



July 31, 2014

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**A few words
from State
Superintendent
of Schools
Lillian M.
Lowery**

Lt. Governor Anthony Brown this week announced \$4.3 million in Prekindergarten Expansion Grants to 24 providers throughout the State, and that is great news for all of us. Better access to quality early learning programs means that more Maryland children will be getting a great start in the classroom.

The grant program is made possible by the O'Malley-Brown Administration's Prekindergarten Expansion Act of 2014 (SB 332), which Lt. Governor Brown led the effort to pass during this year's legislative session. Under the expansion, the State is partnering with local providers and school systems across the state to expand high-quality full and half day pre-K to another 1,563 children.

The Prekindergarten Expansion Act builds on the State's existing pre-K system and expands the number of pre-K slots available to include Maryland children whose families make up to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The bill represents the first step toward expanding pre-K to all Maryland children by establishing a competitive Pre-Kindergarten Expansion Grant Program and Fund through which local school systems and local providers were able apply to establish, expand and enhance existing pre-K programs and highly effective Judy Centers.

Recipients were selected by the Maryland State Department of Education following the application process which began in April. For more on the grant program, see: Lt. Governor Brown, MSDE Announce \$4.3 Million In Grants To Fund Maryland's Prekindergarten Expansion.

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MARYLAND RECEIVES NEW FLEXIBILITY FROM NCLB TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has received approval of a one-year extension of flexibility from certain provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB)



The U.S. Department of Education approved the extension of MSDE's original waiver request, which was scheduled to expire this summer, supporting

implementation of Maryland's comprehensive plan to improve instruction and learning for all students.

MSDE received approval to continue moving forward in two of three principles addressed in its request for flexibility - college and career-ready expectations for all students and state-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for schools. Federal officials also agreed to continue working with Maryland on implementation of new teacher and principal evaluation and support systems.

"Maryland is committed to preparing world-class students with more rigorous standards, meaningful assessment, and continuous support for educators," said Maryland State Superintendent Lillian M. Lowery. "We have been granted a hold-harmless year during these transitions to ensure educators and students are supported and the implementation is done well."

The ESEA was due for Congressional reauthorization in 2007. In the absence of reauthorization, President

The Maryland State Board of Education voted unanimously last week to accept guidelines for the state's student code of discipline that can serve as a model for local school systems to use when developing their own discipline codes.

MSDE staff presented the new framework for school systems to use as they review and revise their local district codes of discipline, and develop and establish new discipline-related policies. These guidelines include behavioral expectations for all members of the community who have a direct impact on creating healthy learning environments and promoting student success. They also were designed to reduce disparities in discipline based on race and disability.

The Maryland Guidelines for a State Code of Discipline align closely with the Maryland State Board of Education's discipline reform efforts as laid out in their 2012 report, *School Discipline and Academic Success: Related Parts of Maryland's Education Reform*. The guidelines were written in accordance with state law and the Code of Maryland Regulations. They complement and support the new state regulations, which the State Board adopted in January to keep students in school, maintain their progress toward graduation, and strengthen school safety overall.

The Board requested an inclusive, thorough, and participatory process, and the workgroup reflected that. It was convened in 2012 and two co-chairs were appointed: MSDE's Robert Murphy, M.Ed., and Kate Rabb, JD, of Open Society Institute-Baltimore. MSDE staff issued initial invitations to representatives from all 24 local school systems in Maryland, and numerous organizations and stakeholders.

The draft guidelines, workgroup report and the report to the State Board of Education have been linked to last week's State Board meeting agenda.

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Obama announced in September 2011 that the administration would grant waivers from parts of the law to states in exchange for adopting college- and career-ready standards for all students; creating accountability systems that target the lowest-performing schools, schools with the largest achievement gaps, and other schools that are not meeting targets for at-risk students; and improving teacher and principal evaluation and support systems.

This one-year extension of ESEA flexibility allows Maryland to continue moving forward on the ambitious work that began with its initial flexibility request made in 2012. The extension is through the 2014-2015 school year. The Department is reviewing requests from states for extensions to ESEA flexibility annually.

The approval letter granting amendments to Maryland's ESEA Flexibility request includes criteria for Reward Schools, Priority Schools and Focus Schools within the State's School Progress Index.

Maryland schools received a one-year waiver from some No Child Left Behind requirements, so schools can continue to work on educational improvement initiatives.

STATE'S FIRST PROMISING PRINCIPALS ACADEMY HELD IN CALVERT COUNTY



A new generation of Maryland school leaders converged on Solomons Island this week for the first Governor's Promising Principals Academy.

The Academy was a unique effort by the Maryland State Department of Education to prepare a new cadre of principals. Research has repeatedly shown that an effective principal is the key to a successful school. Governor Martin O'Malley has challenged Maryland to create a pipeline to identify, nurture,



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Calendar

August 13-16 – Maryland Association of Counties
Summer Conference, Ocean City

August 19 – First system opens for 2014-15 school
year (Calvert)

August 26 – Maryland State Board of Education
meeting, Baltimore



VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

Inside Educator Evaluations Videos

June 30, 2014

Maryland Schools Superintendent Lillian Lowery sits
down for an in-depth discussion about Teacher
Principal Evaluations with 2013 Cecil County
Teacher of the Year Steve Luthultz.

Teacher Principal Evaluations Videos

[Part 1](#) [Part 2](#) [Part 3](#)

In the News

Maryland Gets a PreK Boost
WMAR Channel 2

Prince George's Receives Grant to Help Launch New
High Schools for ELLs
Washington Post

Editorial: Moving Forward with New High School
Tests
Baltimore Sun

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and support the development of great principals.

"Maryland public schools lead the nation in large part
because of the outstanding educators who lead our
schools," Governor O'Malley said. "We need to train
and support these women and men who guide the
preparation of our State's most precious natural
resource: our children. Strong school leaders provide
the cornerstone of an educational system that
develops college and career-ready graduates."

Two participants from each of Maryland's 24 local
school systems have been taking part in the
Academy. Participants were nominated by their local
superintendent based on their interest, current
position, and leadership potential. The summer
conference—aligned to principal evaluation
standards—is the first time the entire cohort of
promising principals has gathered as a whole.

State Superintendent of Schools Lillian Lowery
addressed the emerging leaders on Wednesday, the
final day of the three-day residential academy.
Participants had been immersed in intensive
professional development on subjects ranging from
synergistics to ethics.

For more on the Promising Principals Academy, see:
<https://sites.google.com/site/promisingprincipals>.

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