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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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MSDE Awards More Than \$169 Million to Local Education Agencies as Part of Maryland Leads Grant Program

Maryland Lead's Seven High-Leverage Strategy Areas, Including Science of Reading and 'Grow Your Own,' Help Seed the Transformation of Maryland Education and Implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future

BALTIMORE, MD (June 28, 2022) - Today, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) announced the award of Maryland Leads grants funds to Local Education Agencies (LEAs), a bold, foundational initiative to reimagine the State's education system and realize the promise of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. In total, MSDE is disbursing more than \$169 million in funding to LEAs across the State to directly accelerate learning and seed long-term, sustainable, and transformational change in Maryland school communities. The innovative grant program also generated more than \$25 million in local investment to supplement Department awards, which will build sustainability for Maryland Leads grant programs and activities.

Maryland Leads offered LEAs the opportunity to propose initiatives and programs across seven, high-leverage strategies rooted in research and evidence-of-best-practice for driving student outcomes, bolstering teacher pipelines, and supporting teacher and staff recruitment and retention.

All 24 Maryland School Districts applied to the Maryland Leads program and received an award. The largest awarded program investments are in two strategy areas: Grow Your Own Staff and the Science of Reading. With additional financial incentives to encourage LEA participation, 23 LEAs will implement Grow Your Own Staff Programs (totaling \$47,486,941 in LEA awards) and 22 LEAs will begin programs related to the Science of Reading (totaling \$53,252,654 in LEA awards).

“All of our districts chose to step up and take on the challenge of the Maryland Leads program, which will seed transformational change. This program provides a critical opportunity to further recover from the pandemic, fuel the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and lay the foundation for our students' success in the years to come – well after the pandemic is behind us,” said State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. “The Maryland Leads program raises the bar in terms of the rigor of program designs, and we expect outstanding outcomes that will accelerate student learning, narrow opportunity and achievement gaps, and provide targeted support for historically underserved students and their communities.”

New Grow Your Own programs and activities have the potential to generate more than 300 new teachers, 100 new paraprofessionals, support for more than 400 conditionally certified teachers to

pass licensure exams, and build sustainable talent pipelines for years to come. The awarded Science of Reading programs will result in all K-3 teachers, principals, special education teachers, and literacy specialists being trained in instruction aligned to the science of reading. These LEAs also commit to adopt and scale high-quality, content-rich, culturally relevant instructional materials aligned with the Science of Reading and ensure that progress monitoring in K-3 occurs regularly with a universal screener, as required in the Ready to Read Act.

In addition to the Science of Reading and Grow Your Own, the other five strategies include: Staff Support and Retention, High-Quality School Day Tutoring, Reimagining the Use of Time, Innovative School Models, and Transforming Neighborhoods through Excellent Community Schools.

The Department will monitor and support program implementation from start to finish to ensure implementation fidelity and, where necessary, program adjustments. MSDE will implement communities of practice for the various strategy areas and continue to foster collaboration across the State's LEAs. The Department will require formal mid-term reports and will continue to post program updates on the Maryland Leads webpage: <https://marylandpublicschools.org/MDLeads>.

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