred to as academic language, is limited and interferes with the students' ability to process their thoughts.
   - Reading-There is difficulty with comprehension which can be attributed, in part, to a lack of knowledge about the culture of the native English speaker.

- Writing-Writing activities tend to have some relationship to culture which makes it difficult to write in the same manner as the native English speaker. This insufficient knowledge about the culture of the native speaker interferes with the English Language Learners' ability to write a suitable response.

Describe the changes or adjustments that will be made to ensure sufficient progress of Limited English Proficient students towards attaining English proficiency. Include a discussion of corresponding resource allocations, and incorporate timelines where appropriate.

This year, the focus will be on increasing the participation of ELL teachers in targeted professional development with mainstream teachers. ELL teachers will meet at least twice per year with teachers of ELLs who have IEPs and participate in IEP meetings to review goals in the IEP and to monitor the students' progress on IEP goals.

The pull-out model will continue to be used for students who benefit from smaller classes and direct instruction. Parents/guardians of ELLs will receive quarterly updates on the progress of their child and have an opportunity to meet with teachers at the Back to School Night and the ELL Family and Parent Conference Night.

No Child Left Behind requires that corrective actions are taken in local school systems that failed to make progress on the AMAOs:

- *For any fiscal year*. The school system must separately inform a parent or the parents of a child identified for participation in or participating in a language instruction educational program of the system's failure to show progress. The law stipulates that this notification is to take place not later than 30 days after such failure occurs. The law further requires that the information be provided in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that the parent can understand.

- *For two or three consecutive years*. The school system must develop an improvement plan that will ensure that the system meets such objectives. The plan shall specifically address the factors that prevented the system from achieving the objectives.

- *For four consecutive years*. The state shall require the local system to modify the curriculum program and method of instruction or determine whether or not the local school system shall continue to receive funds related to the system's failure to meet the objectives, and require the local system to replace educational personnel relevant to the system's failure to meet the objectives.

- If applicable, describe the corrective action plan specifying action to be taken for not meeting AMAO 1 for two or three consecutive years:

  N/A

  Local school systems not making AMAO 1 must provide an update on how the school system has revised the applicable components of the Master Plan to ensure progress of English Language

Learners towards English proficiency. In the report, school systems should describe what challenges are evident and what changes or adjustments will be made so that the school system will meet AMAO 1.

Limited English Proficient Students

- If applicable, describe the corrective action plan specifying action to be taken for not meeting AMAO 2 for two or three consecutive years:

  N/A

  Local school systems not making AMAO 2 must provide an update on how the school system has revised the applicable components of the Master Plan to ensure progress of English Language Learners towards English attainment. In the report, school systems should describe what challenges are evident and what changes or adjustments will be made so that the school system will meet AMAO 2.

- If applicable, describe the corrective action plan specifying action to be taken for not meeting AMAO 3 for two or three consecutive years:

  N/A

  Local school systems not making AMAO 3 must provide an update on how the school system has revised the applicable components of the Master Plan to ensure progress of Limited English Proficient students toward attaining reading and math proficiency. In the report, school systems should describe what challenges are evident and what changes or adjustments will be made so that the school system will make Adequate Yearly Progress. You may refer to other sections of this update as appropriate.

Adequate Yearly Progress

This section requires that school systems in any phase of school system improvement update progress in specific areas. Additionally, school systems must report the percentages of all schools making Adequate Yearly Progress, the percentages of Title I schools making Adequate Yearly Progress, Schools in Improvement and Title I Schools in Improvement.

School System Improvement

This section must be completed **ONLY** by local school systems in improvement or corrective action.[2]

N/A

Instructions:

1. Local school systems in corrective action must provide an update on how the school system has revised the applicable components of the Master Plan to execute the corrective actions taken by the State Board of Education. In the report, school systems should describe what challenges are evident and what changes or adjustments will be made so that the school system will exit corrective action status. You may refer to other sections of this update as appropriate.

School Improvement

   No Child Left Behind Indicator 1.3: The percentage of Title I schools that make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Under No Child Left Behind, local school systems must review the progress of Title I schools primarily to determine if: (1) each school has made adequate yearly progress toward meeting State standards by 2013-2014; and (2) schools have narrowed the achievement gap. In conjunction with the local school system, the State must review the effectiveness of each school's actions and activities that are supported by Title I, Part A funds[3], including parental involvement and professional development.

In June 2010, MSDE submitted its Race to the Top application (RTTT) to the US Department of Education. As required in the application, school systems with persistently low-performing Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III schools must, as part of their master plan update, provide a plan describing district-level support for improving student performance at the identified schools. The plan must also describe the corresponding resource allocations dedicated to improved performance, aligned with the state's RTTT goals and commitments in the MOU signed by local school systems.

Maryland defines "persistently lowest-achieving Tier I schools" as those Title I schools (elementary school grade levels PreK-5, middle school grade levels 6-8, and combination schools PreK-8) that are the five lowest-achieving (or lowest 5 percent) of all Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State. "Persistently lowest-achieving Tier II schools" are those *Title I-eligible* secondary schools that are the lowest five percent of all secondary Title I-eligible schools in the State.

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[2] Section 13A.01.04.08 of the Code of Maryland Regulations.
[3] This information is included in Attachment 7 of Part II.

"Persistently low-achieving Tier III schools are Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring not identified as persistently low-achieving in Tier I.

A. Based on the Examination of School-level AYP Data (Tables 5.1 and 5.2):

1. Identify the challenges, including those specific to Title I schools, in ensuring that schools make Adequate Yearly Progress. Describe the changes or adjustments, and the corresponding resource allocations, which will be made to ensure sufficient progress. Include timelines where appropriate.

Making AYP is increasingly more challenging for elementary schools as the AMO rises. Schools are working diligently to provide students with the academic support they need to be successful. This is challenging with a continuously rising target and economic factors causing the dynamic in schools to change such as increasing class size, no additional classroom teaching positions, and reduction in support staff. As the AMO increases, more students are at risk for failure and schools try to find a means to provide them with the academic intervention they need to be successful.

Two schools did not make AYP. Evergreen Elementary School (EES) and Oakville Elementary School (OES) did not make AYP in the area of special education in both reading and mathematics.

Evergreen Elementary School missed the goal by four students. Three students did not meet the reading goal and one student did not meet the mathematics goal. Because this was EES' first year (opened August 2009), they did not have the benefit of Safe Harbor. With such a small number of students not making AYP, the school likely would have made Safe Harbor had it been available. It should also be noted that the four students who did not make AYP at EES were within several points of proficiency on MSA. Oakville Elementary School missed Safe Harbor by less than one student in the area of reading.

Given the limited number of students who did not make AYP at EES and OES, the plan for these schools is to continue with their existing plan but provide more administrative oversight and guidance both from the school and central office. The schools, with support from the Office of School Administration, Advisement, and Accountability and the Office of Special Education have met with the school staffs and drilled through the data with them. Each school had a meeting with the Superintendent of Schools, the Chief Academic Officer, and Director of Elementary Schools to discuss the plan for next year. Each site understands the status of their school. They are adjusting their schedules as appropriate to provide more time within the existing school day for academic intervention and inclusive service. The goal is to provide more time and academic attention to students in need.

For 2010-2011, both schools have new, more experienced special education teachers joining their staffs. These new staff members should be able to provide additional strategies and procedures based on their experience to support students at risk of failure. Data meetings will continue with special education and regular education teams but they will occur more frequently and with more targeted purpose particularly at OES and EES. The teams will review and adjust the instructional plan accordingly for at risk students. Additional materials of instruction are in place at school sites that will support continued progress and more in depth intervention help. The St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) Department of Special Education is continually working in collaboration with the general education instructional leaders in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development to close

the achievement gap between special education and general education students. Collaboratively, both departments are analyzing student data and instructional practices and interventions needed to support both special education and general education students in making adequate yearly progress. It is the philosophy and belief of the SMCPS that the achievement gap cannot be closed if special education students are not provided access to grade level instructional content materials and expectations. However, the SMCPS recognizes that all students, special education and general education, have differing abilities and needs along the continuum of readings and mathematics.

The SMCPS has applied for and received discretionary grant funds for the 2010 and 2011 school years, which specifically target the AYP challenges. The grants have addressed the availability of targeted and focused interventions to address decoding, fluency, and comprehension as well as mathematical competencies for students identified with disabilities (SWD). Identified special educators and general educators providing interventions in the areas of decoding, fluency, and implementation of reading strategies within context have been and will continue to be trained on each of the intervention programs proposed in the grant: *Read Naturally*, *Rewards*, and 6 Minute Fluency. Science and social studies teachers, and the supporting special education staff, were added to the 2011 grant. The professional activities will focus on the acquisition of decoding and reading strategies our special education students are learning in their intervention blocks. The identified special education and general education teachers providing interventions in the areas of mathematical competencies will be trained in the use and implementation of the Mobius On-Line Intervention. Grant funds are also used to support teacher leaders, intervention teachers, and administrative staff in the analysis of student data and progress monitoring through focused bi-monthly scheduled collaborative team meetings. Special education and general education teachers use these meetings to analyze identified students' performance on county and state assessments in order to initially group students for specific interventions and progress monitor the appropriateness of the selected interventions.

Analysis of the data collected for the 2009-2010 grant indicates that the project was successful. The overall number of special education students considered proficient in reading increased above the targeted goal. Science and social studies teachers were added to the 2010-2011 grant in addition to the Mobius On-Line Intervention. Data indicates that students are able to apply basic decoding and reading comprehension skills in isolation. However, more intensive instruction and intervention are needed to assist these students in using their skills across contents.

Data meetings will occur at least biweekly at schools sites but more often as needed. Administrators will be present in those meetings and central office specialized special education staff will participate periodically. This process has already begun this academic year and will continue throughout the school year.

B. Based on the Examination of Schools in Improvement Data (Tables 5.3 and 5.4):

1. Describe the actions that the school system is taking including the changes or adjustments, and the corresponding resource allocations to ensure that the No Child Left Behind and Title I requirements for schools identified for Developing Needs (Improvement-Year 1; Improvement-Year 2; and Corrective Action) and Priority Needs (Restructuring-Planning and Restructuring-Implementation) are being addressed (Tier III schools).

Our middle school in improvement made AYP in 2010 and is holding in Restructuring-Implementation and will exit school improvement if AYP is attained in 2011. They will continue implementation of their Maryland State Board of Education approved Alternative Governance Plan with local and state monitoring.

- Describe actions that the school system took during the 2009-2010 school year.

  - Spring Ridge Middle School continued to have an additional administrative position, academic dean, and one additional counselor. Both positions address students' academic needs.

  - The grant period was extended for the remaining State School Improvement Grant (SSIG) funding through June 30, 2010. These funds continue to support instructional technology and Professional Learning Communities (PLC).

  - The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Academy (STEM) which began with grade 6 in 2007-2008 has added a new cohort each year and serves grades 6-8 at Spring Ridge Middle School.

  - Spring Ridge Middle School will continued to have a 21st Century Learning Center extended day program and a FLOW student mentoring program funded through state and federal grants.

  - Spring Ridge Middle School received an attendance monitor funded by the Local Management Board.

- Describe the actions that the school system will take once school improvement status is determined for the 2010-2011 school year.

  All of the above actions will continue for the 2010-2011 school year. Additionally, Spring Ridge will pilot the integration of Windows 7 into our school system. All non-STEM computers in the building will be replaced this year.

  C. Based on your review of "persistently low-performing Tier I and Tier II schools" in your system (affected school systems only):

  N/A

  1. Describe the system's plan for improving student performance at the identified schools, including the programs, practices, and strategies, and corresponding allocations that will be used. Refer to relevant portions of your School Improvement Grant (SIG) application if applicable and as appropriate.

Attendance Rates

Attendance rates are an additional measure used in Maryland's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations.

Based on the Examination of the Attendance Data (Table 5.5):

1. Describe where progress in increasing attendance rates is evident. In your response, identify progress in terms of grade band(s) and subgroups.

Elementary and middle school level attendance rates continue to remain above the state goal of 90 percent in the aggregate and for all subgroups. At the **elementary**, the American Indian/Alaskan Native group showed marked improvement from 92.3 percent to 95.1 percent. At the **middle** school level, the overall attendance rate increased from 94.4 percent to 94.8 percent. At the **middle** school level there were increases in the attendance rate for the African American, American Indian/Alaskan, white (non Hispanic), FARMS, and special education subgroups.

2. Identify the practices, programs, or strategies and the corresponding resource allocations to which you attribute the progress.

The St. Mary's County Public School System has made attendance a priority. We have provided a consistent, targeted focus on the importance of attendance which has led us to the areas of growth we are seeing. We continue to stress the critical necessity for students to be in school every day. Differentiated staffing continues to support schools with a history of attendance concerns. School counselors, nurses, and community partners act as mentors. Additional counseling staff members are present at schools identified with overall concerns. Attendance monitors are placed in schools identified with significant attendance concerns. A part time interagency liaison was housed at the Local Management Board's office and worked directly with our most needy families in a team approach with mental health staff and family advocates to empower the families to make positive changes that included more regular school attendance.

The school calendar was changed a few years ago, adding a full week of spring break to encourage parents to take vacations during school breaks and our attendance regulations became more stringent for high school students. Anecdotal evidence indicates that there are fewer families taking vacation while school is in session.

At each school, the Pupil Services Team (PST) reviewed school wide attendance, and interventions were implemented for individual students and groups of students.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Strategies (PBIS) have been implemented in two of our middle schools and six of our elementary schools.

Positive school climate has been a focus throughout the entire system implanting asset development, character education and other school-based initiatives as well as PBIS. This further supports our attendance efforts in that more students are attending school.

We continued our efforts to address chronic absenteeism (truancy) through the Interagency Committee on School Attendance and our partnership with the Sheriff's Office and the State's Attorney's Office to enforce the school attendance laws.

The Tech Connect program continued providing support to 9th grade students. This program supports 9th grade students during their first year of high school to promote student success and school affiliation. Freshmen are able to earn the required technology credit at the Dr. James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center (JAFCTC) beginning in their first year of high school. The Tech Connect program provided an alternative hands-on learning environment for approximately seventy-five first-time freshmen students. The students identified had been unsuccessful in middle school and showed, based on academic, discipline, and attendance data, risk factors, of dropping out of school. By completing the course at the JAFCTC, students earned one technology credit and half of an elective mathematics credit. Small class size, support by dedicated school counselors and support staff, and an engaging curriculum resulted in over half of those participating earning five or more credits and moving on to a successful sophomore year. Students work with mentors on a regular basis to set goals, monitor academic progress and learn how to use the Homework Access Center (HAC). Parents are periodically invited to breakfast to celebrate student success and to establish connections with their child's school.

The Fairlead Academy was established two years ago to meet the needs of students who were at risk of dropping out. Student attendance was monitored closely and home visits and other inventions ensured regular ongoing attendance by students. The Fairlead Academy provides a comprehensive learning community designed for approximately seventy-two (72) first year freshmen (9th grade) who were recruited from the four middle schools in the county and sixty (60) continuing sophomores (10th grade) students. The class sizes were very small, 1:12 teacher/student ratio. Additional technology was infused in the program with one computer for every two students, and interactive technology was placed in each classroom. The instructional program was organized into 90 minute blocks and ran on an A/B day schedule. Teaching was differentiated to students' particular areas of need and interest. There was also a daily 45 minute session built in for mentoring and character development. Each student was provided with an individualized learning plan developed for him/her. Several enrichment activities were interwoven into the curriculum and were directly connected to the instructional program. As a result of this program, the overall attendance improved, the combined grade point average improved, the vast majority of students were involved in extracurricular activities, and the students were promoted to 10th and 11th grade.

Last year was our third year of implementation for our new web based student information system, *eSchool+*. Teachers entered student attendance directly into the system and parents were given real time access to track their children's progress. In addition, schools were better able to monitor and track their students as a result of this data system. This information system helped us to monitor attendance more closely from the home and from school. All of these programs and initiatives are combining to improve our overall attendance.

A more efficient method of monitoring homeless students was established through *eSchool+*. Pupil Personnel Workers (PPWs) work closely with the student's home school, transportation, and the family to ensure that the students continue in their home school without absences.

3. Describe where challenges are evident. In your response, identify challenges in terms of grade band(s) and subgroups.

One of our positive challenges is to maintain the progress and improve the attendance rate at the **middle** school level (94.4 percent to 94.8 percent). Five of our nine **middle** school student groups demonstrated improvement over the 2009-2010 school year and the overall rate increased from the previous year. This will have a long term positive impact on graduation rate and dropout rate.

One of our biggest challenges is the attendance rate for the FARMS student group at **all** levels. The **high** school level did not meet the 90 percent expectation. For the **elementary** and **high** school levels there was a slight decrease.

The special education group did not meet the 90 percent rate expectation for **high** school level. There was also a decrease in the rate for the **high** school level from the previous year.

The African/American group had a 91.9 percent attendance rate for the **high** school level. There was improvement in the **middle** school level (93.9 percent to 94.2 percent).

American Indian/Alaskan Native group had a 9l.8 percent rate for **high** school and 93 percent rate for the **middle** school level. There was improvement on the **elementary** and **middle** school levels.

The white (Not of Hispanic Origin) group for the **high** school level had a 93.1 percent attendance rate, a slight decrease over the 2009 SY.

The Hispanic group met or exceeded the 90 percent attendance rate at **all** levels, however, there were slight decreases on all levels.

The Limited English Proficient group had decrease at **all** school levels.

Another one of our biggest challenges is at the **high** school level. Regular and consistent attendance is the basis for graduation. All groups showed a slight decrease.

4. Describe the changes or adjustments that will be made along with the corresponding resource allocations to ensure sufficient progress. Include timelines where appropriate.

Strategies and interventions are targeted to those student groups and to those areas where AYP is not being met. Given that regular and consistent attendance is fundamental to high school completion for all students, the Pupil Services Team (PST) meets regularly at each school to, in part, monitor attendance. A major role of our PPWs is to serve as leaders on the PST committee.

At these meetings, time is allotted to review attendance, discipline, and other school-wide data pertaining to AYP and subgroups. Interventions are planned for individual students and groups of students who are confronting challenges and are not coming to school regularly. There are many interventions that specifically address attendance concerns.

Interventions specifically addressing attendance for students may include the following:

- Home visits are made by members of the Pupil Services Team on a regular basis. Our PPWs coordinate these efforts and assist with the visits.

- In some of our Title I schools, our Parent Liaison Coordinators assist with monitoring attendance and communicate with our parents frequently, specifically those families and students confronting challenges and are not coming to school.

- Our school nurses (who in many cases get to know many of our truant students) are now mentoring students with truancy issues and are in constant communication with these families regarding attendance.

- Pupil Personnel Workers provide transportation for those identified students who miss the bus or are not in school. In addition, they provide transportation for families who need to attend meetings to discuss the needs of their children.

- For those students who have attended Fairlead Academy (grades 9 and 10) and the Tech Connect program (grade 9), a component of the program is focused on improving dropout and graduation rates. College and Career Coaches (4) will be at each comprehensive high school to monitor their attendance and academic performance once they transition to the 10th and 11th grade.

- Counselors, who are part of the Pupil Services Team, coordinate the teacher/parent conferences process once a student is identified by the Pupil Services Team as having attendance, discipline, and/or academic concerns.

- The school system's Home Access Center (HAC) allows parents to review their children's daily attendance online. As a result, parents are now much better informed.

- The school system's automated phone out system, *School Messenger*, calls a parent when a student is absent or tardy to class.

- On the school system's Articulation Day, the Student Services Team (psychologist, PPWs, and school counselors) meet to discuss those students who need extra support transitioning from one school to the next. The team focuses on students who have attendance and other concerns.

- Students who continue to be truant and parents/guardians who are not ensuring that their children attend school regularly may be referred to the Interagency Committee on School Attendance. In addition, such cases may be referred to the State's Attorney's office if the problem persists.

- There are also attendance incentives and student assemblies which are designed to reward students who are maintaining excellent attendance and students who have improved their attendance.

- The Pupil Services Team develops individual plans with measurable goals to address specific student needs. A majority of these plans include a home/school communication component and follow-up meetings are held to assess progress.

- A more efficient method of monitoring homeless students has been established through *eSchool+*. PPWs work closely with the student's home school, transportation, and the family to ensure that the students continue in their home school without absences and continue their education without disruption.

Although these are overall initiatives that are in place to support all students and student groups, our FARMs, special education, and African American student groups are the focus of such initiatives, given the need for additional support. Therefore, these student groups and students from these student groups become the focus for our school system and individual schools' Pupil Services Team committees.

The adjustments planned for 2010-2011 are intended to provide school staff with a focused approach to address the needs of those student groups whose attendance lags behind their peers. Maintaining and improving upon the model for school improvement plans focuses the work of school staff on strategies that have proven successful in our schools and in other systems. Schools will choose from several approved options for climate setting: PBIS, Asset Development, and/or Character Education initiatives.

Professional development for student services staff in August focused on school climate and promoting positive relationships and the recognition of the harmful effects of bullying. Student services staff will continue to attend professional development activities that provide strategies for improving attendance, developing behavior intervention strategies and graduation rate data. Those students in the targeted groups will be identified and supported by school-based and central office student services staff, using individual student information from our state attendance reports.

In School Intervention Centers have been developed to replace in school suspension. Students will be able to stay in school and receive instruction for minor offenses while learning alternatives ways of behaving/responding.

All schools review and discuss their school-wide attendance, discipline, and disproportionality data as a component of the Pupil Services Team meetings and/or PBIS meetings. These discussions lead to targeted interventions. PBIS schools use this data in a very systematic fashion through the use of SWIS (School Wide Information System) and/or *eSchool+*.

