



Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

200 West Baltimore Street • Baltimore, MD 21201 • 410-767-0100 • 410-333-6442 TTY/TDD

May 1, 2008

Dr. Kerry Briggs, Assistant Secretary
United States Department of Education
Building FOB-6, Room 7w204
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington DC 20202-6100

Dear Dr. Briggs:

We are appreciative of the opportunity to present to you a proposal for a Differentiated Accountability pilot as described in the March 18 release from Secretary Margaret Spellings. Our proposal, approved by the Maryland State Board of Education, provides Maryland's answers to the questions listed in the April 3, 2008 guidance document, *Peer Review Guidance for the NCLB Differentiated Accountability Pilot Applications*.

We believe that our plan for Differentiated Accountability will allow us to target resources more strategically and take appropriate approaches to addressing the needs of our most chronically underperforming schools, including those that are showing multiple areas of underperformance as well as those already in the restructuring phase of School Improvement. At the same time, we will continue to work with schools that have been identified as in the early stages of our Schools in Improvement continuum, offering additional intervention strategies that we believe will assist them in meeting their annual targets and ultimately allow them to exit School Improvement.

Maryland's proposal is based on the State's current Schools in Improvement plan which meets the requirements of No Child Left Behind and identifies those schools that do not meet specific AYP requirements as detailed in our Consolidated State Accountability Workbook. We will continue to maintain our current School Improvement categories for NCLB reporting purposes as we implement the proposed pilot and transition schools to the two primary pathways of Comprehensive Schools and Focus Schools, based on the performance of "all students" and subgroups. They will be further subdivided into stages called Developing Schools and Priority Schools, based on the length of time the school has been in improvement. We will also recognize Achieving Schools as schools that have continued to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), schools that have exited School Improvement, and schools that have not made AYP for only one year.

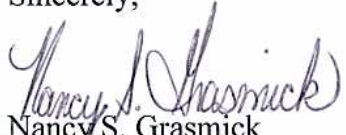
We believe we meet the preconditions for your approval, and we are providing our responses to the guidance document questions in our attached proposal. We look forward to your feedback to our proposal and your approval for Maryland to move forward with the



Page 2
Dr. Briggs
May 1, 2008

Differentiated Accountability pilot. If you find areas of our proposal are in need of clarification or modification, we will be happy to work with your staff to achieve approval. Please contact me or Dr. Ronald Peiffer, Deputy State Superintendent for Academic Policy, at 410-767-0473 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

NSG:sks

Attachment

c: Patrick Rooney, U.S. Department of Education