

# MARYLAND FORWARD

## Governor's Forum on Skills and Education



January 3, 2011  
Bowie State University

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# Introduction

## Purpose of the Forum

The State of Maryland enjoyed a number of successes in K-12 education, higher education, and workforce training during Governor O'Malley's first term. In addition to securing a \$250 million federal Race to the Top grant to promote quality education and preparation for *all* students, Maryland has been ranked by *Education Week* as the as #1 public school system in the nation for three years in a row.<sup>1</sup> Maryland also leads the nation in the passage rate for Advanced Placement exams,<sup>2</sup> and in the percentage of high schools considered to be academically rigorous.<sup>3</sup> In addition, initiatives focused on Career and Technology Education (CTE) were implemented in Maryland's public schools, thereby increasing the percentage of CTE graduates who have passed an assessment or earned industry recognition by more than 10 percentage points. These are only a few of the many accomplishments that have put Maryland on a trajectory of success.

Governor O'Malley convened the Maryland Forward Forum on Skills and Education to gauge progress on the Strategic Policy Goals established during the first term and to develop a strategy for continued progress in these priority areas during his second term. The Forum was designed to elicit feedback and ideas from approximately 300 leaders from K-12 and higher education, business stakeholders, cabinet secretaries, and state employees. The recommendations centered on how the State can continue to improve our education system in order to promote innovation and accelerate the transition to the new economy.

Discussion at the forum was focused on building a world-class K-12 education system, promoting college completion, and expanding skills training in the State. Participants discussed prioritization of resources at the State and district levels and evaluated the allocation and use of current resources. Stakeholders also addressed alignment at transition points and the need to help students seamlessly through each stage of education and into the workforce.



<sup>1</sup> "Quality Counts 2011: Uncertain Forecast," *Education Week*, January 11, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> "6<sup>th</sup> Annual AP Report to the Nation," College Board, February 2010. Link to the full report: [http://www.collegeboard.com/html/aprtn/pdf/ap\\_report\\_to\\_the\\_nation.pdf](http://www.collegeboard.com/html/aprtn/pdf/ap_report_to_the_nation.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> "America's Best High Schools 2010," *Newsweek*, June 2010. Link to the article: <http://www.newsweek.com/feature/2010/americas-best-high-schools.html>.

# Key Recommendations

## *Building a World-Class K-12 Education System*

- **Integrate innovative learning.** Utilize technology, track longitudinal data, and increase collaboration to promote educational excellence.
- **Bridge systematic gaps.** Develop strategies to ensure that students are prepared for transitions from elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education and the workforce.
- **Promote effectiveness among teachers and principals.** Facilitate communication, effective teacher preparation, and specialized support to foster innovative learning.

## *Promoting College Completion*

- **Restructure financial aid programs.** Formulate new approaches to financial assistance that encourage completion and meet the realistic needs of students.
- **Increase focus on STEM programming.** Educate students about and prepare them for STEM majors and careers, beginning in elementary and secondary school.
- **Create statewide internship programs.** Facilitate collaboration between higher education and businesses and governmental agencies to create a statewide internship program.

## *Advancing Skills2Compete*

- **Increase partnerships with private industry.** Increase employer-driven training and financial assistance opportunities.
- **Promote cross-sector innovations.** Employ collaborative efforts, database systems and partnerships between all education sectors and private industry.
- **Expand focus on adult and alternative programming.** Tailor training programs to meet the needs of adult learners and underserved populations.

# Preparing Marylanders for the Jobs of the New Economy

*"We're in a fight for our children's future. It's a fight to transition into the new economy with more opportunity for all. In this fight, there will be some states that lose, and some states that win. For Maryland to win, we must move forward by creating jobs through innovation, saving jobs, and protecting public safety, public education, and our quality of life."*

- Governor Martin O'Malley

Maryland created 26,000 new jobs in 2010, representing the State's strongest year of new job creation since 2006.<sup>4</sup> The State's continued success in job growth and creation requires a plan to prepare *all* Marylanders for the new economy. According to the Center on Education & the Workforce at Georgetown University, 66 percent of all Maryland jobs by 2018 (approximately 2 million) will require *some* postsecondary training beyond high school. This is 3 percentage points above the national average.<sup>5</sup> Across all job sectors, there will be an increase in the minimum levels of education required. Therefore, Maryland must raise overall college completion rates while placing extra focus on closing the completion gap for underrepresented students and increasing the number certifications attained by middle-skill workers.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Carnevale, Anthony P., Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl. "Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018." Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University. June 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Aggregated by NCHEMS from IPEDS 2007-08 Graduation Rate File

Governor O'Malley recognizes that moving Maryland into the new economy will require innovation and leadership in advancing skills of all Marylanders, prioritizing public safety and homeland security, supporting environmental sustainability, and the promoting the health of all residents. For Governor O'Malley, "progress on one of these fronts requires progress on all."<sup>7</sup> The O'Malley-Brown Administration will continue to lead through implementation of overall strategic education reform and skills goals.

## **Moving Maryland Forward: Progress on the Strategic Policy Goals**

### **Background on the Governor's Strategic Policy Goals**

Governor O'Malley ran for office in 2006 with a commitment to make government work again for the people of our State. Upon taking office, the Governor instituted StateStat, a system of performance-based management, to make our State government more accountable and efficient. In 2008, the Governor created the Delivery Unit as an extension of StateStat to implement cross-agency initiatives and effectively align State and federal resources. Working with the Executive Agencies and StateStat, the Delivery Unit oversees the Governor's 15 strategic policy goals, broadly categorized into four key areas – skills, security, sustainability, and health.

