



Public School Opportunities Enhancement Act: Report

Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment,
and Educational Policy

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MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Introduction

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) completed the fourth and final year of implementation of the Maryland Public School Opportunities Enhancement Program (PSOEP) grant. Pursuant to Section § 7-1701 through 1706 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the PSOEP grant authorized the MSDE to award grants to local school systems, community schools, and non-profit organizations. These grantees are used to expand or create extended day and summer enhancement programs. The initial award in the 2016 - 2017 school year was \$2,500,000. The MSDE made awards on a competitive basis to eligible entities that proposed to serve the following:

- a) Local school systems and the Seed School with at least 50 percent of public school students that qualify for free lunch under the National School Lunch Program
- b) Extended day and summer enhancement programs for students between the ages of four and 19 that take place:
 - Before and after the school day
 - On weekends and holidays
 - During vacations and summer breaks

Implementation

The original PSOEP award amount for the 2020 – 2021 school year was \$2,500,000. During the 2020 - 2021 school year, one subgrantee award was rescinded for failing to comply with grant requirements. The adjusted award amount was \$2,398,223. Funding was awarded to 13 community based and local school systems (LSSs) 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. The PSOEP program was offered in six local school systems: Allegany, Caroline, Prince George's, Somerset, Wicomico, and Baltimore City. The grantees are: Board of Education Allegany County (Allegany), Parks and People Foundation (Baltimore City), Medical Education Resources Initiative for Teens (MERIT) (Baltimore City), YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc. (Baltimore City), Elev8, (Baltimore City), The Family League of Baltimore (Baltimore City), Caroline Human Services Council, Inc.(Caroline), Central American Solidarity Association (CASA) de Maryland, Inc.(Prince George's), Futuristic LLC/ Healthy Solutions, LLC.(Prince George's), The ERHKY Foundation (Prince George's), Community Youth Advance (Prince George's), Somerset County Local Management Board (Somerset), and Ward Foundation, Inc.(Wicomico).

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of LSSs maintained virtual operations and the PSOEP programs maintained virtual learning environments as a means to provide instruction to students. Grant managers in the out-of-school time (OST) programs worked closely with their partners and service providers to convert lessons and activities to online formats. Each program submitted Program Weekly Closure Forms that described the activities that were being implemented which include (1) curriculum work, (2) lesson plan development, (3) online/distance learning, (4) staff/professional development, (5) OST program data collection, and (6) systems planning work that included summer programs, evaluation, and sustainability efforts. 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. By the close of the school year, three total programs were able to transition to either hybrid or face-to-face instruction as a result of LSSs reintegration of learning into the school environment.

Grantees and Programs

The PSOEP Total Grant Award per Jurisdiction and Lead Agency with the Program Name and Description				
Program Name	Jurisdiction	Lead Agency	Description	Grant Amount
Full STEAM Ahead with ACCESS - After-School Community Collaboration for Enrichment and Student Services	Allegany County	Board of Education Allegany County	The program provides enrichment activities in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) for economically disadvantaged students in the four middle schools in Allegany County.	\$200,000
Super Kids Camp: An Environmental and Literacy Summer Camp	Baltimore City	Parks and People Foundation	SuperKids Camp serves 500 rising 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th , and 5 th grade students during a six week, 29 day, six hours a day literacy and environmental program. The program is designed to prevent learning loss in literacy skills.	\$250,000
MERIT Health Leadership Academy	Baltimore City	Medical Education Resources Initiative for Teens	MERIT provides longitudinal academic support and career opportunities to students from low-income backgrounds who are interested in healthcare.	\$168,214

The PSOEP Total Grant Award per Jurisdiction and Lead Agency with the Program Name and Description				
Program Name	Jurisdiction	Lead Agency	Description	Grant Amount
Elev8 Baltimore	Baltimore City	Elev8	Elev8 Baltimore, in partnership with William Pinderhughes Elementary/ Middle School, provides afterschool and summer homework assistance and targeted academic support to improve math, reading, and project-based STEM activities.	\$157,274
Y in Central Maryland Afterschool Enrichment at Johnston Square Elementary School	Baltimore City	YMCA of Central Maryland, Inc.	Y Afterschool enrichment immerses 70 students who are having trouble meeting academic standards in an environment with high-quality Mathematics-focused academic instruction. The program provides homework assistance, a nutritious meal, and enrichment clubs that include environmental stewardship development, service learning, character education, the arts, science, engineering, technology, math (STEM), and fitness.	\$190,000
Pre-K Out-of-School Time Program	Baltimore City	The Family League of Baltimore, Inc.	This project is an extended day program that serves six pre-k programs at six Baltimore City public elementary schools. The intended outcome of the program includes increased standardized test scores.	\$190,000

The PSOEP Total Grant Award per Jurisdiction and Lead Agency with the Program Name and Description				
Program Name	Jurisdiction	Lead Agency	Description	Grant Amount
Caroline Human Services-Summer Learning Program	Caroline County	Caroline Human Services Council, Inc.	The Caroline Human Services Council along with Caroline County Recreation and Parks, and Caroline County Public Schools provides a summer learning enrichment program at three school sites throughout the county. These programs provide 450 kindergarten through sixth grade students with academic supports to overcome summer slide, and address social-emotional needs and physical health.	\$125,500
CASA's Mi Espacio Program	Prince George's County	CASA de Maryland, Inc.	The CASA's "Mi Espacio" after school program aims to address academic challenges, improve academic achievement, and enhance college/career readiness through a dynamic and highly tailored program. The program focuses on academic success, leadership development, and socio-economic integration.	\$160,000
Health and Arts Learning HUB	Prince George's County	Futuristic LLC/ Healthy Solutions, LLC.	The Health and Learning Arts Hub (HUB) is a youth development resource center designed to equip students with the tools to grow stronger physically, emotionally, and academically. The HUB serves 120 students in grades two through six. The program provides students with support needed to improve math and reading achievement scores and develop leadership values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, and citizenship.	\$179,149

