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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick, *Nancy* State Superintendent of Schools
DATE: September 23, 2008
SUBJECT: 2008 Maryland School Assessment Science Results

PURPOSE:

To provide Board members with a summary and overview of the statewide results of the 2008 Maryland School Assessment in Science, which was administered in spring 2008.

BACKGROUND:

The 2008 administration of the Maryland School Assessment in science included all students in grades 5 and 8. The results of the assessments are required to be reported under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, but are not included in the calculations determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This year's results serve as the baseline year for the science assessments. Results from a pilot conducted last year were reported to school systems after the State Board set standards for the test in January 2008, but were not used for public release.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Beginning in 2005, Maryland, like many other states, began development of a State assessment in science under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The curriculum was revised to identify specific content to be included in instruction and state assessments grade-by-grade for students in grades three through eight. Federal law also required the implementation of assessments at each of the levels as well. The state instructional frameworks cover content at each of the three grade bands (kindergarten through grade 2, grades 3, 4 and 5, and grades 6 through 8). Similarly, assessments covered across each of those grade bands (grades 5 and 8). The requirement for a high school science test is met through the use of the biology High School Assessment.

The Maryland School Assessments include selected response (multiple choice) items and items requiring students to produce a written response—some requiring short one- or two-sentence responses, some requiring longer responses. The assessments were designed to be administered either on-line or via paper and pencil. The method of administration is dependent upon school system capacity to test students on-line, as well as school choice and student needs. This year, approximately 62 percent of the administrations were on-line, with 13 school systems testing more than 85 percent of their grade 5 students on-line and 12 school systems testing more than 85 percent of their grade 8 students on-line. Students, however, take the exact same forms of the tests whether on paper or on-line. To make sure that



the two versions of the test measured comparably, the tests were calibrated and scaled separately and then put on the same scale for reporting. The studies reporting this equating will be available as part of the technical report later this year.

The assessments were administered at the end of April and beginning of May and returned to local school systems in September. Local school systems have been notified of the school and system results for the MSA science, as well as individual student scores.

The 2008 assessments are important because they provide the baseline data for science in grades 5 and 8 under the auspices of the new curriculum and assessments. Results of the assessments in the following table are embargoed and are not to be made public until discussed at the Board meeting.

2008 MSA Science Percent Proficient, Advanced, and Proficient/Advanced by Subgroup

	Grade 5			Grade 8		
	% Proficient	% Advanced	% Prof/Adv.	% Proficient	% Advanced	% Prof/Adv.
All Students	55.6	8.5	64.1	57.5	3.9	61.4
American Indian	57.4	6.7	64.1	56.7	3.2	59.9
Asian	64.3	15.6	79.9	71.5	11.0	82.5
African American	43.6	2.2	45.7	38.3	0.4	38.7
White	66.0	13.8	79.8	74	6.5	80.5
Hispanic	45.8	2.4	48.2	43	1.2	44.3
FARMs	41.5	1.8	43.3	36	0.4	36.4
LEP	26.4	.5	26.9	14.4	0.1	14.5
Special Education	33.5	2.1	35.5	24.4	0.6	25.0

ACTION:

For information only.

NSG:sks