MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Preparing World-Class Students

Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.

DATE: December 17, 2012

SUBJECT: 2012-2013 National Title I Distinguished Schools Program

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PURPOSE:

To recognize John Eager Howard Elementary School as the 2012-2013 National Title I Distinguished School for Maryland.

BACKGROUND:

Title I, Part A is the largest federally funded education program which provides schools and school districts with high concentrations of students who are economically disadvantaged with funding to allow them to obtain supplemental resources to enhance their educational programs. At its core, Title I, Part A should be used to enhance reading, mathematics, and science programs for students who are not performing to state standards. Distinguished Title I schools go beyond what is mandated in the statute. Each year the National Association of State Title I Directors (NASTID) recognizes Title I Distinguished Schools from all fifty states and Puerto Rico, who have been selected for their outstanding results in one of two categories: (1) exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years or (2) closing the achievement gap between student groups. Each state may nominate up to two of its Title I schools that have risen above obstacles of poverty to improve learning for its most vulnerable children. One Maryland school has been identified as a 2012-2013 Title I Distinguished School for closing the achievement gap between student groups.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Three hundred sixty nine Title I schools participated in the 2011-2012 Maryland School Assessment (MSA). After comparing Maryland State Assessment (MSA) data for the 2011-2012 school year, John Eager Howard Elementary School in Baltimore City had the lowest gap between subgroups and therefore is recommended to represent Maryland in Category 2 - closing the achievement gap between student groups. Attachment I contains a profile for John Eager Howard Elementary School which describes the focus areas, strategies, and key elements used by this "distinguished school" to improve academic achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. John Eager Howard will receive recognition as a National Title I Distinguished School at the Title I Conference in Nashville, Tennessee from January 21-24, 2013.

ACTION:

For information only and recognition by the State Board of Education.

Attachment

John Eager Howard Elementary School
2011 Linden Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21217

Tamara Hanson, Principal
Gale Carter, Assistant Principal
Phone: 410-396-0837

John Eager Howard School is a Title I school located in the Reservoir Hill Community in Northwest Baltimore City, Maryland. We are home to 254 students in Pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. Our specialized early learning programs provide educational services to children from birth to 3 years old, as well as resources for their families. Our student population is 98.8% African American with 81% of students receiving Free and Reduced Price Meals (FARMS). Ours is also one of two elementary schools in Baltimore City that has an early intervention program for the deaf and hard of hearing. Our vision, mission and motto are shared by the staff and community and our ultimate goal is to educate scholars and serve and support our families and community in every way we can.

Curriculum and Instruction (Teaching and Learning): We are proud of our rigorous academic and instructional programs, which are directly aligned to the state curriculum and Common Core State Standards. Our professional staff is committed to providing a quality education that encourages students to develop their full potential, and to be responsible learners and productive citizens in the global workforce. Every child has a gift and our Gifted and Talented Education Program (GATE) allows students to develop their gifts, talents and areas of interest. Green Keepers is another instructional program at John Eager Howard that encourages environmental stewardship while practicing the objectives set forth by Maryland Green School program. Lastly, our Child First after-school program uses the STEMulated Minds Curriculum that focuses on discovery, exploration and hands-on learning.

Student Achievement: Student achievement is the ultimate goal of education. Our school uses data to drive instruction and decision making. Teachers use a variety of tools to identify students' strengths and weaknesses such as state standardized tests, benchmarks, diagnostics assessments, unit pre and post tests, teacher-created assessments and informal techniques. We have bell-to-bell instruction that starts each day with "Drop Everything and Intervene." During this hour of intervention, all children begin the day feeling successful because they are reading on their just-right levels and receiving individualized instruction from their teachers and or other adults assigned to the class. All resource teachers and support personnel are assigned to a class for support. Supplemental materials from the Reading A-Z program are used during this time. And we are dedicated to educating the whole child. Students here even learn during recess with our Playworks program, in which they learn safe, healthy and inclusive play. Playworks also has a leadership component that provides students with an opportunity to be a Junior Coach so they can lead and facilitate games during recess.

Positive Behavior System: John Eager Howard is a school that prides itself on creating a culture and climate that is safe and conducive to teaching and learning. We have developed a unique school-wide behavior program called "Go for the Gold." The underlying ideas of the behavior system were adopted from Clip Chart System by Rick Morris. Our "Go for the Gold" behavior system provides common expectations, strategies and protocols for both positive and negative reinforcement. The advantage of our behavior system is that it allows students to self-monitor and take ownership of their actions, decisions and behavior. Go for the Gold promotes positive behavior and offers students daily, weekly and monthly rewards. We also have a schoolwide character education program that educates students on topics ranging from self-esteem to bullying. Each class starts with a community chat that helps students develop healthy communication and problem-solving skills, and ways for them to build rapport, relationships and respect for each other. Counseling services, peer mediation groups and mentoring programs all contribute to our vision of having a safe and orderly instructional environment.

Professional Development: Our teachers and staff receive systemic professional development through Baltimore City Public Schools. In addition, we provide teachers with in-house professional development through our own teacher institute. The John Eager Howard Teacher institute is a colleague-to-colleague training that is offered once a month, and for which teachers identify topics and areas of interest for which they would like more training. We also have our "collaborative café," a professional development opportunity for teachers to share knowledge and insight on strategies, techniques, pedagogy and trends in education so that they can apply it to their daily instruction.

Families and Community Partnerships: At John Eager Howard we know it takes a village to raise a child. That's why we welcome support at every level from parents, neighbors, faith-based institutions, local businesses, universities and more. For years we have enjoyed support from a number of our families and surrounding organizations. Through participation in our School and Family Council, Family Learning Night, First Friday Breakfast, workshops, trainings and daily volunteering, we are able to heighten our impact on students, families and the community—all working together to advance the mission and vision of our school. This year we became a Child First Community Resource School with a full-time community resource coordinator who assists with a range of activities to increase family and community engagement.

Greatest Contributing Factor: The John Eager Howard Staff is committed to being an institution of learning where there is a safe and orderly environment in which teachers teach to meet scholars' holistic needs. Our scholars' learn through exposure and experience what they need to be lifelong learners and productive citizens. And we provide a wide range of activities, programs, assemblies, fieldtrips and opportunities for children, families, teachers, administrator, and the community to work together to achieve our school goals. We work diligently to be the hub and core of the community.