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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Sept. 25, 2012

Agenda

Consent Agenda Items

The State Board granted permission to publish regulations regarding virtual learning, in accordance with legislation enacted in 2012 (COMAR 13A.04.15). The regulation, which replaces the emergency regulation passed by the Board on June 26, 2012, establishes the vendor fee structure that will support the work of educators who will review online courses that satisfy requirements for Maryland public high schools and the standards which the county boards must follow to evaluate online courses for approval on the MSDE Master List.
Handout

Race to the Top Focus Area: PARCC Update

The State Board was provided an update on the status of discussions between the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Higher Education educators regarding how to determine college and career readiness, including performance level descriptors and validation criteria.

Dr. Carolyn Wood, MSDE, reported on technical difficulties of implementing PARCC, and governance and decision making issues, some because of the fact that PARCC is a consortium of states with differing views and practices. She shared that Dr. Lowery was appointed to the steering committee that acts on behalf of the larger committee. Dr. Wood also detailed the many judgment and policy questions surrounding deciding whether a student is college and career ready.

Board member Staton asked if PARCC assessments were moving forward. Dr. Wood responded they were moving towards policy. Dr. Lowery explained that there were policy concerns because there were 24 states on board with more coming, so standards had to be set. She added that they have to work with higher education to determine what 'readiness' means. She reminded the board that the Governor's P-20 Council has a work group that is defining what career readiness means, and their intent from the beginning was to inform policy.

Board Member Staton asked if there was any way to determine whether school systems are preparing students for high education. She added that the focus seemed to be on higher education rather than whether children are learning in school system.

Dr. Lowery explained that the goal is to meld the transition between K-12 and higher education, and bridge the two in the most efficient way.

Dr. Wood added that it was a combination of the 'what' and the 'so what', meaning what are we measuring and what difference will it make. She explained that K-12 and higher education are working together but "the devil is in the details" and that is what they are trying to work out.

Dr. Wood reported that the University of Maryland is actively participating with PARCC and providing leadership, including outreach to the larger higher education community.

Board member Gates asked about the academic measure on content and process, and asked where the balance is in the PARCC Assessments. Dr. Wood explained the assessments are aligned with the Common Core Standards, and those boundaries needed to be recognized. She added that this is only one indicator as to whether students are prepared for college level courses.

Board member Gates requested more insight on the topic of career readiness. Dr. Wood said there had been much discussion about academic skills and different sets needed at different levels, and students needing to have the same academic skills for college and for career. Dr. Lowery said that PARCC is looking to the states are to define what career readiness means.

Board member Finan said PARCC is more about career training and not necessarily readiness, and that this was where the Common Core Curriculum comes into play.

The board engaged in a discussion of what makes a student ready for a career, skills necessary to learn a specific job, and overall functioning in the work world. They also discussed pen and paper testing versus computer delivered assessments.
Handout

Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant

The State Board was provided an update on the Race to the Top early Learning Challenge Grant by Dr. Rolf Grafwallner, MSDE. A detailed accounting of the progress for each of the 10 projects indicates that most of the scheduled project activities have been initiated and are underway toward meeting the first set of milestones and deliverables. By May of next year there will be a full launch of the program with pilots starting soon. The 10 thematic projects reflect the following approach:

- Revising the current Early Learning Framework
- Refining the existing comprehensive set of assessments
- Implementing a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (Maryland EXCELS)
- Developing a workforce
- Building a statewide early childhood data system

Handout

Standards for the Mastery and Application of the Braille Code

Marcella Franczkowski and Lisa Wright, MSDE, informed the board of the development of the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum Frameworks for Braille: Mathematics and English/Language Arts, and

authorized the release of the Frameworks and accompanying Braille standards to guide the instruction of students with visual impairments in Maryland so that they graduate college and career ready.

The board was informed that the "Maryland Common Core Curriculum Frameworks for Braille 2012" will be located online at Maryland Public Schools website once it is approved. Dr. Franczkowski said there are 1800 students in Maryland who are in need of these services, and Maryland will serve as a model nationally as the only state offering these standards.

Board member Gates commented on the ability of students to use computer with Braille Access, and asked what was being done to ensure this moves forward so what is available to blind students is the same as for sighted students. Dr. Franczkowski shared that for input, students will learn the keyboard, and for output, students will use technology that is imbedded.

The board unanimously approved.
Handout

Maryland Teacher Staffing Report

The board was presented recommendations relating to teacher content shortage areas for use as the basis of scholarships and other incentives. In addition, there are recommendations of geographic areas of shortage, gender and diversity shortages, and shortages of select non-classroom professionals.

Recommendation 1: MSDE declare the following content areas as critical shortage areas:

- Career and technology areas (7-12)
- Technology education, and Family and Consumer Sciences
- Computer Science (7-12)
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) (PreK-12)
- Mathematics (7-12)
- Science areas (7-12)-Chemistry, Earth/space science, Physical science, and Physics
- Special education areas: Generic-Infant/primary (birth-grade 3), generic: Elementary/middle schools (grades 1-8), Generic-Infant/primary (birth-grade 3), generic: Elementary/middle schools (grades 1-8), Generic: Secondary/adult (grades 6-adult); Hearing impaired; Severely and profoundly disables; and Visually impaired
- World Language areas (PreK-12)-Chinese, and Spanish

Recommendation 2: MSDE declares 20 jurisdictions as geographic areas of projected shortage of certified teachers which includes Harford County and Anne Arundel County. Not included in the 20 are Allegany, Garrett, Worcester, and Talbot.