Because of the success of our Tech Connect and Fairlead Academy programs for our freshmen and sophomore students, we have expanded the number of students who will be enrolled into these programs for the upcoming school year. To ensure that we maintain ongoing support for these students, the school system has created a more extensive program to support these students in tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. Four College and Career coaches will have the primary responsibility of ensuring that the ongoing success of the students in these programs continues.

Graduation Rates and Dropout Rates

No Child Left Behind Goal 5: All students will graduate from high school.

> **No Child Left Behind Indicator 5.1: The percentage of students who graduate each year with a regular diploma.**

> **No Child Left Behind Indicator 5.2: The percentage of students who drop out of school.**

Graduation rate is an additional measure used in Maryland's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations.

Based on the Examination of Graduation and Dropout Rate Data (Tables 5.6 and 5.7):

1. Describe where progress in moving toward the graduation/dropout target is evident. In your response, identify progress in terms of subgroups.

For the 2010 school year, SMCPS saw a dramatic increase in the graduation rate for all students. In the aggregate, we rose from 86.27 percent in 2009 to 88.83 percent in 2010. Across subgroups, the increase was also significant. African American graduation rates rose from 75.89 percent in 2009 to 80.74 percent in 2010. Hispanic graduation rates rose from 88.46 percent in 2009 to 89.66 percent in 2010. Special education graduation rates rose from 71.95 percent in 2009 to 76.24 percent in 2010. Our most dramatic increase of over 12 percent was seen with our Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) students, who rose from 69.28 percent in 2009 to 81.45 percent in 2010.

2. Identify the practices, programs, or strategies and the corresponding resource allocations to which you attribute the progress.

The increase in our graduation rate can be attributed to persistent monitoring, intervention, and support provided to students who were at the greatest risk of dropping out. The 2010 school year began with concrete performance targets for each school, lists of students who had the greatest need, and a commitment to monthly meeting with school counseling teams and building leadership to review the work of each school. Each month, the Supervisor of Counseling along with the Director of Secondary Schools, traveled to each high school to meet with the counseling team and discussed individual struggling students. All the high school principals met monthly with the Director of Secondary Schools for a real-time review of performance data – beginning with students withdrawn to date and a discussion of what could be done to retrieve them. Out of these meetings, Evening High School offered modified courses, and credit recovery options were implemented at the schools.

3. Describe where challenges are evident. In your response, identify challenges in terms of subgroups.

Our challenge continues to be with the gap between African American students and their white counterparts. Although we had success in closing the gap, it still persists. This will continue, as we had little abatement in the dropout rate for African American students, which maintained at 4.2 percent. The FARM dropout rate increased 2.56 percentage points. Our special education subgroup also continues to underperform against their counterparts. We will craft the most appropriate educational plan for each

student needing services, but this may well include five or more years of high school. Our goal is to keep them in school and moving forward. We did see a slight decrease in the special education dropout rate, but as graduation requirements rise in rigor, this student group struggled most.

4. Describe the changes or adjustments that will be made along with the corresponding resource allocations to ensure sufficient progress. Include timelines where appropriate.

For the 2011 school year, SMCPS realigned resources, created a new department, Career and College Readiness, and deployed three central office staff members directly to the high schools. The college and career coaches at each high school are charged with working daily with students transferring back to high school after attending the Fairlead Academy. They are also working with students identified as at-risk of dropping out. Their role is to mentor, educate, and advocate for these students, keeping them in school and moving forward. The Director of Career and College Readiness is charged with holding monthly meetings with the Chief Academic Officer and quarterly meetings with the Superintendent of Schools to monitor their work with students.

The Director of Career and College Readiness oversees all efforts related to tracking students toward graduation and intervening if they struggle. The primary responsibilities are listed below:
- Oversee the Graduation Coaches
- Oversee all grant funded interventions (Twilight School, FLOW Mentoring, 21st Century)
- Observe and evaluate the performance of HSA Bridge staff
- Oversee the entire operation of Evening High School
- Oversee the entire operation of Summer School (SS)
- Oversee and advance on-line and correspondence courses available for students with the goal of offering core content courses remotely by 2012 – ultimately developing a virtual high school experience with credit bearing courses available to all SMCPS students

The DCCR coaches are assigned to each of our high schools and they work directly with our transitioning students as well as those failing to make adequate yearly progress toward graduation. They also provide ongoing support for our Fairlead Academy students as they transition back to their home schools. Their principle role is to ensure that all students graduate prepared for the rigors of college and/or careers.
Their primary roles and responsibilities include:
- Advocate for all Fairlead students as they transition back to their comprehensive high school - continuing this personal interaction until graduation
- Develop individual educational plans for identified at-risk students and work with their assigned teachers to ensure appropriate progress toward set goals
- Continuously monitor all key data points relative to student drop out and graduation - providing weekly briefings to school-based leadership teams and monthly briefings to Division of Instruction leadership team
- Marshall all school system and community resources available to assist students and their families to stay productively engaged in the educational process
- Coordinate with assigned support staff- PPWs, psychologists, supervisors, and administrators- to ensure consistent attendance of the identified students
- Establish weekly contacts with guardians regarding their children's progress

- Create and coordinate parent learning opportunities regarding the successful navigation of graduation requirements
- Act as the site based-parent, business, and community liaisons
- Act as the site based Education That is Multicultural Advocate (ETMA) - leading on-going multicultural education initiatives to ensure a culturally responsive pedagogy
- Gather and report out student performance data for weekly meetings with the school based instructional leadership team
- Gather and report out student performance data for monthly and quarterly meetings

Highly Qualified Staff

No Child Left Behind Goal 3: By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.

No Child Left Behind Indicator 3.1: The percentage of classes being taught by "highly qualified" teachers, in the aggregate and in "high-poverty" schools.

No Child Left Behind Indicator 3.3: The percentage of paraprofessionals working in Title I schools (excluding those whose sole duties are translators and parental involvement assistants) who are qualified.

Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), LSSs are required to report the percentages of core academic subject (CAS) classes being taught by highly qualified teachers, and the percentages of CAS classes being taught by highly qualified teachers in high-poverty schools compared to low-poverty schools. High-poverty schools are defined as schools in the top quartile of poverty in the State, and low-poverty schools as schools in the bottom quartile of poverty in the State. NCLB also requires that school systems ensure that economically disadvantaged and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.

Plans for Reaching the 100 percent Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Goal

LSS responses to Section I.D.vi in Part I and the Title II, Part A attachment in Part II will continue to serve as the school system's Highly Qualified Teacher Improvement Plan.[4]   In this section, each LSS should address the factors that prevent the district from attaining the 100 percent HQT Goal. Please see the instructions on the next page.

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[4] Section 2141(a) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Instructions:
1. Complete data tables 6.1 – 6.7.
2. Review the criteria on tables on the next two pages.
3. If the school system has met **all** of the criteria on the following tables, skip to the prompt at the end of this section.
4. If the school system **did not** meet all of the criteria below, respond to the prompts associated with any criteria missed. Be sure to respond to the prompts for **each** criterion not met.

Based on data in the table:	If your system does not meet the criteria:	Respond to the prompts:
6.1: Percentage of Core Academic Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers	The percentage of CAS is 90 percent HQT or higher.	1. Describe where progress is evident.
6.2: Percentage of Core Academic Subjects Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teacher in Title I Schools	The percentage of CAS in Title I schools is 100 percent HQT.	2. Identify the practices, programs, or strategies and the corresponding resource allocations to which you attribute the progress. What evidence does the school system have that the strategies in place are having the intended effect?
6.3: Number of Classes Not Taught by Highly Qualified (NHQ) Teachers by Reason	The percentage (total) of NHQT is less than 10 percent.	3. Describe where challenges are evident. 4. Describe the changes or adjustments and the corresponding resource allocations that were made to ensure sufficient progress. Include timelines where appropriate.

Based on data in the table:	If your system does not meet the criteria:	Respond to the prompts:
6.4: Core Academic Classes taught by Highly Qualified Teachers in High Poverty and Low Poverty Schools by Level **6.5**: Core Academic Classes taught by Highly Qualified Teachers in High Poverty and Low Poverty Schools By Level and Experience	The percentage of HQT in CAS in high-poverty is not greater than the percentage of HQT CAS in low-poverty schools. The percentage of inexperienced HQT in CAS in high poverty schools is not greater than the percentage of experienced HQT in CAS in low poverty schools.	1. Describe where progress is evident. 2. Identify the practices, programs, or strategies and the corresponding resource allocations to which you attribute the progress. Your response must include examples of incentives for voluntary transfers, the provision of professional development, recruitment programs, or other effective strategies that low-income and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by unqualified, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers. What evidence does the school system have that the strategies in place are having the intended effect? 3. Describe where challenges are evident. In your response, include teacher experience, minority status of students, and poverty status of students, where appropriate. 4. Describe the changes or adjustments and the corresponding resource allocations that were made to ensure sufficient progress. Include timelines where appropriate.

Based on data in the table:	If your system does not meet the criteria:	Respond to the prompts:
6.6: Attrition Rates	Total overall attrition is less than 10 percent	1. Describe where progress is evident. 2. Identify the practices, programs, or strategies and the corresponding resource allocations to which you attribute the progress. What evidence does the school system have that the strategies in place are having the intended effect? 3. Describe where challenges are evident. 4. Describe the changes or adjustments and the corresponding resource allocations that were made to ensure sufficient progress. Include timelines where appropriate.
6.7: Percentage of Qualified Paraprofessionals Working in Title I Schools	Percentage of qualified paraprofessional in Title I schools is 100 percent	1. Describe the strategies that the local school system will use to ensure that all paraprofessionals working in Title I schools continue to be qualified.

If **all** of the criteria were met, please respond to the following prompt **only**:
- Identify the major priority areas that will move the district to achieving 100 percent of CAS taught by highly qualified teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff schools and critical subject-area shortages as well as establish an equal distribution of highly qualified teachers in high- and low-poverty schools.

St. Mary's County Public Schools strives to continually recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, in our effort to reach 100 percent of our classes being taught by highly qualified teachers. Major priority areas include:

a. Training for our administrators and open lines of communication with school-based administrators pertaining to assignment of teachers in CAS with respect to the individual's certification;
b. Increased awareness of administrators and applicants regarding the requirements for meeting Maryland certification requirements prior to being hired in a CAS;
c. Conferences with individual teachers and their administrators to develop plans to obtain full certification;
d. Recruiting foreign teachers who meet the standards for highly qualified in a CAS in critical shortage areas (for SMCPS, those areas are special education, mathematics, science, and ESOL);
e. Termination of employment if certification standards are not met;
f. Reimbursement for Praxis assessments;
g. Providing increased tuition reimbursement;
h. Partnerships with local colleges for Direct Billing to the school system for system employees who are enrolled in approved courses;
i. Participation in job fairs of colleges/universities that offer Maryland Approved Programs, including the previous year's participation in the Maryland Education Recruitment Consortium (MERC).

The schools that are identified as high-poverty and Title I schools will be given preferential hiring for fully certified teachers when vacancies do occur in those buildings to address equality pertaining to highly-qualified teachers, both experienced and inexperienced.

High Quality Professional Development

No Child Left Behind Indicator 3.2: The percentage of teachers receiving high quality professional development.

Looking back:

In 2008, districts submitted plans for (a) district-wide professional development activities that meet the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards (Option 1) or (b) fostering high-quality school-based professional development activities by integrating the six elements of the professional development planning process included in the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide (Option 2). In 2009, option 1 districts submitted an evaluation plan for the district-wide professional development activity and option 2 districts reported on their progress in ensuring quality in their school-based professional development.

The 2010 Master Plan reporting requirement for teacher professional development calls on districts to provide updates on their professional development activities in two parts. Each district should report on their 2010 status in Option 1 or Option 2 AND provide an overview of their teacher induction program.

Option 1 districts (Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, Charles, Frederick, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Talbot, Worcester) should submit their evaluation reports on their district-wide professional development activity. These evaluation reports should address each of the elements approved in the 2009 evaluation plan submitted and approved by MSDE in December of 2009. Option 2 districts (Baltimore City, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Dorchester, Garrett, Harford, Prince Georges, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Washington, Wicomico) should provide a progress report on integrating the 6 components of professional development planning into the district school improvement planning process, addressing each of the elements as approved by MSDE in December of 2009. In your response to the reporting requirements for either option, be sure to highlight the corresponding resource allocations.

High Quality Professional Development

Requirements for Reporting on Option 1 Professional Development Activities

1. Final evaluation reports should, at a minimum:

   - Summarize key evaluation findings presented as responses to the three evaluation questions listed below:
     o Did the activity take place as planned? (Did it include the intended participants? Did they participate for the expected duration and intensity? Did all of the professional learning activities occur as planned? Were all of the necessary materials and equipment available as planned?)
     o What were the participants' perceptions of the relevance and usefulness of the activities for their current teaching assignments and for helping them work more effectively with their students?
     o Did the activities achieve the intended participant outcomes as reflected by measurable and/or observable indicators?

   - Discuss data collection activities and the instruments, with a clear explanation of how data collection addressed each of the three evaluation questions, including any problems encountered; and

   - Discuss the evaluation findings, presented as answers to each of the three evaluation questions, with special attention to findings about the extent to which the professional development achieved the intended outcomes as reflected by the indicators (interim evaluation reports should focus on interim outcomes and indicators as specified in the professional development plans).

2. In addition, evaluation reports should, as appropriate:

   - Present and/or describe the logic model that informed the professional development plan;

   - Discuss any contextual factors that may have either facilitated or impeded implementation of the professional development as planned and/or participant application and use of new knowledge and skills;

   - Describe any limitations; and

   - Present recommendations.

High Quality Professional Development

Requirements for Reporting on Option 2 Activities

Districts that submitted plans for integrating the teacher professional development planning framework included in the *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide* into school improvement planning should report on their progress on each of the four tasks included under this option. The four questions and specific issues to be addressed in the progress reports follow below.

1. **Has the district integrated the teacher professional development planning framework into school improvement planning guidance?** If so, attach a copy of the revised guidance, including all related forms and artifacts, to the annual update. If this task has not been completed, include a brief explanation of the challenges and difficulties that were encountered and describe how the task will be completed during the 2010-2011 school year.

Yes.

The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide (Revised, November 2008) provides a solid framework for guiding professional development. St. Mary's County Public Schools have integrated these components into our school improvement planning (SIP) process, and we have revised the templates for our SIP process to include components of the planning guidance provided by MSDE. In 2005, the SIP process integrated professional development planning components for each specific goal, and asked schools to outline the context, content, and process, as well as the follow-up necessary to achieve the goals. Over the past few years, the system has worked to revise the guidance for school improvement professional development, with specific attention to the components of the teacher professional development planning framework. Last year (2009) the SIP model was modified, with specific guiding questions relative to the Professional Development Standards and the key planning components. The process continued for the 2010-2011 school year, and it includes the following:

- **Needs Assessment/Identified Need:** As an integral component of the SIP process, for each identified goal area, schools were to provide a detailed analysis of their data, including root causes. In this discussion, school teams should identify staff needs relative to these root causes of student achievement. A key initiative this year is implementing a process for tracking teacher observation data, so elements of proficiency can be identified across a school. This will allow a school to identify areas of need for professional development as observations will focus on direct connections between teacher behaviors and student learning. This needs assessment set the priorities for the professional development. Key questions include:
  - *In what ways does the PD plan support the needs articulated in your SIP plan?*
  - *Be explicit in your description of how this connects to SIP goals.*

- **Goals:** Schools were asked to identify specific professional development goals *aligned with their SIP needs assessment for each identified area* (e.g., mathematics or reading). These goals must be objectively stated, and indicate specific teacher learning outcomes. Staff are expected to design indicators related to these outcomes with the school improvement team. Guiding questions for this area included, but were not limited to:
  - *What are the goals for the professional development activity?*
  - *How will staff be involved in establishing learning goals?*
    - *PD goals are based on the participants' learning and implementation.*
    - *Provide ways for input from participants*
- **Learning Activities:** As part of this component of the SIP, school teams developed a plan for high quality learning experiences for staff. Participants for each activity were identified, and may be differentiated by the need for the professional development, the intended outcomes, and the level of student proficiency. Guiding questions included:
  - *What is the process and design of the professional development?*
  - *What strategies will be employed?*
    - *Include appropriate, active learning opportunities.*
    - *Ensure full participation, incl. leadership involvement*
- **Follow Up:** "Staff Development without follow-up is malpractice." These words by Dennis Sparks, former executive director of the National Staff Development Council, ring in the ears of our school leaders, as follow-up has been emphasized as a critical and non-negotiable component of the SIP process. For this element, guiding questions included:
  - *What follow-up will occur?*
  - *When will it occur?*
  - *How have you matched the follow-up design with the learning activities?*
    - *Consider job-embedded approaches*
    - *Allow for frequent, collaborative interactions*
- **Evaluation:** Evaluation is a critical step in the process. Principals guide the evaluation of collaborative teams and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) through regular meetings and open dialogue with staff. This is also an embedded component of the SIP process for professional development. To this end, the evaluation extends beyond what Tom Guskey would describe as "Level 1" staff development evaluation, where participants rate their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the presentation or initial participation in an activity. Instead, this key guiding question is asked:
  - *How will you evaluate the impact on instruction and student learning?*
    - *Measure staff learning*
    - *Measure the extent and level of implementation*
    - *Measure the impact on students' learning*
  - *Essentially, the evaluation should answer three questions:*
    - Did the professional development take place as planned?

- What were teachers' perceptions of the professional development?
- Did the professional development achieve the intended outcomes?

Teams at each school create team action plans, quarterly, that reflect data discussions and target instruction to identified student need. These action plans are recursive, i.e., evaluation information about teacher learning and student learning are used for the development of the next quarter's plans.

- **Organization and Management:** The School Improvement Process has been revised to include this section where the school team specifically identifies the structure within the school schedule and the processes in place for managing the job-embedded professional development throughout the year. The master calendar for the school system also now includes four (4) early release days specifically for staff collaborative planning. In addition, the system provides funding for release time, and schools are directed to provide a schedule of when the collaborative planning time is included in their schedules. Key questions for consideration include:
  - *Who is responsible for the professional development? Who are the participants? What scheduling and structures need to be in place to make time for the professional development?*
    - *Provide time equitably for staff involved in the initiative*
- **Budget:** Each school is provided funding through Title II, Part A, for collaborative planning and Professional Learning Communities. The funding is specifically targeted for this form of job-embedded professional development. Funds are provided to promote effective collaborative teaming and to support the teams in working to improve instruction, share effective instructional practices, share student work, analyze data and work products, redesign the instruction based on that analysis and review all formative assessments. The content addressed through these collaborative teams varies based on the both student needs and teacher needs. School leadership teams work in a differentiated model to determine the focus of a team's work. Teams at each school create team action plans, quarterly, that reflect data discussions and target instruction to identified student need. The school principal must submit an initial action plan and the school improvement PD Plan outlining the use of Title II funds for job-embedded professional development prior to accessing the funds.

Professional Development Plan to Support School Improvement Efforts
Choose 2-3 professional development priorities for your school for the school year. Use this form for each of these identified PD priorities.
Use this planning frame to design the professional development related to your school improvement goals.

Identified Need	Professional Development Goals
In what ways does the PD plan support the needs articulated in your SIP plan? ☐ *Connect to SIP goals.*	*What are the goals for the professional development activity?* ☐ *PD goals are based on the participants' learning and implementation.* ☐ *Provide ways for input from participants*
Major Emphasis: **Connection to SIP Goal(s):**	

Learning Activities	Follow Up	Evaluation
What is the process and design of the professional development? *What strategies will be employed?* ☐ *Include appropriate, active learning opportunities.* ☐ *Ensure full participation, incl. leadership involvement*	*What follow-up will occur?* *When and how often will it occur?* ☐ *Consider job-embedded approaches* ☐ *Allow for frequent, collaborative interactions*	*How will you assess the PD initiative's impact?* ☐ *Measure staff learning* ☐ *Measure the extent and level of implementation* ☐ *Measure the impact on students' learning*

Organization and Management

Who is responsible for the professional development? Who are the participants? What scheduling and structures need to be in place to make time for the professional development?
☐ *Provide time equitably for staff involved in the initiative*

Person(s) Responsible:	Participants/Target Participants:	Budget: ☐ *No Cost* ☐ *School-Based Funds* ☐ *Title II, Coll. Planning Funds*	☐ *Grant_____* ☐ *Other_____*

Structure and Scheduling of Professional Development:

2. **Has the district implemented a program to prepare principals, other school leaders, school improvement teams, and school-based professional development staff to use the teacher professional development planning framework**? If so, describe the program, clearly specifying (a) who participated and whether all of the intended participants did, in fact, participate, (b) the schedule (e.g., the number of sessions, the length of each session), (c) the topics covered, and (d) the professional learning activities (e.g., presentations, opportunities for practice and feedback). Also, attach copies of any materials developed for the training session. If the district has not implemented a program to prepare principals and others to use the planning framework, discuss the reasons for not doing so and describe how such a program will be completed during the 2010-2011 school year.

Ongoing professional development for school leaders is evident in the results we have seen through the development of exceptional school improvement plans and the level to which high quality professional development has been attained. Continuous improvement drives our system, so we recognize that more work needs to be done. Multiple opportunities have been provided and ongoing follow-up ensues to ensure that leaders (including administrators, system leaders, and teacher leaders) have the necessary skills, competencies, and dispositions to prepare, design, deliver, and evaluate high quality professional development – and that these opportunities align and support school improvement efforts.

