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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: March 24, 2009
SUBJECT: Results of the External Review of the Voluntary State Curriculum for World Languages

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to report the results of an external review of the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum for World Languages conducted by Westat and to present this curriculum for State Board acceptance.

BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Impetus to develop the Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) resulted from the call for rigorous content standards articulated in NCLB legislation and the 2002 Maryland report, *Achievement Matters Most: The Final Report of the Visionary Panel for Better Schools*. An important recommendation of the Visionary Panel report was for state and local school systems “to align every aspect of education...to support the classroom teacher.” This initiative also recommended development of a statewide grade K – 12 curriculum that specifies by grade and subject area what students are expected to know and be able to do. The World Languages VSC defines what students should know and be able to do at four levels of language learning.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

MSDE began the work of drafting the World Languages VSC in 2003. Representatives from Maryland’s local school systems and institutions of higher education joined with MSDE staff to develop initial drafts. The documents underwent a series of subsequent reviews where scope and sequence, assessable content, and consistency were examined and revised by MSDE and selected world language specialists from across the state.

The World Languages VSC design process and format were similar to those used earlier by other core content VSC development teams. At the top level, *content standards* are broad statements of what students should know and be able to do. Within each content standard are *indicator statements* that vary in number within and across content standards and language levels. Indicator statements break the content standards into “teachable components.” Finally, *objective statements*, written with the most specificity, describe what students are expected to know and be able to do at each proficiency level. They are intended to guide teachers in the delivery of instructional activities and, therefore, should be measurable.

Representatives from the local school systems and higher education participated in the various steps of the development, review, and revision of the VSC. Throughout the process, Division of Instruction staff conducted district visits to collect feedback and input from world language teachers and administrators about the VSC. Visitors to the mdk12 website have also had the opportunity to provide feedback on the document. In addition to collecting feedback, the district visits and focus groups provided opportunities to observe curriculum implementation and to collaboratively determine professional development needs, and discuss possible MSDE and local school system partnerships to address identified needs.

In 2008, Westat was awarded the contract to review the World Languages VSC. To carry out this review, Westat drew on the expertise of the three nationally recognized content experts from the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) and an expert educational measurement specialist. Westat developed review protocols and scoring rubrics to use in evaluating the World Languages VSC and then summarized that information and provided specific comments and suggestions for revisions to Maryland's world languages leadership. As soon as the preliminary report was available, supervisors of world languages from across the state began carefully reviewing and discussing the recommendations. The resulting draft of the World Languages VSC reflects the revisions and enhancements made in response to the expert review.

ACTION:

This item is presented for Board acceptance.

NSG/mlg

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| Attachment A | Executive Summary From the External Review of the Maryland World Languages Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) |
| Attachment B | World Languages VSC |
| Attachment C | 2008-09 Maryland World Languages Enrollment Report |