This structure of centrally coordinated policy implementation and accountability has propelled Maryland's progress towards attainment of the strategic policy goals and has set the course for governmental efficiency and innovative reform. Two of the 15 goals were the central focus of the Skills and Education Forum:

- **Strategic Education Goal:** Improve student achievement and school, college, and career readiness in Maryland by 25 percent by 2015.
- **Strategic Skills Goal:** Increase the Number of Marylanders Who Receive Skills Training by 20 percent by end 2012.

### **Strategic Education Goal**

In February 2010, the Governor introduced the *Plan for Improving Student Achievement and Readiness in Maryland* to further develop the efforts to achieve the strategic education goal of improve student achievement and school, college, and career readiness in Maryland by 25 percent by 2015.

#### **Seven Strategies**

The goal is divided into seven strategies that are designed to further improve our public schools and better prepare Maryland students for competition in the global economy:

1. Raise standards and adopt internationally benchmarked assessments to better prepare Maryland students for college and careers in an era of global competition.
2. Build a comprehensive statewide longitudinal data system.
3. Close the "readiness gap" and improve transitions into school, higher education, and the workforce.
4. Enhance Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Education.

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<sup>7</sup> Stated by Governor Martin O'Malley at the Forum on Skills and Education

5. Expand Career and Technology Education (CTE).
6. Provide teacher and principal support to recruit and retain qualified and effective teachers and principals.
7. Maximize American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding opportunities.

**Rated #1 for Seamless Transitioning of Students from  
Pre-School to the Workforce**

Maryland has been recognized by *Education Week* and the College Board as a national leader for seamlessly transitioning students through all stages of education and into the workforce. The Governor's P-20 Leadership Council of Maryland has examined key issues such as closing the “readiness gap” at all levels from pre-kindergarten through all levels of education and into the workplace.

### **Moving Maryland Forward**

Since the release of the Governor’s *Plan for Improving Student Achievement and Readiness in Maryland*, the State has made measurable progress in each of the seven strategies outlined in this report. In addition, the State has been ranked and recognized as a leader in education.

### **Building on our “First-in-the-Nation” Education System**

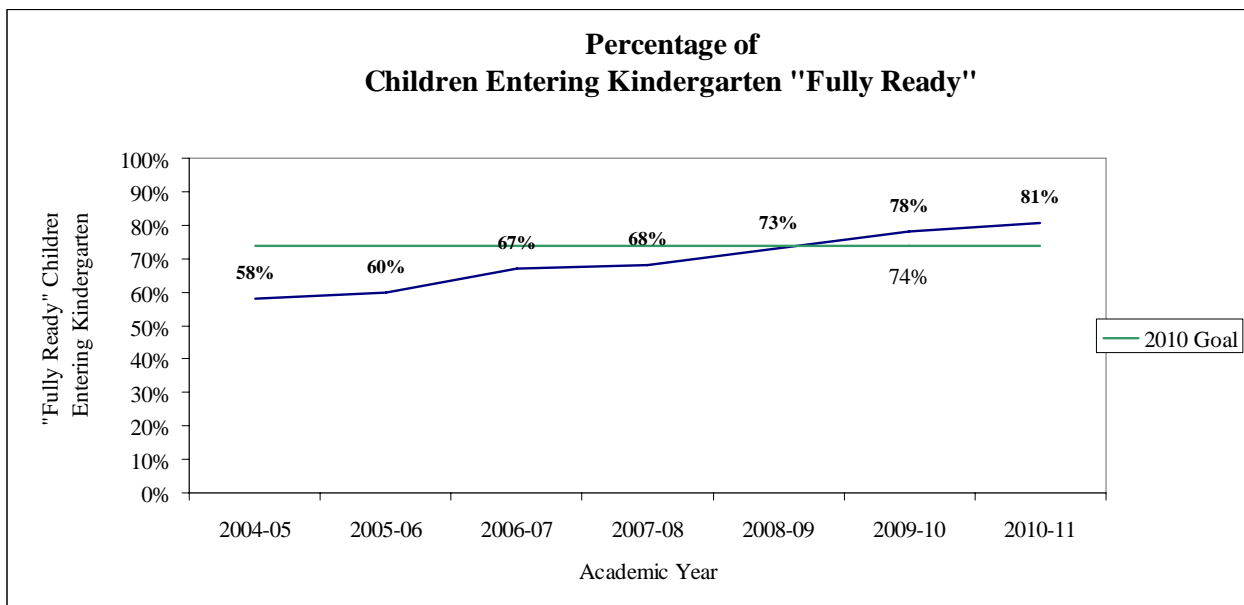
- Maryland the named the “Best Public School System in America,” three years running by Education Weekly. The report recognizes Maryland for having the best alignment from Pre-K to post-graduate education in the nation.
- Maryland was ranked as #1 in Advanced Placement (AP) Test passage rate in the nation by the College Board, three years in a row.
- Our pre-kindergarten program is consistently ranked among the best in the country.
- Governor O’Malley was designated as “America’s Greatest Governor of the Year 2010” by the National Education Association.
- Students achieved the highest student scores in Maryland’s history on the MSA, the annual assessment that tests grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics to calculate whether a school meets the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) target.

