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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education

**FROM:** Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*

**DATE:** June 21, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Alternative Governance for School Improvement Proposals  
(Restructuring Plans) for Baltimore City Public School System

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this action is to approve the Alternative Governance (AG) proposals for the following schools: City Springs Elementary/Middle, Connexions Academy Middle/High, Furman Templeton Elementary, Glenmount Elementary/Middle, Patterson High, and The Historic Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary.

**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 Four 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.

The six schools presenting today, in collaboration with central office officials, parents and school 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 reviewed and approved each school's proposal prior to its submittal to the MSDE. Under NCLB, schools and central offices must select one of the three federal options for alternative governance.

Option 1	Replace all or most of the school staff, which may include the principal, who are relevant to the school's inability to make adequate progress.
Option 2	Re-open the school as a public charter school.
Option 3	Contract with a private management company.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

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

City Springs Elementary/Middle	0008	Option 1 – Replace relevant staff
Connexions Academy Middle/High	0325	Option 1 – Replace relevant staff
Furman Templeton Elementary	0125	Option 2 – Re-open as a Charter School
Glenmount Elementary/Middle	0235	Option 1 – Replace relevant staff
Patterson High	0405	Option 1 – Replace relevant staff
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary	0122	Option 1 – Replace relevant staff

*All six of these schools have been working with MSDE since their year of Corrective Action. In addition to selecting Options 1 and 2, each school re-validated the selected Reforms and Supporting Action Steps that they believe will increase student achievement and facilitate the school's exit from school improvement. Reform areas include: Reading/English Achievement, Mathematics/ Algebra Achievement, School Culture and School Structure. Sample action steps identified for all student subgroups include:*

*Furman Templeton – Option 2 – Re-open as a Public Charter School*

- Re-open as a year-round public Charter School. Intercessions will be used for faculty professional development as well as remedial instruction for lower performing students.
- Adopt E.D. Hirsch – Core Knowledge Sequence reading and math curriculum that is aligned with the State Curriculum and provide needed professional development to all staff on differentiating instructional delivery.
- Implement the Power of Teaching at all grade levels. This tool provides behaviorally measurable guidance on how to deliver the curriculum effectively.

***Schools Implementing Option 1 – Replace Relevant Staff***

***Math Achievement:***

- Collaborate with colleagues in cross grade level and cross content meetings to discuss lessons, assessments and best practices prior to implementing instruction. Special educators will participate in these sessions to share information around modifications and accommodations.
- Differentiate instruction by identifying and utilizing the State Curriculum to develop differentiated lessons that are aligned with the indicators and assessment limits.
- Create a position in charge of collecting and analyzing meaningful data (formative and summative) and provide ongoing professional development to teachers so that they can implement data-driven intervention strategies.
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***Reading Achievement:***

- Providing job-embedded, hands-on professional development with modeling and feedback, such as demonstration lessons, co-teaching, and side-by-side coaching.
- Providing professional development for teachers around integrating cross-curricular literacy strategies. Coaches will co-plan and co-teach with teachers and observe and provide formative feedback.
- Teaching catch-up or remedial English/literacy courses for students who are placed in these classes based on diagnostic assessments/coursework/HSA scores/other relevant data.

***Student Attendance:***

- Consistently enforce school-wide policies that have been clearly communicated to students, parents and staff across all academies so that interpretation of policies is not left to individual staff leadership.
- Provide ongoing, job-embedded professional development relating to creating a positive learning environment, especially as it relates to building relationships with students.

***Use of Data:***

- Collaborating to develop classroom methods for collecting real-time data from classroom assessments and review of student work.
- Utilize DataLink and collaborative planning time to share successful practices across content areas and to plan daily instruction to address individual student needs.
- Locate, analyze and apply a successful authentic model for school-wide data-driven decision making in order to create a school-wide vision for the school to which to align resources.

*Implementation for the above Action Steps will be monitored through meeting agendas, lesson plans, focused learning walks to observe use of practices shared in professional development sessions, collaborative planning artifacts, observations, and student performance on benchmark and State assessments.*

Over the last five weeks, teams of MSDE school improvement specialists, along with school improvement experts from local school systems, reviewed the Alternative Governance (AG) for School Improvement proposals from these six schools. As a result of the internal review, the adopted alternative governances are recommended for approval. Full copies of the AG for School Improvement Proposals are available in the 2011 AG Binder in the Caucus Room.

**ACTION:**

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

City Springs Elementary/Middle	0008	Option 1 – Replace relevant staff
Connexions Academy Middle/High	0325	Option 1 – Replace relevant staff
Furman Templeton Elementary	0125	Option 2 – Re-open as a Charter School
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