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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick 
DATE: September 21, 2009
SUBJECT: Results of the External Review of the English Language Proficiency (ELP)
State Curriculum

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to report the results of an external review of the Maryland English Language Proficiency (ELP) State Curriculum conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics and to present this curriculum for State Board acceptance.

BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Impetus to develop the State Curriculum resulted from the call for rigorous content standards articulated in *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* legislation and the 2002 Maryland report, *Achievement Matters Most: The Final Report of the Visionary Panel for Better Schools*. An important recommendation of the Visionary Panel report was for state and local school systems “to align every aspect of education...to support the classroom teacher.” This initiative also recommended development of a statewide grade K-12 curriculum that specifies by grade and subject area what students are expected to know and be able to do. The Maryland English Language Proficiency State Curriculum defines what English Language Learners (ELLs) should know and be able to do at five levels of proficiency across five grade bands.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

MSDE began the work of drafting the ELP State Curriculum in 2005. Representatives from Maryland’s local school systems and institutions of higher education joined with MSDE staff to develop initial drafts. The Maryland ELP State Curriculum writers were guided by the principles of the national TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) standards that emphasize the importance of teaching language in a meaningful context. Therefore, the ELP State Curriculum was designed to align to the Maryland Reading/English Language Arts State Curriculum. The documents underwent a series of subsequent reviews where scope and sequence, assessable content, and consistency were examined and revised by MSDE and selected ELL specialists from across the state.

The ELP State Curriculum design process and format were similar to those used earlier by other core content curriculum development teams. At the top level, *content standards* are broad statements of what students should know and be able to do. Within each content standard are *indicator statements* that vary in number within and across content standards and language levels. Indicator statements break the content standards into “teachable components.” Finally, *objective statements*, written with the most specificity, describe what students are expected to know and be able to do at each proficiency level. They are intended to guide teachers in the delivery of instructional activities and, therefore, should be measurable.

Representatives from the local school systems and higher education participated in the various steps of the development, review, and revision of the ELP State Curriculum. Throughout the process, Division of Instruction staff conducted district visits to collect feedback and input from world language teachers and administrators about the State Curriculum. Visitors to the mdk12 website have also had the opportunity to provide feedback on the document. In addition to collecting feedback, the district visits and focus groups provided opportunities to observe curriculum implementation and to collaboratively determine professional development needs, and discuss possible MSDE and local school system partnerships to address identified needs.

In 2008, the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) was awarded the contract to review the ELP State Curriculum through a competitive bid process. To carry out this review, CAL drew on the expertise of the four nationally recognized content experts. CAL developed review protocols and scoring rubrics to use in evaluating the State Curriculum and then summarized that information and provided specific comments and suggestions for revisions to Maryland’s ELL leadership. As soon as the preliminary report was available, ELL supervisors, resource teachers, and teachers from across the state began carefully reviewing the recommendations and revising the curriculum documents. The resulting draft of the Maryland ELP State Curriculum reflects the revisions and significant enhancements made in response to the expert review.

ACTION:

This item is presented for Board acceptance.

NSG/mlg

Attachment A Executive Summary From the External Review of the Maryland English Language Proficiency State Curriculum

Attachment B Maryland English Proficiency State Curriculum

Attachments can be found at

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/title_III/.