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State Superintendent of Schools

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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*

DATE: May 25-26, 2010

SUBJECT: Approval of Alternative Governance for School Improvement Proposals
(Restructuring Plans) from Baltimore City Public Schools, Baltimore County
Public Schools and Dorchester County Public Schools

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this action is to approve the alternative governance (restructuring plans) for the following schools: Gilmore Elementary and Northeast and Patapsco Middle Schools in Baltimore City; Deer Park and Old Court Middle Schools in Baltimore County; and Cambridge South-Dorchester High School in Dorchester County.

BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

In January 2002, President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Section 1116 (b)(8)(B) of this Act, in conjunction with COMAR 13A.01.04.07.C(3), places requirements on local education agencies (LEAs) with schools in the five levels of school improvement – Years 1, 2, 3 (corrective action), 4 (restructuring planning), and 5 (restructuring implementation). Years 4 and 5 coincide with Maryland’s Differentiated Accountability Pilot as schools are designated “Priority” Comprehensive Needs schools or “Priority” Focused Needs schools. Schools in improvement must target their efforts on content areas and on students who are in greatest need. Once identified as a “Priority” school, the school must develop detailed improvement plans designed to strengthen each subgroup’s achievement.

Year 4 Priority Comprehensive Needs and Priority Focused Needs schools are required to select an alternative governance option under NCLB. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has developed Alternative Governance for School Improvement guidelines to lead schools through this process. Schools are asked to reflect on the action steps taken while in Year 3, involve representative school stakeholders in the planning process, create a School Academic Profile outlining changes to current strategies, and conduct a proactive analysis to identify potential challenges likely to be encountered during the implementation of the Alternative Governance model.



Eighteen schools in five local education agencies (LEAs) were identified for alternative governance planning based on the results of the 2009 State assessments. These schools, in collaboration with central office officials and school and community stakeholders, have spent the last six months assessing school needs and preparing their Alternative Governance for School Improvement Proposals. Local Boards of Education and superintendents review and approve each school's proposal prior to its submittal to the Maryland State Department of Education.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The following schools have submitted Alternative Governance for School Improvement Proposals:

Baltimore City

Gilmor Elementary	0107	Option 1 – Replace all or most of the school staff
Northeast Middle	0049	Option 1 – Replace all or most of the school staff
Patapsco Middle	0163	Option 1 – Replace all or most of the school staff

Baltimore County

Deer Park Middle	0254	Option 1 – Replace all or most of the school staff
Old Court Middle	0252	Option 1 – Replace all or most of the school staff

Dorchester County

Cambridge South-Dorchester High	0713	Option 1 – Replace all or most of the school staff
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In addition to selecting Option 1, each school has proposed to implement significant reforms that they believe will increase student achievement and facilitate the school's ability to make adequate yearly progress. Schools have selected significantly reforms in the following areas: reading/English achievement, mathematics/algebra achievement, and school culture. Sample strategies/action steps identified for all student subgroups include:

Baltimore City

Reading/English Achievement:

- a. Participate in on-going professional development that is “differentiated” to meet the needs of the teachers and improve their capacity. Topics may include: understanding the IEP, accommodations and modifications; align reading instruction in self-contained classes with the state curriculum; data utilization; differentiation of content, product and process in support of all students in all content areas; and inclusive and consultative special education models.
- b. Identify and utilize cross-curricular lesson plans.
- c. Identify and utilize teacher expertise to develop the potential of other teachers in the building.
- d. Implement improved collaborative planning sessions that happen at a regularly scheduled time that focuses on student achievement.

Baltimore City (Continued)

Mathematics/Algebra Achievement:

- a. Participate in differentiated job-embedded professional development learning sessions that may include workshops, modeling, demonstration lessons, and sharing of best practices.
- b. Identifying and utilizing Maryland State Curriculum to create differentiated lessons for students.
- c. Identifying and aligning collaborative planning time for cross curricular planning to address key skill areas in math.
- d. Utilizing data to collaboratively develop strategies for instruction that will meet the needs of students including intervention groups.

