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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: May 27-28, 2009
SUBJECT: Results of the External Review of the Physical Education Voluntary State Curriculum

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to report the results of an external review of the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum for Physical Education conducted by Westat and to seek the State Board's acceptance of this curriculum.

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 Physical Education VSC defines what students should know and be able to do at each grade level, Pre-K through 8, and for the one-half credit course required for high school graduation.

The physical activity and physical education of American school children has been the subject of both national and state legislation. In 2004 the United States Congress established a requirement that all school districts with a federally-funded school meals program develop and implement wellness policies by the start of the 2006-2007 school year. Among other critical elements, district policies must include goals for physical activity.

Maryland legislative efforts have included efforts to mandate minimum times for physical education to address student wellness. These legislative efforts resulted in the *Task Force to Study Student Fitness in Maryland Public Schools*. The final report of the Task Force was submitted to the General Assembly in November 2008. During the 2009 legislative session the *Gwendolyn Britt Student Health and Fitness Act Bill* was passed which authorizes LSS's to develop and implement certain Wellness Policy Implementation and Monitoring Plans. As part of



these wellness plans, districts are encouraged to collect baseline data on the health components of fitness.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In the 2004-2005 school year, MSDE began the work of drafting the Physical Education VSC. 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, sequence, assessable content, and consistency were examined and revised by MSDE and selected physical education specialists.

The Physical Education VSC design efforts engaged processes similar to those used earlier by other core content VSC development teams. Similarities are particularly evident in the delineation of PreK – 8 grade-by-grade discrete instructional targets as well as in format. 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 grades. 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 at a given grade level. They are intended to guide teachers in the delivery of instructional activities and, therefore, should be measureable.

Representatives from the local school systems and higher education participated in the various steps of the development, review, and revision in the curriculum development process. During the spring semester of 2007, Division of Instruction staff conducted district visits to collect feedback and input from teachers, administrators and parent groups about the Physical Education VSC. Visitors to the mdk12 website have also had the opportunity to provide feedback of the document. In addition to collecting feedback, 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 Physical Education VSC through a competitive bid process. To carry out this review, Westat drew on the expertise of four nationally recognized content experts. The review team developed a series of rubrics to use in evaluating the Physical Education VSC and then summarized that information and provided specific discussion to Maryland's physical education leadership. As soon as the preliminary report was available, physical education coordinators, supervisors, and resource teachers from across the state began carefully reviewing and responding to the recommendations made in Westat's report.

ACTION:

I am recommending State Board acceptance of the Physical Education Voluntary State Curriculum.

NSG/dls