



Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools

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# STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS NANCY S. GRASMICK ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR RETIREMENT

**BALTIMORE (March 30, 2010)** – Maryland State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick today announced her intention to retire this summer, which will end her nearly 20-year tenure at the helm of the nation’s most honored public school system.

Dr. Grasmick has served as State Superintendent in Maryland since September of 1991. She currently ranks as the nation’s longest-serving appointed state schools’ chief. She will retire on June 30.

Maryland this year has already received several national accolades. *Education Week* in January named Maryland the number one school system in the nation for an unprecedented third straight year. The College Board in February followed up by citing Maryland student success in the rigorous Advanced Placement exams as the nation’s best, also for the third consecutive year.

“Our students and our schools have made tremendous progress over the past two decades, and stand on the edge of even greater progress,” Dr. Grasmick said. “It has been my great honor and privilege to work with our state’s outstanding educators to provide our children with the educational system they richly deserve.”

Under Dr. Grasmick’s leadership, Maryland schools have seen marked improvement. For seven consecutive years, Maryland’s school systems have raised scores in both reading and math, and there has been strengthened achievement across racial subgroups. Student achievement also has increased for students receiving special services, such as low-income and students with disabilities. At the same time, MSDE data reveal a reduction in many achievement gaps between subgroups, especially at the elementary-school level.

Maryland has seen dramatic improvement in other areas. Its work in the Advanced Placement program has been cited, logging the nation’s greatest increases in the percentage of students scoring at college mastery levels in the exams. Graduation rates in the state have risen steadily over the past 20 years, while dropout rates have fallen.

The Maryland State Department of Education has been a thriving incubator for innovative practices under Dr. Grasmick. Determined to strengthen school performance across the board, Dr. Grasmick led the state to initiate one of the nation’s first accountability systems, predating the federal No Child Left Behind Act by several years and receiving national recognition along the way.

**(more)**

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In other pioneering efforts, MSDE initiated what may be the nation's first state division for leadership development, shining a spotlight on the principal as instructional leader for each school. The Department four years ago launched the nation's first statewide award to honor parents who contribute to school improvement. The State more than a decade ago set in place the nation's only service learning graduation requirement.

Dr. Grasmick has put a special focus on early childhood development during her years as State Superintendent. The Maryland Model for School Readiness, which charts the preparation of students as they enter kindergarten, has earned a reputation as a national model. Over the past nine years, the percentage of children deemed to be fully prepared for kindergarten has risen from 49 percent to 81 percent. Over those nine years, Maryland has moved all early care programs under MSDE, and the Department initiated an innovative curriculum for pre-school students linked to the State's K-12 curriculum.

Last summer, Maryland was awarded one of the U.S. Department of Education's 12 Race to the Top grants, a \$250 million program designed to take the nation's top school system to a new level of excellence. The grant takes aim at continuing the improvement of the State's lowest performing schools, redesigning teacher tenure, strengthening data collection, and constructing a new system of teacher and principal evaluation that puts student performance at its heart.

Dr. Grasmick's career in education began as a teacher of deaf children at the William S. Baer School in Baltimore City. Over the next 30 years, she served as a classroom and resource teacher, principal, supervisor, assistant superintendent, and associate superintendent. Dr. Grasmick is the only person in Maryland history to hold two cabinet-level positions simultaneously; in 1991, she served as Special Secretary for Children, Youth, and Families and as State Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Grasmick—a graduate of the Baltimore City Public Schools (Western High School)—received a doctorate from the Johns Hopkins University, an M.S. from Gallaudet University, and a B.S. from Towson University. She served on the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education and has garnered numerous awards for her visionary and consistent leadership, including the Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education; the College Board's first President's Award for K-12 Leadership; the Maryland State Conference of the NAACP's Community Service Award; the Johns Hopkins University's Woodrow Wilson Award; the James Bryant Conant Award from the Education Commission of the States; and the American Academy of Pediatrics' Child Advocacy Award. Dr. Grasmick recently served on the American Academy of Sciences task force that produced "Rising Above the Gathering Storm," a report that spotlighted math, science, and technology education in this country. She has been inducted into the *Daily Record's* "Circle of Excellence," an honor bestowed only on those named to the newspaper's Top 100 Women list more than three times. Just last month she was named along with developer David Cordish as the first two inductees into the *Daily Record's* "Circle of Influence" honoring influential Marylanders who have a positive impact in the State "in a wide variety of ways and settings."