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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Dec. 17, 2012

Agenda

Board president Charlene Dukes began the meeting with a moment of silence for those lost in the recent tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut.

Dr. Lowery reported on communication with Dr. Carl Roberts, Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland (PSSAM), who advised that he had been in touch with all 24 superintendents, all of whom spent the weekend putting supports in place and ensuring staff and students have the resources needed to cope with the recent tragedy.

Dr. Lowery also shared that preparedness guidelines were put in place in 2003 based on national models, and in 2005 the State Board adopted those as regulations. She stated that MSDE is now reviewing regulations and guidelines to see if updates are needed, and a work group will be convened in January to discuss them. She advised that resources were posted on the MSDE website about discussing tragedies with children, and that MSDE will continue to assess what local school systems need.

Board member Sidhu said we need to be mindful of parent's mental health issues.

Board Member Walk said the Newton tragedy touches all of Maryland's school community because we are more in touch with children than most people.

Board member Walsh observed that Sandy Hook Elementary Schools staff did everything correctly but still the tragedy occurred. Ms. Walsh stated she would like the board to develop a political statement that says assault weapons should be illegal. She stated that the State Board is the body in this state that represents teachers and children, and they need to be able to say they are doing everything they can legally do to protect both. She asked for this to be discussed at the next meeting; President Dukes said the discussion will be on the January agenda.

Principal Recognition

Jim Foran, MSDE, presented the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) principal and assistant principal of the year. He shared that it was hard to celebrate today but it is an appropriate day to recognize the work of principals and assistant principals.

The board heard comments from secondary principal of the year Kim Dolch from North Carroll High School in Carroll County, and assistant principal Everett Davis from Montgomery Village Middle School in Montgomery County.

Mr. Foran then shared that National Principal Month was October but since there was a change in the association's executive director, the recognition was rescheduled for December. Board president Dukes presented a proclamation from the Governor's office to the association.

Memo

National Title I Distinguished School

The board recognized staff from John Eager Howard Elementary School in Baltimore City as a National Title I Distinguished School. The school's principal provided an overview of the school and its programs.

Memo

Progress Report: Race to the Top Evaluation by Center for Application and Innovative Research in Education

Jim Foran provided background, stating that MSDE decided during the application writing phase of its RTTT grant proposal that it needed an external, independent evaluation of the overall program. As such, MSDE chose to engage the services of the Center for Application and Innovation Research in Education (CAIRE) at Towson University.

Staff from Towson University made a presentation and provided a report entitled CAIRE Process/Product Evaluations as of September 30, 2012.

The presenters reported that on the whole, CAIRE found the projects reviewed appear to be well managed and on schedule. They also found that project managers had a good understanding of the relationships among projects and were aware of hard dependencies that might pose a risk to the completion of their project to solicit ideas and feedback from them.

They reported that the financial controls established by MSDE for projects were also reviewed in March 2012, and the only risk identified at that time was that project managers were having difficulty simultaneously tracking project expenditures on both a Federal and State fiscal year basis. They shared that in response, MSDE hired additional fiscal staff who assumed major responsibility for tracking project expenditures. Subsequent to the report's issuance, MSDE learned that USDE would accept reports on a State fiscal basis, and did not have to also report on a Federal Fiscal year basis. This conversation is currently taking place.

The major strengths identified are:

1. Platforms and processes are in place to support local districts and the State programs.
2. Teams or districts have developed plans for implementation of Common Core and Teacher Evaluations.
3. Teacher induction processes are in place in all districts and most are implementing an induction program.

The major challenges identified:

1. The nature and scale of proposed reforms create anticipated and unanticipated delays in the pace of progress toward RTT objectives.
2. Implementation of RTT initiatives requires that highly skilled contractual personnel be recruited; hired; oriented; retained and, as needed, replaced.

3. Maryland's history of LEA autonomy must be balanced with the need for

collaboration with MSDE and across LEAs. Evident of such joint engagement supports the likelihood of broad and deep reform.

On the last point, presenters shared that they consistently heard that MSDE was perceived as shifting from enforcing regulation to capacity building, and the question was how to balance that. They stated that CAIRE will continue its evaluation through the impact stage to determine if the intended results from the overall reform are indeed achieved.

