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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*  
**DATE:** January 25, 2011  
**SUBJECT:** Admissions standards to attend the SEED School of Maryland

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**PURPOSE:**

The SEED School of Maryland is a statewide residential education boarding program for at-risk students that opened in August 2008. SEED Maryland is designed to provide a rigorous education and to prepare eligible students for college. The school adds a grade each year until it will serve students through grade 12. For the 2010-2011 school year, SEED has enrolled 240 students in grades 6, 7, and 8, and which come from 13 of Maryland's 24 school systems. The State Board is being asked to revisit previously established admissions standards to lower the income standard from 300% of the poverty level to 250% and to implement strategies designed to increase student participation from different local school systems (**Attachment D**). *Changes in enrollment standards would apply only to the entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade class and would not apply to those students already enrolled at SEED.* The enabling legislation requires State Board approval for changes in written admissions standards to the SEED School of Maryland.

**BACKGROUND:**

*Education Article: Title 8. Special Programs for Exceptional Children: Subtitle 7: Residential Boarding Education Programs for At-Risk Youth* was enacted by the Maryland General Assembly in 2006 to establish a residential boarding education program for at-risk youth under the supervision of the Maryland State Department of Education (the Department). A major purpose of the school is to adequately prepare students for success in college. § 8-101 and § 8-701 through 8-709 defines the eligibility criteria for those students applying to the school as well as establishes the program as a statewide initiative. Changes to those criteria must be approved by the Maryland State Board of Education as stipulated in § 8-704.

(c) Written standards.-

- (1) The operator shall adopt written standards for the admission and dismissal of students.
- (2) The standards and any amendments shall be submitted to the State Board for approval.
- (3) The State Board may require modifications to the standards as it considers necessary.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

In August 2007, the Department and SEED staff began the process required to be ready for the entering class for the 2008-2009 school year of 80 sixth grade students meeting the disadvantaged and at-risk criteria. The Department-appointed Project Monitor for the SEED contract is Dr. Rhona Fisher. Activities in place include scheduled quarterly meetings with SEED and the Department's internal workgroup to address issues that are part of operating a public secondary school in Maryland. Over the course of the school year, the contract stipulates certain deliverables as well as requires semi-annual progress reports to the State Board. See Table 1 below for current student representation at the SEED School of Maryland.



**Table 1. SEED Enrollment as of 9/30/2010**

County	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	N=Enrolled Students
Anne Arundel	3	4	2	9
Baltimore City	32	39	31	102
Baltimore Co.	6	9	11	26
Calvert	1	1	--	2
Dorchester	--	1	--	1
Harford	--	--	1	1
Howard	21	13	3	37
Montgomery	4	4	--	8
Prince George's	16	19	14	49
Queen Anne's	--	1	-	1
Somerset	--	--	1	1
St. Mary's	1	--	1	2
Washington	--	--	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>240</b>

The SEED School of Maryland has a 'point of entry' admissions process such that only 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are admitted to the program each school year. This means that should a 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grader withdraw from SEED, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student from the waitlist would be invited to fill the slot. Proposed changes would impact only this new cohort.

In order to increase the opportunity for underrepresented counties to enroll more students, the SEED proposes to *continue* holding its county-specific lotteries in order to provide at least a single student slot per county, and then add a *new* provision so that any county having two or fewer slots for that school year, would be offered up to two additional slots depending on the total SEED representation from that school system. This will help to ensure that students traveling from that county are not traveling alone. Further, if a student from a county that is underrepresented withdraws from SEED, priority will be given to selecting a replacement student from the waitlist whose home county is the same as the departing student's. See the **Attachment II** from SEED for background to the proposed changes in eligible poverty levels for the entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade class in Fall 2011 and for changes in the lottery for underrepresented school systems.

The SEED School of Maryland's leadership team expected to present includes: Jerry Kountz, Head of School; Jallon Croskey, Director of Academics; and Nedra Davis, Admissions and Parent Relations Manager.

**ACTION:**

The members of the State Board of Education are asked to consider the requested changes and vote to accept or not one or both of these changes.

NSG/rsf

Attachments



## The SEED School of Maryland

### 2009-2010 Admissions Policy and Student Eligibility Criteria

Admission to The SEED School of Maryland will be determined by lottery from a pool of students who submit a complete application for admissions and who meet the qualifying factors detailed below. SEED will conduct separate lotteries for boys and girls, in order to enroll a balance of boys and girls. To promote geographic diversity, SEED will set aside one slot in the admissions lottery for each county from which an eligible student applies.

