Maryland Association of Boards of Education
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The Monitor

a summary of the monthly
Maryland State Board of Education Meeting

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February 28, 2012

Race to the Top Update

Interim State Superintendent Sadusky shared that he had a frank discussion with local superintendents about areas of concern, including over testing in some areas, and that each updated him on where their LEA was on the continuum of progress.

Jim Foran, MSDE, provided an update on the status of the Race to the Top grant program. He stated that he was in the process of visiting all the LEAs, with Baltimore City and St. Mary's being his most recent visits.

Race to the Top Focus Area: Transition to the Common Core Standards

Mary Carey, MSDE, provided an update to the board on the transition to the Common Core Standards. She stated that at the March State Board meeting, she will report on the status of assessments, and any other area in particular the board requests.

Dr. Carey shared that the superintendents meeting previously referenced by Dr. Sadusky was substantive, and the superintendents asked two things be stressed to board members: There is anxiety among teachers and principals about the next two years, and also anxiety surrounding professional development as it pertains to the total transformation of curriculum and assessments. She added there is new technology to learn and that locals are gearing up for their own professional development. She stated that "next year is the year of the bear when everything comes together."

Dr. Carey shared a handout, Maryland's Third Wave of Reform: Timeline, (Critical Elements), and reviewed progress on the timeline with the board. She highlighted the statewide communication element, and agrees with the superintendents that this piece is critical.

Dr. Carey stated that they are assuming in 2014-2015, there will be no MSAs, and shared the superintendents are questioning whether or not there could be a moratorium on MSAs during the transition. Dr. Carey stated this was a risk given that Title I funding is dependent upon testing for individual students. She added that if there was a different or modified test other than the MSA, there would be a risk in funding and timing.

President DeGraffenreidt asked if there was way to ask the U.S. Department of Education if we can take the risk out of funding by having them look first at an alternative test. He stated he saw this as just another change management problem to be solved but wondered on the deliverability end, what the value was for measuring student growth and teacher effectiveness. He stated he felt that in year one of a new test, there was not much value as there was nothing to compare.

Dr. Carey stated that she tried to put as many options on the handout as were discussed with the superintendents, but that curriculum was missing as it was not yet created. She added they were basically discussing options for MSAs; HSAs as graduation requirements; what the results mean; and increased flexibility in how the results are weighed.

Board Member Walsh asked why MSDE expects testing results to be low with the Common Core Standards. Dr. Carey discussed the gap analysis, and teacher anxiety over shift in curriculum and testing. Ms. Walsh stated that the board should analyze the data and make sure students are not unduly penalized. President DeGraffenreidt stated that the teacher anxiety stems from "what do you want me to do," while students just want to know the process is fair. Dr. Carey reminded the board that they are only talking about the next two years, and that they will be making new decisions regarding Common Core assessments.

Dr. Carey continued highlighting options as outlined in the handout. The board engaged in an overall discussion of the 1-2 year transition time, questioning how to focus on rigor without having a negative impact on progress being made now. Dr. Carey stated she agreed with the superintendents' recommendation to "stay the course" while moving ahead with professional development and providing support to the LEAs as they move into new assessments and evaluations.

Board Member Walsh asked if the board could play a more public role and get reports from "on the ground," stating that if there are problems, the board will be aware of them. Dr. Sandusky advised the superintendents have asked for panel presentations to the State Board throughout the transition.

Dr. Sadusky also stated that a discussion of waivers of diploma requirements by the board is a good idea, and he will have a presentation regarding flexible approaches ready for the March State Board meeting. President DeGraffenreidt thanked Dr. Sadusky and stated the board wants assurance that students know what they need to but are not caught in the transition.
Memo & Handouts

Update: Next Generation Science Standards

Mary Carey and Mary Thurlow, MSDE, presented an update on the work of the national Next Generation Science Standards committee. They were joined at the table by board members Dr. Gates and Dr. Finan as they both serve on the committee.

Dr. Carey stated that because Maryland has a strong science program, it was desired that Maryland's environmental program be a part of the national standards. She shared it was a K-12 curriculum committee, and that the board will have an opportunity to review the standards.

Dr. Gates and Dr. Finan reviewed the process of the committee, stressing that Next Generation Science is not a stand-alone curriculum but rather very much integrated into the Common Core Standards. They

added that the committee is seeking to make it teacher and student friendly, and is using technology to accomplish this goal.

Board members engaged in a discussion of the timeline, and Dr. Carey stated that next steps are to send draft standards to the board in spring, give feedback to the committee, perform the gap analysis, and then start curriculum development work, which is the same process that was used with math and English.
Memo & Handout

English Language Development Standards (Spring 2012 Assessment Administration)

Mary Carey and Susan Spinnato, MSDE, provided an update on Maryland's transition to new English Language Development (ELD) standards and the English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment.

Dr. Carey stated that MSDE is preparing LEAs to transition to the new assessment used by the *World Class Instructional Design and Assessment* (WIDA). She explained that by Maryland joining the WIDA consortium and not working in isolation, more resources are available.

Board members engaged in a discussion of how English Language Learners are educated, either in a separate classroom or mainstreamed into the regular classroom, and which method has better results. Ms. Spinnato explained that all teachers are now essentially ELL teachers when they have an ELL learner in the classroom, and teachers need better resources for those students.

Board Member Walsh stated she was worried teachers were being set up for failure, and the board would possibly be supporting a strategy that was not in the best interest of students. Dr. Carey stated that as a state, Maryland needs to step back and assess what is already working locally. She further stated that staff would talk with the LEAs and come back to the board for more discussion.
Memo

Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) School Counselor (AMEND), COMAR 13A.12.03.02

Mary Carey presented the amended COMAR regulations regarding certification for school counselors.
Memo & Handout

Gifted and Talented Education, COMAR 13A.04.07.01

Mary Carey and Jeanne Paynter, MSDE, presented proposed regulations to the board. They also displayed Governor Martin O'Malley's proclamation declaring February Gifted and Talented Month in Maryland. They shared that MSDE had received a Jack Kent Cooke Foundation award of $700,000 for Gifted and Talented Education.

