

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

May 11, 2010

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Maryland's "Race to the Top" Application

WHEREAS, The Maryland State Department of Education intends to apply for a Race to the Top Grant through the United States Department of Education and is seeking the support of all 24 local boards of education, and

WHEREAS, If selected to receive a Race to The Top Grant, the Maryland State Department of Education could receive up to \$250 million over four years with half of this amount provided to the state's 24 local school districts, provided the districts sign a memorandum of agreement with the Maryland State Department of Education: and

WHEREAS, The Maryland State Department of Education is to be commended for its effort to increase the number of students who are college ready in Maryland and its desire to provide more rigorous instruction that is similar to what is provided to Montgomery County Public Schools students; and

WHEREAS, The Maryland State Department of Education circulated a draft of its application among education stakeholders for review and comment, and Montgomery County Public Schools staff has carefully reviewed the draft application; and

WHEREAS, During the review of the draft application, Montgomery County Public Schools staff identified many areas of the application that are consistent with the reforms pursued in Montgomery County in the last ten years and also identified areas of the application that are in conflict with the district's reform agenda; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery County Public Schools staff finds the application sections related to teacher evaluation inconsistent with professional growth systems, which were developed in consultation with the Montgomery County Public Schools employee associations over the past 12 years; and

WHEREAS, Specifically, the Teacher Professional Growth System is a national model because of its comprehensive approach to teachers' professional development and evaluation; and

WHEREAS, The Teacher Professional Growth System provides support and mentoring for novice and underperforming teachers through the use of expert consulting teachers; and

WHEREAS, The Teacher Professional Growth System employs the Peer Assistance and Review Program, which is designed to assist novice and underperforming teachers, as well as remove such teachers from the classroom should they fail to demonstrate significant improvement, and

WHEREAS, For the last ten years, the efforts of the Peer Assistance and Review Program have resulted in the removal, resignation, or retirement of nearly 400 teachers through a fair process adjudicated by a panel of administrators and teachers, a far greater rate than has been documented in any large school district in the nation; and

WHEREAS, The professional growth systems used in Montgomery County Public Schools are consistent with the *Education Reform Act of 2010* because they consider student growth as a "significant" component of a teacher's evaluation; and

WHEREAS, There is no demonstrable research that proves the elements in the Race to the Top application related to teacher evaluation would create a more effective evaluation system than the proven professional growth systems in Montgomery County; and

WHEREAS, The changes to the teacher evaluation systems contemplated in the application are too nascent to determine whether they would be effective; now therefore be it

Resolved, That Montgomery County Board of Education conditionally supports the Maryland Race to the Top application provided that MSDE allows Montgomery County Public Schools to continue using its highly successful professional growth system, which has yielded exceptional results for students, and incorporates the provisions from the *Education Reform Act of 2010* in the state's application and removes provisions that are not in compliance with the *Education Reform Act of 2010*; and be it further

Resolved, That the Maryland State Board of Education of Education declares the Montgomery County Public Schools Teachers' professional growth systems compliant with the *Education Reform Act of 2010* and any future implementing regulations contemplated or adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education.

JDW:BKE:dh