

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Date: June 10, 2008

TO: **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

FROM: Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

SUBJECT: **REPORT ON SPRINGBOARD**

ORIGINATOR:

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INFORMATION

That the Board of Education receives an update on the progress of SpringBoard.

Baltimore County Public Schools SPRINGBOARD

Program Overview Executive Summary

SpringBoard is a College Board college-preparatory curricular support that utilizes rigorous, relevant, and motivating lessons and activities to promote active student engagement and ownership of learning. The goal of SpringBoard is to provide students with the foundational and higher-level thinking skills necessary for success in rigorous high school courses (such as AP or IB), college, and beyond. The curricular supports provided by SpringBoard reflect College Board standards and are aligned to national and state standards. Based on the premise that students can achieve high standards, SpringBoard is designed to increase academic rigor for students, close the achievement gaps among AYP subgroups, increase diversity in AP courses, and empower teachers to improve and/or enhance instruction.

For the past three years, MSA scores in reading have remained static or have dropped slightly for the middle school grades. SAT verbal scores have declined and an increasing number of BCPS graduates are enrolled in non-credit bearing courses in two-year and four-year colleges. Despite the rise for the last five years in AP participation, the pass rate for the AP exams is at a five-year low, having dropped 1.9 percentage points since 2003. These data points seem to indicate that as a district, better preparation is needed for students to be successful in rigorous courses in high school, college, and beyond. It is with this in mind, Baltimore County Public Schools is integrating the College Board SpringBoard program into the Language Arts 8 Curriculum.

Baltimore County Public Schools will utilize the SpringBoard Level III support in conjunction with the Language Arts 8 Curriculum for standard Language Arts 8 students to reinforce best teaching practices in language arts education and augment student achievement. The Office of Language Arts will revise the current curriculum for Grade 8 to follow the unit outlines of SpringBoard. The appropriate materials from the Language Arts 8 Curriculum guide will be supplemented with the learning strategies and activities provided by SpringBoard to improve the delivery of instruction. The English/language arts strategies (which mirror the learning activities stressed within the AVID program) focus on reading, writing, oral literacy, and collaboration. These research-based, “promising practices” help students track and express their learning and guide teachers into the habit of using such practices on a daily basis.

SpringBoard, designed to meet the diverse needs of students through differentiated instruction, will provide a more engaging and rigorous classroom and curriculum. Daily exposure to these best teaching practices will enhance critical thinking skills and student preparation for accelerated classes, college, and beyond.

All Grade 8 standard language arts classes will begin implementation of the integrated curriculum in August 2008. The Office of Language Arts has developed a comprehensive timeline for implementation of SpringBoard in Grade 8 which includes the following milestones: training of administrators in monitoring, May 2008; initial training of teachers, summer 2008; integration of Language Arts 8 Curriculum with SpringBoard supplement, summer 2008; purchase and distribution of all curricular materials, summer 2008; monitoring of program, school year 2008-2009; evaluation of program, spring 2009; recommendation for expansion, spring 2009.

Extensive and on-going professional development is planned for teachers, administrators, and instructional support staff, beginning with training for administrators on tools for monitoring instruction. Teachers will receive a four-day training in the summer of 2008 (or, during September) to become familiar with the materials, teaching strategies, and curricular integration. Additionally, teachers will learn what the SpringBoard classroom looks like, the County expectations for implementation, and the systemwide monitoring process. Follow-up sessions are scheduled for the fall of 2008, which will address the emerging needs of the teachers. Additional workshops will be scheduled for the spring of 2009. Select teachers and instructional support staff will be provided training to become certified national trainers.

Monitoring of the revised curriculum will primarily be the responsibility of administrators, instructional leaders (department chairs), and Office of Language Arts personnel. A customized five-minute walk-through guide and a Program Implementation Rubric for administrators will be developed (summer 2008); periodic, systemwide monitoring is crucial for the success of this endeavor and will require support from all administrative levels. Additionally, the Office of Language Arts staff will develop the criteria and description of the components of a SpringBoard classroom, including word walls, displays of student work, and portfolios.

Evaluation of the integrated curriculum will be conducted in conjunction with the Department of Research, Assessment, and Accountability using an evaluation template designed by the University of Maryland for program evaluation in BCPS. Future sources of information will include SAT scores, AP enrollment and passing scores, and the number of students enrolled in non-credit bearing courses in college.