#### Eligible students are:

- Meets criteria for "disadvantaged" and "at risk youth" (defined below);
- Residents of Maryland;
- Entering/enrolled in 6<sup>th</sup> grade in 2009-10 school year;
- No older than 12 years and 7 months as of September 1, 2009.

#### A disadvantaged student is defined as a child who:

- Because of environmental conditions is not achieving at a level that is scholastically up to his/her potential abilities;
- Has to compensate for his/her inability to profit from the normal education program;
- Has the potential to successfully complete a regular educational program leading to graduation from a high school; and
- Because of home and community environment, is subject to language, cultural, and economic disadvantages that make his/her completion of the regular educational program leading to graduation unlikely without special efforts by school authorities to provide stimulation of his/her potential in addition to the efforts involved in providing the regular educational programs. [Md. Educ. Art. §8-101(b)(1).]
- Lives in a household that has an income that does not exceed 300% of the Maryland poverty level;

#### An at risk student is defined as a student who meets at least two qualifying factors. These factors are:

- The student is eligible for free or reduced price meals;
- The student has a record of suspensions, office referrals, chronic truancy or involvement with the social service system;
- The student has failed to achieve proficient or advanced level on state assessments (MSA) in reading, math or both;
- The student has a disability;
- The family's adjusted gross income is below federally established poverty guidelines;
- The family receives temporary cash assistance under the State Family Investment Program;
- A member of the family has been incarcerated (immediate family or member of the household);
- The head of household is a single parent;
- The head of household is not a custodial parent;
- The student is recommended by a teacher, counselor, social worker or community-based service organization. [Md. Educ. Art. §8-701(b).]

*The SEED School of Maryland is a statewide public boarding school that was established through Education Article 8, Subtitle 7 of the Maryland Annotated Code. The school operates under the supervision of the Maryland State Department of Education. The Department may be contacted through email at [seedprogram@msde.state.md.us](mailto:seedprogram@msde.state.md.us).*

**ATTACHMENT II**

**From the SEED School of Maryland  
Proposed Changes to Student Admission Standards  
To The  
Maryland State Board of Education  
January 25, 2011**





approved 12/11/2007  
amended 4/29/2008  
updated 12/02/2008  
pending approval 2/01/2011

## The SEED School of Maryland

### 2011-2012 Admissions Policy and Student Eligibility Criteria

Admission to The SEED School of Maryland will be determined by lottery from a pool of students who submit a complete application for admissions and who meet the qualifying factors detailed below. SEED will conduct separate lotteries for boys and girls, in order to enroll a balance of boys and girls. To promote geographic diversity, SEED will set aside one slot in the admissions lottery for each county from which an eligible student applies and two slots for each county with an underrepresented population (defined as 2 students or less) of students already enrolled at SEED.

#### Meets criteria for "disadvantaged" and "at risk youth" (defined below):

- Residents of Maryland;
- Entering/enrolled in 6<sup>th</sup> grade in 2011-12 school year;
- No older than 12 years and 7 months as of September 1, 2011.

#### A disadvantaged student is defined as a child who:

- Because of environmental conditions is not achieving at a level that is scholastically up to his/her potential abilities;
- Has to compensate for his/her inability to profit from the normal education program;
- Has the potential to successfully complete a regular educational program leading to graduation from a high school; and
- Because of home and community environment, is subject to language, cultural, and economic disadvantages that make his/her completion of the regular educational program leading to graduation unlikely without special efforts by school authorities to provide stimulation of his/her potential in addition to the efforts involved in providing the regular educational programs. [Md. Educ. Art. §8-101(b)(1).]
- Lives in a household that has an income that does not exceed 250% of the Maryland poverty level;

#### An at risk student is defined as a student who meets at least two qualifying factors. These factors are:

- The student is eligible for free or reduced price meals;
- The student has a record of suspensions, office referrals, chronic truancy or involvement with the social service system;
- The student has failed to achieve proficient or advanced level on state assessments (MSA) in reading, math or both;
- The student has a disability;
- The family's adjusted gross income is below federally established poverty guidelines;
- The family receives temporary cash assistance under the State Family Investment Program;
- A member of the family has been incarcerated (immediate family or member of the household);
- The head of household is a single parent;
- The head of household is not a custodial parent;
- The student is recommended by a teacher, counselor, social worker or community-based service organization. [Md. Educ. Art. §8-701(b).]