The PSOEP Total Grant Award per Jurisdiction and Lead Agency with the Program Name and Description				
Program Name	Jurisdiction	Lead Agency	Description	Grant Amount
ERHKY's Pathway to Success Program	Prince George's County	ERHKY Foundation	The ERHKY Foundation uses a host of researched-based strategies and community support initiatives to improve academic performance of students and engage students in social entrepreneurship and financial literacy programming.	\$210,000
CYA Saturday and Summer Academies	Prince George's County	Community Youth Advance (CYA)	The CYA Saturday School and Summer Bridge Academy serve students residing in the Langley Park Community. The intended outcome of the project is for 75 percent of participating students to meet or exceed state performance targets in reading/language arts, science, and mathematics.	\$197,525
The FACES of Somerset	Somerset County	Somerset County Local Management Board	FACES of Somerset provides intensive academic support, strives to build character in the students, and strives to raise reading test scores.	\$134,589
Science, Technology, Research, Environment, Art and Math (STREAM).	Wicomico County	Ward Foundation, Inc. Operating as Ward Museum	The Ward Museum's Science, Technology, Research, Environment, Art, and Math (STREAM) after school program uses Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) which infuse arts-integrated, project-based programming. The program seeks increases in science, math, and literacy performance at four of Wicomico's Title I schools.	\$235,972
Total				\$2,398,223

Funding by Jurisdiction

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

- 32 percent of total funding awarded to four Baltimore City grants
- 31 percent of total funding awarded to four Prince George's County grants
- 10 percent of funding award to one Wicomico County grant
- 8 percent of funding awarded to one Allegany County grant
- 8 percent of funding awarded to one Baltimore County grant
- 6 percent of funding awarded to one Somerset County grant
- 5 percent of funding awarded to one Caroline County grant

There are a total of thirteen grantees with programs providing school year only services.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance was provided to all grantees throughout the 2020 - 2021 school year. The assistance included support for grantees to remain in fiscal and program compliance. The MSDE OST staff conducted six virtual trainings during the 2020 - 2021 school year. Professional learning and technical assistance topics included: national OST programming and online professional learning resources, guidance regarding the impacts of COVID-19 on program operation, asynchronous vs. synchronous programmatic offerings, STEM, contracted services documentation and accountability practices, grants fiscal management protocols, evaluation and effectiveness, and budgetary amendment training. The MSDE also utilized the End of Year Report to identify future technical assistance needs. Grantees were required to include in their budget proposals funding for two trainings, bi-monthly networking meetings, and State training.

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

Evaluation and Effectiveness

Grantees submitted final reports in July 2021. The MSDE grant managers reviewed end-of-year reports to determine the effectiveness of the programs.

Grantees were required to develop program objectives based on the following accountability measures:

- Features that had a measurable impact on the well-being for children and youth as identified by the Maryland Out-of-School Time Programs' Quality Standards Framework
- 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 end-of-year report noted that grantees reported progress in meeting three self-reported performance objectives that were located in the original proposal. The findings demonstrated that overall grantees met or demonstrated progress towards meeting these objectives. The data reported that an average of 91 percent of grantees had met or were progressing towards the three identified objectives. The data reported an average of 30 percent were classified as "unable to measure." The PSOEP 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 virtual operations of programming as a result of school building closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the cancellation of assessments, and/or evaluation results not yet being available.

Grantees were responsible for hiring an external evaluator as outlined in the Request for Proposals. 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. Most of the external evaluation reports found that the majority of the annual milestones were met. 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

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 local school systems with at least 50 percent 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. Teach for America is a nationally validated program that recruits, selects, and trains new teachers for placement in schools serving low-income students. With the funding from the 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) and Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS).

In the 2020 - 2021 school year, and moving forward, corps members participated in ongoing learning structures of content specialist sessions and all corps learning experiences. In the content specialist sessions, full time teachers and content experts facilitated professional development sessions that supported corps members teaching in a virtual and hybrid learning environment. Throughout the 2020 - 2021 school year, corps members attended five whole corps learning experiences known as All Corps. In each of these sessions, expert facilitators designed sessions where corps members would engage with specific skills, tools, procedures, or routines to assist with virtual and hybrid pedagogy.

Summary

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 the MSDE to submit a report on the effectiveness and an evaluation of programs funded annually. The reports for the PSOEP grant were submitted to the General Assembly in December 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020. The MSDE is submitting this report in order 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.) The 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 the third year of implementation of the PSOEP grant is indicated below.

PSOEP Grantee and Total Number of Students Served in 2020 - 2021	
Grantee	# of Students Served 2020 - 2021
Allegany	96
Caroline	40
CASA de Maryland, Inc	24
Community Youth Advance	151
Elev8	15
ERHKY	93
Futuristic	23
MERIT	79
Parks and People Foundation	23
Somerset	21
The Family League of Baltimore	12
Ward Museum	62
YMCA	21
TOTAL	660