Overview of Professional Development Sessions for Administrators and Supervisors:

Extensive professional development in this area was provided in the 2008-2009 school year as these components were integrated. This past year, only one (1) new principal was appointed, and that person was an assistant principal prior to appointment.

Session	Participants	Date/Time	Topics
A&S Leadership Retreat	Administrators and Supervisors	8/4-6/08 8 hrs	Implementing Job-Embedded PD; Focused Work of PLCs; School Improvement Review
A&S Leadership Seminar	Administrators and Supervisors	10/1/08 2 hrs	Review and Discussion of PLC Work; Assessments for Learning
A&S Leadership Seminar	Administrators and Supervisors	11/8/08 2 hrs	Collaborative Planning and Action Planning-Revisiting the Process
A&S Leadership Seminar	Administrators and Supervisors	4/1/09 1 hr.	Collaborative Planning/PLCs Update
A&S Leadership Seminar	Administrators and Supervisors	5/6/09 90 min	Review of School Improvement Process

			for 2009-2010 – PD Elements
A&S Leadership Retreat	Administrators and Supervisors	8/3-6/09 8 hrs	Implementing Job-Embedded PD; Focused Work of PLCs; School Improvement Review

In the 2009-2010 school year, follow-up was provided as we examined the continuity and extension of our focus on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). The schedule of follow up included:

Session	Participants	Date/Time	Topics
A&S Leadership Retreat	Administrators and Supervisors	8/3-6/09 8 hrs	Implementing Job-Embedded PD; Focused Work of PLCs; School Improvement Review
A&S Leadership Seminars	Administrators and Supervisors	10/7/09; 11/4/09; 12/2/09; 1/6/10; 4/7/10; 5/5/10 12 total hrs	Analysis of teacher evaluation process to include data analysis and collaborative planning with teams; Review and Discussion of PLC Work- focus on common assessments
A&S Leadership Seminar	Administrators and Supervisors	Weekly	Emailed "leader tips" providing strategies and tools for working with collaborative teams and PLCs
A&S Leadership Retreat	Administrators and Supervisors	8/9-12/10 8 hrs	Implementing Job-Embedded PD; Focused Work of PLCs; School Improvement Review

For all administrators and supervisors, monthly leadership seminars include a major focus on professional development. In these sessions, principals and supervisors investigate ways in which they can make the most of the professional learning communities at their schools. Guidance from system leaders, as well as funding support, both through Title II, Part A, and local funding (e.g., with the addition of four early release days for collaborative planning), provide the support and accountability for schools to engage in this type of high quality professional development. The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide offers clear guidance and detailed, supportive explanations

that lend another layer of professional development. These strategies are indicative of how SMCPS has prepared leaders, school teams, and coaches in the use of the principles and practices in the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Planning Guide.

Weekly "leader tips" were sent to all administrators and supervisors, with suggested strategies for supporting professional learning teams. An example of one of the tools is included below:

Walk-through Checklist

Use this checklist as a reference when conducting monthly walk-throughs of collaborative professional learning team meetings. Place a check next to any behaviors noted. Add notes as reminders of what specifically you saw for future reference in reporting data.

Date: _____ Time: _____
Team: _____ Duration: _____

Check any behaviors evident. Make special notes as desired.

Team/individual behaviors	Notes
Team organization	
All members are present.	
The team facilitator has the agenda.	
Teams have their norms visible.	
Teams have their plan visible.	
Teams have their professional learning goals visible.	
Teams have their student learning goals visible.	
Team engagement	
All members are actively engaged.	
Teams use positive communication strategies.	
The facilitator helps the team accomplish its work without being directive unless the work the team is doing requires it.	
Team members contribute equitably to the work.	
Team members treat one another with professional courtesy and respect.	
Team's work	
Teams are focusing on an identifiable curricular area.	
Teams are focusing on instruction.	
Teams are focusing on data.	
Teams are focusing on assessments.	
Teams are focusing on meeting the needs of specific students.	
Teams refer to the curriculum.	
Teams consult external resources.	
Teams discuss the purpose of the meeting.	
Team members assess their team's work, their own learning, and student learning.	
Team members set an agenda for the next meeting.	
Team members complete the meeting summary.	

Over the last few years, several opportunities were provided to offer school leaders and school-based staff guidance and support in designing high quality professional development:

- **School Improvement Guidance:** In both the spring of 2008 and the spring of 2009, one full day was provided for SIP guidance and professional development (in 2010, follow-up was provided as part of our monthly Administrator and Supervisory leadership seminars). As part of this day, the professional development guidance was an overt and emphasized component. Through this component, results of the 2008 SMCPS Survey of Teacher Participation in High Quality Professional Development were shared, with a clear emphasis on job-embedded professional development. With the accompanying template for professional development as part of the SIP, schools had an accountability measure in place to ensure that the components of planning framework were met. Funding for follow-up days were provided to each school for planning and feedback. Detailed feedback and collaborative dialogue is built in as part of the process in our August Leadership Retreat, which is outlined in #3 below.
- **Professional Development Institute:** The Professional Development Institute has been implemented for two years. Through a three (3) day institute this summer (and 8 follow-up sessions delivered throughout the school year), school leaders, system leaders, teacher leaders, and school based coaches (known locally as Instructional Resource Teachers) participated in an in-depth professional development academy designed and delivered by the SMCPS Department of Professional and Organizational Development and Cindy Harrison, national consultant and author of *Taking the Lead: New Roles for Teachers and School-Based Coaches* (NSDC, 2006). In this institute, over 55 leaders in 2008-2009, and 36 leaders in 2009-2010, actively utilized the standards for staff development and were responsible for designing a high quality experience – and receive feedback on their design. This institute set the stage for effective planning in the school improvement process, and built a cadre of highly-skilled professional developers. Embedded in this institute was training in the use of the planning guide, and the plans developed by participants were to reflect these elements of high quality professional development. SMCPS received the *2009 MCSD Excellence in Staff Development Award* for the Professional Development Institute.
- **IRT Professional Development**: Instructional Resource Teachers (IRTs) are the school-based coaches in place at schools. The IRT works with the school principal to facilitate the job-embedded professional development with the staff. The evaluation system for IRTs includes clear language explicitly stating the expectation for providing high quality professional development. More specifically, this year, the roles and responsibilities were clarified to emphasize their role as a professional development leader. To this end, they have been part of ongoing PD in designing high quality professional development, using the work of Cindy Harrison and Joellen Killion (*Taking the Lead* was used as a book study). IRTs participated in the PD Institute, and components of the PD Planning Guide were reviewed as part of the IRT monthly meetings (held on the fourth Friday of every month).
- **PLC Leader Training:** In alignment with the practices set forth in the planning guide and Teacher Development Standards, teacher leaders and Professional

Learning Communities (PLC) leaders engaged in ongoing learning opportunities to understand their roles and best practices for job-embedded professional development. In July, the first part of a multi-day training for PLC leaders took place. As part of this professional development opportunity, both administrators and teacher leaders examined and practiced protocols and processes for leading effective collaborative teams and professional learning communities. Further, they were given strategies for planning effective collaborative team meetings and ongoing professional development, for which the Planning Guide is used in the follow up sessions. This effort, in which over 130 leaders participated in the 2008, 2009, and 2010 cohorts, helped to prepare school-based individuals for their roles in facilitating engaging sessions with teams focused on critical and guiding questions for our PLCs:

- o Exactly what is it we want all students to learn?
- o How will we know when each student has acquired the essential knowledge and skills?
- o What happens in our school when a student does not learn?

3. **Has the district implemented a program to prepare district staff for reviewing and providing feedback on professional development plans?** If so, describe the program, clearly specifying (a) who participated and whether all of the intended participants did, in fact, participate, (b) the schedule (e.g., the number of sessions, the length of each session), (c) the topics covered, and (d) the professional learning activities (e.g., presentations, opportunities for practice and feedback). Also, attach copies of any materials developed for the training session. If the district has not implemented a program to prepare district staff for reviewing and providing feedback on the professional development plans, discuss the reasons for not doing so and describe how such a program will be completed during the 2010-2011 school year.

As part of the SMCPS August Leadership Retreat (August 2010), a full day is built in for collaborative reviews of school improvement plans. Because the professional development plan is an integrated part of the SIP, it is reviewed actively by the group of leaders and feedback is provided consistently for every school improvement team. Our design for review and feedback includes a team approach, where four to five school leadership teams sit together with representative school system supervisors, directors, and Instructional Resource Teachers, to review each school's plans. The group utilizes a rubric, inclusive of all components, to provide oral feedback. Key Questions provided for the discussion of School Improvement Plans for PD included:

- o What are the key professional development initiatives your school is undertaking this year?
- o In what ways does the PD plan support the needs articulated in your SIP plan?
- o What are the goals for the professional development activity?
- o What is the process and design of the professional development? What strategies will be employed?
- o How is follow-up provided?
- o What follow-up will occur?
- o When and how often will it occur?

- o How will you assess the PD initiative's impact?
- o How are you ensuring the time is scheduled for PD?
- o Who is responsible for the professional development? Who is the audience? What scheduling and structures need to be in place to make time for the professional development?

Notes and written feedback are provided to schools shortly thereafter, and schools have an opportunity to revise their plans. Following the finalization of the school plans, the Department of Professional Development compiles a summary report to each school, offering support and delineating where commonalities are noted between schools (thereby promoting networking and sharing of resources).

What follows is a sample provided as part of the training.

<u>Sample</u> School Improvement Plan – PD Section

<u>Leonardtown Elementary School</u> - Professional Development Plan to Support School Improvement Efforts
Choose 2-3 professional development priorities for your school for the school year. Use this form for each of these identified PD priorities.
Utilize this planning frame to design the professional development related to your school improvement goals. Duplicate or Delete planners as necessary.

Identified Need	Professional Development Goals
In what ways does the PD plan support the needs articulated in your SIP plan? *Connect to SIP goals.*	*What are the goals for the professional development activity?* *PD goals are based on the participants' learning and implementation.* *Provide ways for input from participants*
Major Emphasis: Alignment of Instruction to Science SC objectives Connection to SIP Goal(s): Our SIP goals are all based on improved student achievement on all assessments. Ensuring alignment to the Science SC objectives as well as the rigor to which those objectives are taught will result in student achievement. The process of ensuring alignment will carry over to the other content areas.	Goals: Teachers will increase their own knowledge and understanding of the Science SC. Teachers will use a framework, which they develop, to self and peer review lessons for accurate alignment and rigor making changes as necessary to improve instruction. Teachers will consistently implement the components of differentiation and assessment in their lesson plans and implementation.

Learning Activities	Follow Up	Evaluation
What is the process and design of the professional development? What strategies will be employed? *Include appropriate, active learning opportunities.* *Ensure full participation, incl. leadership involvement*	*What follow-up will occur?* *When and how often will it occur?* *Consider job-embedded approaches* *Allow for frequent, collaborative interactions*	*How will you assess the PD initiative's impact?* *Measure staff learning* *Measure the extent and level of implementation* *Measure the impact on students' learning*
Teachers will self-assess their knowledge and understanding of the Science SC Teachers study and unpack the Science SC through grade level collaborative discussions Teachers develop a lesson plan checklist for alignment, rigor, differentiation, and assessment	Grade Level Team Meeting discussion about how to teach a specific objective Lesson plans for the identified objective will be reviewed for alignment, rigor, differentiation, and assessment at the following month GLTM Monthly informal walk-throughs during Science lessons for identified "look-fors"	Pre self-assessment and Post self-assessment on knowledge and understanding of the Science SC Lesson plans will include objectives, differentiation, and assessment Objectives on the board will align to instruction in classroom

Teachers will use this checklist once a month to analyze the alignment of planned instruction to chosen Science SC objectives

Teachers will develop a "look-for" list to be used during walk-throughs to document | Follow-up will include debriefings of walk-throughs with teachers.

Follow-up will occur at one Grade Level Team Review of student work samples to assess effectiveness of lesson plan implementation | Students will be able to explain the objective they are learning

More students will reach benchmark on county assessments and MSA |

Organization and Management

Who is responsible for the professional development? Who is the audience? What scheduling and structures need to be in place to make time for the professional development?
Provide time equitably for staff involved in the initiative

Person(s) Responsible:	Participants/Target Audience:	Budget:	
Denise Eichel
Carrie Smith
Laurie Wood
Marla Pyles	K-5 Teachers
Special Education Teachers
Paraeducators	*No Cost*
School-Based Funds
Title II, Coll. Planning Funds	*Grant_____*
Other_____

Structure and Scheduling of Professional Development:
Self-assessment of Science SC objectives will begin at the August Professional Days before school starts. Collaborative discussion focused on the Science SC objectives will take place at one Grade Level Team Meeting per month. Title II funds will be used to provide 2 hours of planning per quarter to review quarterly data.

SAMPLE FEEDBACK - This feedback was provided and an ensuing discussion with the school team allowed for deeper analysis and dialogue.

Professional Development Plan to Support School Improvement Efforts
Choose 2-3 professional development priorities for your school for the school year. Use this form for each of these identified PD priorities. Utilize this planning frame to design the professional development related to your school improvement goals. Duplicate or Delete planners as necessary.

Identified Need	Professional Development Goals
In what ways does the PD plan support the needs articulated in your SIP plan? ☐ *Connect to SIP goals.*	*What are the goals for the professional development activity?* ☐ *PD goals are based on the participants' learning and implementation.* ☐ *Provide ways for input from participants*
Major Emphasis: Alignment of Instruction to Science VSC objectives **Connection to SIP Goal(s): Our SIP goals are all based on improved student achievement on all assessments. Ensuring alignment to the Science VSC objectives as well as the rigor to which those objectives are taught will result in student achievement. The process of ensuring alignment will carry over to the other content areas.**	Goals: 1. To increase knowledge and understanding of the VSC. 2. Teachers will utilize a framework to self and peer analyze lessons for accurate alignment and rigor. 3. To further build capacity in teachers to collaborate and reflect on their practice.

Comment [JAM1]: Be explicit about the specific learning objective for the teachers, i.e., what do you hope they will learn and be able to do. Consider the stems: Teachers will be able to…

Your second objective is pretty close, providing a process objective.

Learning Activities	Follow Up	Evaluation
What is the process and design of the professional development? What strategies will be employed? ☐ *Include appropriate, active learning opportunities.* ☐ *Ensure full participation, incl. leadership involvement*	*What follow-up will occur? When and how often will it occur?* ☐ *Consider job-embedded approaches* ☐ *Allow for frequent, collaborative interactions*	*How will you assess the PD initiative's impact?* ☐ *Measure staff learning* ☐ *Measure the extent and level of implementation* ☐ *Measure the impact on students' learning*
Teachers will ~~have the opportunity to~~ self-assess their knowledge and understanding of the Science VSC Teachers will ~~have the opportunity to~~ study and unpack the Science VSC through grade level collaborative discussions	Grade Level Team Meeting discussion about how to teach a specific objective Lesson plans for the identified objective will be reviewed for alignment, rigor, differentiation, and assessment at the following month GLTM	Pre self-assessment and Post self-assessment on knowledge and understanding of the Science VSC Lesson plans will include objectives, differentiation, and assessment Objectives on the board will align to instruction in classroom

Comment [JAM2]: There has to be some level of accountability and expectation set for the PD>>

Comment [JAM3]: These are excellent follow-up activities.

Teachers will ~~have the opportunity to~~ develop a lesson plan checklist for alignment, rigor, differentiation, and assessment Teachers will ~~have the opportunity~~ once a month ~~to~~ use this checklist to analyze the alignment of planned instruction to chosen Science VSC objectives Teachers will ~~have the opportunity to~~ develop a "look-for" list to be used during walk-throughs to document	Monthly informal walk-throughs during Science lessons for identified "look-fors" Follow-up will include debriefings of walk-throughs with teachers. Follow-up will occur at one Grade Level Team Meeting per month to analyze lesson plan for alignment and rigorous instruction Review of student work samples to assess effectiveness of lesson plan implementation	Students will be able to explain the objective they are learning More students will reach benchmark on county assessments and MSA

Comment [JAM4]: Will teachers also be involved in the walkthroughs? Or will it just be admin?

Organization and Management

Who is responsible for the professional development? Who is the audience? What scheduling and structures need to be in place to make time for the professional development?
☐ *Provide time equitably for staff involved in the initiative*

Person(s) Responsible:	Participants/Target Audience:	Budget:		
Denise Eichel Carrie Smith Laurie Wood Marla Pyles	K-5 Teachers Special Education Teachers Paraeducators	✓ No Cost ☐ School-Based Funds ☐ Title II, Coll. Planning Funds	☐ Grant_____ ☐ Other_____	

Structure and Scheduling of Professional Development:
Self-assessment of Science VSC objectives will begin at the August Professional Days before school starts.
Collaborative discussion focused on the Science VSC objectives will take place at one Grade Level Team Meeting per month. Title II funds will be used to provide 2 hours of planning per quarter to review quarterly data.

As part of the systemic focus on job-embedded professional development and professional learning communities, the monthly administrative and supervisory seminars have been designed to review and revisit the work of PLCs. Action plans are developed at the school level, reflective of staff understandings, reflection, and action on student learning, and are sent to the Director of Teaching, Learning and Professional Development one week before designated administrative and supervisory seminars on a quarterly basis. Plans will be reviewed collaboratively at these sessions and follow-up sessions with assistant principals will be provided as well to ensure that multiple layers of school leadership are included in the process of review and discussion.

Below is a segment from the memorandum to principals detailing the process of accountability to these plans:

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Accountability and Support:
Teams/PLCs are especially effective when they are monitored and supported by the leadership of the school and the school system.

- **Teams/PLCs should offer the opportunity and expectation to collaboratively plan instruction and develop shared assessments.** These shared assessments will be used to facilitate wider and more consistent discussion about student achievement. The planning frames for these discussions should be the Two Week Planner.

- **Monitor the work of the Teams/PLCs through Monthly/Quarterly Action Plans**. Effective Action Plans are aligned with the school improvement plan. There is no mandated template or form for you to use although there is a sample that you may use if you so choose. There is an attached list of identified components that your Action Plans must include. The best Action Plans are results-oriented, based on data analyzed from state, local, and school sources. Professional development should be reflected, as appropriate, to assist the members of the Team/PLC to enhance their instructional effectiveness for increased student learning.

  Action Plans will be reviewed and discussed quarterly at A&S Leadership Seminars. These plans must be submitted to the Director of Teaching, Learning and Professional Development <u>one week prior to the quarterly A&S seminars in September, December, February, and April</u>. Instructional supervisors will provide support and feedback, as needed, for the work of the Teams/PLCs.

- Just as the Action Plans will be reviewed and discussed quarterly at A&S Leadership Seminars, **follow-up sessions will be held at the assistant principal sessions**.

- The **Professional Growth Plans for teachers on formative assessment should reflect their work in the Team/PLC** and not be misaligned. Elements of the work of collaborative planning have been added to the Teacher Performance Assessment System for teachers on both formative and summative evaluations.

</div>

4. **How is the district monitoring implementation and impact of the school-based professional development activities? Has the district reviewed school improvement plans that address the new professional development planning requirements?** If so, discuss the results of the review process, clearly specifying (a) how many of the plans were approved as submitted, (b) how many schools were required to revise their plans, (c) the patterns of strengths and weaknesses of the plans as reflected in how they addressed each of the six elements of the planning framework, and (d) lessons learned about the need for additional and/or different kinds of training and support for school and district staff. What specific strategies are in place for

working with schools to monitor implementation and impact of school-based professional development in 2010-2011 and beyond?

As indicated above, the regular interaction with administrators and supervisors will provide the systemic support and ongoing focus through these collaborative meetings. However, the truly impactful review sessions will occur at the school level. Each school was provided both guidance and support to design and implement collaborative teams on a regular basis. Through the PLCs, it is essential that individually designed teams review student data and professional development activities reflective of those needs. Action plans (which are essentially quarterly updates and team-level school improvement plans) include the following components:

- Identified learning challenges, connected to identified SC indicators/objectives
- Root cause(s), i.e., evidence of causes that staff can effectually address
- Strategies to address learning challenges
    - Includes identified students who will receive appropriate interventions, support, or acceleration, based on needs
- Timeline for implementation
- Resources, as appropriate
- Professional development and support needed
- Parent/Community connections, as appropriate
- Process and timeline for evaluating effectiveness

As described above, these action plans are brought to quarterly administrative and supervisory seminars for collaborative review.

All schools have submitted school improvement plans that included professional development planners. Of our 27 schools, one (1) school was asked to provide revisions to the professional development planner. In the 2009-2010, the planner was presented with specific guidance to design no more than three high quality professional development initiatives for the school year. Further, more specific guidance and an example were provided for this school year that helped school teams to design high quality activities. The process remained consistent for the 2010-2011 school year as it was for the 2009-2010 school year.

Building a cadre of strong professional development leaders is essential. Through the professional learning opportunities outlined above (leadership training, PLC leader training, and the Professional Development Institute), more leaders throughout St. Mary's County Public Schools are gaining an understanding of high quality professional development. Through a review of the School Improvement PD Plan as well as quarterly action plans, we are able to support and coach leaders in the design and delivery of job-embedded professional development. During this school year, directors are assigned to school teams to provide coaching and feedback to PLC leaders and facilitators. This will provide both the accountability to the process and the support for effective implementation.

