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TO: Members of the Maryland State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: December 17-18, 2008
SUBJECT: Recognition of Maryland's Blue Ribbon Schools

PURPOSE:

To recognize Maryland's 2008 National Blue Ribbon Schools and announce the new 2009 Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools who will nominated for National Blue Ribbon School Awards.

BACKGROUND AND PROGRAM INFORMATION:

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program began in 1982 under Secretary of Education Terrell Bell. Its purpose has always been to showcase superior schools in America. Maryland has participated in the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program since 1983.

Maryland's Blue Ribbon Schools Program is administered by the Maryland State Department of Education and is the state counterpart of the National Program. Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools are nominated for national awards by the State Superintendent. Based on the state population, MSDE can identify up to six qualifying schools. The program recognizes elementary, middle, and high schools whose students exhibit sustained high performance and/or significant improvement and above average achievement in state assessments in mathematics and reading.

High performing schools must be in the top 10% of all Maryland schools in their category (elementary, middle, high) and must show high performance as measured by five years of data on State assessments in mathematics and reading. Improving schools must demonstrate dramatic gains in mathematics and reading as measured by five years of data on State assessments. These schools must also reflect economically disadvantaged populations with, for example, a minimum of 40% of students qualifying for free and reduced-priced meals. Schools in this category must be in the top 40% of all Maryland schools in their category.



RECOGNITION OF MARYLAND'S BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

Recognition immediately raises the status of Blue Ribbon Schools. In addition to State Board of Education commendations, the schools are honored by Congressional Leaders and the State Superintendent during school visits called "Tours of Excellence." They are also honored by MSDE and the Governor, Lt. Governor, and numerous elected officials at a State Dinner in Annapolis. The dinner is followed by ceremonies and tributes by the Maryland General Assembly on the floor of the House of Delegates and the Maryland Senate. Blue Ribbon Schools are also the subject of a wide array of media attention. Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools win the State Blue Ribbon Flag of Excellence and other awards. National winners are honored with the NCLB/Blue Ribbon Flag and a National Conference that often includes the Secretary of Education and/or the President.

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STATE BOARD CEREMONY

Approximately 50 guests are expected to attend the Board Ceremony, including superintendents, principals, teachers, and corporate partners.

The 2008 National Blue Ribbon Schools honored are:

Cresaptown Elementary in Allegany County
Broadneck Elementary in Anne Arundel County
Cecil Elementary in Baltimore City
Piney Ridge Elementary in Carroll County
Hickory Elementary in Harford County
Hickory Elementary in Washington County

The 2009 Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools will be announced for the first time at the State Board Meeting. Because notification is currently underway, school names have not been included in this briefing memo.

ACTION:

The State Superintendent and State Board President will commend the 2008 National Blue Ribbon School principals and commend the newly selected 2009 Maryland Blue Ribbon School principals. Governor's Citations will be presented to the National winners. State Blue Ribbon School Flags MSDE Citations will be presented to the Maryland winners. Commemorative pictures will be taken.

LUNCH WITH THE BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AFTER THE STATE BOARD CEREMONY

State Board Members are invited to chat with principals at a luncheon immediately following the ceremony. The luncheon from 12 noon – 1:00 pm will be held in

Conference Room #2 on the 8th floor. It will be followed by a working session on the national application process.

Please save-the-date for Maryland's 2009 Blue Ribbon Schools State Dinner

When: March 9, 2009 - Reception and Dinner: 5:00-7:30 pm

Where: Governor Calvert House, State Circle, Annapolis