### **Progress toward our Education Goal**

Building on our “first-in-the-Nation” standing requires persistent momentum toward our strategic goal. The State will continue to make progress on our goals by:

- **Tracking Student Progress** from Pre-K through the workforce by leading the effort to build the *Maryland Longitudinal Data System*.
- **Leading innovation through STEM** by establishing the STEM Innovation Network, a recommendation of the-STEM Task Force of the Governor’s P-20 Leadership Council.
- **Increasing STEM workforce preparedness through AP Exam achievement.** Between 2007 and 2009, the number of STEM AP exams with scores of 3 or better increased by more than 50 percent.
- **Expanding CTE Programs.** The numbers of fully implemented CTE programs were expanded from 30 to 38 programs statewide and increased the percentage of CTE programs with at least one affiliate partner from 10 percent to 37 percent.

- **Engaging educators through the TELL Maryland Survey.** In 2009 the Governor administered the survey to engage Maryland educators on working conditions and paths to progress. The survey will be administered again in 2011.
- **Promoting Financial Literacy.** In January 2010, the State Board of Education accepted the Maryland Personal Financial Literacy Education State Curriculum, an initiative of the Financial Literacy Education Advisory Council.
- **Adopting the Common Core State Standards.** In June 2010 Maryland adopted the Common Core to ensure that our students receive a *world-class* education that prepares them to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.
- **Winning a \$250 Million a Race to the Top Award,** which will be used to implement reforms to build upon Maryland’s first-in-the-nation ranked public schools and ensure that every Maryland student receives a world-class education.
- **Funding K-12 Education at Record Levels** for four consecutive years.



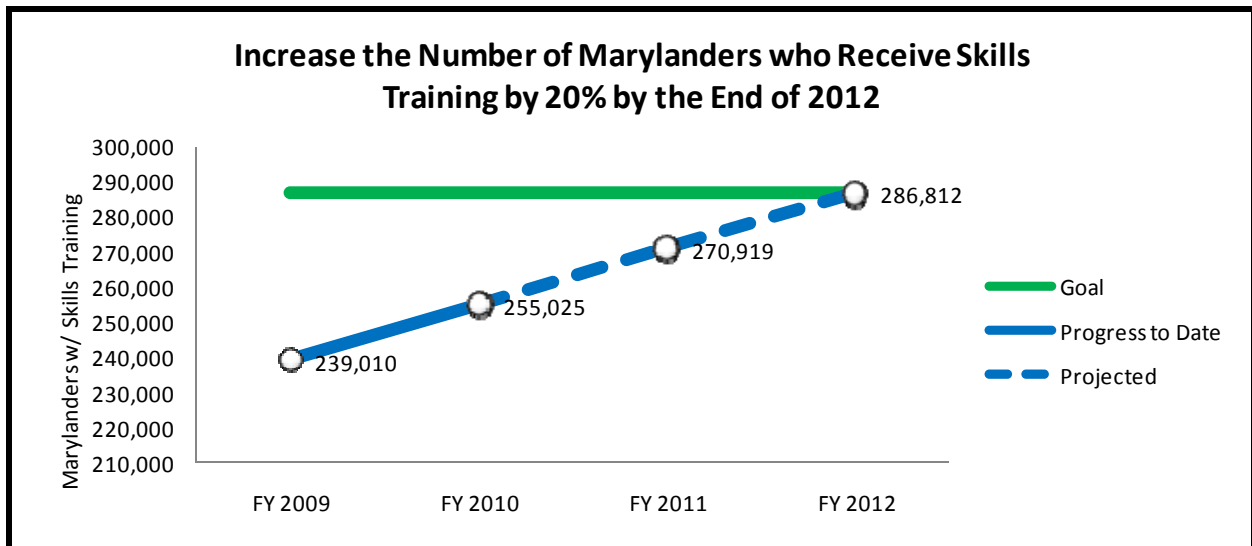
## Strategic Skills Goal

In March 2010, Governor O’Malley launched *Skills2Compete Maryland*, a new workforce skills vision that seeks to increase the number of Marylanders who participate in education or training beyond high school. This effort focuses on providing Maryland’s unemployed, newly dislocated, and low-wage incumbent workers with the skills needed to compete and succeed in the emerging knowledge-based economy. In conjunction with *Skills2Compete* and in response to the emerging needs of Maryland’s growth industries, the O’Malley-Brown Administration is implementing a plan to increase the number of Marylanders who receive skills training by 20 percent by 2012.

## Eleven Strategies

The Skills2Compete plan is divided into the following strategies:

1. Increase the number of degrees and certificates awarded by Maryland community colleges and increase enrollment in non-credit coursework that leads to a government or industry required certificate or license.
2. Increase overall enrollment in occupational skills training by 20 percent by 2012.
3. Expand the Maryland Business Works Program (MBW) incumbent worker training initiative to advance the skills of more than 3,000 incumbent workers per year in Maryland by 2012.
4. By 2012, increase the number of registered apprentices and graduates of apprenticeship programs in the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program and register 15 new programs, including at least 5 new non-construction programs.
5. Expand participation of inmates in apprenticeships and nationally-recognized certificate programs.
6. Increase the number of adult education participants that enter postsecondary education or training.
7. Increase the number of CTE graduates attaining industry certification, licensure and/or early college credit.
8. Increase the number of Maryland RISE (Reaching Independence and Stability through Employment) participants who complete occupational skills training and receive an industry-recognized certificate.
9. Increase the number of persons with disabilities enrolled in postsecondary education and career technology training programs and the number of certifications awarded or programs completed by persons with significant disabilities.
10. Continue to partner on the development and expansion of the Maryland Weatherization training program conducted through the State's community colleges.
11. Increase outreach and promotion of S2C to Maryland workers.

