MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Preparing World-Class Students

Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed.D.
Interim State Superintendent of Schools

200 West Baltimore Street • Baltimore, MD 21201 • 410-767-0100 • 410-333-6442 TTY/TDD • MarylandPublicSchools.org

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed. D.

DATE: January 24, 2012

SUBJECT: U.S. Department of Education ESEA Flexibility

PURPOSE:

To review and endorse progress on Maryland's application to the U. S. Department of Education Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility which is designed to improve academic achievement and increase the quality of instruction for all students in a manner that was not originally contemplated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Maryland has indicated (non-binding) that they will be submitting an ESEA Flexibility Application by the current deadline of February 21, 2012. Eleven states submitted an application in November 2011. The states include Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Tennessee. At this time the U.S. Department of Education peer reviewers are reviewing these applications.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The U.S. Department of Education has offered the opportunity to request flexibility on behalf of the State, the LEAs and schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. This voluntary opportunity provides flexibility regarding specific requirements of NCLB in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction.

As required, Maryland must submit an application that addresses four principles to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student academic achievement in the State and LEAs. MSDE has conducted 33 meetings to date involving stakeholder groups with additional meetings planned in January with Title I Coordinators, Special Education Advocates, Local Assistant Superintendents, and others.

Maryland's request will address each of the four principles. For Principle 1, College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students, Maryland has adopted the Common Core standards, has developed a transition plan and is part of the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for Colleges and Careers (PARCC). Universal Design of Learning (UDL) and alignment for English Language Learners are important components of the new curriculum.

For Principle 2, State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support, Maryland is looking to revise Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. Maryland will use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. Maryland is also developing a draft accountability System for all schools that includes achievement, gap closing, growth, and college and career readiness.

For Principle 3, Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership, the work of supporting educator evaluation is aligned with the work of the Educator Effectiveness Council. The model, guided by work with the union colleagues, includes developing a model for 50% student growth, researching Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), identifying the Framework for Teaching by Charlotte Danielson as a model for Professional Practice, and ensuring that professional development is tied to all components. Additionally, Maryland continues to develop the principal model which will include the Maryland Leadership Instructional Framework and a student growth/achievement component.

Finally, for Principle 4, Reducing Duplication and Unnecessary Burden, Maryland must remove duplicative and burdensome reporting requirements that have little or no impact on student outcomes. Maryland agrees to review and, based on that review, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools.

ACTION:

For information purposes.

BJS:mlg