



Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools

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**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Members of the State Board of Education  
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*  
DATE: December 17-18, 2008  
SUBJECT: 2008-2009 National Title I Distinguished Schools

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**PURPOSE:**

To recognize Crellin Elementary School and Doswell E. Brooks Elementary School as the 2008-2009 National Title I Distinguished Schools for Maryland.

**BACKGROUND:**

Title I, Part A is the largest federally funded education program which provides schools and school districts with high concentrations of students who are economically disadvantaged with funding to allow them to obtain supplemental resources to enhance their educational programs. At its core, Title I, Part A should be used to enhance reading, mathematics, and science programs for students who are not performing to state standards. Distinguished Title I schools go beyond what is mandated in the statute. Each year the National Association of State Title I Directors (NASTID) recognizes Title I Distinguished Schools from all fifty states and Puerto Rico, who have been selected for their outstanding results in one of two categories: (1) exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years or (2) closing the achievement gap between student groups. Each state may nominate up to two of its Title I schools that have risen above obstacles of poverty to improve learning for its most vulnerable children. Two Maryland schools have been identified as 2008-2009 Title I Distinguished Schools.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Three hundred sixty-five Title I schools participated in the 2007-2008 Maryland School Assessment (MSA). After comparing MSA data for the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years, Crellin Elementary School in Garrett County scored highest in Category 1—exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years, and Doswell E. Brooks Elementary School in Prince George’s County scored highest in Category 2—closing the achievement gap between student groups. Attachment I contains a profile for each school which describes the focus areas, strategies, and key elements used by the two “distinguished schools” to improve academic achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. Both Elementary Schools will receive national recognition as National Title I Distinguished Schools at the Title I Conference in San Antonio, Texas on February 19, 2009.



**ACTION:**

For information only and recognition by the State Board of Education.

NSG:JN:cwm

Attachments

Crellin Elementary School  
115 Kendall Drive  
Oakland, Maryland 21550

Dr. Dana McCauley, Principal  
301-334-4704  
Garrett County Public Schools

**Crellin Elementary School** is a small Title I school nestled in the mountains of western Maryland. With 88 students, kindergarten through grade five, Crellin Elementary serves as the hub of the community. During the 2007-2008 school year, approximately 75% of students received free or reduced meals. Although the number of students in Crellin Elementary is relatively small, the enthusiasm for learning is matched by the number of community members and parents who work collaboratively with school staff to create a unique learning environment.

**Curriculum and Instruction: *Our Entire Community Has Become Our Classroom***

Crellin Elementary adopted the theme of “Crellin Corps of Discovery” in 2002. Since that time, we have used our environment and community as the context for curriculum. We believe the key to our success lies in this approach to learning. All of our curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned with the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC).

**Opportunities for All Students to Achieve: *Great Expectations Yield Great Results***

Crellin Elementary teachers differentiate activities so all students are challenged and supported. Students participate in interest projects and have the opportunity to continue learning during, after school, and summer programs. It is the expectation that all students will strive to be the best they can be, both in and out of school.

**Coordination with Other Programs: *Learning Partners***

Crellin Elementary has adopted many “learning partners” from the community. It is through these partnerships that we have been able to extend learning outside of the traditional school walls. Experts from various organizations and groups team with teachers to provide unique learning opportunities.

**Professional Development: *Student Driven; Answering “Why?”***

The staff at Crellin Elementary is always learning. As students’ needs change, we look for alternative ways to meet those needs. Topics for staff development activities are determined by students learning interests in conjunction with the VSC. When a child has a special interest in a particular area, the teachers seek strategies to capitalize on that interest.

**Participation with Parents, Families, and Community: *Learning For All, Side by Side***

The involvement of our parents, family, and community members goes beyond traditional participation. Our Discovery programs include them in the learning and teaching process to make Crellin a true community of learners. On any given day, it is common to see not only parents but also community members working with staff and students in our classrooms.

**Greatest Contributing Factor: *Our Students Have a Real Sense of Being Part of Something Larger: Being Able to Make a Difference in Their Community***

The greatest contributing factor to our success is the approach—integrating curriculum into the theme of community and the environment. Our students are able to construct knowledge in a concrete framework; in a way that is tangible. As a school community, we view questions and problems as an opportunity to collaborate and learn. We continue to dream big and work to make those dreams a reality.



Doswell E. Brooks Elementary School  
1301 Brooke Road  
Capitol Heights, Maryland 20743

Dr. Anita Stoddard, Principal  
Ms. Deatrice Womack, Assistant Principal  
301-817-0480

**Doswell E. Brooks Elementary School** is a comprehensive school in Capitol Heights, Maryland, a community in the central region of Prince George's County. Doswell provides a positive and nurturing environment where children are first and everyone is motivated to engage in meaningful learning. The school meets the needs of several populations, including English Language Learners (ELL) (38%) and Early Childhood Education (10%). Sixty percent (60%) of Doswell's population is African American.

Doswell E. Brooks continues to qualify as a Title I school with a free and reduced lunch rate of 73%. The monetary benefits of this program have enabled us to purchase two paraprofessionals and a .5 Reading Recovery/Literacy teacher. The additional paraprofessionals allow us to offer additional supplemental support to special education and ELL students. The paras are placed in classrooms with the largest number of special education and ELL students. The Reading Recovery position will assist the school in meeting the needs of first graders by providing one-on-one support and small group intervention for students at other grade levels.

**Curriculum and Instruction:** Expectations are held high at Doswell for both staff and students. Prince George's County Public Schools provides a rigorous curriculum framework and a framework for teaching which is aligned with the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC). Unit tests, formative assessments, and other on-going performance assessments drive daily instruction.

**Opportunities for All Students to Achieve:** From students with special needs and students with limited English skills to students who are several grades above grade level, Doswell is committed to meet the instructional needs of all students. Instruction is differentiated everyday in every content area. Student data is shared at weekly instructional team meetings so that modifications can be made and interventions put in place in order to assist students. Forty-five minutes of each school day are spent focusing on specific indicators that identified students are not mastering.

**Professional Development:** Central office staff, school based mentors, and administration provide targeted professional development. A professional development calendar is developed each spring based upon a needs assessment survey completed by the staff. During each staff meeting and weekly instructional planning, professional development takes place. New teachers and paraprofessionals participate in professional development each month with a focus on curriculum and instruction, blackboard, classroom management, lesson planning, culture, differentiated instruction, etcetera.

**Participation with Parents, Families, and Community:** Doswell's door is always open. Parents and community members may visit classrooms as long and as often as they would like. Parent and community feedback is always welcome. We have two scheduled Parent Teacher Advisory meetings each month, one focusing on a content area while the other focuses on how the Parent Advisory can assist Doswell with moving forward. To assist our ELL parent population, Rosetta Stone classes are held every Monday. Lastly, thanks to Title I, each student at Doswell E. Brooks Elementary has an agenda book. These books serve as a daily home school communication device.

**Greatest Contributing Factors:** Each morning all Doswell students recite the Doswell Pledge. The end of the pledge states, "I can learn! I must learn! I will learn! I will be successful! It is my destiny! The greatest contributing factor to Doswell's success is having staff that believes and passes that philosophy on to our children. Although Doswell analyzes data every week, instruction is monitored on a daily basis, targeted instruction is provided, and staff development is differentiated. It is the Belief and Hard Work that makes it happen.