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**Student Family Income Analysis**

The following data was calculated from income levels reported on student applications for the classes of 2016 and 2017. Students in the Class of 2015 were not included as there was no income cap in the original cohort application process.

Percent above Federal Poverty Guidelines	Below 100 Percent of Poverty Level	101-150 Percent of Poverty Level	151-200 Percent of Poverty Level	201-250 Percent of Poverty Level	251-299 Percent of Poverty Level (Proposed Income Cap for class of 2018)	300 Percent of Poverty Level (Income Cap level for Classes 2016, 2017)
MS 1 6th Grade Class of 2017 # of Students/%	20 27%	23 31%	16 21%	6 8%	7 9%	3 4%
MS 2 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Class of 2016 # of Students/%	24 33%	22 31%	12 16%	4 5%	7 10%	3 4%
<b>Total Number of Students/%</b>	44 30%	45 31%	28 19%	10 7%	14 10%	6 4%

Analysis:

- 87% of families fall below the 250% above the poverty level proposed cut off - \$55,120 for a family of four
- 20 families or 14% of currently enrolled students in MS 1 and MS 2 fall above the 250% poverty level and would not have qualified for admission under the proposed 250% guideline



**Projected Student Loss based on Percent of Poverty Levels**

If maximum income cut off is **250%** above poverty level, project **20** students would not be eligible  
**200%** **30**  
**150%** **58**  
**100%** **103**

**Income Guidelines**

Size of Family Unit	100 Percent of Poverty Level	150 Percent of Poverty Level	200 Percent of Poverty Level	250 Percent of Poverty Level (Proposed Income Cap for class of 2018)	300 Percent of Poverty Level (Income Cap level for Classes 2016, 2017)
2	\$14,570	\$21,855	\$29,149	\$36,425	443,710
3	18,310	27,465	36,620	45,775	54,930
4	22,050	33,075	44,100	55,125	66,150
5	25,790	38,685	51,580	64,475	77,370
6	29,530	44,295	59,060	73,825	88,590
7	33,279	49,905	66,540	83,175	99,810
8	37,010	55,515	74,020	92,925	111,030



The SEED School of Maryland

Underrepresented County Lottery Policy

**Purpose:** To further promote geographic and racial diversity in the student enrollment at the SEED School of Maryland, the following enhancements have been adopted to modify the admissions policy to allow counties who are underrepresented at SEED to gain additional enrollment slots in the lottery:  
*For the purposes of this policy, underrepresented at The SEED School of Maryland is defined as two or fewer students enrolled at the school.*

**Action:** For counties that have fewer than two students enrolled at SEED:

- Two enrollment seats will be set aside in the lottery for the following school year to ensure a total of at least 2 students from the representing counties
- When a vacancy from underrepresented county occurs, SEED will review the lottery waiting list and find another student from the underrepresented county to enroll at SEED

For counties that have two or more students enrolled at SEED:

- One enrollment seat will be set aside as set forth in the current admissions policy

**Quick Look at 2011 County Lottery w/ Underrepresented County Policy**

LEA	Student Representation (based on 9/30 enrollment count)	Slots in the 2011 Lottery
Allegany Co.	0	2
Anne Arundel Co.	9	1
Baltimore City	99	1
Baltimore Co.	25	1
Calvert Co.	2	1
Caroline Co.	0	2
Carroll Co.	0	2
Cecil Co.	0	2
Charles Co.	0	2
Dorchester Co.	1	2
Frederick Co.	0	2
Garrett Co.	0	2
Harford Co.	1	2
Howard Co.	42	1
Kent Co.	0	2
Montgomery Co.	6	1
Prince George's Co.	50	1
Queen Anne's Co.	1	2
St. Mary's Co.	2	1
Somerset Co.	1	2
Talbot Co.	0	2
Washington Co.	1	2
Wicomico Co.	0	2
Worcester Co.	0	2

**2011 Lottery Scenario:**

- 68 seats available
- 40 seats in county lottery
- 28 general lottery

*\*These figures are based on the scenario of every county having at least 2 student applications.*