School Culture:

- a. Implement Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) with consistency and fidelity to modify behavior, minimize classroom disruption, and reduce office referrals.
- b. Continue to build positive relationships with parents and community for support with negative behaviors.
- c. Create a plan of action in support of students with the most challenging behaviors.
- d. Work under the direction of the Towson's University Partnership Initiative Schools (TUPS) and in collaboration all the TUPS' Social Workers and Counselors to create a positive learning environment.

Baltimore County

Mathematics/Algebra and Reading/English Achievement:

- a) Develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate an ongoing, differentiated, and targeted PD series for mathematics and English achievement focusing on effective data utilization to guide daily instructional practices and interventions.
- b) Develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate an EBLT instructional technique in concert with Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) with a strategic focus on strengthening student engagement.
- c) Develop and implement a master schedule that enhances student achievement and differentiation of instruction by providing common planning periods, incorporating a co-teaching model, and implementing a new extended-time intervention aligned to the students' identified academic needs, especially students receiving special education services.
- d) Develop and implement a monitoring tool for mathematics and English that continually assesses cohort growth.
- e) Identify and utilize Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) initiatives focused on accelerating student learning in mathematics through the appropriate utilization of technology.
- f) Develop, enhance, and build capacity among community-based partnerships focused on academic excellence.

Dorchester County

Reading/English Achievement:

- a) Collaboratively planning for differentiated instruction and implementing universally designed lessons under the direction of representatives from the Maryland State Department of Education.
- b) Successfully implementing the Core Learning Goals through the Maryland State Curriculum.
- c) Implementing reading strategies that focus on the acquisition of reading comprehension skills and providing support in the form of accommodations for those students who struggle with reading.

School Culture:

- a) Provide professional development as it pertains to planning and implementing the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) initiative.
- b) Fully implement classroom management strategies as outlined in the PBIS program.
- c) Consistently adhere to school and district procedures and policies with regard to student management and discipline.
- d) Encourage students to attend school/classes regularly and provide positive reinforcement for those students who do so.

This past April, teams of MSDE school improvement specialists, along with school improvement experts from local school systems, reviewed the Alternative Governance for School Improvement proposals from these six schools. As a result of the internal review, the adopted alternative governances are recommended for approval. Copies of the six Alternative Governance for School Improvement Proposals are available in the 2010 Alternative Governance Binder in the Caucus Room (7th Floor Conference Room Adjacent to Board Room).

ACTION:

The State Board of Education is requested to approve the Alternative Governance for School Improvement proposals for the following schools:

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Maryland State Department of Education

Planning for Alternative Governance Fact Sheet

2009-2010 School Year

<p>What is restructuring?</p>	<p>Restructuring is a process under the federal law <i>No Child Left Behind</i> for schools failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP for five or more consecutive years). Restructuring requires a major reorganization of a school's governance structure.</p> <p>Restructuring ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes fundamental reforms to improve student academic achievement in the school; • is significantly more rigorous and comprehensive than strategies undertaken as part of corrective action; and • addresses the reasons why the school continues to not make AYP and facilitates the school's ability to exit school improvement as soon as possible. 																															
<p>How do schools in improvement progress toward alternative governance?</p>	<p>Under the new Differentiated Accountability Pilot adopted during the summer of 2008, schools in improvement progress toward alternative governance through two distinct pathways depending on the number of subgroups not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Comprehensive Needs schools will have failed to meet the annual measurable objective (AMO) in the "All Students" subgroup or will have failed to achieve the AMO for 3 or more subgroups. A Focused Needs school would not have achieved the AMO for less than 3 subgroups or is a 100% Special Education subgroup school.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NCLB and New Differentiated Accountability Pilot</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 10%;">Years Not Achieving AYP</th> <th style="width: 30%;">NCLB Designation</th> <th colspan="2" style="width: 60%;">Differentiated Accountability SCHOOL PATHWAYS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td rowspan="2" style="background-color: #cccccc;">Schools not in School Improvement</td> <td colspan="2" style="background-color: #cccccc;">Achieving Schools</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td colspan="2" style="background-color: #cccccc;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting AYP • Alert Schools • Exited Schools </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="background-color: #cccccc;">Schools in Improvement</td> <td style="background-color: #cccccc;">Comprehensive Needs Schools</td> <td style="background-color: #cccccc;">Focused Needs Schools</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>School Improvement 1</td> <td rowspan="3" style="background-color: #cccccc;">Developing Comprehensive Needs Schools</td> <td rowspan="3" style="background-color: #cccccc;">Developing Focused Needs Schools</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>School Improvement 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Corrective Action</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td rowspan="2" style="background-color: #cccccc;">Planning for Alternative Governance</td> <td rowspan="3" style="background-color: #cccccc;">Priority Comprehensive Needs Schools</td> <td rowspan="3" style="background-color: #cccccc;">Priority Focused Needs Schools</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td rowspan="2" style="background-color: #cccccc;">Alternative Governance Implementation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7+</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Years Not Achieving AYP	NCLB Designation	Differentiated Accountability SCHOOL PATHWAYS		0	Schools not in School Improvement	Achieving Schools		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting AYP • Alert Schools • Exited Schools 		Schools in Improvement		Comprehensive Needs Schools	Focused Needs Schools	2	School Improvement 1	Developing Comprehensive Needs Schools	Developing Focused Needs Schools	3	School Improvement 2	4	Corrective Action	5	Planning for Alternative Governance	Priority Comprehensive Needs Schools	Priority Focused Needs Schools	6	Alternative Governance Implementation	7+	
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<p>What is required when a school begins to plan to restructure?</p>	<p>If a school is identified as a Priority Comprehensive Needs or Priority Focused Needs school it will begin planning for restructuring. In collaboration with the LEA, the school must develop an Alternative Governance for School Improvement plan. All schools entering restructuring planning must have their Alternative Governance Plans approved by both their local Board of Education and the State Board of Education. If the school does not make AYP in the Restructuring Planning year, it must implement its restructuring plan no later than the start of the next school year.</p>																															

