November 5, 2019

The Honorable Larry Hogan
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
H-107, State House,
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
H-101, State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Learning in Extended Academic Programs Grant Programs Report (MSAR #11693)

Dear Governor Hogan, President Miller, and Speaker Jones:

During the 2018 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly enacted the Learning in Extended Academic Programs (LEAP) Grant Program. Section 7-2006 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland requires the Maryland State Department of Education to submit a report on the implementation of the LEAP grant including an evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs and services. In addition, the attached report provides the criteria for selection of awardees and a list of counties with eligible schools.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Tiffany Clark, Director, Office of Education Policy and Government Relations at tiffany.clark1@maryland.gov or by phone at (410) 767-0090. Thank you for your continued support and interest in maintaining the highest quality of education for all students in Maryland public schools.

Best Regards.

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

KBS/mg
Encl.

c: Sarah Albert

Report to the Maryland General Assembly
Learning in Extended Academic Programs (LEAP)

Presented by the
Maryland State Department of Education

December 1, 2019

Larry Hogan
Governor

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

Brigadier General Warner I. Sumpter, USA, Ret.
President, Maryland State Board of Education

Larry Hogan
Governor

Sylvia A. Lawson, Ph.D.
Deputy Superintendent for School Effectiveness

Mary L. Gable
Assistant State Superintendent of Schools
Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy

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Executive Director
Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy

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Introduction

The Learning in Extended Academic Programs (LEAP) Section § 7-2001 through 7-2006 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland was introduced during the 2018 legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly. This legislation required the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to establish a grant program to provide extended academic enrichment programming that has a positive measurable impact on or enriches the academic performance and overall well-being of students who are at risk of falling behind academic requirements.

The initial award for the 2018-2019 school year was $4,500,000. In the 2019-2020 school year, per Section 7-2005 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the MSDE will utilize three percent of the $4,500,000.00 appropriation to hire an Extended Learning Specialist for the LEAP program. The LEAP specialist will monitor and provide technical assistance to LEAP program grantees. A total of $4,365,000 will be awarded to the local school systems to execute grant programs. The MSDE made awards to eligible entities that propose to serve public schools in which at least 80 percent of the students qualify for the free and reduced price meals program.

Eligible schools may:

- Coordinate and partner with other eligible county schools to jointly apply; and/or
- Partner with a non-profit organization to provide extended academic programming.

County boards were able to apply on behalf of one or more eligible schools in the county. An eligible school was eligible to apply for a grant only if the county superintendent endorsed the school's grant application. The following local school systems had eligible schools that qualified for LEAP funding:

- Allegany County
- Anne Arundel County
- Baltimore City
- Baltimore County
- Cecil County
- Dorchester County
- Frederick County
- Harford County
- Montgomery County
- Prince George's County
- Somerset County
- Wicomico County

On August 15, 2018, and November 17, 2018, the MSDE conducted a pre-proposal technical assistance webinar to provide:

- An overview of Maryland's LEAP grant;
- Answers to questions for those interested in submitting a proposal; and
- A timeline of activities relative to the grant competition.

The MSDE received 25 submissions for the LEAP grant funding. The MSDE selected applications that demonstrated the ability to successfully implement programs that extended or expanded academic enrichment programming and met the established criteria:

- Extend academic enrichment programming before and after the school day for a minimum of eight hours each full week that school is in session; and/or

- Expand academic enrichment programming on weekends for a minimum of four hours per weekend; and/or

- Expand academic enrichment programming during the summer break for a minimum of four hours per day for a minimum of 30 days.

The criterion used to evaluate individual applications consisted of 12 components:

- Extent of Need for Project
- Program Design
- Performance Measures and Indicators
- Alignment with Maryland's College and Career Readiness Standards
- Implementation and Governance Plan
- Evaluation and Dissemination
- Coordination with other Programs
- Sustainability
- Budget and Adequacy of Resources

The MSDE publicly solicited, screened, and selected impartial, qualified reviewers to review and score the applications. Applications that were selected for funding required applicants to complete a validation process that required a response in writing to a standard set of programmatic and fiscal questions to clarify any questions or concerns raised by the reviewers. The MSDE forwarded the questions at least one week before the interviews. The validation process afforded the applicant the opportunity to answer questions and expand on their proposal. This process assisted reviewers with final funding and programmatic decisions.   The validation process included a budget review to ensure there was an alignment between activities described in the application and proposed expenses.

Implementation

Award notifications were made and programming began upon receipt of the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) from the MSDE. Grantees were informed that the LEAP funding is for consecutive years and contingent upon state funding.

Grantees

The initial award for the 2018-2019 school year was $4,500,000.00. The MSDE made awards to eligible school systems in which at least 80 percent of students qualified for the federal free or reduced price meal program. A total of 12 local school systems were notified by the MSDE of the eligibility to apply. As a result, each eligible jurisdiction in Maryland received a LEAP award and the total funding for each local school system is detailed below (Table 1).