Throughout the year, ongoing collaborative discussions with our teachers' association have focused on continuing the expectation for teacher collaboration. In this vein, the teacher evaluation framework, our Teacher Performance Assessment System (TPAS) was revised, including direct emphasis on job-embedded professional development. An excerpted component from TPAS appears below:

DOMAIN 4: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES COMPONENT 4c: PARTICIPATES IN A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE				
ELEMENT	INEFFECTIVE	DEVELOPING	EFFECTIVE	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE
1 PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES	The teacher does not participate in collaborative teams or professional learning communities during the duty day (or compensated time) or participation subverts the work of the group.	Teacher's participation in collaborative teams/professional learning communities during the duty day (or compensated time) is inconsistent.	Teacher participates in collaborative teams/professional learning communities meetings during the duty day (or compensated time) on a regular basis, contributing to group analysis of student achievement and to instructional and assessment planning.	Teacher actively participates in collaborative teams/professional learning communities during the duty day (or compensated time), making contributions toward group learning and individual learning. Teacher's regular attendance at meetings and contributions to group work production (e.g., common assessments) are evident.

With the expectation of collaborative planning built into the teacher evaluation system, there is a level of accountability both for the teachers and the administrators for participation in job-embedded, high quality professional development. These efforts are monitored systemically as well, through the continuation of the Survey of Teacher Participation in High Quality Professional Development.

Monitoring High Quality Professional Development:
In 2004, MSDE commissioned a survey conducted by Policy Studies Associates, Inc., in which teachers were asked to report on their participation in five categories of professional development for that school year. In 2006, 2008, and 2010, St. Mary's County Public Schools administered the survey locally. The survey questions were structured similarly, with permission from Policy Studies Associates, Inc., to utilize the same survey questions, so results are comparative.

<u>**Key Findings:**</u>
- **65 percent of teachers reported participating in one or more of the five categories of activities that are defined as high quality activities.** This is <u>an increase of **14 percent**</u> over the previous survey (+29 percent since 2004)
- **The high standard of professional development is consistently illustrated in response patterns.** Teacher responses that rank experiences as high quality have increased, though the standard remained high. Of particular note:
  - The percentage of teachers who participated in *job-embedded* professional development who ranked the experience as high quality <u>increased by **6 percent**</u> (+29 percent since 2004).
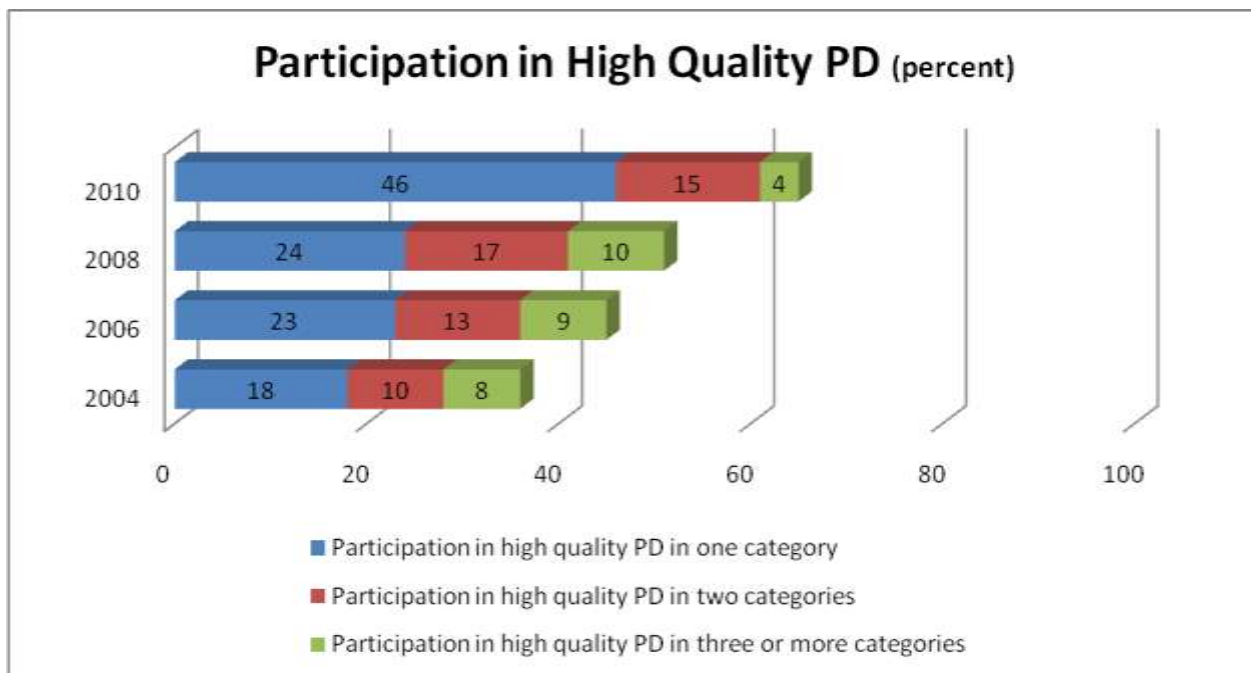
Participation in *job-embedded* professional development underline{increased by **11 percent** (+33 percent since 2004).

- **The percentage of teachers** who participated in *workshops, institutes, and academies* who ranked the experience as high quality increased by **16 percent** (+19 percent since 2004).
- **The percentage of teachers** who participated in *coaching and mentoring* who ranked the experience as high quality increased by **5 percent** (+50 percent since 2004).
- **The quality of professional meetings and conferences improved substantially.** The percentage of teachers participating in professional meetings and conferences that lasted one day or longer who ranked the experience as high quality increased by **17 percent** (+31 percent since 2004).
- **Teacher experiences that met the criteria for high quality (learning opportunities, planning and decision making, follow up, and benefits) increased in all activities.**
- **Teachers expressed collaborative planning** was the most ideal learning format for professional development, with **69 percent** of respondents indicating this format as the most desirable.

Summary of results:

Results from selected exhibits are included below. All exhibits from the survey can be found in the complete attachment of exhibits from the survey administration.

Participation in High Quality Professional Development

	2004	2006	2008	2010
Participation in one or more high-quality professional development activities	**36 %**	**45 %**	**51 %**	**65 %**
Participation in high quality PD in <u>one</u> category	18 %	23 %	**24 %**	**46 %**
Participation in high quality PD in <u>two</u> categories	10 %	13 %	**17 %**	**15 %**
Participation in high quality PD in <u>three or more</u> categories	8 %	9 %	**10 %**	**4%**

The 2010 Survey of Teacher Participation in High Quality Professional Development shows that **since 2004, there has been an increase of 29 percent** of teachers participating in one or more high quality professional development activities, and currently, nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of teachers participate in at least one high quality professional development activity in the categories defined by the MSDE Teacher Professional Development Standards. The 2010 data shows **a 14 percent increase in participation since 2008**.

Participation in Professional Development, By Category
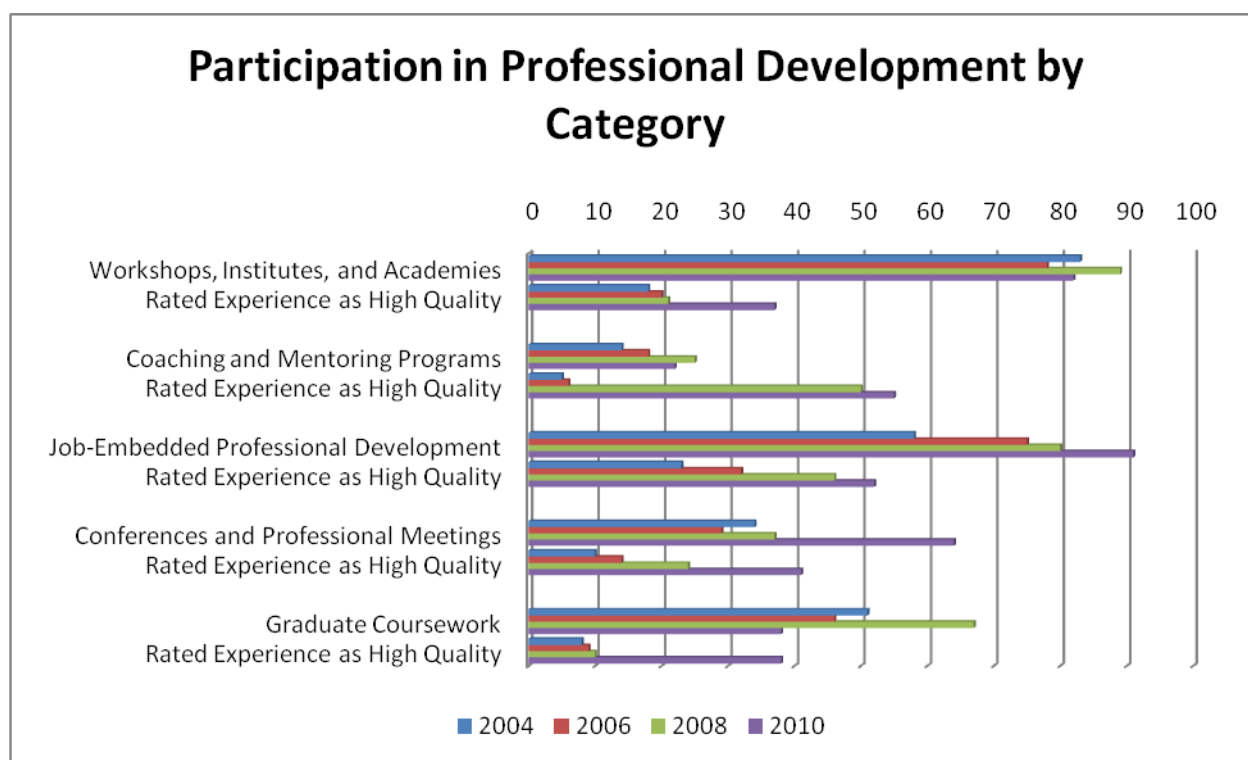
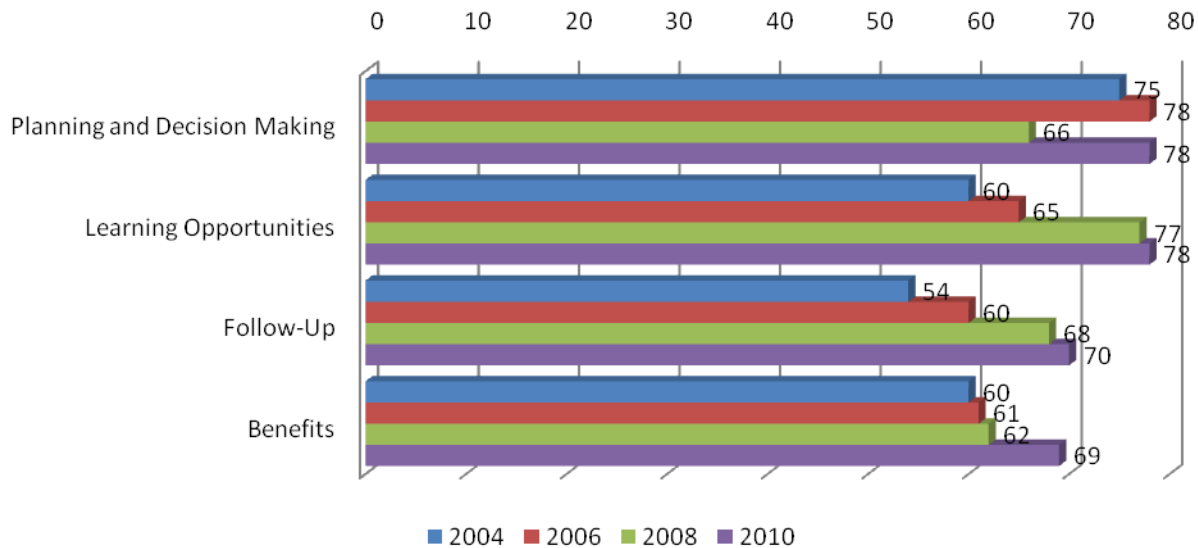|	2004	2006	2008	2010	Six Year Trend
Workshops, Institutes, and Academies	**83**	**78**	**89**	**82**	-1
Rated Experience as High Quality	18	20	21	37	+19
Coaching and Mentoring Programs	**14**	**18**	**25**	**22**	+8
Rated Experience as High Quality	5	6	50	55	+50
Job-Embedded Professional Development	**58**	**75**	**80**	**91**	+33
Rated Experience as High Quality	23	32	46	52	+29
Conferences and Professional Meetings	**34**	**29**	**37**	**64**	+30
Rated Experience as High Quality	10	14	24	41	+31
Graduate Coursework	**51**	**46**	**67**	**38**	-13
Rated Experience as High Quality	8	9	10	38	+30

Since 2004 there has been a consistent **participation in the categories that represented long-term high quality professional development** activities within St. Mary's County Public Schools.
- o Workshops, Institutes, and Academies: **steady at just -1 percent since 2004**
- o Coaching or Mentoring Programs: **+8 percent since 2004**
- o Job-Embedded Professional Development Activities: **+33 percent since 2004**
- o Conferences or Professional Meetings: **+30 percent since 2004**
- o Graduate Coursework: **-13 percent since 2004**

Further, the percentage of teachers who participated in these activities consistently **ranked those activities as high quality** professional development at an increased level.
- o Workshops, Institutes, and Academies: **+19 percent since 2004; +16 percent since 2008**
- o Coaching or Mentoring Programs: **+50 percent since 2004; +5 percent since 2008**
- o Job-Embedded Professional Development Activities: **+29 percent since 2004; +6 percent since 2008**
- o Conferences or Professional Meetings: **+21 percent since 2004; + 17 percent since 2006**
- o Graduate Courses: **+30 percent since 2004; + 28 percent since 2008**

Teacher Experience that Met High Quality PD Standard - Job-Embedded Professional Development

Planning and Decision Making: 2004: 75, 2006: 78, 2008: 66, 2010: 78
Learning Opportunities: 2004: 60, 2006: 65, 2008: 77, 2010: 78
Follow-Up: 2004: 54, 2006: 60, 2008: 68, 2010: 70
Benefits: 2004: 60, 2006: 61, 2008: 62, 2010: 69

In the above chart, teacher participation in the category of **Job-Embedded Professional Development**, is delineated by Standard Area. In this category, **78 percent** of teachers who reported participating in activities to increase learning opportunities that enhanced their knowledge and skills, meeting the Maryland criteria for high quality in the 2009-2010 school year. This represents **an increase of 18 percent** since the 2004 administration of the survey, and compares to 77 percent from the 2007-2008 school year. **70 percent** of teachers reported participating in follow-up activities that met the high quality standard (**a 16 percent increase** from 2004); and **69 percent** of teachers reported benefits to their instruction resulted from participating in these activities (**a 9 percent increase** from 2004).

It should be noted that there is a consistent percentage of teachers who reported participating in the planning and decision making for this category over a 6 year trend. **78 percent** of teachers reported that activities met this Maryland standard for high quality. This represents a **12 percent increase** from the 2008 survey administration.

It should be further noted that at the recommendation of the Superintendent and the calendar committee, and subsequent approval of the Board of Education, four (4) two-hour early dismissal days were added to the system calendars for the purpose of collaborative planning. This decision is supportive of the teachers' favored design for professional development.

Preferred Design	Percent
Online learning	**45**
Study groups for teachers in my school	**51**
Study groups with teachers from other schools	**46**
Presentations and demonstrations	**59**
Grade-level/content team collaboration and planning	**69**
Vertical content team articulation and planning	**50**
College and university courses	**43**

New for 2010:

In 2009, the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Advisory Council recommended that the State Board revise the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) to provide guidance to LSSs on providing an induction program for all teachers new to their district. Following review by LSS staff and a public comment period, in April, 2010, the State Board of Education adopted COMAR 13A.07.01. Also in April, 2010, the Maryland General Assembly passed a statute (SB899/HB1263) which expanded the number of years new teachers may serve before being granted tenure. As a part of that Statute, districts are required to provide induction and mentoring support.

In the 2010 Master Plan updates, districts should submit an overview of their Teacher Induction Program.
For the overview, districts should describe how their program addresses the Induction Program COMAR in:
  (1) The content, structure and participant outcomes of the following elements:
        a. Orientation program before the school year begins;
        b. Support from a mentor;
        c. Regularly scheduled opportunities to observe or co-teach with skilled teachers;
        d. Ongoing professional development sessions; and
        e. Ongoing formative review of new teacher performance based on clearly defined teaching standards.
  (2) Their staffing plan, including who coordinates the program, the number of new teachers and the number of mentors and how many new teachers they each serve.
  (3) The process of mentor recruitment, screening, selection and training
  (4) The training provided to Central Office and School-Based Administrators regarding the New Teacher Induction Program.
  (5) To the extent practicable given staffing and fiscal concerns, if any of the following options were adopted for new teachers:
        a. A reduction in the teaching schedule;
        b. A reduction or elimination of responsibilities in non-instructional duties; and/or
        c. Sensitivity to assignment to teaching classes that include high percentages of students with achievement, discipline or attendance challenges.

If the LSS Induction Program currently does not address one or more of the elements above, the LSS should describe its plan for addressing the gap during the 2010-2011 school year.

The New Teacher Induction Program for St. Mary's County Public Schools is multifaceted, and includes: mentoring; support resources; pre-service professional development; demonstration classrooms; monthly seminars; online learning support; and new teacher socials. Throughout the initial phase in a budding teacher's career, the support, guidance, and ongoing professional development is critical to their success. Our three-year induction program, framed around the notion that teachers need to develop essential skills, attitudes, and competencies for success in the classroom, provides the professional development they need to be successful in their first three years of teaching.

Induction is a process through which new teachers become effective teachers within the school system. Through this process, teachers are provided with the professional development they need to be successful in their first three years of teaching. Induction is a process that must be individualized, i.e., the needs of one teacher will differ from the needs of another; therefore, training must be differentiated by grade, content, and teacher experience. Mentoring is a critical component of induction, in that it provides for this differentiation and offers on-site, just-in-time support and coaching to teachers as they hone their craft.

New Teacher Supports Include:

> **Orientation**
> A three-day period in which teachers new to St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) are oriented to our school community, with the following objectives:
> - Teachers will develop an understanding of the mission, goals, and priorities of St. Mary's County Public Schools;
> - Teachers will develop an understanding of SMCPS curricular and instructional priorities and develop an instructional plan for the first three weeks of school; and
> - Teachers will develop an understanding of what good teachers in SMCPS should know and be able to do to prepare for, conduct, and reflect upon their instructional interactions with children.
>
> New teachers are also invited to participate in two days of "Early Bird" sessions differentiated by content, grade level, and system initiative.

> **Resources:**
> - During New Teacher Orientation, each teacher new to our system receives:
>   o <u>The Teacher's Guide to Success</u>
>   - This text "provides a practical approach to teaching through tried and true experience-based suggestions and research-based strategies."
>   o *Success-a-Day* Journal
>   - We expect that new teachers reflect on their daily practice.
>   o New Teacher Handbook
>   - This school system handbook was designed with new teachers in mind, and has information about system initiatives and facts (including contact information for departments, directions to schools, etc.), instructional tips, human resources and certification information, among other relevant

information. The handbook is also posted online so updates can be made regularly.

Model Demonstration Teacher Program

The Model Demonstration Teacher Program provides support to teachers new to our system during their first year in the classroom. The program begins before the teacher steps foot into the classroom. Each teacher new to SMCPS spends a full day in the classroom of a master teacher at his/her grade level or content area. On this day, a team of master teachers provides our new hires with ideas to help prepare them for the first month of school. Master teachers provide three-and-a-half weeks of high quality lesson plans consistent with the Maryland State Curriculum. The Model Demonstration Teacher program also provides teachers new to SMCPS ongoing monthly support throughout the school year.

Mentoring

St. Mary's County Public Schools believes in the importance of mentors for new teachers. The Department of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development, in collaboration with the Department of Human Resources, provides formal orientation and on-going development for all mentors of teachers new to our system. School administrators pair experienced teachers with novice teachers and teachers new to our county. These mentor teachers provide coaching, support, and guidance as the new teachers transition in their first three years.

Each school is provided release time (substitute funding) to allow for new teachers to observe their mentors or other master teachers, or to have a mentor come into the new teacher's classroom to observe and coach. The school system expectation is that this occur at least once per quarter for each new teacher. This allows for a cycle of feedback to new teachers focused on the Teacher Performance Assessment System (TPAS). The domains and components align with the *Maryland Teacher Evaluation Framework.*

Domain 1   Planning and Preparation
Component 1a   Demonstrates Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy
Component 1b Demonstrates Knowledge of Students
Component 1c Selects Instructional Outcomes
Component 1d Demonstrates Utilization of Resources
Component 1e Designs Coherent Instruction
Component 1f Assesses Student Learning

Domain 2   The Learning Environment
Component 2a Establishes an Environment of Respect and Rapport
Component 2b Establishes a Culture for Learning
Component 2c Manages Classroom Procedures
Component 2d Manages Student Behavior
Component 2e Organizes Physical Space

Domain 3   Instruction
Component 3a Communicates Clearly and Accurately
Component 3b Uses Higher Order Questioning and Discussion Techniques

Component 3c Engages Students in Learning
Component 3d Uses Assessment in Instruction
Component 3e Demonstrates Flexibility and Responsiveness

Domain 4   Professional Responsibilities
Component 4a Grows and Develops Professionally
Component 4b Communicates with Families
Component 4c Participates in a Professional Learning Community
Component 4d Shows Professionalism
Component 4e Maintains Accurate Records

Feedback and Formative Review

With higher standards for student learning, teachers are also expected to demonstrate higher standards of professional practice. The SMCPS assessment system as a whole is designed to support professional growth and development. The SMCPS assessment system reflects the following:
- the use of multiple sources of information to evaluate teaching in addition to direct classroom observation (for example student work, teacher artifacts, planning documents, teacher reflection);
- an emphasis on teacher self-assessment, reflection, and collegial support;
- a role for teacher autonomy in the assessment process, combined with adherence to accepted measurement principles in the assessment processes for accountability purposes; and
- the use of multi-year assessment cycles, with different procedures for teachers in different phases of the cycle.

