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State Superintendent of Schools

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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick 

DATE: January 26, 2010

SUBJECT: **RECOGNITION:** International Spanish Academy Designation

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to recognize Kemp Mill Elementary in Montgomery County, the first school in Maryland to be accepted by the Embassy of Spain as an International Spanish Academy (ISA).

BACKGROUND:

The ISA project is administered by Spain's Ministry of Education for the purpose of developing quality Spanish-English programs which promote high academic standards for all students as well as the value of international relations and understanding between cultures. Resources and programs offered by the Embassy of Spain to schools that have been recognized as ISAs include: access to double academic accreditation for students, specialized visiting teachers and language/culture assistants, courses for teachers and school administrators in Spanish universities, scholarships for summer institutes, instructional materials and teaching resources, professional development activities, and participation in the ISA network.

Kemp Mill Elementary is a dual immersion school where students in kindergarten through grade 5 receive instruction in Spanish and English; classes are comprised of 50% native English speakers and 50% English Language Learners whose primary language is Spanish.

The *Task Force on the Preservation of Heritage Language Skills in Maryland*, in its report submitted to the Governor and Maryland General Assembly in January 2009, recommended the expansion of dual language programs: "Additional dual language



programs in Maryland have the potential of improving the achievement of English Language Learners and responding to parent request for more elementary world language programs. The cognitive, affective, and social benefits of dual language programs are well documented in research.”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In June 2008, MSDE entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Spain’s Ministry of Education with the goal of enhancing Spanish language and culture programs in Maryland. The prestigious International Spanish Academy (ISA) program is one of the components included in the MOU and offers numerous resources, activities, and recognition for students and teachers. Kemp Mill Elementary, a dual immersion school in Montgomery County, completed the rigorous application process and has been designated an International Spanish Academy.

ACTION:

Recognize Kemp Mill Elementary as one of only 10 schools in the US and Canada to be accepted as an International Spanish Academy in 2009-10.

Guests who will be present:

Mr. Floyd Starnes	Principal, Kemp Mill Elementary
Mr. Diego Fernández Alberdi	The Counselor of Education, Embassy of Spain
Ms. Rosa López Bullón	Education Advisor, Embassy of Spain

NSG/scs