



# Public School Opportunities Enhancement Act

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**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.**

State Superintendent of Schools

**Geoff Sanderson**

Chief of Accountability

Office of Accountability

**Mary L. Gable**

Assistant State Superintendent

Division of Student Support and Federal Programs

**Wes Moore**

Governor

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Xiomara V. Medina, M.Ed.

Samir Paul, Esq.

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## Introduction

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Pursuant to Section § 7-1701 through 1706 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the Public Schools Opportunities Enhancement Program (PSOEP) grant authorized the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to award grants to local education agencies (LEAs), community schools, and non-profit organizations to implement quality extended day or summer enhancement programs. In the 2017 - 2018 school year, MSDE implemented the first four-year cohort of the PSOEP grant. In the 2021 - 2022 school year, funding was made available to award grants for a second four-year cohort. As a result, MSDE hosted a new PSOEP competition and awarded grants to 11 subgrantees in Baltimore City and Prince Georges' County. The award amount for the 2021 - 2022 school year was \$2,500,000, and remained the same for subsequent years, given the continued availability of state funds. The 2024-2025 school year was the fourth and final year for grant program implementation and the results are contained in this report.

## Implementation

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### **By The Numbers: A Look at State funded enrichment programs**

The PSOEP award amount for the 2024-2025 school year was \$2,500,000 and remained unchanged from the previous school year. Funding was awarded to 11 community-based agencies to expand or create extended day programs that provide access to enrichment opportunities that improve work habits, reduce academic achievement gaps, and improve academic skills.

### **Grantees and Programs**

The PSOEP programs operated in two jurisdictions: Prince George's County and Baltimore City. The grantees are YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc. (Baltimore City), Village Learning Place (Baltimore City), Kingdom Vision Ministries (Prince George's County), and McDougall International, LLC (Prince George's County).

### **2024-2025 PSOEP Total Grant Award Per Jurisdiction (see page 5 for details)**

Program Name	Jurisdiction	Lead Agency	Program Description	Total Award
Gateway Enrichment Program (GEP) at Allenwood	Prince George's County	McDougall International, LLC	The program is designed for students in grades 1 through 5, the program offers a structured and academically enriching experience. Each day, from Monday through Thursday, students participate in one hour of academic enrichment—focused on Math, Reading, and English Language Development—followed by one hour of engaging activities such as Robotics, Gardening, and Sports. The program runs from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., providing a balanced blend of academic support and hands-on learning.	\$227,272
Gateway Enrichment Program at Samuel P. Massie Academy	Prince George's County	McDougall International, LLC	The program is designed for students in grades 3 through 8, GEP offers a structured, academically rich STEM-focused experience.  The 16-week after-school program engages students in project-based STEM activities that deliver core academic content in meaningful, hands-on ways. Course offerings are designed to spark curiosity, deepen understanding, and support both new and ongoing student interests. All instruction is grounded in a standards-based curriculum aligned with the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards, ensuring academic rigor and relevance.	\$227,272
Bright Start Enrichment Program	Prince George's County	Kingdom Vision Ministries	The program immerses students in environmental literacy and service learning through dynamic, hands-on, project-based experiences. Participants explore local ecosystems using drone technology, conduct soil analyses, and design replanting strategies to revitalize green spaces. The program integrates STEM principles with ecological awareness, fostering a strong sense of environmental stewardship and community engagement. By blending technology with real-world problem-solving, students develop critical thinking, collaboration skills, and a meaningful connection to their environment—while making tangible, positive contributions to their communities.	\$227,272

Program Name	Jurisdiction	Lead Agency	Program Description	Total Award
Let's Invest in Neighborhood Kids (LINK) Summer and LINK Leaders Summer	Baltimore City	Village Learning Place	<p>The program serves students from Pre-K through 6th grade. The program offers engaging lessons in literacy, math, and science, along with enrichment workshops and weekly field trips. Through a partnership with the Good Harvest Summer Meals Program, students receive breakfast and lunch daily, while the Village Learning Place provides both morning and afternoon snacks.</p> <p>LINK Leaders is a summer program tailored for students in grades 7 through 12. From Monday to Thursday, participants engage in an updated curriculum focused on college and career readiness, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, service learning, enrichment activities, and outdoor movement. Wednesday afternoons are dedicated to off-site visits to workplaces, offering students firsthand exposure to various career paths. Fridays are reserved for full-day field trips, providing additional opportunities for exploration and learning beyond the classroom.</p>	\$227,272
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Graceland Park O'Donnell Heights Elementary and Middle Schools	Baltimore City	YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc.	<p>The Y in Central Maryland provided high-quality and engaging activities that improve academic performance, increase school attendance, and build parent engagement. The program integrates evidence-based academic intervention and enrichment activities provided by thoughtfully selected partners to build environmental stewardship, heighten college and career readiness, enhance scholar character, develop service learning, and encourage wellness.</p>	\$227,272
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Rosemont Elementary/ Middle School	Baltimore City	YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc.	<p>The Y in Central Maryland identified three areas that would benefit from targeted out-of-school time (OST) academic and enrichment programming: scholar improvement in reading and literacy, improved attendance, and increased parent engagement.</p>	\$227,272