The assessment system includes two different processes: a formative process, under the direction of the teacher, and a summative process which involves administrators in making judgments regarding teaching performances. All probationary teachers are engaged in the summative process each year. Once teachers receive continuing contracts, however, they participate annually in either the formative process or the summative process.

This evaluation system is one based on professional growth. As such, the cycle of feedback provided by supervisor – as well as by mentors – is an integral component.

New Teacher Seminars
Ongoing professional development is built into the program of support for new teachers.
- These sessions are planned for every 2nd Wednesday of the month (unless otherwise noted).
- Sessions offer practical strategies for immediate application with differentiated processes for elementary and secondary teachers. Time is allotted for discussion, problem solving, and learning.
- Teachers are paid a stipend for up to three sessions.
- Teachers who participate fully in all sessions <u>and complete a reflection log</u> earn three (3) MSDE Continuing Professional Development credits that can be applied toward the renewal of your certificate.

Teaching Tips
- On Wednesdays, each teacher new to SMCPS and their mentors receive a *Teaching Tip* via school system e-mail. The tips are practical and can be applied in classrooms immediately.
- The e-mails also provide updates and reminders to new teachers about initiatives and upcoming professional development.
- Mentor teachers and instructional resource teachers are also provided weekly tips with strategies to enhance their skills and their role as supports to new teachers.

New Teacher Socials:
The school system sponsors outings in and around St. Mary's County to help new teachers connect on a personal level with the community. These excursions are both educational and fun. Past socials included:
- A trip to St. Clement's Island – "Birthplace of Maryland"
- Historic St. Mary's City
- A walking tour of the United States Naval Academy and Annapolis State House
- Bowling
- A tour of the United States Capitol and the White House

Differentiated Support for New Teachers:
Induction is a process through which teachers new to the profession and new to SMCPS are provided with the professional development they need to be successful in their ***first three years of teaching***. Recognizing that teachers come with different levels of experience, we have differentiated support for our new teachers in their first three years and veteran teachers who are new to St. Mary's County Public Schools.
- All teachers new to the profession participate in induction activities until they receive tenure.
- Veteran teachers, in their first year with SMCPS, participate in induction activities for a minimum of one year.

YEAR ONE:
- **Orientation:**
  - Multiple summer professional development programs, including:
    - "Early-Bird" workshops in content, strategies, and programs (optional)
    - Three-day period in which teachers new to SMCPS are oriented to our school community (required)
- **New Teacher Seminars**:
  - Monthly seminars designed to support new teachers' professional development (required) (3 credits)
    - Held 2nd Wednesday of the month
    - Each participant who attends will be paid $57.50 per session for up to three sessions
- **Mentoring**

- A site-based, experienced teacher provides coaching, support, and guidance (required)
- Regular opportunities to observe or co-teach with experienced teachers (once per quarter), with follow-up coaching and feedback
- **Formative Review and Feedback**
  - Feedback and review of performance based on the Teacher Performance Assessment System (TPAS) provided by administrators, supervisors, and non-evaluative feedback by mentors
- **Ongoing Professional Development**
  - Participation in site-based or system-wide professional development, including participation in professional learning communities (PLC), collaborative teams, workshops, or courses (as appropriate)

YEAR TWO:
- **2nd Year Seminars**:
  - Monthly seminars designed to support new teachers' professional development (required) (3 credits)
  - Held 2nd Wednesday of the month - *If teachers are enrolled in a graduate program and take a 3-credit course, this requirement may be waived.*
- **Mentoring**
  - A site-based, experienced teacher provides coaching, support, and guidance
  - Regular opportunities to observe or co-teach (up to twice a year), with follow-up coaching and feedback
- **Formative Review and Feedback**
  - Feedback and review of performance based on the Teacher Performance Assessment System (TPAS) provided by administrators, supervisors, and non-evaluative feedback by mentors
- **Ongoing Professional Development**
  - Participation in site-based or system-wide professional development, including participation in professional learning communities (PLC), collaborative teams, workshops, or courses (as appropriate)

YEAR THREE:
- **Teacher Leadership Professional Development**
  - Participation in professional development designed to foster teacher leadership. Options include:
    - Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Leader Training (1 credit)
    - Skills for Mentoring and Coaching (1 credit)
    - Potential Instructional Leaders of Tomorrow's Schools (PILOTS) program (1 credit)
- **Formative Review and Feedback**
  - Feedback and review of performance based on the Teacher Performance Assessment System (TPAS) provided by administrators, supervisors, and non-evaluative feedback by mentors
- **Ongoing Professional Development**

- o Participation in site-based or system-wide professional development, including participation in professional learning communities (PLC), collaborative teams, workshops, or courses (as appropriate)

VETERANS NEW TO THE SYSTEM:
- **Orientation:**
  - o Multiple summer professional development programs, including:
    - ▪ "Early-Bird" workshops in content, strategies, and programs (optional)
    - ▪ 3-day period in which teachers new to SMCPS are oriented to our school community (required)
- **New Teacher Seminars**:
  - o Monthly seminars designed to support teachers' professional development (choose 4 or more to attend) (2-3 credits)
    - ▪ Each participant who attends will be paid $57.50 per session for up to three sessions
- **Mentoring**
  - o A site-based, experienced teacher provides coaching, support, and guidance (as appropriate)
- **Formative Review and Feedback**
  - o Feedback and review of performance based on the Teacher Performance Assessment System (TPAS) provided by administrators, supervisors, and non-evaluative feedback by mentors
- **Ongoing Professional Development**
  - o Participation in site-based or system-wide professional development, including participation in professional learning communities (PLC), collaborative teams, workshops, or courses

Staffing to Support New Teacher Induction

Teacher induction is coordinated as a collaborative effort spearheaded by the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development. The director of that team, along with the Instructional Resource Teacher for Professional Development, implement the program with collaboration from Human Resources, other departments, and schools. Mentor teachers and school-based Instructional Resource Teachers provide input through quarterly meetings. For the 2010-2011 school year SMCPS hired 91 new teachers. All first year teachers are assigned a mentor; second-year teachers continue the mentor support from the previous year; and third-year teachers are given the option of continued support. This year, 106 mentors support these new teachers, with a maximum ratio of one (1) mentor to up to three (3) new teachers.

Mentor Support, Selection, and Training

At the heart of St. Mary's County Public Schools' Teacher Induction Program are our peer mentors. Peer mentors work directly with beginning teachers providing model demonstration lessons, team teaching, lesson planning, coaching and feedback, as well as guidance and support in other areas of professional development. Coordination, supervision, training, and support for the program are provided through the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development.

In St. Mary's County Public Schools, school-based peer mentors are selected and approved by each school's administrator. Applications are reviewed centrally for qualifications and training. Mentors are aware of new teacher needs and personally take on the success of our new colleagues. To be selected as a peer mentor, a teacher **must**:

- Demonstrate successful experience as a professional for at least three years in our school district;
- Hold or be eligible for an Advanced Professional Certificate (APC) (96 percent of active mentors currently hold their APC);
- Take the one-credit *Skills for Coaching and Mentoring* training, which is offered systemically three times per year (95 percent of active mentors have taken this course, and the course will be offered again in the spring);
- Show evidence of support for colleagues, a positive attitude, and enthusiasm about teaching;
- Listen and respond to questions and concerns of new teachers;
- Meet with the new teachers during New Teacher Induction Week (August);
- Meet regularly with, observe, and conference with new teachers *(mentors are to meet with their new teachers for 40 minutes per week.)*;
- Actively participate in three mentor meetings throughout the school year; and
- Maintain confidentiality.

Based on the current negotiated agreement, the stipend for peer mentors is $700 above their base salary, paid semi-annually. For each additional assigned new teacher, the peer mentor receives $300. A mentor is assigned no more than three new teachers in a given school year.

To support mentors' work, each are required to successfully complete the 1-credit course, *Skills for Coaching and Mentoring*. Through this course, mentors develop effective coaching and communication skills to build rapport among colleagues, create positive instructional change, and enhance self-esteem for new teachers. Mentors learn a prescriptive process for communicating with a colleague in pre- and post- classroom observation conferences.

Training for Administrators and Central Office Supervisors
During the monthly administrative and supervisory leadership seminars in the spring, leaders are provided an update to changes and recommendations for selecting mentors for the following year, followed up by a memorandum and application for mentors. In addition, they are provided the new teacher and mentor teacher handbooks as well as a calendar of new teacher induction activities that are scheduled. In August, all administrators and supervisors participate in the first day of new teacher induction, conveying the message that each are there to support new teachers throughout the journey. In addition, all administrators have participated in professional development on new teacher induction and supports for new teachers, especially in light of new COMAR requirements. In September, the leadership seminar focuses on support for teachers, emphasizing needs related to beginning of the year conferences, mentor assignments, and quarterly coaching experiences for new teachers.

New Teacher Responsibilities
In support of effective induction practices and new COMAR requirements, principals were given guidance regarding options to consider in assignments for new teachers. As per guidance, to the extent practicable given staffing and fiscal concerns, the following options were provided:

- *A reduction in the teaching schedule;*

- In this time of fiscal constraints, this option was not feasible.
  - *A reduction or elimination of responsibilities in non-instructional duties;* and/or
    - Principals were asked to consider this option by reducing the number of committees on which teachers may be serving, or in reducing other responsibilities. As new teachers are participating in new teacher induction activities (and this calendar was provided in advance), principals were able to keep teachers' schedules under consideration and to assign fewer duties.
  - *Sensitivity to assignment to teaching classes that include high percentages of students with achievement, discipline or attendance challenges.*
    - Principals may certainly consider this option, and decisions are made with a student-centered approach.

Schools that are Safe, Drug-free, and Conducive to Learning

No Child Left Behind Goal 4: All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug-free, and conducive to learning.

No Child Left Behind Indicator 4.1: The number of persistently dangerous schools, as defined by the state.

NCLB requires states to identify persistently dangerous schools. In Maryland, a "persistently dangerous" school means a school in which each year for a period of three consecutive school years the total number of student suspensions for more than 10 days or expulsions equals two and one-half percent (2½ percent) or more of the total number of students enrolled in the school, for any of the following offenses: arson or fire; drugs; explosives; firearms; other guns; other weapons; physical attack on a student; physical attack on a school system employee or other adult; and sexual assault. Schools are placed into "persistently dangerous" status in a given school year based on their suspension data in the prior year. **Note:** Information associated with Safe Schools is also included in Part II, Additional Federal and State Reporting Requirements and Attachment 11: Title IV Part A, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities.

A. Based on the Examination of Persistently Dangerous Schools Data (Table 7.1 – 7.5):

- Where first-time schools are identified, what steps are being taken by the school system to reverse this trend and prevent the identified school(s) from moving into probationary status?

  N/A

Annually, local school systems are required to report incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation as mandated by the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005.[5]

B. Based on the Examination of Data on Incidents of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation (Table 7.6):

1. How would you characterize the prevalence of bullying, harassment, and intimidation in the schools in your system? If you have seen an increase or decrease in reports over the past three school years, explain those in terms of programs and/or procedures that you have implemented.

While the number of incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation decreased from 82 in 2006-2007 to 66 in 2007-2008, the number increased to 93 in 2008-2009 and to 129 in 2009-2010.

St. Mary's County Public Schools implemented the Superintendent's Bullying Prevention and Community Awareness Initiative. The initiative enhances bullying prevention efforts through continuing professional development for staff, student-based presentations, and parent community meetings addressing prevention strategies, recognition of victims, staff and parent response to victimization (to include reporting procedures), and addressing the bully through school-based intervention strategies. Supported by a grant from the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, Jodee Blanco, nationally acclaimed anti-bullying expert and author of the book, *Please Stop*

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[5] Section 7-424 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code.

Laughing at Me, provided professional development for staff, parents/legal guardians, and community members as well as a guest speaker for middle school students. The presentations and professional development have reached 3,7000 middle school students, 2,000 staff members and over 200 parents, guardians, and concerned community members.

2. What methods has your school system used to make staff, parents, and students aware of the Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Form?

Schools at each level implemented the bullying reporting law by providing the reporting form in the front offices and in the offices of administrators, teachers-in-charge, school counselors, school nurses, and pupil personnel workers. The form was included in the student calendar/handbook and is available on the school system's website. The link to the form is included in the student handbook as well. The availability of forms allows parents to communicate their concerns in a concise and effective manner that encourages administrators to follow through on their investigations with complete information. Completed investigations are then reviewed by the Director of Student Services to ensure appropriate follow-up and intervention. This information is also used to assist in identifying appropriate professional development topics.

The school system makes brochures available to all schools for distribution to students and parents relative to bullying and sexual harassment. In addition, the school system's website provides strategies for prevention that parents may implement to help their children. This information includes a section on cyber bullying.

C. Based on the Examination of Suspension and Expulsion Data for Sexual Harassment, Harassment, and Bullying (Table 7.7):

1. Identify the system-wide strategies that are being used to prevent/reduce suspensions and expulsions for sexual harassment, harassment, and bullying.

In addition to the Superintendent's Bullying Prevention and Community Awareness Initiative, the St. Mary's County Public School System utilizes a variety of strategies to prevent and/or reduce incidents of sexual harassment, harassment, and bullying.

Students in grades 3-9 receive instruction in one of two research-based curriculums: Steps to Respect (elementary) and Second Step (secondary). Classroom discussion is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the lessons.

Each school creates a school-wide discipline plan that includes recognition for appropriate behavior, referrals for student support, and scaled consequences for repeated behavioral infractions. Assistant principals, school counselors, PPWs, and school psychologists provide intervention and support as do school-based and community mentors at some sites.

PBIS initiatives include a focus on respectful behaviors among different groups. The Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment Prevention and the Disproportionality (Special Education Discretionary) grants continue to support PBIS school incentives. The PBIS initiative includes a focus on defining, teaching, acknowledging, and reinforcing the positive and appropriate behavior of our students.

Professional Development is a key strategy for improving school climate and reducing disruptions to learning. New teacher orientation includes demonstration classrooms and specific sessions on classroom management. Assistant principals are trained annually by the Department of Student Services relative to policies, regulations, laws, and strategies for enhancing student behavioral success. Student services staff development is planned annually based on system data and state and local trends/issues.

The focus of identifying students with academic gaps/deficiencies and to match each student to the interventions that move them forward academically will continue. Those students will then become more engaged and less likely to disrupt the school environment because of boredom or an attempt to mask their academic weaknesses. The data-driven approach to individualized student intervention that has improved our MSA and HSA results has had an impact on our elementary and middle school discipline data as well. Teachers and instructional resource teachers represent the human resources that work directly with these students.

This same individualized support for students who continue to disrupt the learning environment will be the focus of our school-based Pupil Services Team (PST) discussions. This team consists of an administrator, school counselors, nurses, PPWs, and school psychologists who work with others such as parents/legal guardians, special educators, and instructional resource staff to assess the behavioral needs of students and the climate needs of the school. The team will continue to identify and implement school improvement strategies and interventions for individual students as identified by school data.

Schools that are Safe, Drug-free, and Conducive to Learning

D. Based on the Examination of Suspension Data (Tables 7.8 - 7.10):

1. Identify the system-wide strategies that are being used to prevent/reduce suspensions. If applicable, include the strategies that are being used to address the disproportionate suspensions among the race/ethnicity subgroups and between genders.

The key to a positive school climate and sound classroom management is a strong and effective instructional program. Our local and state instructional data points are indicative of a strong instructional program taught by highly qualified teachers. This is the first key to our success in our efforts to improve safety and reduce suspensions.

Character education is tied to school climate in each of our schools. Direct instruction in terms of character education takes place in elementary schools and enhances our PBIS initiatives as appropriate. The six pillars of character education are tied to our discipline codes and are used as additional supports for our teachers.

PBIS was fully implemented in eight schools. Discipline data indicates that five of those schools demonstrated fewer suspensions in 2010. Five schools reduced the disproportionate representation of African American students in that data and four schools reduced the number of students with disabilities who were suspended from school. Suspensions for students with disabilities, males, and African American males, in particular, continue to be of concern and remain areas needing targeted focus.

The group mentoring programs focuses on the needs of underachieving students who are experiencing social, behavioral, and academic problems. We are targeting those students who are in the student groups who are underachieving district wide- including our African American, FARMS, and special education student groups. In addition to the mentoring opportunities, these students will also be provided with additional interventions.

Each school has a school discipline plan and the school system's code of conduct is consistent across schools. Administrators receive annual training on school climate, discipline investigations, and behavioral strategies. There is a crisis team as well as a restraint team in each school with regular training for those staff who are assigned to those teams. Five emergency drills are conducted annually.

Safety assistants meet regularly with the Director of Safety and Security. Their role in prevention and intervention will be expanded to ensure that they serve as an additional resource for the school in the hallways and in the cafeteria.

In order to address the need to acknowledge the effects of community disruption on our schools, the Division of Supporting Services has assessed physical plant safety as related to disruption and has included physical changes in the general and capital improvement budgets with the addition of security vestibules and visitor check in equipment.

The Superintendent established the Superintendent's Safety and Security Advisory Committee (SSSAC) under the direction of the Director of Safety and Security. This committee composed of the

Superintendent's School Support Team (SSST), all site administrators, supporting outside agencies, school-based and central office staff, employee association representatives, parents/legal guardians, students, and community partners as authorized and appointed by the Superintendent of Schools. The committee provides an opportunity for community collaboration and guidance in strategically planning for the safety and security of our schools. The committee examines all aspects of safety, security, and school climate to assess needs and make program and enhancement recommendations to the Superintendent. The Director of Safety and Security is responsible for the scheduling of quarterly meetings, documentation of attendance, and meeting agendas.

Annual professional development for assistant principals supports their ability to develop relationships with students and their families. These sessions also provide them opportunities to network and identify successful practices in other schools within the county. Finally, the assistant principals are updated annually on the discipline trends and training topics are developed based on our local data.

2. Describe the changes or adjustments that will be made, along with the related resource allocations, to ensure sufficient progress. Include timelines where appropriate.

Our first adjustment is the implementation of a model for school improvement plans that focuses the work of school staff on strategies that have proven successful in our schools and in other systems. Schools will choose from several approved options for climate setting: PBIS, Asset Development and/or Character Education initiatives. The initial funding for asset development was provided by the Local Management Board.

The school system will continue to expand and implement the model for tiered behavioral support to those schools that are confronting challenges in this area. We will provide our team leaders and district coaches with training from the statewide PBIS management team to ensure that the initiative is being implemented with fidelity. As our local school system PBIS coaches and school leaders are trained from each school, we will continue training staff members at the school level.

As a component of the school improvement plans, school-based pupil services teams will meet regularly to identify students who have accumulated discipline referrals and/or suspensions. Individualized plans will be developed to assist these students in changing behavioral patterns that interfere with learning.

Professional development is provided to key staff in targeted areas. New procedures were developed to assist school teams in evaluating and managing student threats of harm to others or themselves. Central office staff and school-based administrators will be trained in these new procedures in the fall of 2010. In addition, several required trainings, including Child Abuse/Sexual Harassment Prevention, Crisis Intervention Information and Responsibilities, Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Prevention, and Health Emergencies: Life Threatening Allergies have been developed as online modules to allow for ease of staff access and ongoing training, as well as compliance monitoring.

We have also partnered with our Local Management Board (LMB) to provide Asset Development training for our site based school leaders. Many of our schools participated in this training and received the training materials at that time. To ensure that staff members and participating schools are implementing this initiative with fidelity, we will provide additional training and we will monitor this process centrally as we provide the schools with the necessary support. In April 2010, selected central

office staff members were trained as trainers in Asset Development, enabling them to provide updated training to school-based staff as required.

The school system is in the third year of implementing a federal mentoring grant, Future Leaders of the World (FLOW) Mentoring, through the office of Safe and Drug Free Schools. The FLOW Mentoring initiative supports school-based mentoring programs for students who are encountering social and behavioral challenges. For the first two years of the grant, FLOW Mentoring operated programs in elementary and middle schools, serving students in grades 4-8. In the 2010-2011 school year, with the additional support of a new grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and funding from the Department of College and Career Readiness, FLOW Mentoring will be starting programs in each high school in the county. At the elementary level, students are matched one-to-one with a volunteer from the community. At the middle and high school levels students are matched in small groups of 4-5 with a teacher or staff mentor from their school. Programs meet once a week, after-school, for an hour and a half and every student is provided with bus transportation home. In every site a school Site Leader supervises mentor/mentee matches and coordinates programming to help support each student and each match.

In its second year (2009-2010) FLOW Mentoring served over 200 students in grades 4-8. Over the course of the year discipline referrals for the entire group of mentees dropped by 44 percent, 40 percent of mentees showed academic improvement as measured by GPA, 16 percent maintained their GPA, and over 67 percent of mentees showed improvement in school attitude, class participation, and social skills. By adding high school programs this year FLOW Mentoring will be able to serve additional students, reaching at-risk youth throughout the county.

In addition, the school system has also provided funding for male and female group mentoring programs at specific elementary and high schools throughout the county. These programs meet once a week after-school and provide programming and enrichment activities based on gender-specific issues and needs. Male and female group mentoring programs target students who need additional academic and social support. This initiative continues to be expanded to other secondary and elementary schools in the school system.

