



Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Schools

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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D. *Lillian M. Lowery*  
**DATE:** February 24, 2015  
**SUBJECT:** 2014-2015 National Title I Distinguished Schools Program

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**PURPOSE:**

To recognize Belle Grove Elementary School in Anne Arundel County as the 2014-2015 National Title I Distinguished School 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.

**SUMMARY:**

Maryland recognized one school at the National Title I Conference early this month. Based on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) performance data, Belle Grove Elementary School in Anne Arundel County scored highest in Category I – exceptional student performance. The school's profile is included as Attachment 1. Belle Grove Elementary School received national recognition as a National Title I Distinguished School at the National Title I Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah on February 5, 2015.

**ACTION:**

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

MEL:YC:sw

Attachment



Belle Grove Elementary School  
4502 Belle Grove Road  
Baltimore, MD 21225

Ms. Tamara J. Kelly, Principal  
410-222-6589

**Belle Grove Elementary School** is a Title I school located in the Old Brooklyn Park community of Anne Arundel County. The community borders Baltimore City which contributes to the urban profile of the neighborhood. Our community consists of single family residences as well as row houses, which are ever present in the Baltimore metropolitan area. We currently have 265 students in grades Pre-K through five. The majority of our students live within walking distance of our school. Belle Grove has a diverse student population. Eighty-seven percent of our students receive free or reduced meals. Our student demographics information is as follows: 44% Caucasian, 30% African American, 14% Hispanic, 10% Multi-racial, and 1% Asian.

**School Climate and Culture:** At Belle Grove, students are committed and encouraged to achieve academically. We believe in the growth mindset and the power of "yes". Students are supported every day to persevere towards their academic goals. Our school culture is centered on providing a safe and respectful environment that provides students with the opportunity to develop positive relationships, engage in rigorous instruction, and demonstrate responsible behaviors to grow as lifelong learners. To foster positive school culture, we have implemented daily positive office referrals for students and staff in support of our Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) program.

**Student Achievement:** Belle Grove is a community focused on our mission; One School, One Mission-Achievement. Achievement is monitored through a variety of assessments, including state and local tests, teacher created formative assessments, student work portfolio and samples, and reading inventories. For the last two years, Belle Grove has administered the Fountas and Pinnell assessment to students. This assessment has provided instructional staff with information that informs our instructional decisions, planning, and programs.

**Ongoing Data Analysis:** Data is analyzed daily at Belle Grove. During weekly leadership team meetings, grade level collaborative planning, and monthly School Improvement Team Meetings, the principal works alongside teachers to analyze assessment data. Through this analysis, we are able to identify and monitor students' progress toward standards, and make conscious decisions regarding interventions and the differentiation needed for each student. In addition to summative assessments, Belle Grove implements formative assessments daily. These assessments provide instructional staff with real time feedback that assists in planning for differentiated, student tailored remediation or extension.

**Professional Development:** Our school staff focuses on strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers, primarily in the areas of reading and writing. Collaborative planning sessions have been critical in improving teaching and student learning as well. Teachers work together to plan reading, writing, and math lessons aligned to the Common Core. Teachers are also able to engage in grade level specific mini professional development sessions during collaborative planning. This practice provides differentiated professional development. All professional development aligns to Belle Grove's school improvement plan, district goals and standards.

**Parent/ Community Involvement:** Belle Grove has many ways to engage and involve our families in their children's academic growth and success. Open and continuous communication with families is a key component to ensuring family involvement. One event that kicked off the school year was Belle Grove's Sneak a Peek event. This event provided students and families the chance to come to school before the first day to meet the principal, their teacher, and to see the classroom. This initial event

helped to establish and emphasize the importance of home-school partnerships. Additionally, our principal communicates with families through monthly newsletters and utilizes the Connect Ed message system to share important school events. Parents and guardians are also in constant communication with their child's teachers through daily agenda book messages, Class Dojo interactive behavior management system, and phone calls.

**Greatest Contributing Factors:** Specific feedback to teachers about instruction has been an important factor in our school's success. Teachers and instructional staff receive specific feedback through three types of walkthroughs: quick visits, learning walks, and data walks. The data is analyzed and provides our school improvement team, involving all teachers in the building, valuable data on how the entire school is progressing towards our school improvement goals. Additionally, the entire school community is committed to promoting a positive learning environment where student learning and academic growth is the focus.