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MEMO

TO: Local Superintendents of Schools
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: January 19, 2011
SUBJECT: Online Courses for High School Credit

Questions have been posed recently regarding online courses offered by private companies and community colleges for credit toward high school graduation in Maryland. Some online programs are being advertised to caregivers and students as Internet-based high school curriculum enabling students to earn high school credit and/or a high school diploma.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) follows a specific approval process for accepting online courses that are administered by each local school system. This approval process helps ensure the quality of the online courses offered by our public schools and alignment with Maryland curriculum. For online courses, COMAR 13A.03.02.05D specifies that “Consistent with local school system policy and procedure, credit may be given for...Maryland State Department of Education-approved online courses.”

Credit toward a Maryland high school diploma can only be awarded for MSDE-approved online courses. An online course is one that is provided by internet and other technologies in which 80% or more of instruction is conducted online with the teacher and student separated by distance or time or both and in which two-way communication between the teacher and student is required. The list of MSDE-approved online courses is updated periodically. You may wish to visit and refer other educators to <http://mdk12online.org/> to become familiar with online offerings and obtain further information. Students and their caregivers can also be directed to this website for information about virtual learning in Maryland.

We ask you to share the content of this memo with your assistant superintendents, high school principals and guidance counselors, and middle school principals and guidance counselors. Your assistance will support the opportunity for these stakeholders to provide informed advice concerning appropriate, quality online learning courses for their students. Thank you for your timely attention to this request.

For additional information please contact Kathleen Cecil at (410) 767-0734 or email kcecil@msde.state.md.us.