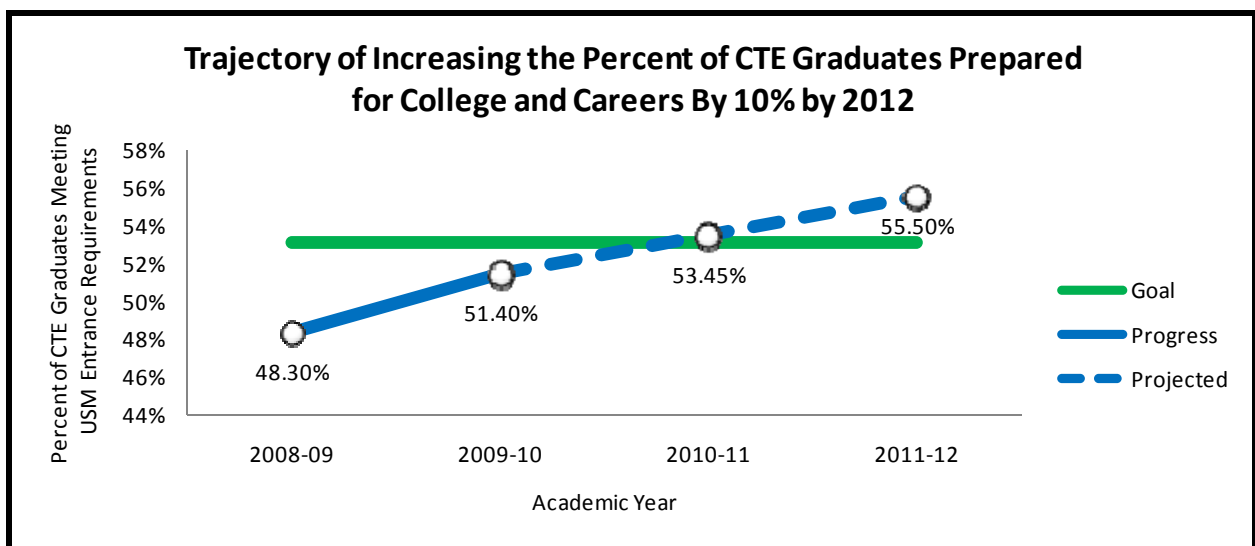


Note: Skills Training is defined by Skills2Compete training and up-skilling strategies. This chart does not include the following Skills2Compete strategies for which full data were not available for the time period displayed: Number of CTE Graduates; Number of Participants in State Weatherization Training Program; Number of Private Career School Enrollments.

## Moving Maryland Forward: Progress toward our Strategic Skills Goal

In the past, a college education or advanced training beyond high school was not required to make a decent living. But in today's economy, education and training beyond high school are the difference between a subsistence living and family-sustaining careers. Maryland has made measurable progress in each of the five strategies, outlined above. Our progress includes:

- **Increasing Coordination** by linking Maryland *Skills2Compete* website with the State's One-Stop Career Centers. In 2010, over 16,000 Marylanders were matched with workforce services at Maryland One-Stop Career Centers.
- **Increasing Apprenticeships.** After a decline of the number of graduates from 2007-2009, graduates of apprenticeship programs increased in 2010—setting the pace to reach its 2012 graduate goal.
- **Improving Career and Technical Education (CTE)** by increasing access to CTE in Maryland's public schools and increasing the percentage of CTE graduates who have passed an assessment or earned industry recognition by more 10 percentage points. The State continues to increase CTE partnerships between MSDE and businesses and higher education institutions.
- **Strengthening our Community Colleges.** The number of Associate Degrees and certificates awarded and credit-based enrollments at Community Colleges increased in 2010.
- **Launching MD RISE,** the Department of Human Resources' partnership with State and local government, community colleges, and employers to provide job training to hundreds of TCA recipients in targeted sectors. In June 2010, the program reached an initial goal of establishing 10 training partnerships.
- **Working with Business.** The newly created *Maryland Business Works Incumbent Worker Training Program* supports existing Maryland businesses in the retention and growth of their workforce. Under the program, the number of incumbent workers doubled from 2,500 to 5,000 in less than two years and participating employers expanded from 200 to more than 300.
- **Securing State Energy Sector Partnership Grant,** a \$5.4 million Department of Labor grant to support career training for Marylanders in energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors.
- **Securing HRSA Workforce Planning Grant,** a \$150,000 grant to support the development of a workforce blueprint for increasing the primary care workforce by 25 percent over the next 10 years.



