



Memorandum

TO: Members of the MLDS Governing Board

FROM: Ross Goldstein, Executive Director
Angela Henneberger, Ph.D., Research Director

DATE: August 26, 2016

SUBJECT: Promise Heights Evaluation in Partnership with University of Maryland, School of Social Work

Purpose

On September 6, 2016, the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) School of Social Work will be submitting an application to the U.S. Department of Education for a Promise Neighborhoods Implementation Grant (CFDA Number 84.2155N, Federal Register Vol. 81, No. 131, July 8, 2016). At the request of Dr. Richard Barth, Dean of the School of Social Work and in consultation with Secretary Fielder in his capacity as Chair of the Governing Board, the Center issued a conditional letter of support (see attached) for the grant and the Center's participation in evaluating grant related program outcomes for students in the Promise Heights Neighborhood schools. The support and participation is conditioned on the approval of the Governing Board, which is being sought at the Board's September 9, 2016 meeting.

Background

The Promise Heights Initiative began in 2009 and aims to improve the educational outcomes of students in West Baltimore (see <http://promiseheights.org/> for more information). In 2012, Promise Heights was awarded a U.S. Department of Education Promise Neighborhood planning grant to establish integrated and comprehensive services to support students' success in high school, college, and career. Promise Heights currently partners with five Baltimore City Public Schools, providing community school coordination in each school.

Summary

The University of Maryland, School of Social Work is submitting a proposal to the United States Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement for a 2016 [Promise Neighborhood Implementation Grant](#) (PI: Bronwyn Mayden) which would bring, as much as, 30 million dollars to West Baltimore neighborhoods, schools, and students, over a five year period. As part of the grant, the School of Social Work seeks to partner with the Center to examine the postsecondary and workforce outcomes associated with program participation. The grant recipients must utilize both postsecondary and workforce outcome indicators to demonstrate program effectiveness. Use of the MLDS will allow authorized staff of the Center to conduct a rigorous comparison of outcomes between program participants and non-participants. The findings will have direct implications for students, schools, and programs in the State. For example, this evaluation will provide implications for programs that benefit at-

risk students in other jurisdictions. The Center is in an optimal position to conduct this evaluation, as it is the central repository for State data linking K-12, college, and workforce data.

Benefits for UMB School of Social work

The proposed partnership between the School of Social Work and the MLDS Center strengthens the grant application by establishing a clear means for providing comprehensive analysis of the applicable student outcomes. The use of the MLDS diminishes the expense and effort the School of Social Work would otherwise incur if it had to form multiple partnerships to obtain data on the students and establish its own database to link the students and analyze their outcomes.

Benefits for MLDS Center

The chartering legislation for the MLDS (Education Article § 24-703(f)(5), Annotated Code of Maryland), requires the Center to evaluate state and federal education programs within Maryland. The proposed partnership with the School of Social Work would benefit the Center directly by providing funding to develop the capacity of the Center to evaluate specific education programs. This grant would provide approximately \$40,000 per year to the MLDS systems management team and research budget. With support from this grant, the MLDS systems management team will create an infrastructure for adding program indicators to the MLDS. Additionally, with support from this grant, Dr. Henneberger would develop and test analytic models of outcomes associated with program participation at the student and school levels. These analytic models could then be used as the framework for future analyses on state and federal education programs in other jurisdictions or programs implemented statewide. These analyses will begin to offer information on the programs that could be more widely disseminated across the state in order to improve student educational outcomes.

In sum, the proposed partnership would further the capacity of the Center to provide educational program evaluations. Moreover, this work would provide a systems infrastructure and methodological framework for replicating program evaluation outcomes in other parts of the State.

Action

We are requesting the Governing Board approve the MLDS Center entering into a partnership with the University of Maryland, School of Social Work to conduct the Promise Heights evaluation.

Attachment

Conditional letter of support



MLDS CENTER

Maryland Longitudinal Data System

Address 550 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone 410-706-2085
Email mlds.center@maryland.gov
Website www.MLDSCenter.org

July 27, 2016

Dean Richard P. Barth, PhD, MSW and
Assistant Dean Bronwyn Mayden, MSW
University of Maryland School of Social Work
525 W. Redwood Street
Baltimore, MD 21210

Dear Deans Barth and Mayden,

I am pleased to send you this letter in support of the Promise Neighborhoods Implementation Grant and the proposed partnership with the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center to utilize the Center to enhance the quality assurance and evaluation strengths for the Promise Heights Initiative.

The MLDS Center maintains a data system that contains student and workforce data from all levels of education and the State's workforce, which can be used to generate timely and accurate information about student performance that can be used to improve the State's education system and guide decision makers at all levels. The chance to use the MLDS to evaluate the federally funded (US Department of Education) Promise Neighborhood program proposed for West Baltimore and, also, to provide research on the existing State of Maryland (MSDE) funded programs (including the Judy Centers and the 21st Century Grants) is an excellent opportunity for the Center.

The Center's participation with this project is conditioned on approval by the MLDS Governing Board (which meets on September 9, 2016) and funding of this project by the US Department of Education. If those conditions are met, the Center will commit to using support from the award to provide research and analysis to the Promise Heights research team to support their evaluation of Promise Heights. The research and analysis will include the creation of a rigorous comparison group design that will compare academic (K-12), higher education (community college, trade school, or four-year college), and early career (through wage data) for children in Promise Heights and those in comparable communities and schools from other parts of Baltimore.

This work will also benefit the Center by providing an opportunity to better understand the relationship between a variety of school, family, and community conditions created via the Promise Heights team—including out of school time activities, Judy Center participation, STEM education mentoring programs like CURE, and GED-preparation. Please note that no juvenile services, medical, health, or discipline data will be integrated, pursuant to the legal limitations established in State law.

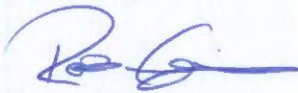
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Because the MLDS Center is the State of Maryland's singular integrated database and has, as part of its chartering legislation, the commitment to conduct research relating to the impact of State and federal education programs, I believe that this is fully consistent with the Center's mission. I will strongly recommend to the MLDS Governing Board that they seize this opportunity to support the evaluation of Promise Height's continuum of solutions designed to achieve the goals of the US Department of Education.

I will let you know as soon as the MLDS Governing Board has decided this matter. Please keep me similarly apprised of your progress.

Sincerely,



Ross Goldstein
Executive Director

cc: James Fielder, Secretary of Higher Education and Chairman, MLDS Governing Board
Angela Henneberger, Research Director, MLDS