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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools *Nancy*
DATE: July 20, 2010
SUBJECT: Maryland's Test Security Program

PURPOSE:

To provide State Board members with an overview of the process used to monitor and maintain the security of the assessments administered in Maryland public schools. Backed by COMAR regulations, Maryland's test security program has been designed to protect the integrity of the testing and reporting process, and to ensure fairness and equity across the state.

BACKGROUND:

With more and more emphasis on test scores for accountability, use in teacher evaluations, and high stakes uses for students, the probability that a minority of educators may resort to fraudulent means to protect their interests increases. Students, their parents, and the community deserve access to valid and honest performance results. Maryland's test security program strives to ensure they get those valid scores, and that are informed if this is not the case.

Maryland has a long history with a stringent test security program that has been infused into all aspects of the test administration and scoring process. The system began with the functional testing program in the 80's, and has become more sophisticated as technology advances and MSDE has reacted to creative ways a few staff members find to compromise the integrity of the testing program. Since compromising test security can be accomplished in a wide variety of ways, the enforcement and monitoring takes a variety of different approaches, and occurs at every step of the testing process. The success of the program stems from an active partnership with local school systems.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Maryland uses a carefully managed test security process that is infused throughout all phases of testing. Important aspects included in the process are: careful attention to the training of all personnel appropriate test administration and handling of materials, a program of random and focused observations of test administrations, protocols used during scoring to discover evidence of impropriety, review of final scores and results, and a varied, flexible process for people to report potential problems. A State Test Administration and Security Committee, led by a full-time Test Security Officer provides a consistent process for each local school system to use in their investigation and resolution of these cases and ensures equitable standards and sanctions across the state.



The test security program used in Maryland has resulted in a long history of success. Local school systems report numerous cases each year, most of them minor and often unintentional errors with no impact on student results. However, the program is also responsible for uncovering a few major violations, and holding those up as examples to others who might be considering similar activities. Thus far, Maryland has not seen any increases in test security cases, but Maryland schools have been living with accountability and tight test security procedures for many years.

A Guide to Test Security and Data Reporting for Local Accountability Coordinators is attached. The presentation to the State Board will outline the program used to monitor the security of Maryland's assessments and protect the validity of the results.

ACTION:

For information only.

NSG:lw