MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Preparing World-Class Students

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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed.D.

DATE: March 27, 2012

SUBJECT: Maryland State Department of Education Website Update

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PURPOSE:

To update the board on plans to strengthen MarylandPublicSchools.org, the Maryland State Department of Education's Website.

BACKGROUND:

MarylandPublicSchools.org was launched more than 10 years ago, succeeding MSDE's rudimentary original website. It serves as the Department's primary site, and is updated frequently with news and information about MSDE's activities. It also serves as a portal to MSDE's other sites, such as MdReportCard.org – the site containing assessment data, and MdK12.org – the Department's curriculum website.

SUMMARY:

The site is built on Microsoft CMS 2002, a content management system that today is considered old technology and is no longer supported by Microsoft. While the site was constructed by Dell contractors, it was turned over to MSDE shortly after its launch to manage and update. The site is managed editorially by MSDE's Division of Academic Policy, with content provided by more than 40 editors located throughout the Department. Content is published using the templates developed by the contractors. MSDE is unable to customize those templates, and the look and feel of MarylandPublicSchools.org site has been treading water for some time.

Through a generous offer from Prince George's Community College (PGCC), MSDE is getting a chance to look at other ideas and designs. Michael Smith, an associate professor at PGCC, and students in his capstone web design course, have met with MSDE staff with plans to provide the department with some proposals for the future. Three student groups are scheduled to present their ideas to MSDE in May. At the same time, MSDE is establishing a cross-divisional team to help chart the course for the website's future.

ACTION:

For information only. No action required.