Board member Walsh asked about purpose of presentation. She expressed frustration about how report is received, with not enough attention being paid to data. She asked if future presentations could be more expressly targeted to board's interest. She asked for more data on teacher evaluation and process, information on how teachers feel about negative evaluations, and whether is professional development is targeted to the needs of the teacher. She added that without seeing data, the board does not have a sense of how Maryland is doing with Race to the Top. She shared that she feels it is their responsibility as a board to be more knowledgeable.

Mr. Foran stated when RTTT started, there was no project for teacher evaluation but since that time, a separate, 55th project has begun (for teacher evaluation) and is on-going. Ms. Walsh stated that since it was the most contentious issue, it should be monitored. Mr. Foran explained there was a pilot program in seven districts but each was different and the data is not consistent. Ms. Walsh asked that the board be presented the data at a future meeting.

Board member Gates discussed Calvert County's use of data and how that showed them what is and isn't working.

Mr. Foran shared that Dr. Lowery designated single staff member responsible for teacher-principal evaluation, and he recommends having that as single agenda item. Dr. Lowery reported on the process of designating that person who reports directly to her. She suggested copying the board on weekly updates sent to her by that staff member.

Board member Montero Diaz asked about sustainability after grant funding has ended. Mr. Foran stated they are concerned about sustainability of all projects and they are looking at each project one by one to assess it. Mr. Brooks and Dr. Lowery shared the government made it clear funding would be going away and sustainability in the state had to be dealt with. Dr. Lowery stated they cannot maintain all the people brought on board to build Race to the Top, and they will need to prioritize moving forward within state parameters. She added there was no indication the state is going to increase MSDE's budget, so they are working to build capacity and plan to manage accordingly.
Memo
CAIRE Final Report
CAIRE Presentation

School Progress Index

Mary Gable and Carolyn Wood, MSDE, presented a summary and overview of the components, calculation, and results of the School Progress Index for 2012. According to their presentation, the School Progress Index (SPI) addresses Indicators of "progress"--Achievement, Closing Achievement Gaps, Student Growth, and College-and Career-Readiness. At each level and for each progress Indicator, actual performance is compared to the progress target. A value of 1:00 indicates that the progress target was achieved. Values less than 1:00 indicate progress that fell short of the target. The School Progress Index is a weighted composite of these Indicators. The State Summary of School Progress by Level shows:

Elementary
- Achievement-0.9931
- Gap-0.9843
- Growth-1.0118
- College/Career Readiness-N/A
- School Progress-0.9852

Middle
- Achievement-0.9843
- Gap-0.9766
- Growth-0.9766
- College/Career Readiness-N/A
- School Progress-0.9562

High
- Achievement-0.9936
- Gap-0.9602
- Growth-0.9766
- College/Career Readiness-1.0002
- School Progress-0.9816

363 schools (25.8 percent) achieved an SPI of 1.00 or higher and achieved all three Progress Indicators. 61.5 percent were classified in Strand 2 or Strand 3, indicating attainment of one or more Progress Indicators. 12.7 percent of schools were classified in Strand 4 or 6.

The board engaged in a discussion about understanding the progress made in closing the achievement gap, and how to communicate the data in a way that is easy for communities to grasp. The board and staff also discussed the complexity of the formula and data, and discerning what is behind the numbers, and how it all will evolve as assessments come on board.

Board member Walk talked about family needs and the urgency of life versus analyzing data from your child's school. He suggested breaking it down into two components – a math model for those needing the data, and a "sound bite" model for the community. Dr. Grunwalder, MSDE, was asked to talk about model used with Early Childhood Education, and Dr. Lowery stated this model could be used with K-12.

The board and staff discussed "strands", and how that information will be what communities and schools are most interested in, including what is area of weakness in the strand and how will schools be addressing that area.

Board member Walsh asked if all the schools in the state were represented in the data, and staff said they were. Ms. Walsh stated it would be helpful to see the data in other forms so that it is more enlightening.

Board member Walk stated that when a school is struggling, it seemed wrong to give them five years to improve, given that every year, kids fall into the abyss. He suggested that the strands be more critical and more descriptive of a school that is in trouble.