Dr. Carey explained that Gifted and Talented Education is not new in Maryland, and they have surveyed LEAs to assess progress. Dr. Carey reminded board members that the Bridge to Excellence funding combined several funding streams, one of which was funding for Gifted and Talented Education. She

shared that there is support from the superintendents and from the Maryland State Advisory Council for Gifted and Talented Education.

Ms. Paynter provided a summary and walk through of the regulations and discussed how the program developed. The board followed with a lengthy discussion of the merits of Gifted and Talented Education, and several expressed concerns about unintended consequences, i.e., students not selected for the programs, underrepresentation of minorities, a single point of entry or multiple opportunities for students to enter programs, the possibility of misidentifying students, and the risk of overlooking students with disabilities who are also Gifted and Talented.

Dr. Carey advised that the proposed regulations address the gap and will move Gifted and Talented Education forward; however, she looks to the board to provide guidance in the language that will address concerns.

Ms. Paynter shared that the superintendents requested reporting on Gifted and Talented be tied to current reporting in the Master Plan, and they will be asked report on subgroups as is done with other areas.

The regulations passed with Board Member Diaz voting in opposition.
Memo & Handout
Dec. 16, 2011 Public Comment

Update: Maryland's ESEA Flexibility Request

Dr. Sadusky reported to the board that the application for ESEA Flexibility was sent to the Department of Education yesterday, and is now available on the MSDE website.

Report: A Safe School, Successful Students, and a Fair and Equitable Disciplinary Process Go Hand in Hand

Without discussion, the board returned from an extended break for lunch and executive session, and voted unanimously to accept the report, *A Safe School, Successful Students, and a Fair and Equitable Disciplinary Process Go Hand in Hand.* President DeGraffenreidt remarked that the report would be open for public comment until the end of March.
Report

Legislative Update

Renee Spence and Steve Brooks, MSDE, presented an update to the board on current education legislation, including education budget issues.

Mr. Brooks shared an update on State Aid to Education, and the status of the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Reform bills. He reported in the Governor's budget, there was a cut to the Maryland Meals to Education program, but there was no cut proposed to Early Childhood Education. He also reported on monitoring the Juvenile Services budget, and that legislation to change the educational services timeline was proposed. President DeGraffenreidt stated that MOE seemed to be moving in the right direction.

Ms. Spence reported there were 2500 bills introduced, and that MSDE was monitoring approximately 25% that in some way impacted education. She highlighted the following bills:

HB 373/SB362 Age for Compulsory Public School Attendance – Exemptions
Ms. Spence explained the details of the bill. She noted a significant fiscal note that impacted the locals but not MSDE. President DeGraffenreidt stated there was a fiscal note to society attached to students dropping out of school, so there would be a net savings from keeping students in school. The board discussed drafting a letter of support for the bill, and Ms. Spence noted that MABE and PSSAM were supporting the bill. Ms. Walsh stated she does not feel she has heard enough of the pros and cons, and Mr. DeGraffenreidt suggested including concerns in the letter of support.

HB 745/SB 689 Maryland Advisory Council for Virtual Learning – Establishment
Ms. Spence explained that staff would like to support the council but amend out the language that specifies standard-setting duties. The Board voted to support with amendments.

HB 1014 State Department of Education – Regulation Adoption Process
Ms. Spence explained this would require the board to hold public hearings on specified proposed regulations that contain a funding mandate or that will have a significant impact on local school systems. President DeGraffenreidt questioned the need for such hearings and the significant fiscal impact. The board voted to oppose the bill.

HB 1218 Public Charter Schools – Chartering Authorities, Application Requirements, Employees and Facility Funding
The board engaged in a lengthy discussion about charter school authorizers and ultimately decided to take no position as board members were not in alignment.

Ms. Spence also highlighted bills concerning collective bargaining, Core Content Areas (Social Studies), tax credit (BOAST) legislation, teacher appeals and layoff rights limitations, and preschool for all students. The board took no position on these bills.
Memo
Handout (synopsis)
Handout (proposed shift)

Interim State Superintendent's Update

Dr Sadusky reported on his recent activities with the legislature in Annapolis. He also reported to the board on their previous request to have the website updated, and stated that Prince George's Community College and University of Maryland Eastern Shore will present possibilities at the next meeting. He advised the board that although the duration of the Advisory Council for Teacher Effectiveness had expired, they continue to meet and the Governor is expected to extend the council. Dr. Sadusky also reported on visiting Charles County's environmental science program, and encouraged board members to also visit.

Board Member Updates

President DeGraffenreidt reported that he and Dr. Dukes testified before the state legislature on the topic of financial literacy, in opposition to the bill to mandate a stand-alone high school course and assessment required for graduation.

Public Comment

Helen Zinnaman, Executive Director of Maryland Educators of Gifted Students, commented on the Gifted and Talented regulations.

Stephen C. Bounds, Director of Policy and Legal Services for the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, commented on local boards needing guidance given recent appeal decisions and discussions by the State Board.
Comment

Rick Tyler, Maryland Parent Teacher Association, commented on the Gifted and Talented regulations.

Opinions

The State Board issued legal opinions in the following cases:

- Casnell Jackson v. Howard County Board of Education, dismissing the appeal as untimely
- Monica D. v. Montgomery County Board of Education, dismissing the appeal as moot
- Elnora Winston v. Prince George's Board of Education, dismissing the appeal for failure to prosecute the case before the local board