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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Maryland State Department of Education Announces New Competitive Grant Program to Reduce Overidentification in Special Education (ROSE) in Maryland Schools

*MSDE to Award Up to Three \$1 Million Grants to Local Education Agencies to Reduce
Special Education Overidentification of Historically Underserved Students*

BALTIMORE (March 1, 2023) – The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) announces the launch of a new grant opportunity that will leverage American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Relief Funds (ESSER III) to reduce the overidentification of historically underserved students in special education programs. Through the Reducing Overidentification in Special Education (ROSE) program, local education agencies (LEAs) will invest in strategies that address and mitigate the learning loss of persistently underperforming students who risk being misidentified with intellectual and/or emotional disabilities, particularly male, African American, English learner, and economically disadvantaged students. Reducing overidentification in special education is essential to transform and create the necessary change to actualize the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future for all Maryland’s children.

“While special education programs throughout the State admirably advance and elevate students with disabilities, too often historically underserved students are mistakenly diagnosed with an emotional or intellectual disability due to race, sex, ethnicity, home language or socioeconomic background. To care about special education means to care about being certain of who and for what children become eligible for special education services. Anything less is an abdication of our responsibility as policymakers, advocates, educators, and humans. Let us hold ourselves accountable for the trajectories on which we place our children,” said State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. “This new grant opportunity will allow awarded LEAs to analyze and interrogate their data, develop and implement pre-referral processes,

and train school-district staff on evidence-based strategies that identify and prevent disparities in special education identification.”

Applicants for the ROSE program must commit to addressing the substantial overidentification of students based on race, sex, gender, home language, and income status in LEA policies, processes, and practices. To do so, applicants will provide detailed baseline data and clear, feasible and ambitious success criteria to address disproportionality in the identification of students for special education services. Applicants must also ensure all goals and measurable success criteria are disaggregated by all student subgroups, particularly historically underserved groups to ensure that proposed plans address existing and persistent disparities. Selected applicants will partner with a single, national leader awarded by MSDE for program implementation.

Grant applications open today and are due by 11:59 EST on May 16, 2023.

The Maryland State Department of Education will host three grant guidance and information sessions this spring. For further information about the ROSE program, including registration links for information sessions, please visit the Maryland State Department of Education website (<https://marylandpublicschools.org/ROSE>). Questions can be emailed to: rose.msde@maryland.gov.

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