




**Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed.D.**  
**Interim State Superintendent of Schools**

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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education

**FROM:** Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed.D.   
Interim State Superintendent of Schools

**DATE:** August 30, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Approval to Change the School Improvement Status of Tier II schools from Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) and Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), as identified in Maryland's Title I School Improvement Grant (SIG) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2010

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**PURPOSE:**

As part of Maryland's Title I School Improvement Grant (SIG) for FY 2010, the purpose of this action is to seek approval of the following waiver requests for the four **non-Title I** schools identified as Tier II Maryland Public Schools:

1. To allow the schools below to "start over" in the school improvement timeline; and
2. To allow the schools below to be exempt as "receiving schools" under the Title I Public School Choice Option.

Tier II Maryland Public Schools identified are:

- Oxon Hill Middle School (PGCPS);
- Thomas Johnson Middle School (PGCPS);
- Benjamin Franklin High School at Masonville Cove (BCPSS); and
- Frederick Douglass High School (BCPSS).

**BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:**

The United States Education Department (USED) has allowed states to apply for certain waivers for schools and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that participate in the Title I School Improvement Grant (SIG), under section 1003(g). In response, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) applied for a waiver of section 1115(b)(12) of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) to permit **Title I** Tier I and Tier II SIG schools that implement a turnaround or restart intervention model to "start over" in the school improvement timeline. Both BCPSS and PGCPS indicated in their SIG applications that they wish to apply this waiver to their **Title I** Tier I and Tier II schools.

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According to USED SIG guidance, only Title I schools are eligible for the federal waiver to change its school improvement status. In order for BCPSS and PGCPs to allow their **non-Title I** Tier II schools to avail themselves of the same waiver benefit as the **Title I** Tier I and Tier II schools, BCPSS and PGCPs made a formal written request to the State Superintendent of Schools to petition the State Board of Education on their behalf to waive COMAR Section 13A.01.04.07.

In addition each LEA was encouraged to submit a waiver request to exempt the same **non-Title I** Tier II SIG schools from becoming “receiving schools” for the Public School Choice Transfer Option under Title I, Part A of ESEA.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The United States Education Department’s School Improvement Grant allows only **Title I** schools to request a federal waiver to change its school improvement status. Maryland’s **Title I** Tier I and Tier II schools have been granted this waiver. LEAs with **non-Title I** Tier II schools are requesting the same waiver from the State Board of Education to allow them to begin implementing their comprehensive reforms without the stigma of the school improvement label. In addition, by allowing **non-Title I** Tier II schools to be exempt from becoming a “receiving school” for Public School Choice, these schools will be able to focus their efforts on the student populations that were addressed in their application. The Board approved a similar request last year.

### **ACTION:**

The State Board of Education is requested to approve the following waivers:

- To “start over” in the school improvement timeline for Oxon Hill Middle School and Thomas Johnson Middle School in PGCPs; and Benjamin Franklin High School at Masonville Cove and Frederick Douglass High School in BCPSS.
- To exempt as “receiving schools” under the Title I Public School Choice Option for Oxon Hill Middle School and Thomas Johnson Middle School in PGCPs; and Benjamin Franklin High School at Masonville Cove and Frederick Douglass High School in BCPSS.

NSG/AEC/MEL/jen/sw

Attachments

# BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake  
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Neil E. Duke, Esq.  
Chair, Baltimore City Board of  
School Commissioners

Andrés A. Alonso, Ed.D.  
Chief Executive Officer

August 8, 2011

Bernard Sandusky, Ed.D.  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Office of the Superintendent  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Dr. Sandusky:

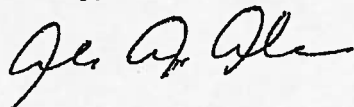
This letter serves as a request by Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) for a waiver of School Improvement Status for the following schools:

- Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle School
- Benjamin Franklin High School at Masonville Cove
- Frederick Douglass High School

City Schools also requests an exemption for Title I School (Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle School) from becoming a Receiving School this year as a part of the Parent Choice Transfer Option, known locally as the Title I Transfer Option (TITO). The absence of a school improvement status allows these schools to refresh their educational reform with the support of the School Improvement Grant. In addition, flexibility in defining professional development, innovative teacher and student recruitment efforts will ensure that turnaround efforts at these schools are successful.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Beth Nolan, Director of Turnaround, or Ms. Cecelia Martin, Turnaround Specialist, at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Andrés A. Alonso, Ed.D.  
Chief Executive Officer

C: Tisha Edwards, Chief of Staff  
Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises, Chief Academic Officer  
Matt Van Itallie, Chief Accountability Officer  
Beth Nolan, Director of Turnaround  
Dr. Tasha Franklin Johnson, Director -- Office of Federal Programs/Title I





**William R. Hite, Ed.D.**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**Prince George's County Public Schools**  
14201 School Lane • Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772 • www.pgcps.org

**RECEIVED**  
AUG 08 2011  
Per \_\_\_\_\_

August 1, 2011

**Dr. Bernard Sadusky**  
Acting State Superintendent  
Maryland State Department of Education  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Dear Dr. Sadusky:

Prince George's County formally requests that the Maryland State Board of Education consider a waiver to allow Thomas Johnson Middle School and Oxon Hill Middle School to "start over" in the school improvement timeline based on COMAR 13A.01.01.02.

Thomas Johnson Middle and Oxon Hill Middle are Non-Title I SIG schools in Tier II. Prince George's has selected the Restart Model for both schools. The district submitted an RFP for an Educational Management Organization to assist in the restart process. After a rigorous review process, Mosaica Turnaround Partners was selected as the EMO. Using the SIG 1003(g) grant as leverage, the partnership with Mosaica and Prince George's County Public Schools will provide significant supports in the following areas:

- Extended learning opportunities with on-line options
- Principal coaching
- Significant support in data analysis and instructional design
- Parent engagement

Thomas Johnson and Oxon Hill will join the network of turnaround schools in the district and work under the supervision of the Turnaround Director, who reports directly to the Chief Academic Officer. In addition to the supports provided by the EMO, the Turnaround Office will provide additional support to these two schools in terms of grant monitoring and alignment to district initiatives.

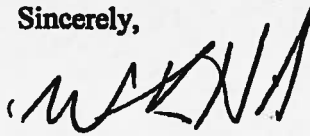
After one year of turnaround experience, the district understands the need to establish clear norms and expectations around culture and instructional delivery. With that in mind, the school year will begin with a symposium for all staff prior to the return of students. The focus will be on instructional norms and expectations for student performance and behavior. In addition, new positions around parent support, reading/language arts, mathematics. Special Education support and data analysis were created to support the transition of these schools to high performing schools. Finally, these schools will be involved with the Breakthrough Center.



**Dr. Bernard Sadusky**  
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**Prince George's County is confident that these measures will successfully turn these schools to high student performance. Your consideration is appreciated.**

**Sincerely,**



**William R. Hite**  
**Superintendent**

**C: Dr. Coleman Potter, Deputy Superintendent**  
**Ms. Ann Chafin, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Student Family, and School Support**  
**Dr. Debra Mahone, Director for Federal and State Programs**