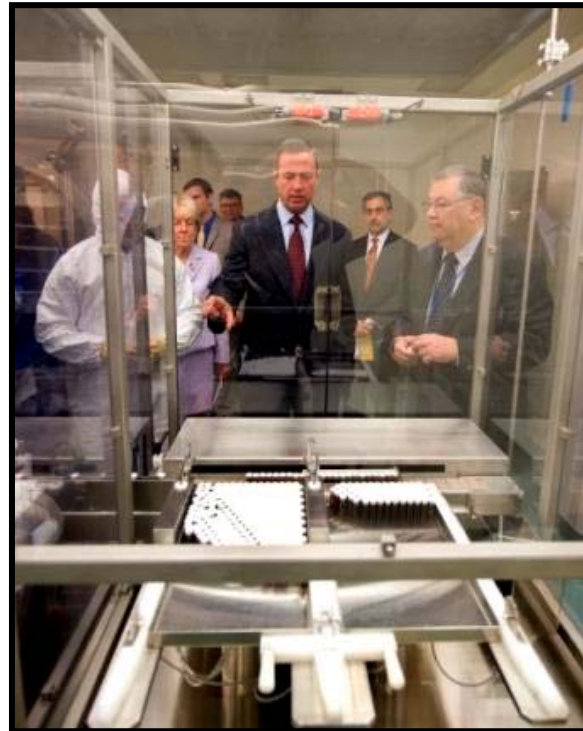
Note: Maryland CTE Programs of Study provide high school students with a sequence of courses designed to prepare them for college and careers. Preparation for College and Careers is measured by how many CTE graduates meet USM entrance requirements.

## Session One: Building a World Class K-12 Education System

### Background

Across the country, states are reforming educational systems to promote global competitiveness while concurrently dealing with unprecedented fiscal constraints.

Central to this reform effort is an expanded focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education and preparedness. According to a report by the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, the list of fastest growing occupations in Maryland is dominated by positions related to STEM fields.<sup>8</sup> Yet, national estimates indicate that 69 percent of public school students in fifth through eighth grade are taught mathematics by a teacher without a degree or certificate in mathematics and 93 percent of those students are taught physical sciences by a teacher without a degree or certificate in the physical sciences.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, a tremendous challenge lies in preparing teachers to teach STEM disciplines and ensuring those teachers are equitably distributed across all districts.



The expanded use of technology and innovation is also a key component of building a world-class education system. Through the Maryland Longitudinal Data System, the State is building statewide technology infrastructure that links all data elements with analytic and instructional tools to promote student achievement. The State is also developing statewide professional learning communities to support educators' use of the instructional tools in the Maryland Longitudinal Data System.

Finally, the State is partnering with higher education and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to develop statewide curriculum and assessments based upon the Common Core State Standards. The resulting standards and assessments will be college and workforce aligned, evidence-based, and internationally benchmarked to best position our students to compete successfully in the global economy.

Participants in this session were sub-divided into two workgroups: *Preparing K-12 Students for the New Economy* and *Creating Seamless Pathways in K-12 Education*.

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<sup>8</sup> "Maryland's Workforce Indicators: 2010." Governor's Workforce Investment Board. December 2010.

<sup>9</sup> "Rising Above the Gathering Storm, Revisited: Rapidly Approaching Category 5," p. 6, National Academies Press, 2010. Link to the full report: [http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=12999&page=R1](http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12999&page=R1)

## Workgroup: Preparing K-12 Students for the New Economy

Facilitated by:

Dr. Alvin Thornton, Senior Advisor to the President for Academic Affairs, Howard University



### Summary

Participants reiterated that in order for *all* students to compete in a global job market, Maryland must ensure that our K-12 educational system is internationally competitive. Strategies to achieve this goal include further integrating STEM and CTE into the K-12 curriculum; utilizing data to drive decision-making at each level of education; and increasing access to innovative technology for all students.

The State must prioritize resources at the State and district levels to promote reform and to ensure that students are prepared for transitions from elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education and the workforce. The recommendations were framed in the context of the State's development of curriculum and assessments based upon the Common Core Standards.

### Recommendation One: Integrate innovative learning

Promoting innovative learning requires the development and implementation of multi-subject curricular integration at all levels. Workgroup participants emphasized the need to

integrate STEM disciplines into all subject areas and more fully develop statewide content in the areas of STEM and CTE.

The workgroup recommended expanded statewide efforts to institute multi-sensory education for children with learning disabilities, the increased promotion of extracurricular activities, and the provision of work-oriented pathways in the curriculum. Resources include the development of the STEM-Net web portal which will link school districts, classroom teachers and students and the development of the *Maryland Longitudinal Data System*, enhancing efforts to promote innovative learning.

### Recommendation Two: Bridge systematic gaps

The workgroup discussed strategies for addressing systematic gaps including: strengthening efforts to close achievement gaps, establishing aligned academic standards, and instituting a comprehensive curricular approach that includes STEM, writing, reading, speaking, and the arts in all areas of education.

The workgroup also emphasized the need to strengthen articulation agreements between K-12 and Higher Education. Additionally, participants recommended that the State perform a technological needs assessment at each school district to determine the gaps that schools and teachers face in accessing and incorporating innovative technology into the classroom.

## **Workgroup: Creating Seamless Pathways**

Facilitated by:

Dr. Elizabeth Morgan, Superintendent, Washington County Public Schools

### **Workgroup Summary**

The *Creating Seamless Pathways* workgroup examined strategies to strengthen struggling schools and improve graduation rates. Participants also discussed the importance of recruiting strong teachers and principals.

The workgroup also explored methods by which educators can utilize the Longitudinal Data System as an analytic and instructional tool to promote student achievement and teacher preparation to ensure that students transition smoothly to the next steps in their education.

### **Recommendation One: Improve collaboration and cooperation**

In order to improve collaboration and cooperation among educators and stakeholder groups, participants recommended encouraging “vertical teaming,” promoting differentiated staffing, improving partnerships with the private sector, and facilitating strategic use of technology.