Program Name	Jurisdiction	Lead Agency	Program Description	Total Award
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Johnston Square Elementary School	Baltimore City	YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc.	The Y in Central Maryland provided high - quality and engaging activities that improve academic performance, increase school attendance, and build parent engagement. The program utilizes evidence-based academic intervention and enrichment activities provided by thoughtfully selected partners to build environmental stewardship, heighten college and career-readiness, enhance scholar character, develop service learning, and encourage wellness.	\$227,272
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Holabird Elementary/ Middle School	Baltimore City	YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc.	The Y in Central Maryland provided high - quality and engaging activities that improve academic performance, increase school attendance, and build parent engagement. The program utilizes evidence-based academic intervention and enrichment activities provided by thoughtfully selected partners to build environmental stewardship, heighten college and career readiness, enhance scholar character, develop service learning, and encourage wellness.	\$227,272
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Fort Worthington	Baltimore City	YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc	The Y in Central Maryland provided high - quality and engaging activities that improve academic performance, increase school attendance, and build parent engagement. The program utilized evidence-based academic intervention and enrichment activities provided by thoughtfully selected partners to build environmental stewardship, heighten college and career readiness, enhance scholar character, develop service learning, and encourage wellness.	\$227,272
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Moravia Park Elementary School	Baltimore City	YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc	The Y in Central Maryland identified three areas that would benefit from targeted OST academic and enrichment programming: scholar improvement in reading and literacy, improved attendance, and increased parent engagement.	\$227,272
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Gwynn Falls Elementary School	Baltimore City	YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc	The Y in Central Maryland identified three areas that would benefit from targeted OST academic and enrichment programming: scholar improvement in reading and literacy, improved attendance, and increased parent engagement.	\$227,272

## Funding by Jurisdiction

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The total percentage of funding and the number of grantees is outlined below:

- 73% of total funding was awarded to eight Baltimore City grants.
- 27% of total funding was awarded to three Prince George's County grants.

There are a total of eleven grantees with eight programs providing school year only services, two programs providing school year and summer services, and one program providing summer only services.

## Technical Assistance

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Technical assistance was provided to all grantees throughout the 2023-2024 school year. Assistance included support for grantees to remain in fiscal and program compliance. MSDE staff conducted hybrid technical assistance offerings inclusive of numerous online webinars and face-to-face meetings. Professional learning topics included: Evaluating program effectiveness and identifying best practices, developing and sustaining standard operating procedures aligned with national standards; maximizing student selection, recruitment, attendance, and engagement; Providing an overview and practical application of risk assessment processes; mitigating fiscal risks through strong internal controls and grants management protocols; strengthening school and stakeholder collaboration; conducting sustainability mapping and implementing long-term strategies; facilitating peer-to-peer resource sharing; Supporting outcome analysis, reflection, and continuous improvement; delivering training on budgetary amendments and fiscal compliance. In addition, grantees were required to include in their budget proposals funding for one national and local training sessions, networking meetings, and State training.

MSDE OST staff also partnered with a State Evaluator of OST and academic enrichment programs to conduct a professional learning series on program evaluation. The evaluation-series focused on evaluative best practices, maximizing impact through evidence-based implementation, ensuring data validity, and procedures for effective evaluation reporting. To ensure quality and capacity building, grantees are required to allocate 7% of the total budget to select an external evaluator to collect, analyze, and interpret program data as a method of continuous improvement.

To sustain a quality program, academic staff and volunteers who delivered academic support and enrichment services were provided with ongoing training and professional learning opportunities. Training was designed to ensure appropriate interactions with students and to prevent high rates of student turnover. Staff training focused on how to work with children, how to create powerful learning opportunities that increase youth engagement, how to negotiate and integrate restorative practices, how to address the needs of children of different ages, races, and cultures, as well as children with disabilities, and how to use Youth Program Quality Standards.