Dr. Lowery explained there were only three options by the federal government, and they decided that option A was best for students. She further explained that Option B just moved the NCLB concept of 'all children achieving" date from 2014 to 2020, which they did not feel was a good option. She further explained that Option C only had a slight tweak to option A, and there was not much difference. She added that in 2014 they can decide if they want to stay on the same path with common core and PARCC implemented, or adjust in some other way.

Memo
School Progress Index publication

Review of Master Plan Updates

Walter Sallee and Portia Bates, MSDE, provided the board a presentation on the 2012 Bridge to Excellence Master Plan updates and the implementation of Maryland's Race to the Top Initiative for local school systems.

It was shared that due to an illness, Queen Anne's County's Master Plan would not be available until Wednesday, Dec. 19, so it was recommended to the state superintendent for conditional approval. All other plans were available and recommended to the state superintendent for approval.

The board and staff engaged in a discussion of how the budget is calculated with respect to the Master Plan, and how it relates to the standards.

Memo
Master Plan Presentation

Model Policy - World Languages Credit Proficiency

MSDE staff presented a proposed model policy that, if adopted by local boards of education, would enable school systems to award high school credit to students based on demonstrated language proficiency. COMAR 13A.03.02.05 already provides an option for local school systems to award credit by exam. The proposed model policy recognizes that Maryland's diverse student population has opportunities to develop language skills outside the classroom and provides a framework for local school systems to award credit for demonstrated proficiency.

Memo

COMAR 13A.11.01, 11.02, 11.06, 11.08
Programs for Adults with Disabilities (ADOPTION)

MSDE staff presented this to the board explaining that it amends the above to comply with the Federal Regulations and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 and to implement other technical changes and clarifications.

Memo and Regulations

State Superintendent's Update

Dr. Lowery reported on a December 6, 2012 letter to Governor O'Malley from the United States Department of Education regarding the amendment to Maryland's approved Race to the Top grant project. Dr. Lowery explained this has been shared at the superintendents meeting and that they had an honest and frank conversation.

Letter

Dr. Lowery also shared that at the last meeting with Secretary Duncan and the state superintendents participating in RTTT, it was decided that the full group was unwieldy when it

came to making decisions in a timely manner. She added that the solution was to have a smaller group of superintendents on a steering committee. When asked if she would be on that steering committee, Dr. Lowery explained that the group would be 'on call' to meet quickly, and given the needs of Maryland and the on-going work on teacher-principal evaluations, she felt it best to not be on the committee. She added that because of their conversations with the higher education community in Maryland, she felt Maryland was in a better place with regard to PARCC assessments.

Upcoming Legislative Session

Renee Spence, MSDE, reported on the upcoming 2013 Legislative Session. She shared that Dr. Lowery has met several Annapolis legislators, and made a presentation before the Ways and Means Committee on the board's vision for education in Maryland. Ms. Spence stated that as a result of that presentation, other committees are requesting the same.

Ms. Spence stated that there are tentative dates for six upcoming budget hearings.

Ms. Spence shared that one area of interest in the upcoming session will be college and career readiness, and a briefing has been tentatively scheduled for some time in February. She further stated that David Spence, who chaired the task force several years ago, will be asked to discuss college readiness.

Ms. Spence stated that while the fiscal outlook is better, they don't believe there will be funding driving legislation, meaning there could be proposals to change policy that does not have a price tag attached.

Ms. Spence shared there was interest in Maryland's charter school law, now 10 years old, and that some legislators want a task force to look at current charter schools and how they are progressing. Ms. Spence also reported there was also interest in:

- early childhood education and expanding preschool opportunity in Maryland
- physical education requirements (minutes)
- financial literacy as a graduation requirement (Comptroller Franchot)

Ms. Spence shared that Delegate Luedtke asked about a survey regarding High School Assessments (HSA) and asked when MSDE would be reporting back. Ms. Spence stated that the survey shows that social studies is being taught in elementary, middle and high school, and MSDE will be reporting that.

Ms. Spence shared that there were currently two MSDE regulations before the Joint Committee on Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review (AELR), those being teacher certification and the discipline regulations, and no details are yet known about when or if there would be hearings. Board president Dukes said that State Board members are interested in being in attendance the hearings.

