



MSDE BULLETIN

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DR. NANCY S. GRASMICK REAPPOINTED STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Maryland State Board of Education this month appointed Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick to a new four-year term as State Superintendent of Schools. The four-year term begins July 1, 2008.

Dr. Grasmick has served as State Superintendent in Maryland since September of 1991. She currently ranks as the nation's longest-serving appointed state schools' chief.

"Our schools have made tremendous progress over the past decade, but we have much work to do," Dr. Grasmick said. "I continue to be committed to the goal of raising achievement for each and every student. The State Board's support is critical to everything we do at the Maryland State Department of Education. I appreciate their ideas and vision as we work together to move our schools forward."

Under Dr. Grasmick's leadership, Maryland schools have seen marked improvement. For four consecutive years, all 24 school systems have raised scores in both reading and math across racial subgroups. Student achievement also has increased for students receiving special services, such as low-income and students with disabilities. At the same time, MSDE data reveal a reduction in many achievement gaps between subgroups, especially at the elementary-school level.

Maryland also has seen dramatic improvement in other areas. It has become a leader in the Advanced Placement program, logging the nation's greatest increases in the percentage of students scoring at college mastery levels on the exams. Graduation rates in the state have risen steadily over the past 16 years, while dropout rates have fallen.

The Maryland State Department of Education has been an incubator for innovative practices under Dr. Grasmick. In her tenure, the state launched one of the nation's first accountability systems, predating the federal No Child Left Behind Act by several years and receiving national recognition from *Education Week*.

It initiated what may be the nation's first state division for leadership development, shining a spotlight on the

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State Superintendent Grasmick announces that six schools will be nominated for national Blue Ribbon honors.

SIX MARYLAND SCHOOLS NOMINATED FOR NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON PROGRAM

State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick this week announced the names of six public schools that have been selected as the 2008 Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence.

The names of the six schools have been submitted to the U.S. Secretary of Education for the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program. They are being recognized by the Maryland State Department of Education on the basis of rigorous state and national requirements for high achievement and dramatic improvement.

"This is an exceptional honor for these six schools, selected from the state's list of more than 1,300 schools," Dr. Grasmick said. "These schools serve as examples of educational excellence. It is a tribute to the students, teachers, parents, administrators and community members of these schools for their tireless efforts."

Three of the schools are in the top 10 percent of state schools as measured by the Maryland School Assessments. The other three are economically disadvantaged schools that demonstrated dramatic improvement on the state assessments over at least the past three years

The schools are:

- **Cresaptown Elementary, Allegany County**
- **Broadneck Elementary, Anne Arundel County**
- **Cecil Elementary, Baltimore City**
- **Piney Ridge Elementary, Carroll County**
- **Hickory Elementary, Harford County**
- **Hickory Elementary, Washington County**

The schools will be honored by Dr. Grasmick and other dignitaries at a banquet scheduled this spring in Annapolis.

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MARYLAND GAINS RECORD NUMBER OF NATIONALLY CERTIFIED TEACHERS

Maryland this month welcomed 227 new Nationally Board Certified Teachers, a new state record number.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has now certified 1,056 Maryland teachers with the profession's top recognition. This year's total was 11th among states, and Maryland's overall total ranks 15th in the nation. Maryland had 161 teachers gain national certification during the last cycle.

"National Board Certification is our profession's most prestigious credential, representing a complete commitment to students," said State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick. "These teachers are an inspiration to their students, their schools, and their communities."

National Board Certification, a voluntary program established by NBPTS, is achieved through a performance-based assessment that typically takes more than a year to complete. It is designed to measure what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. The process requires teachers to demonstrate how their activities, both inside and outside the classroom, strengthen student performance and contribute to student achievement.

Maryland has long been supportive of NBPTS and its goals. The state has coordinated a Candidate Support Network since 1997 and has established regional sites across the state to assist candidates as they progress through the assessment process. In addition to incentives offered by local school systems, Maryland matches up to \$2,000 per year during the validity of the NBC certificate.

The certification process is open to anyone with a baccalaureate degree and three years of classroom experience. The certificate is valid for 10 years, after which a teacher may seek renewal. For more information on the program, see <http://www.nbpts.org>. ■

DR. NANCY S. GRASMICK REAPPOINTED STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (Cont.)

principalship. MSDE is co-sponsoring the nation's first statewide award to honor parents who contribute to school improvement. Maryland also has launched numerous novel education programs, like a trendsetting curriculum partnership with the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture, the acclaimed Comic Book Project, and a curriculum for pre-school students.

Dr. Grasmick's career in education began as a teacher of deaf children at the William S. Baer School in Baltimore City. Over the next 30 years, she served as a classroom and resource teacher, principal, supervisor, assistant superintendent, and associate superintendent. Dr. Grasmick is the only person in Maryland history to hold two cabinet-level positions simultaneously; in 1991, she served as Special Secretary for Children, Youth, and Families and as State Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Grasmick received a doctorate from the Johns Hopkins University, an M.S. from Gallaudet University, and a B.S. from Towson University. She served on the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, and has garnered numerous awards for her visionary and consistent leadership, including the Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education; the College Board's first President's Award for K-12 Leadership; the Maryland State Conference of the NAACP's Community Service Award; the Johns Hopkins University's Woodrow Wilson Award; the James Bryant Conant Award from the Education Commission of the States; and the American Academy of Pediatrics' Child Advocacy Award. Dr. Grasmick recently served on the American Academy of Sciences task force that produced "Rising Above the Gathering Storm," a report that spotlighted math, science, and technology education in this country. ■

SIX MARYLAND SCHOOLS NOMINATED FOR BLUE RIBBON PROGRAM (Cont.)

They also will be recognized with a special tribute by the Maryland General Assembly.

The schools will represent Maryland in the National Blue Ribbon Schools Competition. National winners will be announced in the fall of 2008 and be invited to Washington, DC to be honored by national officials. Maryland corporate sponsors include Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage Corporation, Verizon of Maryland, Comcast, Joe Corbi's Pizza, and SmartTechnologies. ■

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