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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools
DATE: July 21, 2009
SUBJECT: 2009 Maryland School Assessment Results

PURPOSE:

To provide Board members with a summary and overview of the statewide results of the 2009 Maryland School Assessments, which were administered in spring 2009.

BACKGROUND:

The 2009 administration of the Maryland School Assessments in reading and mathematics included all state elementary and middle school students in grades 3 through 8. The results of the assessments plus student attendance rates are combined to determine if schools meet annual targets for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The Assessments have been administered since 2003 with the expectation that all students in all subgroups will achieve proficiency by 2014—the target year identified in the federal No Child Left Behind law. The State Board will be briefed on the 2009 state level results in the aggregate and by race and special services subgroups (students receiving Free and Reduced Price Meals, students with disabilities, and students who are receiving English language learner services).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Beginning in 2003, Maryland, along with many other states, revised its State assessment and accountability program under the federal No Child Left Behind law. The curriculum was revised to identify specific content to be included in instruction and state assessments grade-by-grade for students in grades 3 through 8. Federal law also required the implementation of assessments at each of those grades as well. Prior to 2003, the state instructional frameworks covered content at each of the three grade bands (kindergarten through grade 3, grades 4 and 5, and grades 6 through 8). Similarly, assessments covered across each of those grade bands (grades 3, 5, and 8).



In 2001, the Visionary Panel for Better Schools recommended that grade-by-grade content standards and grade-by-grade assessments in reading and mathematics be implemented. Consequently, the state has experienced several years of consistent and clear direction for teachers on the state expectations for content. This approach has assured that students leaving any classroom in the state and moving to another school will have much more consistency in instruction than ever before. The administration of the assessments yearly has helped schools follow the progress of students as they matriculate through the grades.

The Maryland School Assessments include selected response (multiple choice) items and items requiring students to produce a written response—some requiring short one- or two-sentence responses, some requiring longer responses. The assessments are administered in March and returned to local school systems around the close of the same school year.

Local school systems have been notified of the school and system results for the MSA along with preliminary AYP determinations for schools on their annual status for Adequate Yearly Progress. School systems have been given an opportunity to appeal to the state any results for any school that they feel include possible locally generated technical glitches. In some instances, schools have miscoded students, producing inaccurate school results. This process will be concluded by the July 21 meeting, at which time final AYP results for elementary and middle schools will be made available.

Also administered in 2009, but not reported at this meeting are required science assessments at grades 5 and 8. Results of those assessments will be released later this summer.

ACTION:

For information only

NSG:sks