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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

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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 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.