Workgroup participants suggested the State utilize vertical teaming to connect educators across grade-levels, districts, and the State. These professional learning communities would address curriculum, best-practices and transitions across grade levels to focus on meeting the needs of all students. The Longitudinal Data System will further enhance this process by creating an instructional improvement system to give teachers access to real-time data to promote student achievement statewide.

### **Recommendation Two: Promote effectiveness among teachers and principals**

In addition to the activities described above, the workgroup also discussed the following methods to recruit and retain effective teachers and principals: providing enhanced mentoring programs, encouraging flexible professional development opportunities, and strengthening the teacher preparation pipeline. Participants recommended targeting mentoring and monetary resources to teachers and principals in the most at-risk schools.

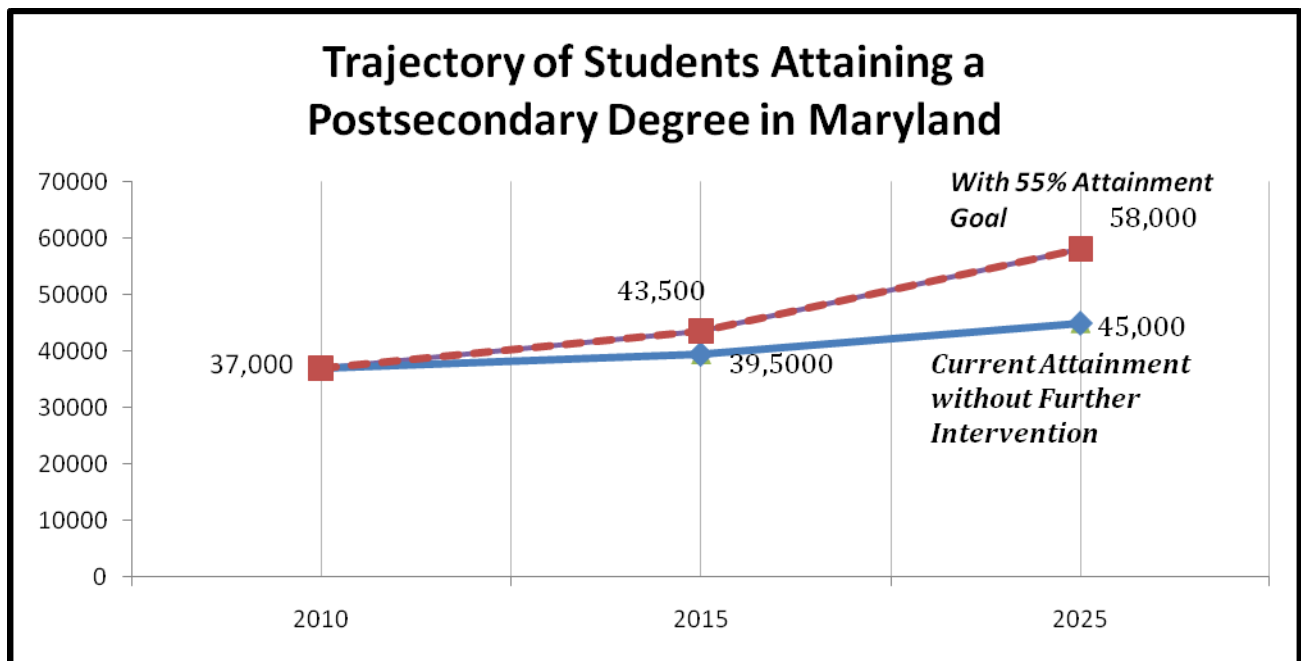


## Session Two: Promoting College Completion

### Background

By 2018, it is estimated that 62 percent of jobs in the United States will require a college degree, defined as an associate's degree, bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>10</sup> Recognizing the importance of degree attainment to the future of Maryland's economy, Governor O'Malley set a statewide completion goal of 55 percent attainment by 2025. This goal sets the target that, by 2025, at least 55 percent of the State's residents age 25-64 will hold at least one degree or credential.

Currently, Maryland's colleges and universities award slightly more than 37,000 Bachelor's and Associate's degrees each year. Without additional intervention, the total number of new degrees from all institutions in the State is expected to continue to rise to 45,000 by 2025. However, to attain a level of degree awards necessary to reach the 55 percent goal, Maryland must go beyond current projections and produce 58,000 degrees per year. To move the state towards achieving this long-term goal, an **interim goal** of increasing the total degree production by 6,500 by 2015 was established and is being tracked through *StateStat*. The Governor's strategic education plan also looks to narrow the degree attainment gap between underrepresented minority groups and others by 50 percent by 2015.



To guide Maryland's college completion reforms, the O'Malley-Brown Administration will conduct an analysis to determine what education and skills training is necessary to meet current and projected the workforce needs and establish pathways to ensure that students are successful at achieving these requirements.

Participants in this session were sub-divided into two workgroups: *Preparing Higher Education Students for the Jobs of the New Economy* and *Ensuring that Enrolled Students Attain a Degree or Certificate*.

