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TO: Members of the State Board of Education  
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools  
DATE: December 17-18, 2008  
SUBJECT: AYP and Schools in Improvement Results for 2008

**PURPOSE:**

To provide information to the State Board concerning the final results of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations for 2008 for schools and school systems as required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). State Board members will receive information about Maryland's Schools in Improvement and a review of the nomenclature being introduced this year as a result of the Differentiated Accountability pilot approved for Maryland by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE).

**BACKGROUND:**

The federal NCLB law requires that states identify schools and school systems not achieving AYP for two years in a row in the same content areas and place them into a School Improvement status to help them improve student performance. In previous years, schools have been identified as in School Improvement Year 1, School Improvement Year 2, Corrective Action, Restructuring – Planning, or Restructuring- Implementation.

In late July 2008, USDE approved Maryland's proposal to participate in a Differentiated Accountability pilot. The pilot allows us to target resources more strategically and take appropriate approaches to addressing the needs of our most chronically underperforming schools. At the same time, we continue to work with schools that have been identified as in the early stages of our Schools in Improvement continuum, offering additional intervention strategies that we believe will assist them in meeting their annual targets and ultimately allow them to exit School Improvement.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

In implementing the State's Differentiated Accountability pilot we have transitioned the previous school improvement categories to two different pathways based on the performance needs of the school. A Focused Needs pathway is reserved for schools in greatest need and resembles the traditional NCLB pathway that Maryland has used since



2003. These schools are those showing broad patterns of failure to meet State standards. A second differentiated pathway, Comprehensive Needs, is reserved for schools showing narrower patterns of failure to meet State standards. These pathways are further subdivided into two stages, Developing and Priority, reflecting the number of years the school has been in improvement.

The 2008 data indicate that Maryland schools are continuing to make progress toward reaching the federal target that all students are reading and doing math at grade level by school year 2013-14 even while annual targets continue to increase. Overall, 1138 elementary, middle, and high schools met the targets in 2008 compared to 1050 in 2007. The number of schools in improvement in 2008 decreased to 219 compared with 233 schools in 2007 despite the fact that the performance targets prescribed by federal law were more challenging for schools to reach in 2008. For more than half of the schools in all of the School Improvement stages, the Differentiated Accountability pilot will permit Maryland to limit the focus of the interventions that will be used to strengthen academic performance to those one or two subgroups not achieving standards.

### 2008 Schools in Differentiated Accountability Pathways

| STAGES                  | PATHWAYS                            |                                |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                         | <i>Comprehensive Needs Pathway*</i> | <i>Focused Needs Pathway**</i> |
| <i>Developing Stage</i> | 36 schools                          | 74 schools                     |
| <i>Priority Stage</i>   | 71 schools                          | 38 schools                     |

\*Schools not achieving AYP in the “all students” group or 3 or more subgroups

\*\*Schools not achieving AYP in one or two subgroups only

The Developing Stage includes schools in the former NCLB Year1, Year 2, and Corrective Action categories. All schools in either Restructuring Planning or Implementation have been placed in the Priority Stage.

Nearly 70% of all high schools met the 2008 targets, and the number of high schools in improvement has decreased since 2005, from 71 to 50. Nine high schools – along with 32 elementary/middle schools – were able to exit the School Improvement process in 2008.

Baltimore City and Prince George’s County school systems are currently in the System Corrective Action stage of School Improvement prescribed by federal law, but both made significant progress in at least one of the three grade bands (elementary, middle, or high school). If similar progress is made for 2009, both school systems may exit Corrective Action.

Detailed information about the 2008 status of all Maryland schools' progress toward achieving Adequate Yearly Progress is available at MSDE's school report card website, [www.MdReportCard.org](http://www.MdReportCard.org).

**ACTION:**

For information only. No action required.