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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*  
**DATE:** May 27-28, 2009  
**SUBJECT:** Review of Mathematics Voluntary State Curriculum, Grades K-8

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this item is to report the results of an external review of the Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum pre-kindergarten through grade eight for Mathematics conducted by Achieve, Inc.

**BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:**

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 requires states to build on the work they had already begun in the area of academic standards by implementing challenging academic content and student achievement standards in the core academic subjects. According to the guidance for NCLB, “The power of rigorous State academic standards is undeniable: they provide a clear direction for what all students should know and be able to do and establish clear expectations for schools, teachers, parents, and students.”

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.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The first mathematics VSC was published for pilot use in September 2003 and was accepted by the State Board in June 2004. Maryland is committed to providing teachers with curricular documents that provide clear guidance and establish rigorous expectations for students. Therefore as we approached the five year marker since the implementation

