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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*

DATE: June 23, 2009

SUBJECT: Approval of Alternative Governance for School Improvement (Restructuring Plans) for one Dorchester County Public School

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this action is to approve the alternative governance (restructuring plan) for Maces Lane Middle 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. Schools in improvement must target their efforts on content areas and on students who are in greatest need. Once identified for school improvement, schools must develop detailed improvement plans designed to strengthen each subgroups' achievement. Under Maryland's new Differentiated Accountability Pilot adopted in 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. Please refer to the attached Alternative Governance Fact Sheet and Maryland's Accountability System for the 2008-2009 for further explanations on school improvement, supportive actions, and the number of schools involved.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) developed Alternative Governance for School Improvement guidelines and an accompanying rubric. A school in restructuring planning is required to follow the guidelines outlining 1) the actions it took during its previous year in corrective action, 2) the rationale behind the selection of its alternative governance option, 3) the LEA's two-year commitment to the implementation of the governance model, and 4) the results of the Teacher Capacity Needs Assessment (TCNA). The TCNA is a tool designed by MSDE to provide schools with data when planning for school improvement. Its primary intention is to identify and address, as precisely as possible, the root causes underlying key issues impacting student performance, either negatively or positively. Its secondary intention is to insure that the staff and administration collectively agree on the recommended allocation of the school's key resources in terms of time, energy, personnel, and money to improve student achievement.

Eight schools in six LEAs were identified for alternative governance planning based on the results of the 2008 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 selecting from a list of available alternative governance options. Local Boards of Education and superintendents review and approve each school's alternative governance proposal prior to its submittal to the Maryland State Department of Education.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The following school submitted an Alternative Governance for School Improvement proposal:

Dorchester County

Mace's Lane Middle School 0707 Option 1 – Replace all or most of the school staff*

* 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.

In addition to selecting Option 1, this school has proposed to implement various actions/strategies based on the needs of students and their families, staff members, and school administrators. Sample strategies include the following:

1. *Provide regular and ongoing professional development on the Performance Matters Data system and how to use ongoing formative assessment data to plan for instruction.*
2. *Provide professional development on the VSC focusing on individual objectives and integrating it effectively into all curricular areas.*
3. *Provide job-embedded professional activities that consist of current best practices and strategies for differentiation in the classroom.*
4. *Provide intense professional development for all staff new to the building.*
5. *Increase communication between school and home.*

From April through May 2009, teams of MSDE school improvement specialists reviewed the Alternative Governance for School Improvement proposal. As a result of the internal review, the adopted alternative governance is recommended for approval. A copy of Mace's Lane Middle School's Alternative Governance for School Improvement Proposal is available in the 2009 Alternative Governance Binder in the Caucus Room.

ACTION:

The State Board of Education is requested to approve the Alternative Governance for School Improvement proposals for Maces Lane Middle School # 0707 in Dorchester County.

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Attachments: Alternative Governance Fact Sheet