<p><i>What is Alternative Governance?</i></p>	<p>Alternative governance is a new and different structure put in place to manage and oversee (govern) daily instructional and administrative activities within a school. The purpose of alternative governance is to significantly increase student achievement by replacing the current governing structure within the school.</p>
<p><i>What Alternative Governance options can be considered?</i></p>	<p>Maryland schools may select from the following three Alternative Governance options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replace all or most school staff, including the principal, related to the school's failure to make AYP; 2. Contract with a private management company to operate the school; or 3. Re-open the school as a public charter school. <p>Note: Replacing the principal alone is not sufficient to constitute restructuring. The LEA may do so as long as this change is a part of a broader reform effort.</p>
<p><i>What is expected of a school that would like to change its approved Alternative Governance?</i></p>	<p>The school must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a comprehensive school needs assessments (i.e. academic achievement, school climate, teacher and administrator capacity, parent involvement, etc.); 2. Identify strategies to enhance the quality of education for students, build teacher capacity, and ensure a supportive learning environment; 3. Obtain staff, parent, and community stakeholder buy-in for the proposed Alternative Governance option; and 4. Submit the alternative governance proposal for local and state board approval.
<p><i>What role do parents and community stakeholders have in the school improvement and Alternative Governance process?</i></p>	<p>Parents and community stakeholders should be provided opportunities to be involved in activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the school's Mission/Vision statements; • Developing the School Improvement Plan; • Building a cohesive school team; • Developing and serving on committees (e.g. parent groups that support student achievement, student well being, and teacher support); • Developing a partnership plan between the school, parents, and community; • Suggesting and choosing how parents can contribute to their child's education; • Engaging in meaningful two-way communication with school personnel; and • Considering other activities described on the Maryland Parent Resource & Information Center (PIRC) website.
<p><i>Who has the final decision in the Alternative Governance selection?</i></p>	<p>Parents', community stakeholders', teachers', and school and central office administrators' input is valuable, necessary, and taken into consideration. The Superintendent and the Local Board of Education have the final say as to what alternative governance option is selected and implemented.</p>
<p><i>How can a school exit Alternative Governance?</i></p>	<p>A school that has implemented its alternative governance plan enters a "holding" pattern once it makes AYP. During this year, the school must continue to implement its approved alternative governance plan. If a school makes AYP the next year (a second consecutive year), it exits the improvement program. If, after exiting the improvement program, the school fails to make AYP for two consecutive years, it re-enters the improvement program as a Developing Comprehensive Needs school or a Developing Focused Needs school.</p>