Recommendation 3: MSDE declares a shortage of teachers who are males and teachers who are members of minority groups.

Recommendation 4: MSDE declares a shortage of the non-classroom professional positions of library/media specialist, principal and speech/language pathologist.

The Maryland Teacher Staffing Report, 2012-2014 can be located online at:http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/progapproval/mtsr.htm

Board president Dukes asked how this report will be used. Dr. Tanning responded that it will start with state scholarships as well as retire/rehire for critical shortage areas for both teachers and principals. Dr. Dukes asked how students would be made aware of scholarships, and was told that higher education would provide information as would the MSDE website.

Board member DeGraffenreidt stated his concern with retire/rehire of principals is that principal's role as a leader is conflicted, and this needs to be monitored carefully. He also expressed concern that rehires will take advantage of "double dipping." Staff explained there are other options and this is not an issue as it was in the past.

The board unanimously approved.
Handouts

Annual Update on Financial Reporting Requirements

The board was briefed on the status of audit reports of local school systems and requested to authorize the State Superintendent to withhold funds from local school systems that are not in compliance. MSDE staff shared that no systems demonstrate a deficit as defined by 5-114, so none are required to submit a corrective action plan or monthly status reports; all but one school system have filed their fiscal 2013 approved budgets as required by 5-102(e).

The board unanimously approved.
Handout

2014 State Education Operating Budget Proposal

The board was briefed on the MSDE Fiscal Year FY 2014 budget estimates and budget enhancement requests for Headquarters, Aid to education, Funding for Educational Organizations, and the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund.

The board unanimously approved.

Public Libraries Capital Grant Program Projects

The board was presented county public library capital projects that were recommended for funding in the State's FY2014 Capital Budget for review and approval. Staff shared that the FY2014 public library capital projects grant requests reflect 11 project requests from 11 library systems which have been reviewed by the grant review committee and are recommended for state grant funding for submission to the Board of Public Works.

The board unanimously approved.
Handout

State Superintendent's Update

Advance Placement and SAT Scores - Mary Gable, MSDE, gave a brief report on the data released the previous day by the college boards, noting an increase in the number of students taking the exam, and an increase in students receiving 3-5 scores. She also noted an increase in minority students taking the exam and scoring well on it.

Dr. Gable also reported that SAT scores were relatively flat; however, there are more students taking the test, which is an initiative in the schools.

Board member DeGraffenreidt noted that with an increase in students taking the SAT, there would be a need for increased for support. Dr. Gable noted that the PSAT is built into the program and the responsibility of the school to analyze the data.

The board engaged in a discussion of comparing the SAT to other tests, which students are taking the SAT's, subgroup performance, district by district performance, and how students are prepared to take the test.

Board president Dukes suggested a "deeper dive" agenda item as soon as the data is in, and inviting districts in to discuss best practices.

Governor's P-20 Council - Dr. Lowery shared that she has been asked to chair the council, and will be looking at performance gaps as well as college remediation. She added that higher education and the Workforce Investment Board are on the council, and they are taking advantage of the opportunity to collaborate.

Discipline Policy - Chuck Buckler, MSDE, reported on what he termed the "landmark" report to the state board. He advised that the Advancement Project will be helping in the future, and that the State Superintendent is forming a workgroup on best practices, both nationally and in Maryland, with a first meeting to be held in November. He stated that a report is planned for December 2013.

Mr. Buckler shared that the report calls for guidelines on State Code of Conduct with a first meeting to be held in December, and that at this point, they were looking at research literature. He added that a conference is being planning for December for Open Society and hopes are to start a conversation within the state as to what the community expectations are around this topic. He shared that the Advancement Project will be holding meetings as well. Mr. Buckler said there are no further details at this time, but more can be expected in early December. He added that the Student Records Manual also needs to be updated and will require a regulatory process that is now being worked on with local school systems.

Ms. Sidhu complimented Mr. Buckler on his appearance on a PBS show on bullying. Mr. Buckler said the policy adopted by the board several years ago has been recognized nationally.

Board Member Update

Board member DeGraffenreidt said he is on P-20 Council and that Dr. Lowery is giving much needed focus and direction so he expects they will pick up speed on issues that need to be addressed. He also said Dr. Lowery has been well received across the state, and he has been complimented often on hiring her as state superintendent.

Board members Sidhu and Smith shared they are registered for the NASBE Conference.

Board president Dukes said Dr. Lowery attended the retreat for the community colleges.

Public Comment

Susan Wickman, a representative from Senator Allan Kittleman's office, spoke on the importance of Social Studies. She thanked the state board for creating the assessment in Social Studies, and stated the subject should be taught with the same rigor as other subjects.

Opinions

The State Board issued legal opinions for the following cases:

- Adam and Dawn R., et al. v. Carroll County Board of Education, affirming the local board's bus stop decision
- Laura Powell v. Talbot County Board of Education, affirming the local board's employee classification decision
- Karen Terrell v. Howard County Board of Education, affirming the local board's employee termination decision
- William K. v. Anne Arundel County Board of Education, affirming the local board's student transportation decision
- Stanmore Family Limited Partnership, et al. v. Montgomery County Board of Education, affirming the local board's land use decision
- Carolyn and John Thompson v. Montgomery County Board of Education, dismissing the appeal for lack of a local board decision to review
- Shariah M. v. Prince George's County Board of Education, dismissing the appeal and remanding the request for early entry to kindergarten to the local board
- Daniel Picca v. Montgomery County Board of Education, affirming the local board's employee termination decision