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) requires that each local school system provide a coordinated program of pupil services for all students (13.A.05.05.01.A)[6, 7, 8] and that the program of pupil services focus on the health, personal, interpersonal, academic, and career development of students (13A.05.05.01B).

E. Based on the Examination of Programs and Services Coordinated with Community Mental Health Providers and Agencies to Support Students with Emotional and Behavioral Needs:

1. Describe how the local school system coordinates programs and services with community mental health providers and agencies that provide services for students with personal and/or interpersonal

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[6] COMAR 13A.05.05.03(A). The Pupil Personnel Program is a systematic approach to programs and services that use the resources of the home, school, and community to enhance the social adjustment of students.

[7] COMAR 13A.05.05.13(E). Health services provided in school shall be coordinated with other health services within the community.

[8] COMAR 13A.05.05.06B(12). "Special health needs" means temporary or long-term health problems arising from physical, emotional, or social factors or any combination of these.

needs (i.e., emotional and/or social needs) in order for these students to progress in the general curriculum.

St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) coordinates programs and services with community mental health providers and agencies on a consistent and regular basis to provide support to students with personal/ interpersonal needs to be successful at school.

Some of the programs and services include Interagency Committee on School Attendance, Multidisciplinary Team with the Department of Social Services, Transition Team for students involved with the Department of Social Services. At these meetings the various service providers and agencies wrap around the student to support school attendance and success. Often students who have attendance problems, family conflict or problems in the community, are in need of assistance with personal/interpersonal issues. At these meetings, the different providers and agencies determine a plan to assist these students.

The Maryland Student Assistance programs are available to students in school. Students with at risk behaviors or involved with alcohol, drugs and personal/interpersonal issues are often at the center of these behaviors.

The St. Mary's County Public Schools also works closely with the Local Management Board to coordinate services and bring in support mental health services within the school directly or through agencies. In cooperation with the Local Management Board, a position was created, "Interagency Liaison" to help coordinate services to students.

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13.A.08.06.01-02 requires that each local school system ensure that any elementary school with a suspension rate[9] of 10 percent or higher implement Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) or another behavior management system. If a school meeting that target has already been trained in PBIS or another behavior management system, the local school system, in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education, will ensure that additional training is provided to expand the school's capacity to intervene. In addition, COMAR 13.A.08.06.01-02 requires that each local school system ensure that ALL schools with a habitual truancy rate[10] of 6 percent (SY 2009/2010) implement PBIS or another behavior management system. This percentage decreases to 4 percent in SY 2010/2011; 2 percent in SY 2011/2012and 1 percent in SY 2012/2013.

Once again, if a school meeting that target has already been trained in PBIS or another behavior management system, the local school system, in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education, will ensure that additional training is provided to expand the school's capacity to intervene.

F. Based on the number of schools in the LSS currently implementing PBIS, please describe the district's capacity to provide ongoing support and training to the school teams and coaches in your

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[9] The calculation for suspensions is an offender rate: The unduplicated number of suspended students divided by Sept. 30 student enrollment.

[10] Habitually truant means a student that meets all of the following criteria: (a) The student was age 5 through 20 during the school year; (b) The student was in membership in a school for 91 or more days; and (c) The student was unlawfully absent from school for more than 20 percent of the days in membership.

system. Where does responsibility for PBIS sit in your system? Is there an FTE (or a portion of an FTE) assigned to provide local support, sustain the initiative and attend statewide activities.

Currently, eight schools in St. Mary's County are implementing PBIS. Four school psychologists and two pupil personnel workers in the Department of Student Services serve as coaches to these school teams. One of the school psychologists has a reduced school caseload in order to coordinate the initiative locally and attend statewide meetings. St. Mary's County Public Schools partners with the other Southern Maryland county school systems in order to combine resources and provide regional training to these established teams. Funding for PBIS initiatives in past years has been provided through a Special Education discretionary grant, the Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment Prevention grant and the SDFS grant. For 2010-2011, funding is provided solely through a Special Education discretionary grant.

G. Based on the examination of Suspension data:

1. Identify how many elementary schools have a suspension rate of 10 percent or higher, how many of those schools have already been formally trained in PBIS, and how many have not.

    No elementary school in St. Mary's County has a suspension rate that exceeds 10 percent.

2. For those schools previously trained, please describe strategies to support/improve the implementation of the PBIS framework in those schools. Finally, please project the number of elementary schools that will require New Team PBIS Training in the summer of 2011 based on this regulation.

No elementary school in St. Mary's County has a suspension rate that exceeds 10 percent.

3. Please identify other district level strategies to address the needs of schools that meet the target for suspension. Do they need additional training? Are there Technical Assistance needs to ensure fidelity of implementation?

    No elementary school in St. Mary's County has a suspension rate that exceeds 10 percent.

H. Based on the examination of Habitual Truancy[10] data:

1. Identify how many schools have a habitual truancy rate of 6 percent or higher, how many of those schools have already been formally trained in PBIS, and how many have not.

    No schools in St. Mary's County have a Habitual Truancy rate that exceeds 6 percent.

2. For those schools previously trained, please describe strategies to support/improve the implementation of the PBIS framework in those schools. Finally, please project the number of schools that will require New Team PBIS Training in the summer of 2011, based on this regulation.

    No schools in St. Mary's County have a Habitual Truancy rate that exceeds 6 percent. One additional school is projected to require new team PBIS training in the summer of 2011.

3. Please identify other district level strategies to address the needs of schools that meet the target for Truancy. Do they need additional training? Are there Technical Assistance needs to ensure fidelity of implementation?

No schools in St. Mary's County have a Habitual Truancy rate that exceeds 6 percent.

Addressing Specific Student Groups

Career and Technology Education

The Bridge to Excellence Act requires that the Master Plan "shall include goals, objectives, and strategies" for the performance of students enrolled in Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs.

Instructions:

Please respond to these questions/prompts:

1. Describe the school system's progress on the implementation and expansion of CTE Programs of Study within Career Clusters as a strategy to prepare more students who graduate ready for entry into college and careers.

The system has implemented five College and Career Academies for all students. CTE offers the instruction for two of the five Academies—the Academy of Finance at Chopticon High School and the College Readiness Academy at the Dr. James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center. A large percentage of the fastest growing jobs in the U.S. require some form of education beyond high school. The Academies, as well as the CTE programs of study at the secondary sites, are developed to prepare students for an educational experience beyond high school. All stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, PAC members, and representatives of special populations) are involved in the development, implementation, evaluation, and expansion of CTE programs. Over the past two years, the system has been consistent in adopting one or more MSDE model programs. Additionally, existing programs/pathways have been upgraded to include a rigorous level of academic proficiency (mathematics and English).

Through partnerships with post-secondary institutions, CTE offers students programs of study that include a college experience (dual enrollment). These dual enrollment programs serve all students. The Tech Prep coordinator, program teachers, and PAC members plan a variety of meaningful activities on the college campus in which CTE students can participate. This helps to create a smooth transition from high school to a post-secondary institution and provides students with meaningful college exposure.

Due to the fact that a career cluster contributes to college readiness for all students, it is the primary avenue the system uses for delivering the knowledge and skills students need to be successful in college and careers. Students are offered a variety of pathways from which to choose, taught rigorous program content, offered dual enrollment opportunities, and are afforded meaningful exposure to a college campus.

2. What actions are included in the Master Plan to ensure access to CTE programs and success for every student in CTE Programs of Study, including students who are members of special populations?

The following is in place to ensure access to CTE programs and the academic success of all students including special populations:

- CTE's Vocational Support Staff Team (VSST) works with students to identify learning strengths, target areas for improvement, and build the skills needed for successful learning and achievement of goals. The VSST continues to do an excellent job identifying barriers to success and developing strategies to help students tear down barriers.
- Staff development activities, using local and federal funds (Perkins), are offered to CTE teachers throughout the year. Staff development activities include developing resources for CTE teachers serving special population students, developing instructional strategies for delivering direct, indirect, and interactive instruction, developing differentiation of instruction techniques, and training in providing accommodations, adaptations, and modifications.
- Teachers are in-serviced on materials containing best practices for expanding career possibilities for special population students.
- Local and federal funds are used to purchase equipment and supplies needed to help the special population to be successful in the classroom environment.

3. Describe the school system's strategies for increasing CTE enrollees to become completers of CTE programs of study. Data points should include the number of enrollees, the number of concentrators and completers.

The following strategies are in place for increasing the number of concentrators and completers:

With assistance from the data specialist, SMCPS is confident that the rate of concentrators expected to graduate will increase from the current rate of 80.69 percent (PQI). To date, the CTE data shows that most students are entering the concentrator course, completing the program, and graduating high school.

Review of the system' data shows enrollment in some of the Clusters has remained strong and consistent over time. When comparing the 2008 Program Quality Index (PQI) data to the 2009 PQI data, the Human Resource Services, Business Management and Finance, and Transportation Technologies clusters had the most students enrolled. Two programs in the Human Resource Services cluster (Child Development - 200201 and Criminal Justice - 430199) greatly attributed to the increase in the enrollment of the cluster. The three programs (Automotive Refinishing and Repair (470603), Automotive Technology (470604), and Aviation (470608) in the Transportation Technologies cluster continue to show gains in enrollment as well as an increase in academic attainment. Additionally, enrollment in the Arts, Media, and Communications cluster (Graphics and TV/Video Production) shows significant increases.

Review of the system data indicates enrollment in some of the programs such as Engineering Technology (151101), Allied Health (519999), Culinary Arts (200401), Production Engineering

(150613), Fire and Rescue (430250), Computer Networking (521204), and Computer-Aided Drafting and Design (480101) shows significant increases.

The rigorous and relevant learning, personal attention for all students, opportunities to bring the real world to the classroom, and opportunities for involvement with the community all attribute to gains in cluster and program enrollment.

One of the incentives listed below is certifications. The system focuses on industry certifications for CTE students. CTE instructors are in-serviced on certifications offered for their programs. Local and federal funds are used to offer students opportunities to earn certifications that are aligned with industry recognized standards. Baselines for the number of concentrators sitting for the certifications have been established. The certification data is used to put strategies in place to improve the pass rate of students. To date there has been an increase in the number of CTE students earning one or more industry certifications. Opportunities for CTE teachers to test for industry certifications are available.

- Students are made aware of CTE program incentives (certifications, articulations, college level program of study, variety of clusters/pathways, internships, scholarship opportunities, college visits, etc.).
- A data specialist is in place to assist with collecting data that identifies CTE concentrators and completers. The data is used to set goals to increase the number of concentrators and completers reported to MSDE annually.
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are in place across the system to devise strategies to increase enrollment and the visibility of all CTE programs.
- Stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, etc.) are educated on CTE for the 21st Century versus traditional vocational education.
- Curriculum that integrates academic and technical studies--and is current with industry standards--is offered to all students.

4. CTE improvement plans are required if a local school system does not meet at least 90 percent of the negotiated performance target for a Core Indicator of Performance under the Perkins Act. If your school system did not meet one or more Core Indicators of Performance, please respond to the following.

a.) Identify the Core Indicator(s) of Performance that did not meet the 90 percent threshold.

HS Completion, 3S1: Concentrators expected to graduate that did - Outcome 2009

b.) Analyze why the indicator was not met, including any disparities or gaps in performance between any category of students and performance of all students.

The 2009 PQI data is incomplete and inaccurate. Therefore, it was difficult to use the data to determine which programs the concentrators are not completing. According to the PQI, only 259 or 80.69 percent of CTE concentrators graduated. Using that same data, CTE missed the target of 99.99 percent by 9.301 percent. The administrators have worked very closely with the data

specialist in preparing CTE reports. The system is optimistic that the 2010 PQI data will be accurate and complete.

Due to the absence of inclusive PQI data, the system was forced to use raw data to analyze program effectiveness. The raw data CTE collected shows that the completion rate at the Dr. James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center is on the increase. In 2008-2009, there were 283 completers. In 2009-2010, there were 345 completers. The conclusion here is that the Forrest Center programs were incorrectly reported for 3S1.

The number of students entering one or more concentrator courses in the largest enrolled high school cluster, Business Management and Finance (BMF), was low. In 2008-2009, 233 students entered one or more concentrator courses. In 2009-2010, 337 students entered one or more concentrator courses. The conclusion here is that students entering high school CTR courses are not entering into the concentrator courses and are not graduating as completers. An improvement plan is in place to assist with meeting the 90 percent threshold. However, based on the raw data, the reporting for 3S1 did not capture all of our high school CTE concentrators who graduated from high school.

Career Research and Development (CRD) is a MSDE model CTE program that prepares students with the academic, technical, and workplace skills necessary to seek further education and employment in a career field of their interest upon graduating high school. Therefore, the course work needed for the CRD students to be successful is available to them. In spite of the rigor and relevance that CRD offers to students, it is a low-performing program. The system has identified the reason why the students are entering the CRD program and exiting before completing high school. The program has a poor image due to academic performance of the students. Students who are <u>not</u> enrolled in the program--who could benefit greatly from the program of study--view the curriculum as being relevant, but not rigorous. The attitude of most students who <u>are</u> in the program is that they cannot succeed. As a result, their inappropriate behavior, poor attendance, and low academic performance prevent them from reaching a level of success.

As a strategy to improve academic performance in the CRD program, administrators are careful to assign teachers to deliver the CRD instruction who have a passion for helping the low achieving or low performing student break the cycle of failure; a skill for raising the self-esteem of students so that they feel good about themselves; the natural ability to strengthen the basic skills of the students by delivering instruction using practical and purposeful lessons and interdisciplinary (mathematics and English) teaching; and some creative and effective strategies in place that will result in the students developing the study skills needed to reach a level of success.

Another strategy to improve the academic and retention performance of students in the CRD program is the use of local and federal dollars to change the appearance of the classroom by purchasing innovative instructional materials.

Additionally, teachers will participate in ongoing in-service training to develop intervention strategies for CRD students. As a result of the training, the system is optimistic that the number of CTE concentrators receiving a diploma will increase.

The system will continue to use daily attendance rates, transcript data, course enrollments, and grades to determine the effectiveness of the strategies that are in place to help concentrators graduate from all CTE programs.

c.) For FY 11, indicate the section/subsection in the CTE Local Plan for Program Improvement where the improvement plan/strategy is described.

Strategy Worksheet A

- Upgrades to Computer Programming
- Upgrades to Career Research and Development
- Upgrades to Business Administration
- Provide opportunities for students to receive a MOS certification and/or other certifications
- Purchase Smart Technology items to encourage students to enroll and complete the program

Strategy Worksheet B1

- Request staff development for teachers to identify essential content for Computer Programming
- Hold Program Advisory Council meetings for program improvement for the AOF, Computer Programming, CRD, and Office Technology programs
- Use contracted services for ongoing staff development
- Set baselines (Computer Programming) for the number of students entering post-secondary education, employment, or the military, two quarters after graduation
- Provide training to teachers on how to make informed instructional decisions using accurate data
- Provide opportunities for students to earn college credit
- Develop a Tech Prep brochure to inform students about the value-added options available through Tech Prep

Strategy Worksheet B2

- Provide high school teachers staff development
- Set a baseline for the number of CTE concentrators taking an assessment
- Use PAC members to assist with aligning the curriculum, instruction, and assessments with program standards and the newly acquired resources
- Submit a proposal for the Administrative Services pathway of the Business Management and Finance cluster
- Ongoing in-service for Business Administration and CRD
- Teachers participate in a data analysis workshop
- Set a baseline for the number of CTE concentrators completing the Business Administrative Services program

<u>Strategy Worksheet B3</u>

- Employ a strategy to increase the completion rate
- Provide teachers staff development (with follow-up) to receive training on the newly acquired resources

Addressing Specific Student Groups

Early Learning

A. Based on the examination of 2009-2010 MMSR Kindergarten Assessment Data (Tables 8.1 and 8.2):

1. Describe the school system's plans, including any changes or adjustments that will be made, for ensuring the progress of students who begin kindergarten either not ready or approaching readiness as determined by the Maryland Model for School Readiness Kindergarten Assessment. Please include a discussion of the corresponding resource allocations and include timelines for use of allocations where appropriate.

The 2009-2010 Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) data shows major progress in the school readiness of St. Mary's County kindergarten students over the past five years. Of the students entering kindergarten, 92 percent were fully ready for school; a significant gain from 79 percent in 2008-2009. Based on projected enrollment numbers, an additional preschool was added to the FY11 budget, including an additional teacher, paraeducator, and materials and resources for instruction. Careful monitoring of enrollment indicated the need for the addition of another pre-K classroom prior to the start of school. The addition of these classrooms will provide developmentally appropriate, readiness for school experiences for an additional 80 students.

Analysis of the 2009-2010 data indicates that continued emphasis should be placed on experiences that develop a wide oral vocabulary with many ways of applying skills and creating understanding. Using DIBELS data and ratings from the Counting Profile Assessments, instructional resource teachers will work with teachers to provide focused interventions on identified readiness needs. On September 24, 2010, staff development funds in the Maryland Model for School Readiness and Title II Grants provided focused, age appropriate training for prekindergarten 3, prekindergarten 4, kindergarten and preschool special education. Other staff development opportunities are planned monthly throughout the year focusing on instruction and assessment.

2. What are the school system's plans to work with other early childhood partners/programs (i.e., Preschool Special Education; Head Start; Child Care Programs) to ensure that children are entering school ready to learn?

Early childhood programs in St. Mary's County include prekindergarten 3, prekindergarten 4, kindergarten, preschool special education, Head Start classes for 3-and 4-year-olds, child care programs, infants and toddlers, and Judy Center playgroups. The Work Sampling System is used to record ratings for each child, based on observations, formative assessments, and work samples in each child's portfolio. All staff receive training in using the domains and exemplars. The ratings are used to communicate a child's progress to families and to create a variety of data reports including those used by MSDE.

Staff development includes trainings and workshops on identified topics that include instruction and assessments within the domains of the Work Sampling System, classroom environments, and classroom management. St. Mary's County Public Schools collaborates with the Promise Center (Southern Maryland) to provide resources and workshops for family members' day care providers, child care

programs, and Head Start staff. Collaborative meetings occur between teachers of children that are dually placed to identify goals, plan instructions, and analyze assessment data.

B. Based on the examination of the 2009-2010 Public Prekindergarten Enrollment Data (Table 8.3):

1. Please verify the accuracy of the Public Prekindergarten enrollment data for school year 2009-2010.

All prekindergarten children are entered into the *eSchool+* central database upon registration in St. Mary's County Public Schools. Daily attendance is monitored through electronic entry by each teacher. The 2009-2010 Public Prekindergarten Enrollment Data (Table 8.3) is accurate and reflects enrollment data reported to MSDE.

2. Describe the policies and practices put in place to ensure the enrollment of all eligible children into the Public Prekindergarten Program as described in COMAR 13A.6.02.

Beginning in January, information about prekindergarten enrollment, including age and income eligibility, is distributed publically to local newspapers and electronic news sites, local radio and television broadcasts, and on the SMCPS website. Flyers are distributed through partner programs, including the Judy Center, Head Start, and the St. Mary's County Local Management Board's Early Childhood team. System-wide prekindergarten round-ups are held in April and May. The Early Childhood Team sponsors an Early Childhood Fair each spring that provides screenings, immunizations, school supplies, and other assistance for families of children living in the most economically disadvantage areas (20653 and 20634). The success of these practices is seen in the expansion of the program with an additional two classrooms (Section A.1).

Addressing Specific Student Groups

Gifted and Talented Programs

The *Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act* §5-401 requires that the Master Plan "shall include goals, objectives, and strategies regarding the performance of gifted and talented students, as defined in §8-201."

The *Annotated Code of Maryland* §8-201 defines a gifted and talented student as "an elementary or secondary student who is identified by professionally qualified individuals as: (1) Having outstanding talent and performing, or showing the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students of a similar age, experience, or environment; (2) Exhibiting high performance capability in intellectual, creative, or artistic areas; (3) Possessing an unusual leadership capacity; or (4) Excelling in specific academic fields.

The focus of the 2010 Master Plan Update is on progress toward meeting goals and adjustments made to overcome challenges. In accordance with this focus and in order to provide a status on the progress toward meeting Gifted and Talented Program goals, objectives and strategies regarding the performance of gifted and talented students, local school systems are expected to provide a cohesive, stand-alone response to the prompts outlined below.

1. List the goals, objectives, and strategies for the Gifted and Talented Program student identification and services along with the progress made in 2009-2010 toward meeting those goals, objectives, and strategies. Include supporting data as needed to document progress.

Goals, objectives, and strategies for the gifted and talented program in SMCPS include:

Goal 1: Increase system awareness of gifted and talented services.
- Objective1: Increase communication regarding services available to elementary school students in the areas of Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and enrichment programs.
- Objective 2: Improve communication practices to clarify for stakeholders what programs are available to highly able learners and what resources beyond the school day exist.

Strategies:
- Communicate regularly with schools via content area newsletters in the areas of Mathematics and Reading/Language Arts. Newsletter features include implementation strategies and pacing tips for PAC-TD services including, Junior Great Books (K-8), William and Mary Reading/Language Arts units (2-8), Capstone projects (3-5), GT Math Extension Maps (1-4), Interact math simulations (5), and Project M3 (3-5). Additional communication to schools will be handled through Administrative (A&S) and Supervisory meetings, as well as through instructional resource teacher (IRT) meetings.
- Continue to refer students to Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth programs.
- Provide increased local opportunities for CTY testing by providing at least three local testing centers.
- Invite students to apply to high school signature programs for STEM and GIS (Global and International Studies) particularly those students whose performance data

indicate a special talent in the areas of math and science (STEM) and humanities (GIS).

