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TO: Members of the State Board of Education  
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick, *Nancy* State Superintendent of Schools  
DATE: December 17-18, 2008  
SUBJECT: Maryland's Test Development Process

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**PURPOSE:**

To provide State Board members with an overview of the process used to develop the State assessments administered in Maryland public schools. The test development process used in Maryland follows nationally accepted protocols and has resulted in Maryland receiving national peer review and subsequent USDE approval of the assessments for use to fulfill the requirements of the federal NCLB act of 2001.

**BACKGROUND:**

Maryland's accountability system preceded the federal NCLB act of 2001 by more than twenty years. This long history of experience in the development and scoring of standardized tests related to Maryland's curriculum left Maryland well-positioned with the experience necessary to continue to develop and implement high quality assessment programs to meet state as well as NCLB requirements. This history also resulted in Maryland receiving early approval of assessments to meet NCLB requirements.

These assessments allow the state to report and communicate to educators and the public about the progress and performance of all students and schools. This reporting is key for Maryland to be compliant with NCLB requirements as well as to document accountability for Bridge to Excellence in Public Education funding to the Maryland General Assembly.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Maryland follows a carefully managed test development process that uses a prescribed procedure. Though there are some variations in the test development process depending on the specific type of assessment and its purpose and design, the process can be defined generically, and the nuances are minor. Important aspects included in the development of every test are: careful attention to the alignment of the test to the curriculum, high quality test items, fairness and accessibility for a diverse student population (including accommodations for students with disabilities, English language learners and students with 504 plans), a valid and accurate scoring process, and consistency of standards from year to year.



The test development process used in Maryland has resulted in a long history of success. The development procedures have a wide national acceptance that has been approved and validated by Maryland's National Psychometric Council as well as by national peer reviewers for the United States Department of Education (USDE). It is a careful and well-planned process involving content experts as well as stakeholders from within the education community and external to the education community. The process for each test development is conducted by a contractor according to MSDE specifications that are reviewed and approved by the National Psychometric Council and validated at key points during the process. Ultimately, State procedures for test development, administration and scoring are subjected to scrutiny by the United States Department of Education. If procedures do not meet federal requirements, a state's accountability system could be disapproved.

A detailed documentation of the test development process is included in the attached White Paper supported by the accompanying Glossary. The presentation to the State Board will outline the process used to develop Maryland's assessments.

**ACTION:**

For information only. No action is required.

NSG:lw