MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Preparing World-Class Students

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TO: Members of the State Board

FROM: Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed.D.

DATE: March 27, 2012

SUBJECT: Online Learning and Maryland Public Education

PURPOSE:

To provide the Maryland State Board of Education with an overview of the Office of Instructional Technology responsibilities and its role in setting the course for online learning in Maryland public schools. This item will provide a springboard for engaging the Board in a discussion regarding online learning priorities for Maryland.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The Office of Instructional Technology supports School Library Media Programs, the MDK12 Digital Library, Online Learning for students and educators, and the Integration of Technology into teaching and learning. During the past few years, the focus of the office has been to maintain the online offerings, encourage implementation of new instructional strategies and tools through Federal grants, provide pathways for increasing the number of qualified online facilitators across the state, and support the implementation of the School Library Media State Curriculum. The dynamic nature of technology and current reform efforts in Maryland requires on-going learning to inform the direction of Instructional Technology and Library Media programmatic decisions and products.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Director of Instructional Technology, who joined MSDE on March 7th, is in the process of investigating the relationship between and among the present reform efforts and the on-going work of the Office of Instructional Technology. In this context, the following initiatives have been identified as integral to Maryland's future work in the online/digital arena:

- Ensuring high quality online courses for students and educators that include accessibility and Universal Design Learning principles.
- Staying current with technology resources as they relate to instruction so that relevant and effective professional development can be provided to educators across the state.

- Addressing the role of the School Library Media Specialist as it relates to and supports the Common Core and Digital Citizenship.

A critical component of this work is conducting research to determine successes and challenges in other states as they relate to online learning approaches, requirements, and general initiatives from state agencies. It is hoped that through a discussion with the Board, that the new director will be able to ascertain some of the Board's priorities and return to the board within the next few months with an aggressive agenda for the Board's consideration.

ACTION:

Information only.