Table 1:

Program Name	Local School System	Award Amount
Jump Start Program	Allegany County	$8,232.96
Learning in Extended Academic Programs	Anne Arundel County	$32,225.28
Young Audiences	Baltimore City	$1,040,547.84
Center for Talented Youth's Baltimore City Emerging Scholars Program	Baltimore City	$399,764.71
Cecil Elementary Extended Academic Program	Baltimore City	$141,622.76
Summer Arts and Learning	Baltimore City	$400,000.00
The Learning in Extended Academic Program	Baltimore County	$341,686.00
Gilpin Manor Summer Enrichment	Cecil County	$12,441.60

Maces Lane Summer Academy	Dorchester County	$66,693.12
Fun Academics in the Summer Time PACK (FAST-PACK)	Frederick County	$360,740.00
Hall's Cross Roads STEM Club and Magnolia Mustang Summer Reading Club	Harford County	$41,687.04
Enrichment Extended Learning Opportunities	Montgomery County	$300,743.00
PGCPS Rising Scholars Summer Program	Prince George's County	$725,975.00
Somerset Summer Extended Academic Programs	Somerset County	$261,212.00
STARS: LEAP After School and Summer Learning Center	Wicomico County	$366,160.00

Total Award Amount: $4,499,731.31

Table 2 indicates the eligible schools and students served in the first year of implementation of the LEAP grant.

Table 2:

Local School System	Number of Schools Served	Proposed Number of Students Served
Allegany County Public Schools	1	45
Anne Arundel County Public Schools	2	150

Baltimore City Public Schools	29	2,609
Baltimore County Public Schools	4	281
Cecil County Public Schools	1	60
Dorchester County Public Schools	1	60
Frederick County Public Schools	1	130
Harford County Public Schools	2	80
Montgomery County Public Schools	8	576
Prince George's County Public Schools	3	405
Somerset County Public Schools	4	296
Wicomico County Public Schools	3	260
Total	**59**	**4,952**

The extended academic programs were required to include before or after school, weekend, or summer programs targeted to students who are at the risk of falling behind on academic requirements. Table 3 depicts approximately 92 percent of LEAP programs met the number of days specified in the grant application.

Table 3:

Percentage of LEAP Programs that Met for the Number of Days as Reported in the Grant
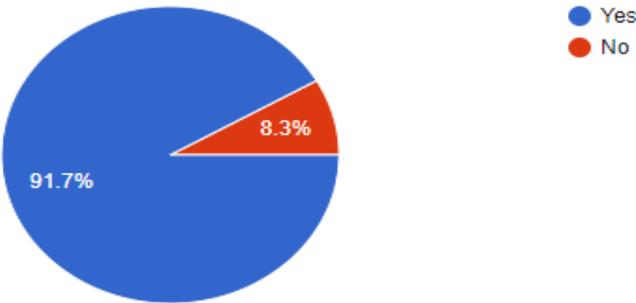
Technical Assistance

The MSDE provided ongoing technical assistance to grantees to ensure that programs:

- Assist every student to realize his or her potential;
- Develop and support a strong accountability system to increase academic success for all students;
- Promote a safe, healthy, and orderly environment for teaching and learning;
- Ensure educator and administrative effectiveness;
- Promote students' physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being;
- Expand high-quality educational opportunities for students and parents;
- Work with districts to strengthen infrastructure; and
- Increase communication and partnerships with stakeholders statewide.

Technical assistance included providing support and training to grantees through webinars and in-person trainings that meet quality standards and content-specific topic areas such as: incorporating best practices around STEM, health and wellness, literacy and math, inclusion of youth with disabilities, and classroom management techniques. The MSDE also utilized the Continuation of Funds Reports to identify future technical assistance needs.

Targeted specialized technical assistance will be provided to grantees that require additional guidance based upon the MSDE Risk Indicators. The Risk indicators include: (1) Open Grant Lines, (2) Total Funding, (3) Complexity, (4) Documentation, (5) Implementation, (6) Un/Allowable Actions, (7) Late Reporting, (8) Low Spend-Down, (9) Reimbursement Invoices, (10) External Complaints, (11) Audit Findings, (12) The MSDE Monitoring, (13) Programmatic Change Requests, (14) Program Deliverables, (15) Grant Management Amendments, (16) Contractors, (17) Illegal Activity and (18) Student Enrollment. An assigned Extended Learning Specialist is being recruited to administer ongoing technical assistance.

Evaluation and Effectiveness

All LEAP grantees provided a self-reported evaluation to assess progress toward achieving its goal of providing high-quality opportunities for academic enrichment. In Year One, grantees implemented their grant proposals as outlined and submitted a Continuation of Funds Report in September 2019. The review of the end-of-year reports determined that grantees effectively addressed all eight State Education Agency Performance Goals. The grantees were required to report on the progress towards three self-defined performance objectives. The findings demonstrated that overall grantees met or demonstrated progress towards the three objectives (Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6).
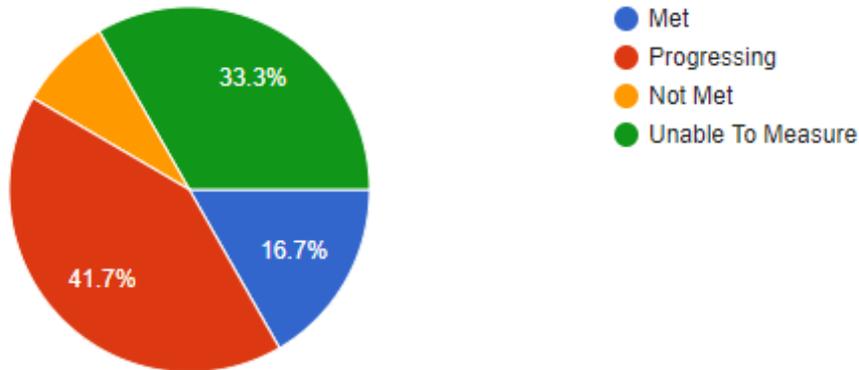
Table 4:

