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Maryland State Department of Education Awarded \$45 Million to Strengthen Literacy

Funding Via a Three-Year Federal Grant

BALTIMORE (October 3, 2017) – The Maryland State Department of Education has been awarded a three-year, \$45 million federal grant to help advance literacy in students from birth through grade 12. The grant is MSDE's largest competitive grant in nearly three years.

The Striving Readers' Comprehensive Literacy Grant, awarded by the US Department of Education, will support the State's Comprehensive Literacy Plan (CLP), including pre-literacy skills, reading and writing. The grant will be awarded in three increments, \$15 million each, contingent on funding.

"I believe that every child in Maryland deserves access to a world-class education regardless of what neighborhood they happen to grow up in," said Governor Larry Hogan. "Strong literacy skills are essential to educational success, and this grant will help ensure our students have the tools they need to compete for the jobs of the future."

Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools, said that literacy skills are foundational for all students.

"Learning starts with literacy, and stronger programs early in a child's life will never stop paying off," Dr. Salmon said. "We are looking forward to the opportunity to provide resources to our local school systems to enhance their literacy programs across reading, writing and mathematics, as well as to increase professional learning development for staff."

The State CLP is based upon five keys: educational leadership; strategic professional learning; continuity of standards' based instruction; comprehensive series of assessments; and tiered instruction and intervention. A state-wide workgroup consisting of local system experts and other stakeholders will provide additional input on the Maryland CLP. Its first meeting is October 5.

Maryland's local school systems will benefit from the grant, as 95 percent of the funds will be passed to local systems to support their literacy work. Each system interested in the special funding will implement a district CLP, aligned to Maryland's literacy plan but based on local needs. For example, a system might need early literacy programs in PreK or specialized professional development at the secondary level.

Maryland's new grant places special emphasis on disadvantaged children, including those living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities. The State's plan targets evidence-based strategies and interventions, and alignment of State literacy plans between learning and literacy for birth to age 5 with kindergarten through grade 12.

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