<sup>10</sup> Georgetown Center of Education and the Workforce, 2009, High-growth fields based on national projections of total new and replacement jobs. <http://cew.georgetown.edu/research/jobs/79012.html>

## Workgroup: Preparing Higher Education Students for the Jobs of the New Economy

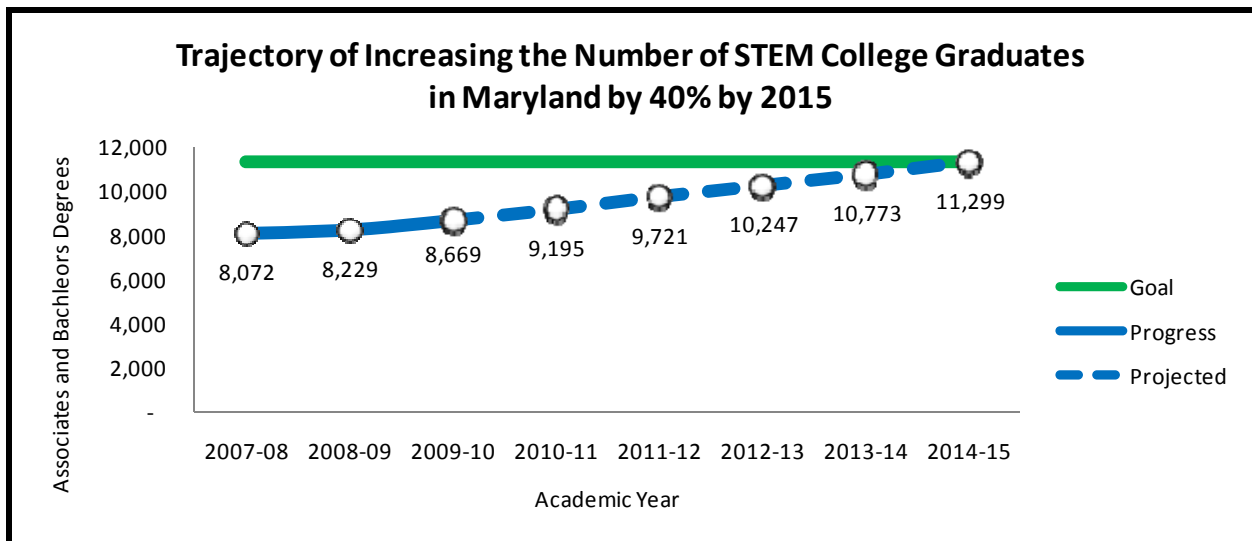
Facilitated by:

Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, III, President, UMBC

### Workgroup Summary

Participants in this workgroup discussed the need to utilize cross-disciplinary training and internships as a link between higher education and the workforce. While the emphasis was on the development of a statewide internship program, colleges, universities, and employers should increase current collaboration and communication to ensure students are knowledgeable of current opportunities.

The workgroup also discussed the lack of alignment between secondary and postsecondary education requirements, specifically within STEM disciplines. The recommendations acknowledged the need for innovative strategies to retain students in STEM disciplines, including targeted financial support. While the discussion focused on higher education's role in preparing students for the new economy, there was recognition that preparation must occur at *all* levels.



### Recommendation One: Increase preparation for those entering a STEM major.

Participants emphasized the importance of early exposure to STEM fields. Students should be informed about STEM opportunities and encouraged to participate in these programs as early as possible. Additional STEM recommendations include increased outreach to minority students, a course redesign that encourages retention, and a cross-disciplinary approach that integrates STEM into other subject matters.

### Recommendation Two: Create a statewide program to increase internships with businesses and agencies.

In order to better prepare students for careers in both the public and private sectors, participants suggested that a statewide internship program be developed. The program would rely heavily on State and federal agencies and business to engage and prepare students for the workforce. A project-based curriculum could be established to connect the internship and classroom experiences, and could be monitored by the academic institution.

The group also recommended educating students at the secondary and postsecondary levels regarding the process and requirements of obtaining security clearances.

## **Workgroup: Ensuring that Enrolled Students Attain a Degree or Certificate**

Facilitated by

Dr. David Wilson, President, Morgan State University

### **Workgroup Summary**

In order to reach the Governor's 55 percent degree attainment goal, participants agreed that elementary and secondary schools must effectively prepare students for postsecondary education. The group also discussed how financial constraints prevent students from completing post-secondary programs. Participants felt there was a significant link between access to financial aid and the educational success of Maryland's students.

### **Recommendation One: Restructure financial incentives to focus on completion.**

Participants suggested re-evaluating financial aid so that need is weighed more heavily as an eligibility requirement. In addition, streamlining the application process and offering financial incentives to students who complete a two-year degree before transferring to a four-year university were recommended.

Participants explored ways to adjust the financial aid formula to account for the intended career pathway of the students. The purpose of this change would be to provide incentives for completion. Finally, stakeholders suggested that incentives should also target students who have dropped out but are in good academic standing and have earned a significant number of credit hours.

### **Recommendation Two: Encourage a culture of academic success throughout elementary and secondary schools and higher education institutions.**

Maryland continues to be a leader in bridging transitions from early education to college and into the workforce. The workgroup emphasized the need to strengthen partnerships between the higher education sector and local school districts to create a climate that increases the chances of students' success in our earliest grades that continues through all levels of education.

The workgroup emphasized the need to strengthen the Maryland Higher Education Commission's role as the higher education coordinating body, facilitating alignment, communication, and data sharing from K-12 to the workforce.



## **Session Three: Advancing *Skills2Compete***

### **Background**

To reinforce efforts to support job growth and to better position the State to compete in the emerging global economy, Governor O'Malley launched *Skills2Compete Maryland*, a workforce development and skills initiative focused on increasing the number of Marylanders prepared for middle and high skilled jobs. This initiative is based on the belief that every Marylander should have access to the equivalent of at least two years of education or training past high school.

