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MARYLAND REMAINS AMONG TOP PERFORMING STATES IN LATEST STUDY

NATIONAL PUBLICATION ALTERS RANKING FORMULA, BUT STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM CONTINUES TO SCORE WELL

BALTIMORE (January 9, 2014) – The Maryland public school system remains among the nation's highest rated school systems again this year, despite significant changes in the calculations used for the independent national report being released today.

Education Week, a national education newspaper, had ranked Maryland number one in the nation for the past five years, based on a composite score derived from performance and policies across six broad categories. This year the publication decided against issuing a composite score for states across those six critical categories – nor ranking states overall – and instead issued grades and rankings in just three categories. The other three categories were not updated.

Maryland's grades in the newly updated categories are: B in Chance for Success (eighth in the nation); B in K-12 Achievement (second in the nation); and B for School Finance (eighth in the nation). In the categories not updated this year, Maryland schools had received a B+ for Standards, Assessments and Accountability (23rd in the nation in 2012); an A for Transitions and Alignment (second in the nation in 2013), and a B for Teaching Profession (third in the nation in 2012.) Maryland remains the only state in the nation to receive at least a "B" across all six categories.

"Together, we've made the better choice to invest in our children. Our number one ranking for five years in a row, along with this recent report, shows that we're getting results," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "We have more work to do, but I'm incredibly proud of the work our great educators, hard-working students and dedicated parents have produced and congratulate them on yet another year of outstanding progress for Maryland schools."

State Superintendent Lillian M. Lowery said that while national reports provide important general information, Maryland has been focused on further improvement for each and every school, and every single student.

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“Our public schools are instituting the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, designed to strengthen every classroom and prepare our graduates for a brighter future,” Dr. Lowery said.. “Our schools have the benefit of strong support from the Governor, other elected officials, parents, business leaders, and the public at large. With our great partners, the nation’s best educators, and a comprehensive plan for the future, our schools will continue to aim higher.”

Maryland has not rested on its success since it was first ranked number one in the nation in 2009. In 2010, Maryland was awarded a \$250 million portion of the federal government’s \$4.3 billion Race to the Top, which has helped the State implement stronger standards for students and educators, build a new data warehouse, and improve educator evaluation. The following year, Maryland received an additional four-year \$50 million federal grant to help continue its reform efforts in critical early childhood education programs.

Quality Counts uses dozens of distinct indicators to develop its report. Individual grades reported by *Education Week* show how Maryland’s consistent strength is gauged throughout:

The Updated Grades:

- **K-12 Achievement – Maryland received a B grade (second in the nation).** Maryland improved from third to second in the rankings. This category includes National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores and an analysis of achievement gaps.
- **Chance for Success (Updated for 2014) – Maryland received a B grade (eighth in the nation).** Maryland received a B+ grade in 2013, ranking sixth. This category includes such factors as parental education, family income, student performance, and graduation rates.
- **School Finance – Maryland received a B grade (eighth in the nation).** This is the same grade – and the same ranking – Maryland received last year. This category is based on school funding and equity in finance.

The Grades that Were Not Updated:

- **Transitions and Alignment – Maryland was among eight States with an A grade in 2013.** This category includes early childhood education, college readiness policies, and workforce policies.

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- **Standards, Assessments, and Accountability– Maryland received a B+ grade (2012 data).** Maryland has a long history of high standards and detailed statewide accountability programs.
- **The Teaching Profession – Maryland ranked third in the nation with a B grade (third in the nation, 2012 data).** Maryland has long been working to improve the quality of its education workforce, a process that continues through the Teacher Principal Evaluation program.

Today’s announcement by *Education Week* continues Maryland’s long history of success in the annual review. Maryland has consistently worked to strengthen policies and improve student achievement. The State placed third in 2008, the first year the publication issued a comprehensive ranking, before gaining the top spot for the first time in the 2009 “Quality Counts” report.

Data for the report comes from publicly available data from federal and national sources. In the past, much of the state-level data gathered by *Education Week* comes from a policy survey of the states conducted each year. The publication did not survey states this year.

For more information, see the *Education Week* website, www.edweek.org.

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