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State Superintendent of Schools

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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D. *Lillian M. Lowery*  
**DATE:** January 22, 2013  
**SUBJECT:** New Methodology for Identifying “Comprehensive Needs” Schools for the Purpose of Awarding Stipends to Certain Teachers and Non-administrative School-based Employees

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this item is to request your approval of a new methodology for identifying schools that have “comprehensive needs.” This change in methodology aligns with Maryland’s new accountability system approved in Maryland’s ESEA Flexibility Request in May 2012 and the new School Progress Index (SPI) reviewed by the State Board in December 2012.

This change will provide the basis to identify certain teachers who are eligible to receive stipends for teaching in Maryland public schools identified by the State Board as having “comprehensive needs.” Section 6-306 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, currently provides for the distribution of stipends to teachers who hold Advanced Professional Certificates, and to teachers and other non-administrative school-based employees who hold a certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, while employed in schools identified as having comprehensive needs.

**BACKGROUND:**

Originally, under the federal No Child Left Behind accountability system, schools not making annual yearly progress (AYP) were classified as schools in corrective action or schools in restructuring. This same terminology was used in Section 6-306 of the Education Article to identify those schools from which certain employees could be eligible for stipends.

Subsequently, Maryland moved to a more refined differentiated accountability system which identified schools as “comprehensive needs” schools, and further distinguished these schools as either “developing” or “priority” schools. In 2009, Section 6-306 of the Education Article was amended to substitute the term “comprehensive needs” schools for the terms “schools in corrective action” or “schools in restructuring.”

With the approval of Maryland’s ESEA Flexibility Request in May 2012 and the new SPI reviewed by the State Board in December 2012, Maryland has moved toward a new accountability system. The methodology for now identifying “comprehensive needs” schools must be aligned with these new accountability measures.

Under the new accountability system, each school receives a SPI measured by student achievement, gap closure, and either student growth in elementary/middle school, or college- and career-readiness in high school. Depending on its SPI, a school is then placed into one of five “strands.” Schools in the lowest two strands (Strand 4 and Strand 5) are not progressing as expected. Under the newly proposed methodology, schools in Strands 4 and 5 would be identified as “comprehensive needs” schools for the purpose of awarding stipends under Section 6-306 of the Education Article.

For comparison purposes: In the 2006-2007 school year, 136 schools were listed as “stipend-eligible schools.” In 2010 – 2011, 221 schools were stipend-eligible. (The number of stipend-eligible schools continued to rise under the old accountability system as more and more schools failed to meet their annual yearly progress targets.) In 2012, using the SPI, there are 170 schools in Strands 4 and 5 that will be stipend-eligible.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Certain teachers and other non-administrative school-based employees are eligible for stipends while employed in “comprehensive needs” schools. A new methodology to identify comprehensive needs schools is needed to align with Maryland’s ESEA Flexibility Request and the new School Progress Index. The recommendation is that schools in Strands 4 and 5 of Maryland’s new accountability system be identified as “comprehensive needs” schools and that these schools be considered stipend-eligible under Section 6-306 of the Education Article.

**ACTION:**

I am presenting this recommendation to the Board for approval.