



Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: December 14, 2010
SUBJECT: 2010-2011 National Title I Distinguished Schools Program

PURPOSE:

To recognize Grasonville Elementary School and Milbrook Elementary School as the 2010-2011 National Title I Distinguished Schools 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. Two Maryland schools have been identified as 2010-2011 Title I Distinguished Schools.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Four hundred Title I schools participated in the 2009-2010 Maryland School Assessment (MSA). After comparing MSA data for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years, Grasonville Elementary School in Queen Anne's County scored highest in Category 1—exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years, and Milbrook Elementary School in Baltimore County scored highest in Category 2—closing the achievement gap between student groups. Attachment I contains a profile for each school which describes the focus areas, strategies, and key elements used by the two “distinguished schools” to improve academic achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. Both Elementary Schools will receive national recognition as National Title I Distinguished Schools at the Title I Conference in Tampa, Florida on January 31, 2011.

ACTION:

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

NSG:JN:cwm
Attachments



GRASONVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
5435 Main Street
Grasonville, Maryland 21625

Mrs. Roberta D. Leaverton, Principal
410-827-8070

Grasonville Elementary School (GES) is located in Grasonville, a small rural community on the Eastern Shore in Queen Anne's County (QAC), across the Chesapeake Bay from Annapolis Maryland. GES is a community-based school serving 475 students in grades PreK – 5. GES qualifies as a Targeted Assistance Title One school. The attendance zone includes the most affluent housing in Queen Anne's County and subsidized public housing as well. School demographics include: 31% economically disadvantaged; 16% African American, 5% Hispanic, 76% Caucasian, 11% Special Education and 3% ELL. GES is a partner with the QAC Judy Center. It is a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Gold School and uses the Success For All (SFA) reading program in grades K – 6.

EveryONE Matters – At GES the focus is on each individual student, not subgroups. The priority is on the needs of the child and includes the following: formation of classes and strategic teacher assignments, multi-age literacy groups, decision-making process for assigning interventions, and monthly SAM (Student Achievement Monitoring) meetings. Literacy groups are reassigned every 8 weeks based on student growth. At-risk students are discussed every 4 weeks and Individual Learning Plans are modified as needed. Five Title One tutors provide interventions on a daily basis to Title One students.

Whatever You Do . . . Do it with Excellence – Professional Development (PD) is a major contributing factor to the school's success. The School Improvement Team determines PD by first determining student needs and then identifying what teachers need in order to support the students. In the past few years, job-embedded PD has been provided on data analysis, collaborative lesson planning, explicit instruction, best practices for math instruction and utilizing the SFA program to teach the Maryland State Curriculum. This year, our PD is differentiated with 3 different strands based on a "Needs Assessment" completed by our staff.

Everyday Every Child Gets a Fresh Start – GES has been a PBIS school for 8 years. It is impossible to walk the halls of GES and not see evidence of the many ways students are positively recognized for supporting our Code of Conduct. Office referrals have dropped significantly as a result of this program. Students, staff, and families are highly supportive of this program and the Character Counts (CC) Program. Every class receives a weekly lesson of CC taught by community volunteers. There is a positive, caring atmosphere that permeates the building.

Partnering with Parents – Parents are supportive of their children's education and the school as a whole. GES is a member of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). In 2009, one of our parent activities was published in the NNPS Book of Promising Partnership Practices. The full-time Parent Coordinator chairs our Title One Parent Action Committee and the Parent Involvement Committee assuring that parents have a voice in the decision making of GES. The school is also supported through our 200 parent volunteers and last year nearly 1,500 hours were logged in by parent volunteers.

Data Rules, Instruction Rocks – At GES, reviewing data and using it to determine instruction is embedded in the culture of the school. Several years ago, staff worked closely with Dr. Ron Thomas on the process of Triangulation. We have continued this process to identify strengths and weaknesses of the school and grade levels based on classroom, benchmark and external assessments. This analysis is what determines the focus of our School Improvement Plan and Grade Level Action Plans. We regularly examine student work through the CLASS (Collaboratively Looking At Student Samples) process. As a result of this process, teams create and implement Response Plans. In both cases, collaborative lesson plans designed on specific MSC (Maryland State Curriculum) objectives are often part of the solution.

Greatest Contributing Factors: *A Supportive School Community committed to individual student success; A Dedicated Staff using data to make decisions about instruction, programming and students; An Experienced Instructional Team and Principal that have the expertise to deliver quality PD resulting in a positive impact on student achievement.*

Milbrook Elementary School
4300 Crest Heights Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

Mrs. Christina Byers, Principal
Mrs. Kimberly O'Connor, Assistant Principal
410-887-1225

Milbrook Elementary School is located in the Pikesville area of Northwest Baltimore County. We serve a diverse enrollment of 356 students. Our student population is 70% economically disadvantaged, 19% English Language Learners (a large portion of who are refugees), 68% African American, 9% Hispanic, 16% Caucasian, 3% Asian, and 12% receive special education services. The teachers and staff at Milbrook share common core beliefs. Those beliefs drive a common commitment that permeates all aspects of our school culture. Excellence in teaching and learning is possible because all staff is committed to building relationships with the school community, growing professionally, and increasing the achievement of all.

Curriculum and Instruction: *Shared Best Practices for Unified Instruction*

To facilitate the use of common language and expectations of the State Curriculum, we have designed a master schedule that promotes collaboration. Teachers meet in content and vertical teams. Teachers align their understanding of content and their expectations of student work to the State Curriculum. Resource and Special Education teachers are able to best differentiate when collaborating with classroom teachers.

Opportunities for All Students to Achieve: *Data- Driven, Differentiated Instruction*

Using data to identify individual students' strengths and needs has contributed to increased achievement. Teachers analyze short cycle, benchmark, and daily assessment data to monitor students' progress, and to evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction. We provide small group intervention that is driven by specific student needs and monitor the effectiveness of the intervention. In-depth data analysis has implications for school-wide programs such as an explicit vocabulary program to address the diverse language needs of our students. Small group, differentiated math intervention remains flexible throughout the year so that levels of abstraction foster students' understanding of mathematical processes.

Coordination with other programs: *PBIS*

Milbrook Elementary has been a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support school for several years. A school-wide Code of Conduct provides common expectations for behavior and a mechanism for providing positive reinforcement. Our character education program explicitly teaches students the Code of Conduct and creates a forum for teachers to build relationships with students.

Professional Development: *The more you know, the better you teach*

We believe that in-depth knowledge of content and pedagogy leads to rigorous and differentiated instruction. Analyzing student data and teacher understanding enables us to provide job-embedded, individualized and small-group professional development. The central theme of our school-wide professional development is increasing teachers' capacity to develop understanding of math and reading content so that students can become strategic readers and independent problem solvers. Providing continual feedback on instruction allows teachers to set individual goals and engage in reflective practice.

Participation with Parents, Families and Communities: *Building Relationships and Collaboration*

Family involvement is a key factor in promoting student achievement. Our community is diverse, and often bilingual. Knowing our students and their families enables us to understand their needs and strengths. Through participation in the School Improvement Team, Curriculum Nights, and daily volunteering, we are able to share our goals and provide support for our families. In addition, families have an opportunity to participate in program planning that is the core of our yearly Parent Involvement Plan

Greatest Contributing Factor: *A Staff Committed to a Shared Vision*

The Milbrook community has a shared vision for student achievement. Our commitment to common beliefs enables us to evaluate and refine our instructional program while sustaining best practices. By continuing to develop a commitment from parents, administrators, teachers, and students, we hope to continue to increase achievement for all students and prepare to meet the challenges of twenty-first century learners.