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

December 1, 2020

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

The Honorable Bill Ferguson
President
Senate of Maryland
State House, H-107
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker
Maryland House of Delegates
State House, H-101
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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

Dear Governor Hogan, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

The Learning in Extended Academic Programs (LEAP) Grant Program was enacted by Section § 7-2001 through 2006 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. This legislation 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 list of awardees and the corresponding counties with eligible schools.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Zachary Hands, Director, Educational Policy and Government Relations, by phone at (410) 767-0504 or by email at Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov.

Best Regards,

Karen B Salmon, Ph.D.

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

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, 2020

Larry Hogan
Governor

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

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

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

Clarence C. Crawford
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

Christy G. Thompson, Ed.D.
Executive Director
Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy

Contents

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 utilized three percent of the $4,500,000.00 appropriation to hire an Extended Learning Specialist for the LEAP program. The LEAP specialist monitors and provides technical assistance to LEAP program grantees. A total of $4,365,000 was 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.

The following local school systems continued to receive LEAP funding in the 2019-2020 school year:

- 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

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 award for the 2019-2020 school year was $4,365,000. 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. 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: Local School System LEAP Programs and Award Amounts

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	$905,816.49
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	$725,975.04
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:		$4,365,000.00

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

Table 2: Local School System Total Number of Schools Served and Proposed Number of Students Served

Local School System	Number of Schools Served	Proposed Number of Students Served
Allegany County Public Schools	1	45
Anne Arundel County Public Schools	*	*
Baltimore City Public Schools	29	2784
Baltimore County Public Schools	*	*
Cecil County Public Schools	*	*
Dorchester County Public Schools	1	71
Frederick County Public Schools	1	140
Harford County Public Schools	2	60
Montgomery County Public Schools	8	450
Prince George's County Public Schools	3	285
Somerset County Public Schools	*	*
Wicomico County Public Schools	3	150
Total	**48**	**3985**

*The sub-grantee chose to not operate a summer program in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will operate a fall program in school year 2020-2021.

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. The data collected through grant monitoring procedures reported that 73 percent of LEAP programs met the number of days specified in the grant application.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the LEAP programs that were operating school year programs transitioned to a virtual environment in mid-March to provide instruction to students. Three programs that were scheduled to operate during the summer decided to delay programming until school year 2020-2021 due to COVID-19 challenges. Each program that operated in a virtual environment submitted Program Weekly Closure Forms that described the activities that were being implemented to include (1) curriculum work; (2) lesson plan development, (3) online/distance learning; (4) staff/professional development; Out of School Time (OST) program data collection; and (6) systems planning work that included summer programs, evaluation, and sustainability efforts. Grant managers in the OST programs worked closely with their partners and service providers to convert lessons and activities to online formats. The MSDE OST team made reasonable and fair accommodations with regards to any reduction in results within OST programs goals due to COVID-19. In addition, flexibility was provided to grantees to reallocate dollars in grant budgets to accommodate for programs transitioning to a virtual environment.

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: national OST programming and online professional learning resources, STEM, summer learning programmatic practices, contracted services documentation and accountability practices, grants fiscal management protocols, and budgetary amendment trainings. The MSDE OST Team hosted an annual State Retreat for OST grantees and local evaluators to enhance knowledge of programmatic and fiscal practices, as well as, explore measurements of effective evaluation of

services. The MSDE also utilized the Continuation of Funds Reports to identify future technical assistance needs.

An assigned Extended Learning Specialist administers ongoing technical assistance. Targeted specialized technical assistance was provided to grantees that required 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.

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 two, grantees implemented their grant proposals as outlined in a Continuation of Funds Report submitted in September 2019. A total of two school year and eleven summer LEAP programs were implemented effectively. The grantees submitted a year two Continuation of Funds Report that records data from the 2019-2020 school year. 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. The data reported that 60 percent of grantees had met or were progressing towards objective one; 33 percent of grantees had met or were progressing towards objective two; and 33 percent of grantees had met or were progressing towards objective three. The data reports an average of 67 percent of performance objectives two and three defined as "unable to measure." The LEAP programs unable to provide measurement at the time of the submitted report cited justifications including the inability to effectively assess student performance because of the abrupt school closings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the waiver of state assessments and/or evaluation results not yet being available. The use of state assessment data is one mode of measurement, among others, utilized by the grantees that are not available due to the lack of administration during the pandemic, spring 2020.

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.

The data identified that all grantees will implement a fiscal year 2021 fall or spring school year LEAP program.

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 enhancement programs for Maryland students. The MSDE understands the importance of offering quality extended day programs to assist students with academic and social skills to avoid regression in learning.

Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy

Maryland State Department of Education

200 W. Baltimore Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21201