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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*  
**DATE:** September 21, 2010  
**SUBJECT:** Common Core State Standards

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this item is to provide an update on the Common Core State Standards.

**BACKGROUND:**

In a collaborative effort 48 states, 2 territories and the District of Columbia committed to developing a common core of state standards in English-language arts and mathematics for grades K-12. This state-led effort has been coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) with input from ACT, College Board, Achieve Inc., National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO). Maryland's commitment to be a part of this effort was made public in a press release in June 2009 and the State Board reaffirmed that commitment by voting unanimously to adopt the standards at their June 2010 meeting.

The Common Core State Standards provide Maryland an important opportunity to address updating our State Curriculum to ensure all students are college and career ready. According to a publication of frequently asked questions about the Common Core, "Standards do not tell teachers how to teach, but they do help teachers figure out the knowledge and skills their students should have so that teachers can build the best lessons and environments for their classrooms. Standards also help students and parents by setting clear and realistic goals for success. Standards are a first step – a key building block – in providing our young people with a high-quality education that will prepare them for success in college and work. Of course, standards are not the only thing that is needed for our children's success, but they provide an accessible roadmap for our teachers, parents, and students." Maryland's next step is to begin the process of transitioning to these common standards with the specific goal of supporting teachers in effective classroom implementation while affording teachers appropriate flexibility.



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

With the June 2, 2010, release of the final version of the Common Core State Standards, Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Instruction staff began the process of reviewing the standards and comparing them to Maryland's State Curriculum. Members of MSDE's Division of Instruction staff invited educators from across the State to compare the State Curricula in mathematics and reading/English language arts with the Common Core State Standards using the Achieve Common Core Comparison Tool (CCCTool). This tool was developed to help state departments of education understand the differences and similarities between the CCSS and their current standards. Seventy-six LEA and higher education representatives met in August to focus on specific grades and grade bands. During September 2010, an additional 28 members of LEA and IHE staff participated in 5 sessions to review the work of the first groups and provide additional input to the comparison process. When the overall match and rate process has been completed, we will be able to identify the degree of match overall and at various grade levels, as well as, where there are gaps. Finally, completion of the match and rate process in the Common Core Comparison Tool (CCCTool) will enable our state team to produce a data set and reports that will be used to inform the State's decisions regarding implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Once the data has been examined, the work will begin to create curricular documents and produce and identify materials that will support teachers in effective classroom implementation. The goal is to produce State documents that will paint clear targets for teachers and to develop or identify materials that will support them in the classroom. In addition, Maryland will review and determine the usefulness of materials developed by national organizations such as the Council of Chief State School Officers, National Association of State Boards of Education and Achieve in support of the Common Core. As the curriculum work is being conducted, the work of the assessment consortium will be carefully monitored.

Communication is a critical component of Maryland's plan for the transition to Common Core. The involvement of our district and higher education partners will help ensure common, clear understanding of the student expectations and will assist with the development of teacher preparation programs aligned to those curricular expectations. Materials to help parents and business partners understand the new standards will also be developed.

The target completion date for this work is June 2011, when the draft curriculum and supportive documents are shared with the State Board for their review and consideration.

**ACTION:**

This item is for information only.