Legislation mandates that grantees follow the Maryland Out-of-School Time (MOST) Quality Framework. The MOST Quality Framework is a clear and accessible tool to assist OST programs in the State of Maryland as they serve youth ages five to 19. The framework can serve as a guide for program leadership to build or enhance a culture of continuous learning and improvement focused on effectively serving the students. The framework is both foundational, setting standards for baseline program quality, and broad, providing a framework general enough for all types of programs. The framework can serve as a springboard to:

- Develop or refine program policies and procedures
- Promote staff conversations about program quality areas of success and needed improvement
- Share and compare concerns about programming and the organization
- Develop, revisit, and refine a collective vision, language, and message amongst staff

- Strengthen communication to external funders and stakeholders

MSDE will continue to assist grantees during the implementation of extended day opportunities for Maryland students. It is essential to offer quality extended day and summer programs to assist students with academic and social skills throughout the year to avoid regression in learning.

## Evaluation and Effectiveness

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Grantees submitted initial evaluation data in August 2025 and final reports in October 2025. The MSDE program office conducted a review of the FY 2025 End-of-Cohort Data Report consisting of a performance report of programmatic and fiscal data, as well as an evaluation report to determine the effectiveness of the programs.

Grantees were responsible for implementing required activities based upon the program requirements. The GRA noted that grantees addressed most of the activities. The percentage of grantee implementation by activity is outlined below:

- 64% of programs established new educational or recreational partnerships with local parks, recreation councils, local public schools, public libraries, institutions of higher education, private sector businesses, and other non-profit organizations
- 91% of programs provided opportunities to learn about the environment, the students' place in the environment, and what they can do to protect it
- 72% of programs provided opportunities to learn about the environment to improve understanding of how nature, science practice, society, and social responsibility are intertwined, and exposed students to careers in environmental fields, green jobs, or sustainable practices
- 45% of the programs supplemented transportation costs for program sites that are not easily accessible to outdoor education centers of park sites
- 91% of the programs connected youth to their environment and provided time outdoors for free play and discovery

Grantees were required to report on features that had a measurable impact on the well-being for children and youth as identified by the MOST Programs' Quality Standards Framework. The percentage of grantee implementation by the MOST Program Quality Standard is outlined below:

- Youth Development Standard: 91% of programs reported employment of research-based youth development strategies that reflect a complementary, holistic approach built on participant strengths rather than on repairing deficits
- Youth Program Climate Standard: 81% of programs reported the establishment of a respectful and nurturing environment
- Family/Caring Adult and Community Engagement: 46% of programs reported strong partnerships with families/caring adults and the community to achieve program goals

Additionally, grantees were required to develop program objectives based on the following accountability measures:

- Educational component that assisted students in meeting academic, on grade level requirements (for extended day programs)

- Learning and enrichment activities that assisted students in achieving at or above grade level in the next school year
- Exposure of students to future learning and life opportunities (for summer enhancement programs)
- Enhancement of the educational purpose of the school day or enhanced students' access to physical, social, and emotional support (for educational programming during the school day)
- Leveraging of private and existing funding sources

The status of self-reported performance objectives provided in the original proposal is annually reported. The findings demonstrated that grantees met or demonstrated progress towards meeting these objectives. The data reported that an average of 82% of grantees had met or were progressing towards the identified objectives. The data reported an average of 18% were classified as “unable to measure” and 0% classified as “not met”. The PSOEP programs were unable to provide outcome measurements at the time of the submitted report. Programs cited the unavailability of state assessment data during the data-collection period as a barrier to effectively assessing student performance. However, subgrantees are required to submit an evaluation addendum for any objectives that were “unable to be measured” once state assessment data are released and reviewed by an external evaluator.

Grantees were responsible for hiring an external evaluator as outlined in the original application. The external evaluator was responsible for developing a plan to assess progress toward meeting objectives, milestones, and anticipated outcomes. In addition, the external evaluator must have been an integral element in the project’s planning, design, and implementation. The evaluation enables project managers to determine which strategies and activities have been successful, and those that need to be revised. These milestones included academic performance, school readiness, classroom participation, assignment completion, offering high quality educational, developmental, and recreation services, parental involvement, and family literacy.

## Funding to Support the Recruitment, Training, and Ongoing Professional Development of New Teachers

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In fiscal year 2019, a budget amendment to the PSOEP program specified that \$500,000 of the funding be authorized to provide a grant to a nonprofit organization to support existing educational programming during the school day, including recruitment, training, and ongoing professional learning of new teachers. The competitive grant was open only to nonprofit [501(c) (3)] organizations that target LEAs with at least 50% of public-school students that qualify for free lunch under the National School Lunch Program.

Teach for America (TFA) was awarded the Public-School Opportunity Enhancement Professional Learning Program (PSOEPLP) grant. TFA is a nationally validated program that recruits, selects, and trains new teachers for placement in schools serving low-income students. With the funding from MSDE, TFA made improvements to their training for new teachers to strengthen their capabilities to increase the academic and personal growth of students in Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS).

