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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed.D. *BS*

DATE: August 30, 2011

SUBJECT: Race to the Top
The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers
(PARCC)

PURPOSE:

To update the State Board on a Race to the Top initiative relative to standards and assessment: The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment consortium.

BACKGROUND:

Maryland's Race to the Top (RTTT) application included an expectation that the Maryland State Department of Education join an assessment consortium to develop a national assessment based on the Common Core Standards. After researching and participating in several consortia, and after the merging of consortia into two major ones, Maryland chose the PARCC consortia based on its flexible design and innovative approaches. PARCC's application was funded by the U.S. Department of Education last fall and Maryland joined as a Governing State, which allows for full participation and decision-making. A total of 24 states are currently members of PARCC, 15 are Governing States. Achieve is the management organization for the consortium and Florida serves as the fiscal agent.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

PARCC has been engaged in a wide variety of design phase and stakeholder engagement activities that have included different MSDE, higher education, and LEA participants, as well as similar groups from other states. Much of the emphasis has been on finalizing governance and organizational structures, as well as completing the design for the tests.

A variety of technical workgroups have been formed including:

- Technical Advisory (similar to MSDE's National Psychometric Council)
- Accessibility, Accommodations and Fairness
- Design
- Technology, Data & Innovation
- Common Core Implementation & Educator Engagement
- Research
- K-2 Ad Hoc Working Group
- Advisory Committee on College Readiness

Additional groups will be formed in the future as the work progresses.

Technology issues are a key component of all discussions, as the PARCC assessments are being designed to be delivered and taken on-line. The two funded consortia have recently partnered to procure a technology readiness tool to assist states in determining the capacity of their schools to meet the technology requirements, and to identify gaps. This tool will also be used to record state progress in addressing those gaps.

In June, PARCC convened a Transition and Implementation Institute. The goal of the Institute is to help states advance efforts to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and prepare for a smooth transition to the new PARCC assessments. A group of educators representing Maryland leaders at the LEA level participated in the June meeting and will convene again next week and twice every year to continue to plan and execute the State's transition efforts.

A website, www.parcconline.org has been launched and is a good source of updated information for the public. The website includes TV media coverage of Maryland's Educator Effectiveness Academies, which have captivated the attention of Achieve and the other states as a best practice for transition to the Common Core Curriculum.

PARCC expects to begin development of the new assessments during the 2011-2012 school year with pilots, field tests, data collection and research in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. Full implementation is planned for 2014-2015.

ACTION:

The information on the PARCC consortium work is being provided to the members of the State Board as a Race to the Top update.