Board member Walsh asked about the committee and the implications of regulations being before them. Ms. Spence explained that the AELR is a legislative committee made up of senators and delegates who review regulations for legal sufficiency, and they may hold a regulation if they require more information or want a hearing to allow various parties to testify regarding the regulation. She added they may hold the regulation for up to a year. Dr. Dukes requested an explanation of the process at the next SBOE meeting.

Board member DeGraffenreidt asked how this action interacted with the Race to the Top grant and commitments made with that. Dr. Lowery responded that Maryland's grant promised alternative pathways to certification. She explained that once MSDE received a letter from the AELR, they will know more. Mr. DeGraffenreidt asked if Governor's office was aware of the AELR's action and what was in jeopardy with teacher certification and the discipline regulations. Dr. Lowery stated that the governor's office was aware.

Board Member Update/Reports

Board vice president Finan shared that the Teacher Effectiveness Council had the same presentation from Mary Gable that they had that morning, and it was well received.

Board member Sidhu shared that NASBE asked her to be a part of panel that presented on Capitol Hill, and it went very well.

Board member Smith shared that he attended the conference at Turf Valley last week and it was excellent. He stated that he felt it reaffirmed direction the state board is moving in with discipline.

Board member DeGraffenreidt said he also attended the conference and that it exceeded expectations. He stated that he agreed with Dr. Smith.
Board member Staton stated that she hoped it was understood they attended because of they stand behind the work the board has done with student discipline.

President Dukes stated it was good to see state board outside of the board room, showing they are committed to the work they are doing.

President Dukes made two announcements:

- Regarding the student discipline regulations, the board received numerous comments during the comment period; staff is analyzing them and will come before the board in January. She added they will follow up to ensure the AELR process is understood.
- The task force on traumatic brain injuries and concussions was due to report in December but was granted an extension until January.

Public Comment

A parent at Southwest Baltimore Charter School came before the board to express how pleased her child and family were with the school.
A parent at Southwest Baltimore Charter School asked for support for the charter school movement because of success of the school.
Joseph Gannon, professor at Loyola University, husband of a teacher, and parent of a Baltimore County student, schools parent, urged the board to make sure their Gifted and Talented regulations are being implemented properly
Thomas Hearn, a parent from Montgomery County, suggested the board move the public comment portion of the meeting to earlier in the day, that the board broadcast their meetings online, and that they reconsider their policy to not engage in discussion with people making public comment. Mr. Hearn also spoke to the board about sports related concussion injuries, and shared he has been attending meetings of the task force. He shared a handout with the board, and stated he was surprised to learn that Howard, Carroll, and Harford school systems all have very strong sports concussion practices but disappointed that Montgomery continues to be an 'outlier' on the subject.

President Dukes offered congratulations and best wishes to Dr. John Smeallie, Deputy State Superintendent for Administration, who is retiring at the end of December after 40 years.

Opinions

The State Board issued opinions in the following cases:

- Ayanna M. v. Howard County Board of Education, affirming the local board's motion to dismiss, as untimely filed, the appeal of a student residency and tuition reimbursement decision
- Sylvia Hill-Gilchrest v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, affirming the local board 's employee reassignment decision
- Donna and Kenneth L. v. Wicomico County Board of Education, dismissing the appeal as moot
- Dan and Lisa K. v. Prince George's County Board of Education, affirming the local board's Student transfer decision
- Michele Maupin v. Howard County Board of Education, affirming the local board's employee termination decision
- Janis Sartucci, et al., v. Montgomery County Board of Education, denying the appellant's request for reconsideration
- Darren and Suzie L. v. Montgomery County Board of Education, affirming the local board's student transfer decision
- Robin Shaffer v. Calvert County Board of Education, affirming the local board's personnel file decision
- Lyndon Watkins v. Montgomery County Board of Education, vacating the State Board's Opinion 12-5
- Tracy and Keith M. v. Prince George's County Board of Education, affirming the local board's student transfer decision
- Dunloy Townhome Condominium, Inc. el al., v. Baltimore County Board of Education, remanding for failure to provide published notice of the school site selection hearing in a newspaper of general circulation