

**NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS APPROVAL BRANCH**

Virginia L. Cieslicki, *Chief*  
(410) 767-0408

The Nonpublic Schools Approval Branch started in 1948 as the Nonpublic Schools Accreditation Branch. In 1994, it became the Nonpublic Schools Approval Branch.

The Branch approves the educational programs of nonpublic nursery schools, kindergartens, elementary schools, middle schools, secondary schools, schools for the disabled, and entities licensed by other State agencies, such as the Department of Juvenile Justice. These programs must conform to Maryland law and to State Board of Education regulations. The Branch also registers nonpublic schools, church schools, and church education boards to supervise schooling at home by parents who, due to philosophical differences, do not want to be overseen by local boards of education. Annually, the Branch publishes the *Directory of Approved Nonpublic Schools in the State of Maryland*.

**PROGRAM APPROVAL & ASSESSMENT  
BRANCH**

Virginia H. Pilato, *Chief*  
(410) 767-0391

The Program Approval and Assessment Branch began in 1981 as a part of the Teacher Education and Certification Branch and reorganized under its present name in 1994. The Program Approval and Assessment Branch evaluates and approves programs to educate teachers and prepare other professionally certified personnel. The Branch also assesses candidates for school principalships.

**STATE TEACHER EDUCATION COUNCIL**

Brenda Haynes, *Chair*  
(410) 767-0390

The State Teacher Education Council was formed by the State Superintendent of Schools in 1984. Then, it was known as the State Coordinating Council on Field Experiences. Under its present name, it reorganized in April 1992. The Council advises the State Superintendent on current issues and promising practices in teacher education.

**DIVISION OF PLANNING, RESULTS,  
& INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

Mark Moody, Ph.D., *Assistant State  
Superintendent for Planning, Results,  
& Information Management*

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Baltimore, MD 21201 (410) 767-0073

Duties of the Division of Planning, Results, and Information Management started in 1921 when the Bureau of Educational Measurements was formed within the State Department of Education. By 1945, the Division of Finance, Statistics, and Educational Measurements replaced the Bureau. The Division was renamed Division of Finance and Research in 1949, Division of Research and Development by 1963, and Division of Research, Evaluation and Information Systems by 1971. The Division of Administration assumed information system functions by 1979, as did the Division of Administration and Finance by 1983. The Office of Management Information Systems emerged in 1987 and was replaced by the Division of Planning, Results, and Information Management in 1992.

The Division administers the *Maryland School Performance Assessment Program*. The Division also provides information processing, evaluation and statistical services, and research for the Department. Under the Division are four branches: Assessment; Information Processing; Planning; and Results.

**ASSESSMENT BRANCH**

Stephen Ferrara, *Chief*  
(410) 767-0081

Formerly within the Division of Instruction, the Assessment Branch joined the Division of Planning, Results, and Information Management in 1994. The Branch conducts the *Maryland School Performance Assessment Program*. Established in 1989 by the State Board of Education, the Program evaluates local education, using measures such as student test scores, attendance, and promotion and drop-out rates. The Program also sets standards for schools and goals for their improvement.

Other student achievement tests are overseen by the Branch. The *Functional Testing Program* tests students in reading, writing, mathematics, and citizenship. To graduate from high school, students must pass these tests which emphasize basic skills, such as reading and comprehending instructions and timetables, balancing a checkbook, and computing interest. The *Norm-Referenced Testing Program* evaluates children in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11. Their scores are compared with the performance of students in the same grade nationwide.

**INFORMATION PROCESSING BRANCH**

Lois M. Brown, *Chief*  
(410) 767-0052

Created in 1971, the Information Processing Branch oversees the Department's information processing operations and expenditures.