*Skills2Compete Maryland* provides a single, overarching theme for Governor O'Malley's workforce policies aimed at expanding employment opportunities, enhancing and upgrading skills to meet the needs of business, creating pathways to earn a decent wage, and expanding the ranks of the middle class. The initiative has focused State agencies, community colleges, local Workforce Investment Boards, apprenticeship programs, and other stakeholders on increasing post-secondary participation and completion rates, and measuring success.

A highly skilled workforce is not only critical to attracting and retaining businesses but it will strengthen Maryland's middle class by giving workers the skills to qualify for higher-paying jobs with greater opportunity for career advancement. In order to determine the best path forward for *Skills2Compete*, experts from both the education and workforce development sectors gathered together for discussion about Maryland's workforce needs. Participants were subdivided into two workgroups: *Aligning Skills2Compete with Workforce Needs* and *Leave No Marylander Behind: Promoting Access to Skills Training*.



## **Workgroup: Aligning Skills2Compete with Workforce Needs**

Facilitated by:

H. Walt Townshend, III, President and CEO, Baltimore Washington Corridor Chamber

### **Workgroup Summary**

Participants discussed the growing demand for middle-skill jobs in this challenging economy. Middle-skill jobs are those that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree and comprise nearly half of Maryland's labor market. The State has remained strong in tough economic times partly because of Maryland's robust innovation economy sectors, including information technology and cybersecurity, green industries, and healthcare.

The workgroup discussed the essential role of a post-secondary credential as a tool for an employee to progress in the labor market or to make a transition after losing a job. To provide access to educational opportunities and skills training requires both effective marketing and communication and a variety of resources, including financial and staff support.

### **Recommendation One: Increase partnerships and streamline communication between all education sectors and private industry.**

This workgroup discussed the benefits of internships and apprenticeships for developing pre-employment skills and creating partnerships between the public and private sectors. Participants stressed the importance of collaborative communication and marketing strategies that involve industry, community colleges, and workers to ensure that Marylanders are aware of the job opportunities available and the skills necessary to fill those jobs.

Additionally, participants recommended that employers assume a greater role in promoting and financing training, internships, and apprenticeships. The participants recommended that training be more employer-driven and focused on specific needs such as "soft skills." The workgroup also recommended soliciting more private sector involvement in training programs for specific populations, such as adult learners or youth workers.

### **Recommendation Two: Promote innovation across sectors.**

The workgroup encouraged the State to develop a refocused and integrated Maryland workforce system that provides the State's unemployed, newly dislocated workers, and low-wage incumbent workers with the skills to compete for and succeed in jobs. Such positions are seen as foundational to the new economy and may include the fields of healthcare, infrastructure building, "green jobs," and Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)-driven jobs.

Integrating efforts and promoting collaboration is best achieved using technological resources, such as the *Skills2Compete* website or the STEM-net. Convincing industry, government, and educational/training organizations to utilize and market available online resources is a key component to promoting innovation in skills training.

## **Workgroup: Leave No Marylander Behind: Promoting Access to Skills Training**

Facilitated by:

Dr. Charlene Dukes, President, Prince George's Community College

### **Workgroup Summary**

The workgroup discussed how certain aspects of the new economy, such as limited resources and growth in new sectors, affect the training pipeline for workers. These factors exacerbate the difficulty of connecting qualified workers to workforce opportunities, and may further hinder the connection opportunities for underserved populations.

For example, many middle-skills jobs (such as those in the field of construction) were staffed through apprenticeships in the past. The workgroup discussed the need to adapt and redefine training programs, internships, and apprenticeships to reflect the needs of the STEM-dominated new economy. These differentiated efforts must be made to match workers with the jobs in growth areas and create new pathways for Marylanders to fill the essential jobs of the future.

### **Recommendation One: Expand the focus of skills training to emphasize adult and alternative programming.**

The workgroup focused on creating new pathways to skills training for *all* Marylanders, highlighting the needs of underserved populations such as ex-offenders, mid-career adults, English language learners, veterans, individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, and the unemployed or underemployed, among others. More specifically, stakeholders encouraged the State to expand the training and retraining to focus on adults, to integrate life skills training components for English language learners and individuals with disabilities, and to ensure that skills are transferrable.

The workgroup suggested that the State create opportunities for adult learners to obtain stackable and portable credentials, allowing them to build upon the skills and training they have already received. Participants also recommended adapting education and skills training programs to meet the needs of non-English speaking populations.

To further bridge the gap between the qualified worker and the workforce, participants stressed the importance of integrating new technology. The use of mentorship and common assessments were discussed as a way to help inform potential participants of their options and ensure appropriate skills are obtained.

### **Recommendation Two: Create pathways and use innovative technology to guide Marylanders into specific industries, especially STEM fields.**

Participants discussed the need to integrate the skills of the new economy into education and workforce systems. This integration should be considered as the State makes the transition to the Common Core curriculum and assessments and a restructures apprenticeships to provide better preparation jobs for the new economy. DLLR has begun to restructure apprenticeship opportunities by identifying existing programs that can be adapted to meet the needs of employers in the emerging sectors. In addition, community colleges are expanding and standardizing internship opportunities as well as creating new certifications based on industry standards.

Developing skills assessments tools for middle-skill workers would also assist in matching education and training with specific workforce needs. Currently, assessments are primarily focused on traditional four-year college readiness.