

Maryland's Parent Advisory Council (M-PAC)

State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick established Maryland's Parent Advisory Council (M-PAC) in the Fall of 2003. M-PAC is a group of parents and advocates that will serve in an advisory capacity to the State Superintendent and the State Board of Education on parent involvement issues.

Mission Statement

Achievement Matters Most, Maryland's Plan for Every Student, is the State Department of Education's comprehensive vision for education. It is organized around five key goals. Goal 5 is "parents will be involved in education." M-PAC will assist the Department in meeting the objectives of Goal 5, which are:

- School systems and schools will communicate more frequently and clearly with families and communities.
- Schools will help parents and legal guardians enhance their parenting skills and will share with them activities to promote academic success.
- All school systems will adopt a family involvement policy aligned with the state's.
- Schools will help parents and legal guardians improve school and student performance.

Charge

M-PAC is charged with generating a series of recommendations on how the objectives of Goal 5 can be met. The council's scope includes state, local, and school-based policies and implementation strategies. M-PAC will oversee the work of three sub-committees, which are organized around the following categories:

- parent/family involvement and its impact on student achievement;
- communication and partnership through non-traditional channels such as community and faith-based groups; and
- education policy issues.

Each sub-committee will be asked to address the overall goals according to the parameters of each group's area of responsibility. M-PAC is further charged with reviewing the analysis and recommendations of each sub-committee and developing two reports: a preliminary report, due at the completion of year one, and a final report, due at the completion of year two.

M-PAC's recommendations and report should include the following elements:

- ***Past and Present:*** An analytical review of the current state of parent involvement at the state, local, and school-based levels, including progress and



- areas in need of development (This will include, but is not limited to, the Exploratory Parent Involvement Survey that was completed before the first M-PAC meeting).
- **Future:** Recommendations for meeting the above mentioned goals with an eye toward the following general questions:
 - Which established policies, programs, and initiatives will continue to be relevant in assuring that the goals are met?
 - What policies, programs, and initiatives require further development and how might they be made more effective or implemented more efficiently?
 - What new policies, programs, and initiatives require development to meet future challenges?

Review and Reporting

The overall M-PAC panel may, and should, ask the sub-committees for progress reports, and, if necessary, request the sub-committees to adjust work to reflect more adequately the fulfillment of the sub-committee and overall charge. The reports of each sub-committee should be appended to the preliminary and final reports of the Council. These reports should be considered a resource in the development of the overall M-PAC reports.

M-PAC will have flexibility in determining what aspects of each sub-committee report it finds useful in developing a coherent, unified set of recommendations, which will be presented to the State Superintendent of Schools, forming the basis of future actions.

The Council may reach beyond any of its sub-committee reports to consider other relevant data or opinions within the purview of any of its sub-committees. The Council and its sub-committees are encouraged to review data, reports, input received as a result of public comment sessions, and other documentation or presentations made by local, state, or national experts in parent involvement.

M-PAC should submit its preliminary report to the State Superintendent no later than the Fall 2004 and its final report by Fall 2005.

The work that you have been asked to do is of great significance and will be acted upon. M-PAC has been modeled after the Visionary Panel for Better Schools, a wide-ranging task force that informed the State Department of Education's strategic plan and resulted in comprehensive changes. Your commitment to attend meetings, review research and other between-meeting assignments, and to actively participate in discussions is vital.

Thank you in advance for the commitment of time, energy, and ideas. The mission could not be completed without your help.