

out by the Department since 1920. The Division received its present name in 1994.

For public schools, the Division formulates guidelines for curriculum to be approved by the State Superintendent of Schools. Guidelines also set standards for educational programs of State agencies. For the *Maryland School Performance Assessment Program*, the Division monitors education programs.

The Division approves plans to reform schools that receive help from the Challenge System Initiative or through Carnegie Foundation grants. With the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Division sets standards and guidelines for school health programs. The Division also trains staff; audits programs; and sponsors conferences on curriculum and learning.

Under the Division are five branches: Arts and Sciences; Equity Assurance and Compliance; Language Development and Early Learning; School Library Media and State Media Services; and Staff Development. In addition, the Division oversees three units.

CHALLENGE & RECONSTITUTED SCHOOL UNIT

Rhona S. Fisher, Ph.D., *Director*
(410) 767-0321

Organized in 1994, the Challenge and Reconstituted School Unit oversees the *Challenge System Initiative*. Through financial and technical support, the Initiative helps schools improve their ratings in the *Maryland School Performance Assessment Program* (Code Education Article, sec. 5-202.2).

Under the *School Reconstitution Program*, the Unit monitors local plans to improve schools which have poor and declining scores in the Assessment Program. Plans outline reforms in school administration, curriculum, and staff. If local efforts fail and the State Board of Education approves, the Unit oversees State intervention to improve these schools (COMAR 13A.01.04.07).

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL LEARNING & CROSS-DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS & PROJECTS UNIT

Eileen M. Oickle, Ph.D., *Director*
(410) 767-0345

The Middle and High School Learning and Cross-Department Programs and Projects Unit was established in 1995. It coordinates programs involving other Department divisions. These include the *Core Learning Program*, *High School Graduation Requirements*, *Middle and High School Learning*, and *Year-Round Schools*.

STUDENT SERVICE ALLIANCE

Contact: Margaret A. O'Neil (410) 767-0356

Through the Student Service Alliance, the Unit helps local schools provide opportunities for students to serve their community. Such service is

mandated for high school graduation, beginning with students graduating in 1997. The Alliance, formed in 1988, also approves local plans for new community service programs in high schools.

SPECIAL PROJECTS UNIT

Antoinette E. Farazza, Ed.D., *Director*
(410) 767-0317

Created in 1994, the Special Projects Unit is responsible for three programs. It oversees the *Carnegie Middle-Grades-School State Policy Initiative* awarding grants to improve middle schools (grades 6, 7, and 8). The Unit also administers a pilot project under the Challenge System Initiative to improve schools in Caroline County. In addition, the Unit supports the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletics Association, which conducts athletic programs for high schools.

ARTS & SCIENCES BRANCH

Kay A. Birukoff, *Chief*
(410) 767-0350

The Arts and Sciences Branch started as the General Curriculum Branch and received its present name in 1989. The Branch assists local school systems in developing curriculum for environmental education, the fine arts, health and safety, mathematics, physical education, science, and social studies. It designs, disseminates, and conducts programs for staff development in these areas as well. The Branch also oversees the *Gifted and Talented Program*.

EQUITY ASSURANCE & COMPLIANCE BRANCH

Woodrow B. Grant, *Chief*
(410) 767-0425

The Equity Assurance and Compliance Branch organized in 1976 as the Office of Equal Opportunity. In 1993, it was placed within the Division of Instruction, later the Division of Instruction and Staff Development. The Branch gives technical aid to local school systems for school desegregation. Branch staff provide training on issues of disability, gender, national origin, and race as they relate to instruction, classroom management, accessibility to facilities and programs, group and personal relations, and employment. The Branch also implements State regulations on multicultural education, assignment of personnel, and pupil integration.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT & EARLY LEARNING BRANCH

Trudy V. Collier, *Chief*
(410) 767-0339

The Language Development and Early Learning Branch was created in 1989. To promote learning and language development in young children (ages 4