- Continue to provide talent development opportunities for students with special talent and interest in Business and Finance through the National Academy of Finance signature program at Chopticon High School.
- Regularly post updates to program initiatives on the school system intranet, SharePoint, and the SMCPS website.

Goal 2: All schools will fully implement GT program services and instruction for rigor in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics.
Objective2: Provide technical assistance at school sites for program implementation.
Strategies:

- Conduct professional development sessions, model lessons, and classroom walkthroughs.
- Integrate opportunities for challenge and rigor within the math curriculum maps and delineated materials in Grades 1-5.
- Provide professional development for implementation of the updated Primary Talent Development units by master teachers on county professional development days, as well as through the distribution of PTD CDs and posting the PTD materials and resources on the intranet.
- Provide technical assistance for middle schools in the implementation of Junior Great Books and William and Mary units for Reading/Language Arts.
- Integrate opportunities for challenge and rigor in Reading/Language Arts through capstone projects and themed reading in Grades 1-5.

Goal 3: Identify all potential students for gifted and talented services at the elementary level.
Objective 3: Ensure that placement criteria and procedures are in place to achieve representative participation.
Strategies:

- Provide a multiple measures approach to identification for gifted and talented services, using a combination of ability and achievement data.
- Provide regular opportunities for identification by instructional unit and skill.
- Supervisor for Instruction for Gifted and Talented will meet with administrative and instructional teams at each elementary school to provide technical assistance in identifying students for participation in PAC-TD services.
- Supervisor for Instruction for Gifted and Talented will meet regularly with primary teams to ensure consistency and reliability in REPI scoring of PTD artifacts.
- Conduct portfolio checks to ensure consistent documentation of PTD behaviors, with a goal of a system composite score of at least a 3.25.

Goal 4: 65% of all students will complete Algebra in Middle School.
   2007-19%, 2008-31%, 2009-63%, 2010-67% of students completed Algebra in middle school.

Objective 4: Ensure that placement criteria and procedures are in place to achieve representative participation in high level middle school courses.
Strategies:

- Collaborate with the supervisors of instruction for English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Fine Arts to ensure that placement criteria allow equitable access to higher level coursework, with the goal of mirrored demographics between the Honors, Pre-AP and AP courses and school system enrollment. Gifted and Talented programming at the middle and high school levels consists of leveled courses, with Honors/Pre-AP and AP courses in each content area.
- Work with the supervisor of mathematics to ensure that the Pre-Algebra course for sixth grade students provides rigor for mathematics, while supporting the state curriculum and common core standards for sixth grade math.
- Implement the Springboard program in middle school Algebra 1 courses to ensure alignment to AP coursework and preparation for rigorous high school curriculum.

Goal 5: All high schools will achieve a 1.5 AP challenge index and a 60% pass rate cumulatively.
2010 Challenge Index-Leonardtown 2.14, Great Mills 1.32, Chopticon 1.95
2008 SMCPS Pass Rate-44.8%, 2009 SMCPS Pass Rate 49.4%, 2010 SMCPS Pass Rate 46.4%

Objective 5: Ensure that placement criteria and procedures are in place to achieve representative participation in Pre-AP and AP courses.
Strategies:
- Fully utilize data, such as AP Potential, to identify students for enrollment in AP courses.
- Implement common assessments to monitor student progress and support student performance in AP courses.
- Implement common syllabi for all high school courses to ensure system-wide alignment to the course standards.
- Provide resources, such as released AP exams and common syllabi, to ensure daily instruction at the rigor of the AP assessment.

The 2009-2010 school year marked the third full year of formal Gifted and Talented (GT) identification. With full implementation of the Primary Talent Development program at all schools, teachers and schools were able to report Readiness, Emerging, Progressing and Independent (REPI) data electronically through the use of a REPI database. This data was merged with information available through the Stanford-10/OLSAT test administration in the spring of second grade. Information used included total reading and total math percentile rankings, total reading and total math stanines, and SAI score, which serves in place of an IQ score. Data also included progress on county reading and mathematics benchmark scores. This data was color-coded and sent back to schools so that teams could begin to look at the data. Since blue and green colors signified advanced or above average ability, color-coding made identification of students a highly visual process. Data from the 2009-2010 identification round indicated that the procedures for identification continue to be revised as identification gaps still exist among minority and economically disadvantaged students. In addition, the procedures for identification need to become institutionalized as part of the weekly data team meetings in order to maintain fluidity between and among skills groups for instruction. The 2010-2011 procedures for identification will continue to reflect the addition of the county gifted and talented supervisor to elementary school teams in order to help school teams identify students and determine whether underrepresented students have met at least one of the criteria in each category. In addition, content area

supervisors will be brought into these discussions as benchmark data is collected and reviewed after each assessment.

In addition to progress in establishing GT identification procedures, and providing instructional materials that provide enrichment and challenge to identified students, central office supervisors have developed curriculum maps which clearly identify and mandate instruction for highly able students. Challenge opportunities have been identified for each mathematics unit in grades 1-5 and all revisions have been made accessible to teachers through the SMCPS online intranet SharePoint site. These materials include the Johns Hopkins CTY program, *Descartes' Cove*, which has been purchased and used at the elementary level for very highly able students. In addition, the school system has reviewed several other mathematics units that can be used to supplement grade level instruction and selected *Project M^3* materials, and *Interact* mathematics simulations. GT Math Extension maps were created in order to provide daily suggestions for extending the mathematics in each unit and increasing the level of challenge. These extensions also address the need to fill instructional gaps that can be anticipated with the implementation of the common core standards in the 2011-2012 school year. Grouping suggestions were included to provide for the need for highly able students to work together in a peer group.

In reading/language arts, professional development has focused on the implementation of Junior Great Books (JGB), and the shared inquiry model of literature discussion and analysis. Level 1 training for the program was held, with a cohort of teachers ready to participate in follow-up training that will now be available from within the school system. Emphasis was placed on building system capacity from within the ranks of the teachers, and future leaders were identified.

SMCPS continues to implement the Primary Talent Development program in PreK through grade 2. This program continues to yield data regarding student strengths, as well as professional development needs, such as reaching underrepresented populations such as minorities and boys.

Communication regarding gifted and talented programs was increased during the 2009-2010 school year through an updated school system website. Communication with school principals, via face-to-face updates, e-mails, or professional development workshops will continue to be a focus for the 2010-2011 school year.

2. Identify the strategies, including resource allocations, that appear related to the 2009-2010 progress.

While the Primary Talent Development program reached the end of its fourth year of implementation in 2009-2010, the school system was able to participate in a pilot of the revised PTD modules during the 2008-2009 school year. Professional development and technical assistance provided through the grant had provided the school system with support in identifying and developing teacher leaders to assist in professional development and in supporting the theoretical framework behind the need for gifted and talented programs. The opportunity to explore materials of instruction that provide the challenge that gifted and talented students require has been critical. The school system commitment to gifted and talented education, including funding for supplemental materials, is critical to continued success for these programs. Professional development in the JGB Shared Inquiry model continued to provide teachers with strategies that can be used to increase rigor through questioning. Integration of the questioning model and the question types can be found embedded in the new 2010-2011 curriculum maps and materials provided to teachers. Providing young students with quality texts that are worthy of

in-depth discussion at the primary level, has been critical to teaching students to think as well as in reinforcing and supporting PTD behaviors such as perceptive, inquisitive, and communicative. This will continue to be supported even more through the implementation of the common core standards, which require students to read at (and above) their instructional level.

Strategies such as Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) as part of the elementary mathematics curriculum continue to support the idea of higher order thinking and creative problem solving. This type of instruction emphasizes math problem solving and communication about problem solving strategies. In fact, these assignments are most often the additional artifacts that can be found in PTD portfolios in support of communicative, resourceful, perceptive, and creative behaviors. Higher level questioning and an emphasis on investigation in the elementary grades increases rigor of instruction for ALL and allows students to explore multiple approaches to problem solving. More and more teachers are making the connections between PTD, Junior Great Books, and CGI. Early Algebraic Thinking was emphasized as a way to increase rigor through the classroom routines outlined in the *Investigations* mathematics program.

3. Describe where challenges are evident in meeting the Gifted and Talented Program goals, objectives, and strategies.

The greatest challenge evident in the gifted and talented program continues to be the identification of students from underrepresented populations. Professional development opportunities will continue to focus on this initiative. In tight budget times, financial resources for all curriculum materials are strained. Supplemental resources for the *Project M^3* and *Interact* units are essential for the success of gifted and talented initiatives, especially the goal of ensuring that regrouping is done by skill, not necessarily by ability. The role of the GT supervisor, in partnership with the content supervisors, will be critical in meeting with grade level teams to evaluate progress and provide assistance in increasing challenge within the curriculum. Work has already started with the new director of the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development to ensure that procedures are in place for identifying resources in the 2012 budget for gifted and talented initiatives.

4. Describe the changes or adjustments that will be made, along with the corresponding resource allocations to ensure sufficient progress. Include timelines where appropriate.

A tiered approach, such as that found in Response to Intervention (RtI), will be implemented for highly able students. The introduction of specially identified materials of instruction, and the reference to "tiers" of intervention for both at-risk and highly able students will lead to the establishment of differentiated levels of program services, with William and Mary for the highly able, and Junior Great Books having a wider scope of reach to include average to high average readers. Mathematics materials, including implementation of the GT Math Extension maps, have been examined to allow for the same differentiation of program services, with *Descartes' Cove* reserved for "Tier 3 Challenge Intervention" and *Project M^3* and *Interact* reaching a wider band of students.

Professional development for the 2010-2011 school year will include strategies for reaching at-risk students, including boys, minorities, and students from poverty. The new assessment schedule and curriculum maps for mathematics and the Reading/Language Arts strategy folder will be the primary focus as teachers become familiar with how to raise the expectations and increase rigor for students as

they are ready to accept it. Data meetings will continue to be a key component, and discussions regarding regrouping of students within the grade levels are expected to continue on an ongoing basis. The Supervisor of Instruction for Gifted and Talented programs will continue to monitor student identification and its alignment with overall school system demographics in order to ensure equity. The new mathematics curriculum maps will provide a method of monitoring which students received program services at any time within the school year. With the system-wide implementation of the new PTD modules, new and stronger opportunities exist to document the targeted behaviors, including CGI. At the intermediate grade levels, *Project M³, Descartes' Cove, Interact, Junior Great Books*, and the introduction of Reading/Language Arts capstone experiences will provide a more deliberate program of rigor to students needing that additional challenge. Program implementation measures, such as PTD Walkthroughs and PTD Portfolio Reviews, will continue. PTD walkthroughs will be held in February, and portfolio reviews will continue at the end of the year.

Funding for materials of instruction and county in-service has realigned under the new Department of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development. This department has fully aligned the curriculum program and funding streams for professional development. These funds are considered to deliver the most impact for meeting the needs of GT students in SMCPS. Over the past two years, the school system has been able to train enough people to build capacity for in-house professional development. The school system continues to acquire materials to supplement the curriculum for highly able students. Materials of instruction funds are used to purchase Project M3, Descartes' Cove, Interact math simulations, William and Mary Reading/Language Arts units, leveled chapter books, and Junior Great Books materials. The remaining funds allow for substitutes for collaborative planning, coaching, mentoring, and professional development for teachers.

<center>**Cross-Cutting Themes**</center>

<center>**Educational Technology**</center>

In addition to including technology strategies across the Master Plan to outline specifically how your district will use all sources of funding in meeting No Child Left Behind Statutory Goals, please respond to the prompts below. Include targets from the *Maryland Educational Technology Plan for the New Millennium, 2007-2012,* district technology and school system strategic plans, data from the Maryland Technology Inventory and technology literacy measurements, and data from any other relevant sources as appropriate. If these items were discussed elsewhere in the Master Plan Update, you can reference the sections and page numbers in your responses below instead of repeating information.

1. Identify the major technology goals that were addressed by the school system during the 2009-2010 academic year. Include a description of:
    *   the progress that was made toward meeting these goals and a timeline for meeting them.
    *   the programs, practices, strategies, or initiatives that were implemented related to the goals to which you attribute the progress.
    *   supporting data and evaluation results as appropriate.

STUDENT LEARNING: St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) continues to provide technology to meet the goals outlined in the SMCPS Master Plan and the MD Educational Technology Plan for both students and teachers. SMCPS Student Technology Literacy proficiency rose from 43 percent proficiency in FY2009 to 56 percent proficiency in FY2010. Our student successes are related to the power of data driven decisions made possible by the data warehouse and *eSchoo*l+ and the integration of interactive technologies and online resources into instruction. (MD Ed Tech Plan, Objective 1/SMCPS Goal 1)

*   Interactive Technologies**:** In 2009-2010, SMCPS focused on the integration of interactive technology (interactive whiteboard/ projection systems, document cameras, and response systems) to engage the learner. This success was a result of the availability of ARRA and Title I funding. Special education ARRA funds targeted middle school mathematics, Algebra 9/90, English 9/90, and special education classrooms. Employing Title I funds, similar interactive technology packages were purchased for all Title I classrooms. Our new green school has interactive classrooms and environmental systems that make the building an interactive educational experience. In the spring of 2010, STEM completed the purchase of the interactive technologies for the elementary and middle STEM Academy classrooms.
*   Online Learning: Our STEM 8 students completed an online Spanish I program through MVLO; however, it will not be used this year since students were not comfortable with the format. Other MVLO courses were used to supplement recovery options for students.
*   Online resources: To build student technology and information literacy, we utilized online resources such as SIRS, WorldBook, CultureGrams, and DiscoveryStreaming for research. Online textbook resources such as Pearson's Successnet, Glencoe and McDougal Littel were shared with students/families. SMCPS continued another year of access to SAT online.

- F.O.C.U.S: Dr. Martirano's "Focus on Cyber Use and Safety" program was implemented in August. This was a joint effort between the Department of Safety and Security and the school library media program. All elementary students received direct instruction about cyber safety while secondary students had learning opportunities through classroom instruction, flyers, or school programs. This program targets students' understanding of digital citizenship. This year's focus will be on cyber bullying.

ADMINISTRATIVE PRODUCTIVITY/EFFICIENCY and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
All of our teachers and administration have infused data driven decision-making as an integral part of our teachers' and administrators' daily work. The 2009-2010 MD Technology Literacy Inventory for Teachers results showed that 80 percent of the respondents were proficient in the Maryland Teacher Technology Standards as compared to 91 percent the previous year. We attribute this to both the decline in participation and the high percentage of non-tenured teachers who completed the measure. The Maryland Technology Literacy Inventory for Administrators revealed 100 percent of our principals were proficient while only 78 percent of assistant principals were proficient. We attribute the 18 percent increase in principal proficiency to building understanding of the administrator technology literacy standards. (MD Ed Tech Plan, Objective 2 and 3/SMCPS Goal 1 and 3)

- Data systems: For staff, SMCPS continued to incorporate data systems to effectively manage student information and assessment data. SunGard's *eSchool+* provides direct, real-time access to student information across the district. Teachers employ the Teacher Access Center (TAC) which provides data to the Home Access Center (HAC) for parents. All staff utilizes our *Performance Matters* data warehouse as an administrative tool for data- driven decision making. The Special Education Department integrates MD IDEA Scorecard site for maintaining student records and reports. For more efficient practice, eFinance continues to be the backbone of our human and capital expenditures.
- As a part of being environmentally responsible, SMCPS rolled out the use of SharePoint for staff in order to communicate, manage documentation, and provide a collaborative platform for electronic information sharing. Staff continued to use the grant funded Electronic Learning Committee (ELC) for collaboration. Last year we also fully implemented our online Teacher Performance Assessment System (TPAS) in order to facilitate better management, document sharing, and accountability among school and central administration. We completed the Counselor Performance Assessment System (CPAS) this August and will now focus on the School Librarian Performance Assessment System (SLPAS). Key to our continued success was ongoing professional development provided for all administrators and staff in the use of interactive technologies related to SMART Board Notebook software, SMART document cameras, response pads as well as continuing workshops targeting *eSchool+* Student Information System, our *Performance Matters* data warehouse assessment systems, IEP Scorecard training, and with the software applications available in our schools.
- Communication among SMCPS staff, parents/guardians, and community is a part of our superintendent's Fifteen Point Plan. This was made possible through *eSchool's* Home Access Center (HAC), Parent Phone Link, and the SMCPS website. In an effort to communicate effectively and efficiently with the community, the SMCPS Board of Education instituted the use of Board Docs. SMCPS continued to require each school to have an active technology committee as a subgroup of the School Improvement Team. For the most part, these teams are co-chaired by

the principal and school library media specialists. The school teams made decisions about technology purchases as reflected by the data in the school improvement plans.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS: SMCPS has made headway in building a more responsive infrastructure by adding wireless to areas of our buildings. This has allowed administrators to use the online assessment system during observations. The Information Technology Departments continues to add areas as funding is available. (MD Ed Tech Plan, Objectives 4/SMCPS Goal 1and 3)

2. Describe where challenges in making progress toward meeting the major technology goals are evident and the plans for addressing those challenges. Include a description of the adjustments that will be made to the Master Plan and local Technology Plan and timelines where appropriate.

While SMCPS has utilized its capital and human resources to the best of our ability, there are still challenges associated with technology especially as it now relates to the Race to the Top application. The Chief Academic Office and the Technology Department continue to work closely to make best use of limited human/financial resources.

- Online Access: SMCPS must have high speed access at all of its elementary schools and increased bandwidth to the Internet backbone if we are to be successful at delivering content and online assessments to all students. In accordance with Race to the Top requirements, SMCPS will have to provide the infrastructure for online testing by 2014, yet our goal is to have all schools utilizing online testing by 2013. SMCPS will continue to investigate virtual schools as a possible way to reach the non-traditional student. SMCPS would like to offer online courses; however, the funding is not available at this time.
- Life Cycle Replacement: Although the SMCPS student to computer ratio is 3:1, funding to sustain adequate lifecycle replacement continues to be a challenge; it is currently at a fifteen year cycle. We are ever mindful of Microsoft's move to stop supporting XP which will impact our student to computer ratio as we roll over to Windows 7. With this in mind, there is a digital divide among our buildings. Our STEM and Title I programs, new buildings, and ARRA supported contents have access to interactive technologies. While other programs/schools are attempting to purchase interactive technologies, it is a very slow process. Interactive technologies are shared among classrooms so access is limited. (MD Ed Tech Plan, Objectives 4/SMCPS Goal 1)
- Staffing: SMCPS falls below the state staffing recommendations to support technology. Currently SMCPS is staffed at approximately 50 percent of the state recommended support technology personnel. Providing content specific e-Coaches would support seamless technology integration at all levels all the while building technology literate students and staff.

3. Describe how the local school system is incorporating research-based instructional methods and the Maryland technology literacy standards for students, teachers, and school administrators into professional development to support teaching, learning, and technology leadership.
   Include a description of how the results of the student, teacher, and school administrator measurements have been used to inform professional development.

SMCPS offers technology-centered professional development in an on-going manner. The e-Coach and technology trainers provide training that is targeted to specific needs of the participant. This PD is delivered in a variety of ways (whole group, small groups, and one-to-one instruction) during planning time, at staff meetings, and at after school workshops. All teachers and administrators are provided ongoing opportunities to build their personal technology skills. In response to the 32 percent drop in proficiency in the MTTS Standard IV-Assessment for administration (which we believe is related to the staff that completed the measure). SMCPS will continue to train our site-based Instructional Resource Teachers (IRT) as well as offer workshops in data driven decision making utilizing our data warehouse. The PLCs are very effective in data reviews so building capacity among our newest teachers will be a target for SMCPS in 2010-2011.

SMCPS continues to utilize school librarians as trainers for our online resources (SIRS, WorldBook, CultureGrams, and DiscoveryStreaming) as well as the IRTs and department chairpersons for DIBELS, Successnet, and/or online textbook support materials as well as software integration. This enables school staff to have someone in each building to support the use of resources. However, since the implementation of our PLCs across the system, teachers have become trainers of each other. The ability to share lessons and assessments on SharePoint has provided teachers across the county with curriculum aligned activities to embed in instruction. Use of SharePoint as our site for collaborative exchange of ideas among staff and administrators has provided a support structure for all.

Our research-based lessons include activities that build critical thinking skills, collaborative learning, and technology and information literacy, and digital citizenship. With the introduction of the interactive whiteboards into the classroom, students can utilize models and simulations to create ideas while investigating complex ideas. Teachers are able to differentiate instruction for multiple learning styles (tactile, auditory, and visual). School librarians and teachers continue to build information literacy skills as inquiry across all grade bands. Utilization of the response pads engages students in assessment.

4. Describe how the local school system is ensuring the effective integration of technology into curriculum and instruction to support student achievement, technology/information literacy, and the elimination of the digital divide.

With the institutionalization of data driven decision making, collaboration, and efficient use of resources, SMCPS has been able to ensure technology integration into teaching, learning, and administrative duties. We have content area pacing guides and instructional materials that integrate technology into the curriculum. The elementary library media curriculum is being redesigned to ensure that technology and information literacy is being introduced to all elementary students through direct instruction without continued support in the secondary schools. As budget permits, we are providing online resources for teaching and learning as well as assessment: SIRS, WorldBook, CultureGrams, DiscoveryStreaming, DIBELS, and textbook resources. We continue to provide before and after-school access to computers for those students who do not have computers at home by extending media center hours.

5. Discuss how the local school system is using technology to support low-performing schools.

Our lowest performing schools have made AYP this year. We continue to provide support to these schools with IRTs who are content specialists and trained in data analysis. All teachers and administrators have 24/7 access to our *eSchool+* student information system, *Performance Matters* data warehouse, and online resources. The Special Education Department integrates the online IEP program for maintaining student records.

