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TO: State Board Members
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: August 25, 2008
SUBJECT: Standard Setting for Alt-MSA Assessments

At Tuesday's Board meeting we will be discussing the proposed standards for the Alternative Maryland School Assessment (Alt-MSA). As you know from the materials included in your Board packet, the Alt-MSA is an alternative assessment used for students with significant cognitive disabilities (approximately one percent of students). It is an individualized portfolio assessment tailored specifically to align to each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). The science portion is new; this was the first standard setting process for that assessment. The reading and mathematics standards were reviewed and validated to provide alignment across content areas.

The standard setting process was completed on Friday, August 22, 2008, so I wanted you to have the most recent information. The process included teachers in all levels (elementary, middle, and high) who work with this specific population of students. Also involved were local school system Superintendents, Directors of Special Education, Local Accountability Coordinators, parents, advocates for students with disabilities and the business community. The following standards are proposed for use in determining proficient and advanced performance of this small group of students with disabilities:

	Proficient	Advanced
Science	6	9
Reading	6	9
Mathematics	6	9

The portfolios receive scores from one to ten. The proposed standards validate the previously set standards for reading and mathematics, which were also 6 and 9, and extend them to the science assessment. The participants felt that having the same standard across grade levels and content areas was justified given the consistency of student performance. Once the Board approves the standards, the Alt-MSA science results from the 2007-2008 school year will be calculated and reported to schools and parents.