

I.H
Reference of Responses to Clarifying Questions

I.A. Executive Summary

Panel Commendation(s)

- The school system is to be commended for the clear articulation of the information based on needs and data driven analysis; the identification of available resources; and the thorough budget narrative that describes the targeting and redistribution of resources including budget cuts due to reduced funding streams.
- For each of the content areas, the format is comprehensive in listing and supporting the interventions contributing to progress. The analysis of data is thorough and clearly articulated; the identification of programs, practices and strategies is comprehensive; and the resources are specific and in a consistent format.

Panel Clarifying Question: Based on data analysis for academic performance for the Special Education subgroup, identify the specific strategies you will be using to increase the achievement of this population.

Approved Response Embedded on Page 12
Item II B

I.D.i Maryland School Assessment/High School Assessments – Mathematics

Panel Clarifying Questions: The data for 2008 Elementary Math LEP and Special Education does not match on pages 32 and 65. Provide clarification and/or make necessary corrections to pages 32 and 65. Based on these revisions, revise related narratives for Elementary Special Education, and LEP including number tested, number proficient, percent proficient on page 66.

Approved Response.....Correction made on Page 66
(A typographical error reversed 2 subgroup numbers)

Approved Response.....Correction made on Page 102
(A typographical error addressed English)

Approved Response.....Correction made on Page 111
(A typographical error addressed English)

Approved Response.....Correction made Page 116
(The total number was omitted from the chart)

I.D.iv Attendance

Panel Clarifying Question: (Note: p.150 Question IA1Compare attendance performance to State standard for 2008 94%; P.153 Question IIA2 Compare attendance

performance to State standard 94%. The State Attendance Standard is 94% not 93.6%.)

Approved Response.....Clarification made on Page 151
Clarification made on Page 154

I.D.v Graduation Rates and Dropout Rates

Panel Clarifying Question: Based on data analysis for attendance, graduation rate and dropout rate for Special Education subgroup, what are the specific strategies you will be using to increase the attendance and graduation rates and decrease the dropout rate of this population?

Approved Response.....Embedded made on Page 166
Additional strategies are described.

I.D.vi Highly Qualified Staff

Panel Commendation (s)

- Communicating certification expectations and increasing course reimbursement has increased percentage of HQ teachers.
- Overall progress is evident in an increase from 53.4% highly qualified teachers in 2003-2004 to 83.3% in 2007-2008. For the 2008-2009 school year, a 92% highly qualified teachers is projected.
- 100% of all paraprofessionals are highly qualified and have been since 2005.
- After-school hours professional development (APD) is offered every Wednesday to foster development of a learning community and strengthen professional relationships. (Schools close early each week.)
- Provision of appropriate CPD coursework to influence practice and provide needed classes to attain or maintain highly qualified status has improved retention.
- Alternative evaluation options have been made available to experienced teachers.
- New Teacher orientation has been expanded from 3 to 5 days and reconfigured based on survey results.
- Increased salary and contributions toward medical benefits have influenced retention.
- Salary and contractual benefits have been addressed; tuition reimbursement has increased from \$1000 to \$3000 per year.
- Somerset has expanded the role of the Human Resources generalist to monitor highly qualified status and communicate to leadership regarding scheduling and individuals regarding achievement and maintenance of status.
- Recruitment has been enhanced by participation in targeted recruitment fairs, signing incentives, moving expenses, use of online services, expanded advertising and offering early contracts in critical shortage areas.

- Providing Praxis tutoring, study guides, and testing reimbursement has increased percentage of highly qualified teachers.

Panel Clarifying Question: System is commended for tracking the retention rate of first and second year teachers. The chart on page 182, Retention Rate of First and Second Year Teachers, needs accompanying text to explain what is represented in the entries; the column for 2007-08 is confusing; the data does not seem to be accurate. Explain how the chart is configured and how it relates to the statements made on page 183 regarding retention.

Approved Response..... Correction made in one column on Page 186 (The ratios were reversed in one column)

Approved Response With extended narrative on Page 187

I.D.vii Safe Schools

Panel Commendation

Somerset County is commended for having all schools in PBIS by 2009.

Panel Clarifying Question: What strategies are going to be used to reduce the in school suspension rate for African American students, both male and female?

Approved Response..... Embedded on Page 219

I.E, IF Addressing Specific Student Groups and Cross Cutting Themes: Career and Technology Education, Early Learning, Gifted and Talented Programs, Special Education, Education Technology, and Education that is Multicultural

Program Manager Question: Please be specific about the goals for the Gifted and Talented Program.

Approved Response Embedded on Page 246

I.G. Local Goals and Indicators

Panel Commendation

Somerset County is commended for the thorough analysis of their local goals, including resources, data, challenges, and plans.