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Maryland Education Moves Forward as Part of State's Overall Stage 2 Recovery

***Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education* Updated; Summer School and Nonpublic Special Education Schools Can Reopen for In-Person Instruction; Child Care Center Groups Expanded to Maximum of 15**

Annapolis – (June 10, 2020) – In tandem with the State of Maryland's advancement into Stage two of Governor Hogan's *Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery*, the education community is moving forward as outlined in the recently updated "Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education." Informed by stakeholder input and an emphasis on equity, the second iteration of the plan addresses requirements for local system reopenings, in-building summer school, the opening of nonpublic special education schools, athletic programs, requirements for any fall openings, as well as special focus on students most impacted by the pandemic. The updated plan also addresses arts programming and career and technical education.

"We are incredibly grateful to our educators, parents and community partners for all of their outstanding efforts to continue engagement and learning in these unprecedented extraordinary times," said Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D. "As we move forward, State and local education leaders must recognize that long-standing gaps in educational opportunity and access have been further exposed and widened by the COVID-19 crisis. We want to ensure that students most impacted receive intense focus and priority in our recovery efforts."

Updates for Stage 2 of recovery addresses summer schools and meals, nonpublic special education, child care and athletics.

Summer School: After consultation with leading public health experts, school systems are now able to bring small groups of students and staff into school buildings. These small groups would consist of 10-15 individuals maximum at a time in rooms within a school building. Local school systems are advised to focus any return to school buildings for summer instruction on students most deeply affected by the pandemic or those who have struggled with distance learning.

Nonpublic special education schools: Nonpublic special education schools may reopen to serve students with disabilities. These schools may begin bringing small groups of children back into their buildings under the same capacity parameters as public school systems. Eligible programs that

choose to reopen will need to develop a recovery plan aligned with the new service delivery model. This plan will require thoughtful planning and intentional collaboration from all parties to ensure the continuum of teaching and learning as well as the smooth transition of students returning to a physical school building. Health and safety protocols and procedures in accordance with State guidelines must be addressed prior to reopening.

Child Care: All child care providers may reopen, as long as they follow all health department protocols listed on the MSDE website and adhere to class size restrictions. Class sizes in child care centers are now expanded to a maximum of 15 individuals per classroom.

School meals: Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, local school systems and MSDE have consistently maintained student access to nutritious meals with more than 13 million meals served since the start of school closures. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has extended several waivers through the end of summer to include non-congregate meals, meal service time flexibility and allowing parents and guardians to pick up meals on behalf of their children. As we transition to a more familiar and routine Summer Food Service Program, local systems will determine operations, including number and types of meals served and locations.

Athletics: Outdoor high school sports may resume practice and training activities within the same guidelines that were previously announced for youth sports programs by the Governor in May. Any and all sporting activities must align with the health and safety parameters outlined by MSDE and local school systems.

Updated Maryland Together: Recovery Plan for Education: The revised plan, which has been posted on the MSDE website, includes several requirements for local school systems as they begin to return students and staff to school buildings.

- Each school system must establish a local stakeholder recovery group that is representative of their schools and the community with equity plans integrated throughout their individual recovery plans.
- Local school systems also must be following federal provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as well as all health and safety protocols developed by MSDE and the Maryland Department of Health for daily cleaning and collection of materials, as well as procedures if a student or staff member should test positive for COVID.
- Local systems and schools must determine where their students are instructionally, identify the gaps in learning, and prepare a path for instructional success and recovery. The Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and all state frameworks for each content area must continue to be followed. A system must also be in place to track student attendance and engagement in distance learning activities.
- The plan includes recommendations for safe transportation and vital steps to assist school systems as they make decisions on how to provide transportation to students in this current environment.

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