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TO: State Board Members
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: August 26, 2008
SUBJECT: Update on 2008 Maryland School Assessment Results

PURPOSE:

To update State Board of Education members on the 2008 Maryland School Assessments (MSA) results and relevant context about the design and execution of the 2008 assessments.

BACKGROUND:

Maryland teachers in grades three through eight administered the 2008 Maryland School Assessments in the spring, marking five years of school accountability under *No Child Left Behind*. Maryland has engaged nationally respected assessment experts to ensure the State could produce valid assessment results in the first year of the assessment (2003) and every year thereafter.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Maryland was one of the first states in the nation to successfully undergo federal peer review procedures and receive federal approval for both its assessment programs and accountability procedures following the signing of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*. All psychometrically appropriate precautions have been taken over the five year history of the program to ensure consistency in the content tested each year as well as a constant level of challenge. Annual review procedures conducted by Maryland's independent National Psychometric Council assure that the passing score for each assessment maintains at the same level of difficulty each year. This annual equating procedure is a standard procedure that assures results are comparable from year to year.

The 2008 assessments involved all of the standard reviews used with all prior years' assessments. Care was taken to assure that there would be no change in the assessment in 2008 with the replacement of a small number of MSA test items that were taken from the Stanford Achievement Test-10 (SAT-10). Maryland's National Psychometric Council approved the 2008 assessment equating and linking procedures and has assured the State that the assessments are equivalent to prior year assessments and fully suitable for federal reporting and accountability purposes.



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The attached briefing paper provides an overview of the assessment control procedures and accompanying analyses that affirm the consistency of the 2008 results. The paper also clarifies and corrects the misinformation and misinterpretation that appeared in at least one news report.

ACTION:

For information only. No action required.

Attachment