6. Please update the district's Accessibility Compliance chart, **bolding or underlining any changes**. The district's completed chart from last year can be accessed at:
   http://docushare.msde.state.md.us/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-20709

7. Please update the district's Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) Certification Form. If there are no changes, check the first box. The form only needs to be signed if there are any changes. Access the district's completed form from last year at:
   http://docushare.msde.state.md.us/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-20709

ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE

On December 4, 2001 the Maryland State Board of Education approved a regulation (COMAR 13A.05.02.13H) concerning accessible technology-based instructional products. This regulation requires that accessibility standards be incorporated into the evaluation, selection, and purchasing policies and procedures of public agencies. Subsequently, Education Article § 7-910: Equivalent Access for Students with Disabilities was passed during the 2002 General Assembly session and further requires that all teacher-made instructional materials be accessible also. MSDE is charged with monitoring local school systems' compliance with the regulation and the law. For more information on the regulation and the law, visit the following web site: http://cte.jhu.edu/accessibility/Regulations.cfm

Please review the information submitted with the October 2009 Annual Update and use the chart on the following page to address additional progress on or changes to the items below related to accessibility compliance. <u>If you choose to use last year's chart with this Update, please bold or underline any changes. Note: to review your system's 2009 master plan update, go to: http://docushare.msde.state.md.us/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-20709</u>

1. **Process:**
   a) Describe your policy and/or procedures for addressing the requirement that invitations to bids, requests for proposals, procurement contracts, grants, or modifications to contracts or grants shall include the notice of equivalent access requirements consistent with Subpart B Technical Standards, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
   b) Describe your policy and/or procedures for addressing the requirement that the equivalent access standards (Subpart B Technical Standards, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended) are included in guidelines for design specifications and guidelines for the selection and evaluation of technology-based instructional products.
   c) Describe how you are addressing the requirement that any teacher-developed materials (web sites, etc.) are accessible.

2. **Implementation:**
   a) Describe how you are ensuring that all educators are being provided information and training about Education Article 7-910 of the Public Schools - Technology for Education Act (Equivalent Access for Students with Disabilities). Include who, to date, has received information and/or training (e.g. all teachers, teachers at select schools, special education teachers only, building level administrators, etc.) and any future plans for full compliance.

3. **Monitoring:**
   a) Describe how you are monitoring the results of the evaluation and selection of technology-based instructional products set forth in COMAR 13A.05.02.13.H, including a description of the accessible and non-accessible features and possible applicable alternative methods of instruction correlated with the non-accessible features.
   b) Describe how you are ensuring that teachers and administrators have a full understanding of the regulation and law and how you are monitoring their adherence to the process and/or procedures governing accessibility.

PROCESS	IMPLEMENTATION	MONITORING
SMCPS will require all vendors to submit letters to show to what degree they comply with COMAR 508 in all RFPs and bids. **In May, 2010, SMCPS modified our software evaluation form which includes a 508 compliance section** as well as connections to the Maryland content standards. Staff requests of technology-based instructional products are evaluated and any shortfalls in the product are made known to the staff so that alternate instructional activities can be provided. No technology-based instructional products can be purchased without a 508 compliance form on file. SMCPS is working to redesign the SMCPS web site so that is meets 508 compliance standards. At this point, SMCPS does not use the web site for students to access instructional materials. It is used for informational purposes only.	Since March of 2002, SMCPS has notified all media specialists and technology contacts about COMAR 13A.05.02.03. This is an ongoing beginning of the year professional development activity for A & S and all media specialists. Media specialists are responsible for disseminating the information to staff. The Special Education Department is responsible for training their staff on particular needs of their students. Technology-based products will offer equivalent accessibility for students with disabilities per the SMCPS ITS Department policy. Availability of the Software Purchasing form incorporates a COMAR 508 compliance with the second page of the purchasing form. New teachers are presented the 508 information as a part of the New Teacher Orientation. Evaluation of the products is overseen by the Library Media Specialists, technology contacts and content area supervisors.	Administrators and Supervisors are presented with the regulation at the Fall Administrators and Supervisors' Meeting. Library Media Specialists present the 508 information to their staff yearly. ITS department evaluates the compatibility of the software and hardware with the SMCPS system. All professional development related which incorporates the use or integration of technology will include a review of the regulation as set forth by COMAR 13A.05.02.03.

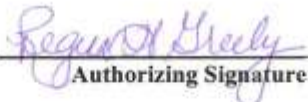**CHILDREN'S INTERNET PROTECTION ACT (CIPA) CERTIFICATION FORM**

NOTE: Complete only if there have been changes to your last certification submitted to MSDE.

☒   Check here if there are no changes to your CIPA certification status.

Any Local Education Agency seeking Ed Tech funds must certify to its State Education Agency that schools have adopted and are enforcing Internet safety policies. It is the intent of the legislation that any school (or district) using federal money ESEA or E-rate) to pay for computers that access the Internet or to pay for Internet access directly should be in compliance with CIPA and should certify to that compliance EITHER through E-rate or the Ed Tech program. Please check one of the following:

☐   Our local school system is certified compliant, through the E-rate program, with the Children's Internet Protection Act requirements.

☐   Every school in our local school system benefiting from Ed Tech funds has complied with the CIPA requirements in subpart 4 of Part D of Title II of the ESEA.

☐   The CIPA requirements in the ESEA do not apply because no funds made available under the program are being used to purchase computers to access the Internet, or to pay for direct costs associated with accessing the Internet.

☐   Not all schools have yet complied with the requirements in subpart 4 of Part D of Title II of the ESEA. However, our local school system has received a one-year waiver from the U.S. Secretary of Education under section 2441(b)(2)(C) of the ESEA for those applicable schools not yet in compliance.

St. Mary's County Public Schools   _Regina H Greely_   _9.23.2010_
       School System   **Authorizing Signature**   **Date**

Cross Cutting Themes

Education That Is Multicultural

Discuss the progress toward meeting Education That Is Multicultural (ETM) goals as outlined in the Education That Is Multicultural regulation COMAR 13A.04.05 by responding to the following questions:

1. **Identify the major ETM goals that were addressed by the school system during the 2009-2010 academic year. Describe the progress that was made toward meeting these goals, and the programs, practices, strategies, or initiatives that were implemented related to the goals. In your response be sure to address the following areas: <u>Curriculum, Instruction, Staff Development, Instructional Resources, and School Climate.</u>**

The St. Mary's County Public School System revisited the Superintendent's Blue Ribbon Task Force to Eliminate the Achievement Gap's original recommendations that were presented to the St. Mary's County Board of Education on June 14, 2006. The original objectives were to: develop a plan of site-based, targeted interventions and acceleration programs designed to increase student achievement and eliminate achievement gaps; and to develop a process for the community and the school system to share ideas and communicate strategies to increase student achievement, especially for underperforming students.

During the spring of 2010, the subcommittees reconvened with original and new Task Force members to revisit the recommendations from school year 2006. In addition, the 2010 Task Force included the recommendations of a student subcommittee. Although most of the original recommendations were deemed to be beneficial and still very much relevant, the subcommittees did make some new recommendations. The implementation of the recommendations both directly and indirectly addresses Education That is Multicultural.

The recommendations of both the 2006 and the 2010 Task Forces were created with a direct focus on the following areas: Cultural Diversity, Parents-Community-Business Partnerships, Interventions and Special Programs, Quality Workforce, and Quality Instruction. As a result of the recommendations made by the Task Force's subcommittees, a number of system-wide strategies and initiatives were implemented. Although the implementation of the initiatives and programs has proven to be successful and data supports that gaps are closing, we found the need to revisit the original recommendations and programs to ensure that we are properly identifying and addressing the myriad needs of our students.

What follows is a summary of our progress related to the targeted objectives of the Task Force:

1. **<u>Quality Workforce</u>**
   - The recruitment specialist, added to the Department of Human Resources in SY 07-08, continues to recruit candidates of color, meet with educators of color and various community members - such as the NAACP for input, and extends recruitment efforts to include international teachers.

- Since the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year, SMCPS has hired (11) teachers from Jamaica, (1) from Nigeria, (1) from Canada, (1) from Wales, and (2) from the Philippines.
- The Human Resources Department continues to visit Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) for quality candidates of color.
- Each new teacher is provided a mentor teacher who will meet with them throughout the school year to provide ongoing support.

2. **Intervention and Special Programs**
- The school system has two 3-year grants from the Maryland State Department of Education for after school programs that focus on eliminating the achievement gap. The funding will be used to continue the five day per week and summers Dream Team/Boys and Girls Clubs at elementary and middle schools and the Carver Recreation Center, and to continue the five day per week, yearlong and summer Bright Futures After School Program at Green Holly Elementary, Park Hall Elementary and Great Mills High schools. In the past year, the high school program has focused on involving freshmen and sophomores, with strategies to increase the number of students who earn enough credits each year to be promoted to the next grade, which will increase the graduation rate for students.
- The school system was awarded a three-year mentoring grant from the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Prevention. The FLOW (Future Leaders of the World) mentoring program is now in all elementary and middle schools and will begin in all high schools this year serving at-risk students with weekly mentoring from community volunteers and staff members.
- The Readers Are Leaders mentoring program continued at Great Mills High School which allowed the high school students to engage elementary students in reading.
- Each school created a School Based Task Force to focus on students in need of additional academic support.
- Technical Assistance Teams (TAT), which is a collaboration of district-level supervisors and administrators and site-based school leaders, were implemented at various school sites to focus on students and teachers in need of additional support.
- Additional schools in the district initiated the Positive Behavioral and Intervention Supports (PBIS) program to reward positive student behavior.
- St. Mary's County College Access Program (CAP) provides a two year curriculum taught by a trained support person at each of the high schools to help minority and first generation students prepare for college, careers, and post-secondary education.
- The school system provided schools with an Academic Literacy program for all students reading below grade level and not performing at proficient levels on MSA reading.

3. **Parent-Community-Business Partnerships**
- Through the Department of College and Career Readiness, SMCPS meets with community members and student leaders to solicit recommendations on issues confronting students in St. Mary's County.
- In collaboration with the family/school partnerships project of Teaching for Change, the Tellin' Stories Project was implemented at two elementary schools. This project

offered a series of workshops that provided parents, grandparents, teachers, and administrators an opportunity to come together and share personal stories.

- The superintendent hosted several meetings and activities for various community stakeholders to solicit their support and recommendations on how we can work collaboratively to support students in St. Mary's County. Such activities/meetings included: Principal for a Day, the Superintendent's Business Breakfast, the Faith Community Meeting, the Volunteer Recognition Ceremony, the Superintendent's College Readiness Luncheon, and the Superintendent's Blue Ribbon Task Force.

- St. Mary's County Public Schools maintained its initiatives and partnerships with community groups and organizations. The school system, community organizations, and groups collaborated on many community initiatives. Some of the partners included: the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, the St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce, the Local Management Board (LMB), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), St. Mary's County Faith Leaders, St. Mary's College of Maryland, the College of Southern Maryland, St. Mary's County Government, the Parental Information Resource Center (PIRC), the Boys and Girls Club, and the St. Mary's County Parks and Recreation to name a few of the many organizations we work with on a daily basis to meet the needs of our students. These partnerships enabled the school system to collaborate with community leaders and organizations for the benefit of the children in our school system.

4. National Network of Partnership Schools

- The National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) provided support and guidance for fifteen (15) schools in St. Mary's County to implement parent involvement activities to comply with the Race to the Top (RTTT) Act. Schools and teams worked together as action teams to develop school action plans and to implement some of the NNPS tools and approaches. As a result of being affiliated with this initiative, St. Mary's County Public Schools receive ongoing technical assistance from the NNPS staff at Johns Hopkins University.

5. Study Circles

- The Study Circles process helps schools and school systems address racial and ethnic barriers to approximately 12-15 stakeholders from different ethnic and racial groups in a school or community. The group meets for six 2-hour sessions and they are led by two trained facilitators who are responsible for ensuring that everyone is actively involved in the process.

6. Cultural Proficiency

- St. Mary's County continued implementing Cultural Proficiency training for principals, assistant principals, supervisors, and other school leaders through the school system's Administrative and Supervisory (A&S) meetings. Cultural proficiency training has been made available for all new teachers in the school system. Cultural proficiency is an approach to addressing issues of diversity, inclusiveness, and entitlement; it provides tools and help for a diverse school and work environment. Cultural Proficiency is a way of being that enables both individuals and organizations to respond effectively to people who differ from them.

7. **Asset Development**
   - St. Mary's County Public Schools along with St. Mary's County Government, partnered to make Asset Development training available for school psychologists, pupil personnel workers, special educators, and other central office personnel. The 40 Developmental Assets are the strengths, or building blocks that children need to grow up healthy, competent, and caring. Research tells us that youth with more assets experience more success in life and participate less in risky behaviors.

In addition, the St. Mary's County Public School (SMCPS) system specifically addressed the five encompassing ETM areas as indicated below.

- **Curriculum.** Explain how your curriculum enables students to demonstrate an understanding of and an appreciation for cultural groups in the United States as an integral part of education for a culturally pluralistic society.

  - Curriculum is aligned to the Maryland Sate Curriculum with embedded integration of multicultural education.
  - The MSDE/Reginald F. Lewis Museum "An African American Journey" curriculum remained on the school system's intranet for all schools to access.

- **Instruction.** Identify how you ensure that students are not denied access to equally rigorous academic instruction on the basis of cultural background.

  - The school system targeted more African American and Economically Disadvantaged students to take the PSAT, SAT, and AP exams. In addition, more African American students were targeted to take more Advanced Placement (AP) classes.
  - The Dr. James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center allowed greater access to African American and Economically Disadvantaged students through the Tech Connect program. These students have an opportunity to experience courses at the Career and Technology Center in their ninth grade year.
  - Grade level teacher collaboration centered on student achievement using disaggregated performance data to make instructional decisions.
  - Fairlead Academy opened in SY 2008-2009 for sixty underperforming ninth grade students and expanded to grade ten in SY 2009-2010. The program is designed to assist struggling freshman with the transition to high school and guide them through the first two years of high school helping them to avoid obstacles to their academic achievement.
  - Each school has a School Based Task Force to focus on students in need of additional academic support.
  - The school system provided schools with an Academic Literacy program for all students reading below grade level and not performing at proficient levels on MSA reading.

- The school system has placed a College and Career Readiness coach in each of the high schools to ensure that we are intervening to provide appropriate support to students in need of additional academic support.

- **Staff Development.** Include descriptions of ETM course and workshop offerings and disaggregated enrollment data for these staff development programs.

  - **Study Circles**
    The Study Circles process helps schools and school systems address racial and ethnic barriers to student achievement and parent involvement. A Study Circle consists of a small group of approximately 12-15 stakeholders from different ethnic and racial groups in a school or community. The group meets for six 2-hour sessions and they are led by two trained facilitators who are responsible for ensuring that everyone is actively involved in the process. Recommendations that are developed during the last two sessions are then shared with key decision makers, most of which are then implemented. Study Circle participants within the school system are eligible to receive (1) CEU credit.

  - **Cultural Proficiency**
    St. Mary's County continued implementing Cultural Proficiency training for principals, assistant principals, supervisors, and other school leaders through the school system's Administrative and Supervisory (A&S) meetings. Cultural proficiency training is provided to all new teachers through ongoing professional development opportunities. School principals and leaders are also expected to facilitate similar discussions and professional development at their respective schools.

    Assistant Principals are vital to our system's success. Monthly sessions are held with APs at which important issues are discussed and information is shared. Their professional development as leaders is essential.

    Cultural diversity training entitled *"Building Cultural Proficiency and Positive Relationships to Improve Student Achievement"* was conducted at targeted elementary and high schools.

    Cultural diversity training was provided for new teachers as part of the new teacher induction program. New teacher seminars continue on a monthly basis.

  - **ETM Course**
    Each year, SMCPS offers a three credit course, "Teaching in a Diverse Learning Environment – Education that Is Multicultural." This course is designed to share strategies to infuse education that is multicultural into instructional practice. The course focuses on the effects of poverty, learning/teaching styles as impacted by culture, and culturally responsive education. Participants develop an action plan focusing upon changing individual and/or collective instructional practices based on select readings, group discussion, independent activities and professional reflection.

Collectively, there have been 54 teachers who have taken this course during the 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010 school years.

- **Instructional Resources.** Explain your process for reviewing materials that avoid stereotyping, discrimination, bias and prejudice, as well as materials that reflect the diverse experiences relating to cultural groups and individuals.

  ➢ Instructional resources including textbooks, supplemental materials, library media materials, and technology are selected to assist students with learning the curriculum. Instructional resources are aligned with the curriculum and are selected to match students' varied interests, abilities, and learning styles.
  ➢ While textbooks are not the only source for learning, textbooks are the most commonly used instructional resource to assist students with learning content, skills, and processes.
  ➢ Textbooks are adopted by a committee of teachers, administrators, and supervisors of instruction. Textbooks are displayed publicly in all three St. Mary's County public libraries and at the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development for public preview before adoption. Notices of such adoptions appear in the local press.

- **School Climate.** Explain how your school climate reflects the diversity of your community and encourages respect for different cultures.

  The population of the St. Mary's County Public Schools is comprised of diverse ethnic, cultural, religious, and racial groups, as reflected in individual classrooms and schools. The school system's global perspective promotes the valuing of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity and creates a climate within the schools which acknowledges and enhances the dignity and importance of each individual. Equally important is the strengthening of steps which have been implemented to encourage students pride in themselves and their cultural identities and achievements; and to promote a feeling of understanding, trust, and acceptance among persons of differing cultural indicators such as ability, age, gender, ethnicity, language, race, region, religion, and socioeconomic status.

2. Describe where challenges in meeting ETM goals are evident.
To effectively meet the challenges of the ETM goals, St. Mary's County Public Schools must confront the following challenges:

   A. Ensuring that we make time to sustain the Cultural Proficiency work and maintain it as a school system priority.
   B. **National Network of Partnership Schools**
   - There is a lack of parental involvement at the middle and high school levels.
   - There is a need to have every school in the school system become an active member of NNPS.
   - The need to organize more effective, goal-oriented partnership programs at the district level and in all of our schools.

C. **Study Circles**
- There will be a need to continue to train additional facilitators.
- The facilitators of the Study Circle process must assist the schools with the recruitment of students, parents, and staff.

D. **Cultural Proficiency**
- There continues to be a need to provide Cultural Proficiency training for *ALL* new employees to the school system.
- There continues to be a need to ensure that school principals and ETM representatives are providing teachers at their schools with Cultural Proficiency training.

E. **Community Partnerships**
- School leaders must maintain the current partnerships that have been developed.
- School leaders must continue building relationships and partnerships with community leaders and organizations.
- School leaders must continue to assess partnerships to ensure that they are meaningful and beneficial for children.

3. Describe the changes, adjustments, or revisions that will be made to programs or strategies for 2010-2011 to address the identified challenges.

For the 2010-2011 school year, St. Mary's County Public Schools will continue to implement the following initiatives to meet the goals of ETM:

- The Superintendent's Blue Ribbon Task Force to Eliminate the Achievement Gap
- National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)
- Study Circles
- Cultural Proficiency Training
- Community Partnerships with the business community, the County Council of Parent Teacher Associations, the St. Mary's County NAACP, the faith based community in St. Mary's County, and other community stakeholders, and
- The implementation of the Asset Development initiative

The work of **the Superintendent's Blue Ribbon Task Force to Eliminate the Achievement Gap** will continue into the 2010-2011 school year. The Task Force's focus will continue to be on the implementation of the recommendations from the 2005-2006 and the modified recommendations of the 2010 Task Force. In addition, the Task Force will continue to provide monitoring at the school level.

St. Mary's County Public Schools will continue to strengthen its partnership with the **National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)** by enabling more schools to join the network. We will make it more feasible for schools to attend district level meetings by providing fewer but more focused meetings and by holding the meetings at a time that is conducive to school representative schedules.

Given that cultural and racial differences can negatively impact student achievement, St. Mary's County Public Schools will continue to institute the **Study Circles Program**. The

Study Circles process has allowed our school system and community to discuss cultural and social issues that impact student achievement.

St. Mary's County Public Schools will also continue to initiate **Cultural Proficiency** training for students and educators. In addition, we will provide intense Cultural Proficiency training for new teachers and staff members. The Cultural Proficiency approach has helped staff members understand the importance of building positive relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. It has also helped educators understand the importance of having high expectations for all students. The Cultural Proficiency training has provided our educators with the tools to respond effectively to children and adults who differ from them.

The superintendent and the superintendent's leadership team will continue to meet with and establish **Community Partnerships** with groups and organizations. There are a series of partnerships, events, and meetings scheduled for the 2010-2011 school year for Patuxent River Naval Air Station, the business community and the Chamber of Commerce, the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), MD PIRC (Maryland Parental Information Resource Center), the faith based community, student groups, and many other civic and social organizations. In addition, the superintendent along with school leaders will continue to meet with community members and stakeholder groups to discuss pertinent matters that impact St. Mary's County Public Schools.

In collaboration with St. Mary's County Government officials, the school system will implement the **40 Developmental Assets** at all grade levels for the 2010-2011 school year. School system and county government officials will provide ongoing training and will continue to monitor and support the work of those educators trained to lead and implement this important work. School system employees trained in this area will continue to collaborate with county government officials and other community organizations.

Local Goals and Indicators

The St. Mary's County Public Schools Bridge to Excellence Master Plan is fully aligned to the five ESEA goals and therefore all goals progress has been addressed in the preceding sections.

Clarifying Question Responses
November 16, 2010

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