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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **State Superintendent of Schools and Comcast Kick-Off Second Annual Parent Involvement Matters Award Program During American Education Week**

*Statewide Award Program Highlights Parents' Impact on Maryland Public Education*

BALTIMORE, MD (November 19, 2008) – Maryland State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick and Comcast today announced a call for nominations for the second annual *Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Awards (PIMA)*. The award program, a joint partnership between the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and Comcast, honors parents and others with legal responsibility for a child whose exemplary contributions to public education have led to improvements for Maryland's public school children, teachers, schools, programs and/or policies.

The call for nominations was made during a special launch ceremony held at Mt. Hebron High School in Howard County, home of the first statewide Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award winner, Larry Walker.

“It was an honor to be named the first statewide winner, and to be part of the excitement, motivation and inspiration that this program generated among parents in its first year,” said Walker. “So many parents across the state are making a profound difference in our schools and it is wonderful that Comcast and MSDE are recognizing them for their efforts.”

The *Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Awards* program was developed to highlight the positive impact parents have on public schools and to encourage all parents to get involved in whatever way they can. Themed *Choose Your Seat. Get Involved.*, the program recognizes Maryland parents who have demonstrated excellence in the following areas of involvement: Communication, Volunteering, Learning, Decision Making and Community Collaboration.

“I am thrilled to once again join in partnership with Comcast to recognize the extraordinary value of parent involvement throughout Maryland public schools,” said Dr. Grasmick. “This unique award will showcase the incredible impact parents and guardians have in the success of our schools and students' education.”

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“The inaugural *Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award* program was a great success, and we were moved by the level of participation among parents, teachers, administrators, students and others across the state,” said Fred Graffam, regional senior vice president for Comcast. “We look forward to working with MSDE to recognize and applaud the contributions that parents continue to make in our communities and public schools.”

*Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award* nominees must be parents or legal guardians of children attending Maryland public schools, and cannot be employees of Comcast, MSDE, or the Maryland public school system. Twenty four semifinalists will be selected – one parent from each of the 23 Maryland counties and one from Baltimore City. Of the semifinalists, five finalists and one statewide winner will be named at an award celebration hosted by Comcast in the spring of 2009. The statewide winner will be awarded a cash prize of \$1,000 and the five finalists will each receive \$250 to further their efforts to improve their public schools.

Nomination forms are currently available and can be downloaded at [www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/pima](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/pima). Nominations must be postmarked by Friday, January 16, 2009.

**About Comcast Cable**

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Comcast's Eastern Division serves six million residential and business customers across Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Washington, DC. The Eastern Division is based in Oaks, Pennsylvania and employs more than 20,000 people.

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