Performance Progress of Objective #1
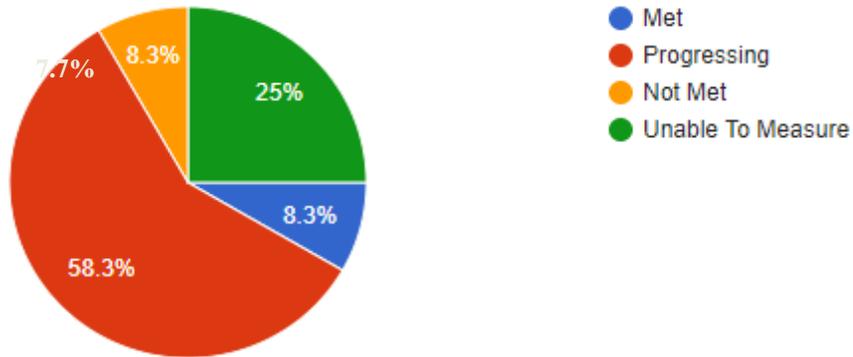
Legend:
- Met
- Progressing
- Not Met
- Unable To Measure

Slices: 8.3%, 7.7%, 25%, 8.3%, 58.3%

∗ Unable to Measure: Assessment data was not available at the time of reporting; however, measurements will be updated with the submission of the Evaluation Report by October 31, 2019

Table 5:

Performance Progress of Objective #2

Legend:
- Met
- Progressing
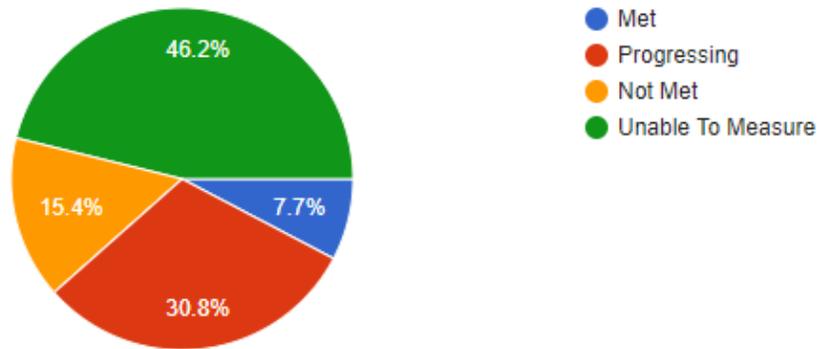- Not Met
- Unable To Measure

Slices: 33.3%, 16.7%, 41.7%

∗

 Unable to Measure: Assessment data was not available at the time of reporting; however, measurements will be updated with the submission of the Evaluation Report by October 31, 2019.

Table 6:

Performance Progress of Objective #3

∗ Unable to Measure: Assessment data was not available at the time of reporting; however, measurements will be updated with the submission of the Evaluation Report by October 31, 2019.

The data reports an average of 36 percent of performance objectives defined as "unable to measure." The use of State Assessment data is one mode of measurement, among others, utilized by the grantees that are not yet available due to the reporting timeline. Grantees are required to identify the individual and/or organization that agreed to serve as the external evaluator for the program and describe his/her qualifications. In choosing an external evaluator, grantees considered the candidate's:

- experience evaluating educational initiatives;
- capacity to collect, manage, analyze, and interpret program and individual student data;
- time availability (evaluation and reporting for this program may take a considerable amount of time); and
- knowledge of and compliance with data confidentiality requirements.

The MSDE will validate the self-reported findings and outstanding performance data upon review of the external evaluator report.

Summary

The MSDE is implementing the Maryland Learning in Extended Academic Programs (LEAP) that was enacted under Sections § 7-2001 through 7-2006 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. This legislation requires the MSDE to submit an annual report on the effectiveness of the LEAP program, as well as, an evaluation of LEAP programs. The

MSDE is submitting this report in order to provide the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly the required information in § 7-2006 of the Education Article.

The findings in this report demonstrated successful implementation of the LEAP grant by the grantees. The grant award for the 2019-2020 school year was $4,365,000 which excludes the three percent administrative appropriation for the hiring of the MSDE Extended Learning Specialist.

The MSDE will continue to assist grantees during implementation of extended day and summer enhancement programs for Maryland students. The MSDE understands the importance of offering quality extended day and summer programs to assist students with academic and social skills year round to avoid regression in learning.

Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy

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