During school year 2024-2025, 16,600 applications were submitted to Teach for America. This meets the stated goal range of 16,000-19,400 and is an increase of 800 applications over the previous year. Of those applicants, 7,500 identified as people of color. This represents 94% progress to goal. One-hundred percent of TFA interviewers were rigorously trained to screen all candidates for specific characteristics predictive of effective teaching in high-needs classrooms. These qualities include the ability to set vision, purposefully plan to achieve outcomes and build relationships along lines of difference. Other research-based qualities that applicants are specifically screened for include effectively modeling a sample lesson, as well as an ability to accept and incorporate critical feedback. 100% of admitted applicants met this screening bar.

For the 25-26 school year, 78% of TFA applicants offered a teaching position in BCPSS accepted their offer. TFA placed 75 new teachers in Baltimore City Schools, representing 94% progress to goal. Of these, 69% identified as people of color, and 50% will teach in a high-needs subject area (special education, teaching English to speakers of other languages, STEM, and Early Childhood Education). To ensure teachers are prepared to successfully teach, TFA corps members undergo extensive pre-service development during a seven-week training experience designed to continue to foster the qualities, skills, and mindsets needed to be successful. Although close, TFA did not meet their goal of placing 80-90 corps members in BCPS. In large part, this was attributed to the uncertainty created by the unexpected real and proposed cuts to AmeriCorps grants across the country. TFA teachers use the AmeriCorps Segal Education Award to pay for their licensure coursework with a partnership with Johns Hopkins University. Though TFA has never guaranteed the award to corps members, wide-spread coverage of the cuts to AmeriCorps have left applicants wary of the possibility of paying significantly more out of pocket for their required licensure coursework than they had anticipated. In response, TFA has worked aggressively over the last six months to establish new partnerships to cut licensure costs by 50%-70%. TFA is confident that this will alleviate financial barriers to completing the corps and will reduce reliance on outside grants to make the corps more affordable.

During the 2024-2025 school year, 82% of corps members agreed that the resources provided by TFA contributed to their development as a teacher leader. In addition, 82% of corps members indicated

that they agreed that the Content Specialist sessions were important to their development. Finally, 87% of corps members indicated that they are proud to be part of Teach For America.

In addition to strong corps member satisfaction, TFA is seeing strong satisfaction from TFA school principals. Eighty-nine percent of principals polled in the latest principal survey agreed or strongly agreed that they would hire another TFA teacher if they had a vacancy in their school. Moreover, 82% of principals agree that “TFA is fulfilling its mission to find and nurture leaders who commit to expanding opportunity for low-income students.”

During the 2024-2025 school year, 63% of corps members with end-of-year data met the academic objectives they articulated for their classrooms. Additionally, 70% of TFA teachers have received a rating of “effective” or “highly effective” on their end of year BCPSS evaluation. Finally, in the most recent survey of principals leading schools in which TFA corps members are placed, 77% of principals surveyed indicated that corps members met or exceeded expectations for student learning outcomes. In the future, TFA coaches will continue to increase communication and collaboration with school-based mentors to ensure clarity of all goals and objectives. For example, TFA coaches attended BCPS new teacher mentor training and met teacher mentors to establish a strong basis for collaboration in the 25-26 school year.

## Summary

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In 2016, the Maryland General Assembly enacted the PSOEP grant (§ 7-1701 through 1706 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland). The statute requires MSDE to submit a report on the effectiveness and an evaluation of programs funded annually. MSDE is submitting this report to provide the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly with information requested by the Education Article (§ 7-1701 through 1706 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland). MSDE will continue to assist grantees during implementation of OST programs and support existing educational programming during the school day, including recruitment, training, and ongoing professional learning of new teachers. The number of students served in year four of the PSOEP grant cohort implementation is indicated below.

### PSOEP GRANTEE AND TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED IN 2024-2025

Grantee	# of Students Served
Let's Invest in Neighborhood Kids (LINK) Summer and LINK Leaders Summer Program	90
Bright Start Enrichment Program	135
Gateway Enrichment Program at Samuel P. Massie Elementary School	120
Gateway Enrichment Program at Allenwood Elementary	150
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Graceland Park O' Donnell Heights Elementary and Middle Schools	90
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Rosemont Elementary/Middle School	60
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Johnston Square Elementary School	84
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Holabird Elementary/Middle School	90
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Fort Worthington	153
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Moravia Park Elementary School	75
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Gwynn Falls Elementary School	90
TOTAL	1,047