

January 24, 2015

Cohort Graduation Rate and Dropout Rate Reports

Dr. Jack Smith, MSDE Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Henry Johnson, Assistant State Superintendent, and Chandra Haislet, Director of Accountability and Data Systems, presented the 4-Year cohort graduation and dropout data for 2014. Dr. Johnson reported that the cohort graduation rates continue to increase and the statewide dropout rate has continued to decrease since 2010. Dr. Johnson provided a graph depicting the cohort graduation rate trend over four and five years; and noted that this is the first time there is longitudinal data by cohort over four years as well as a four-year adjusted dropout rate for students.

Dr. Johnson presented cohort graduation rates by local school system and highlighted the five school systems that experienced the greatest improvements in the four-year cohort graduation rate from 2010 to 2014. He also reviewed cohort graduation by special services student groups which reflected a decline for English Language Learners (ELLs) from 2013. He noted that many of these students do graduate in five years noting a ten percent increase for the 5-year group. In response to a question from board member Montero-Diaz he stated that systems are using summer schools to provide additional training in English for those students. He also shared that staff is interested in the results from Florida where the education department has requested that ELLs are tested every two years instead of every year. He said that approval by the U.S. Department of Education would be required to allow Maryland to change this policy.

Board member DeGraffenreidt requested disaggregated data by local school system and identification of best practices. Dr. Lowery agreed to invite selected representatives to discuss data for their school systems at a future Board meeting.

In response to a question by Dr. Dukes about the dropout rates, Dr. Johnson said that educators in Prince George's County are doing a tremendous job working to retain ninth graders. He said that there are many factors that have an impact on graduation rates. In response to a question by Dr. Dukes, Dr. Lowery said that Maryland is among the highest performing states in the country and agreed to provide the Board with demographic data on student dropouts. Board member Staton asked that the Board do a deeper dive into the impediments in districts such as Baltimore City to keeping students in schools, and possibility of tracking students after they leave school. Ms. Haislet responded that the department is beginning to collect that data and agreed that it is important to know where those students go.

[Handout](#)

ESEA Flexibility Renewal Request

State Superintendent Dr. Lilliam Lowery introduced a panel including Dr. Jack Smith; Penelope Thornton Talley; Mary Gable; Henry Johnson; David Volrath; and Chandra Haislet. The panel presented a comprehensive overview of the pending ESEA Flexibility Renewal Request which is to be presented for action at the State Board's March meeting.

Ms. Talley provided a background on the ESEA Flexibility Waiver approved by USDE beginning in 2011. She reported that a workgroup has been established to produce an updated flexibility renewal request. Dr. Smith informed the board that he will present a revision at the February meeting and also provide a draft to the Maryland General Assembly at the end of February. He then discussed the four principles of ESEA Flexibility:

1. Transitioning to college- and career-ready standards and assessments;
2. Developing systems of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support;
3. Evaluating teacher and principal effectiveness and supporting improvement; and
4. Reducing duplication and unnecessary burden.

Dr. Johnson reported on Principle 1 noting that staff is working hard to provide assistance to LEAs and that all of the new standards are implemented. He said that regional forums are being held to glean feedback from educators to provide additional support. He reported that the PARCC assessments will be administered for the first time and should provide an opportunity for parents and students to know where the student stands at the end of the school year. He noted that when parents receive student reports this year, they will, for the first time, be able to see specific information on how their children did on the test.

In response to a question by Ms. Staton, Dr. Johnson noted that at least two years of testing are needed to determine scoring and that the process is valid and correct. Ms. Gable discussed Principle 2 stating that Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) will not be determined for this renewal. She said they will be establishing some framework for Priority, Focus and Reward Schools.

Ms. Haislet reported on a workgroup consisting of MSDE staff and eight local school system representatives who are engaged in evaluating the current School Progress Index (SPI) model and developing a new model. She shared that the group is preparing to draft a revised SPI to include the addition of a new key indicator of school culture defined by the LEAs and approved by MSDE.

Ms. Eberhart voiced her concerns with the timeline, noting that there is not sufficient time between determining the baseline and identifying schools that are focused for priority or reward schools. She asked how it would be possible to identify growth by January. Dr. Smith responded that the waiver will include a request for a baseline next year and then set performance growth. Dr. Lowery commended on the need to determine how we talk about growth based on targeted populations, and what is a realistic rate of growth.

In response to a question by board member Staton, Dr. Johnson responded that PARCC has taken the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into account on the tests and that work continues in this area. He said that teachers will continuously be taught UDL practices.

Mr. Volrath reported that all school systems are committed to implementing teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that use multiple measures of performance. He shared that the department is writing narrative pieces of evaluation that will apply going forward into a comprehensive document for submission. He said that next year will be very similar to this year and that no personnel decisions will be made. He said that during the 2017-2018 school year, all pieces will come together.

Dr. Smith provided a tentative timeline for submission of the waiver renewal request and said that it will not include an ELL waiver until Florida's waiver request is granted.

[Handout](#)

Social Studies Regulations (COMAR 13A.04.08)

Dr. Lowery noted that the State Board granted permission to publish the proposed amendments to the Social Studies program regulations last September; and that there were no comments received. She recommended and the Board granted final approval of the proposed regulations.

[Handout](#)

Home and Hospital Teaching Regulations (COMAR 13A.03.05)

Dr. Lowery noted that the Board granted permission to publish the proposed amendments to the Home and Hospital Teaching regulation in October of 2014 and that there were no comments received. She recommended and the Board granted final approval of the proposed regulations.

[Handout](#)

Local School Calendar Modification Requests

Dr. Lowery introduced William Cappe, LEA Liaison, to answer any questions regarding a request from Dr. Janet Wilson, Superintendent of Garrett County Public Schools (GCPS), to hold classes on the day after Easter which is a statewide school holiday to make up for school closings due to inclement weather. Dr. Lowery also requested Board authority to approve similar requests to modify the school year calendar submitted by other LEAs for the remainder of this school year. The Board approved the request to open schools on April 6, 2015. In addition, the Board authorized Dr. Lowery to approve similar requests to modify the school year calendar submitted by other LEAs for the remainder of the school year.

[Handout](#)

Legislative & Budget Update

The Superintendent asked Kristy Michel and Amanda Conn, Esq., Director of Governmental Relations, to provide a legislative and budget briefing. Ms. Michel reported on Governor Hogan's budget proposal; highlighting that many items affect the education budget such as a reduction in the amount of funding that certain counties and Baltimore City received under the Geographic Cost of Education Index, freezing the State Aide Formula, changes in library funding, and the elimination of merit increases for state employees. Dr. Dukes asked Board members to provide Tony South with any questions they have regarding the state budget. The questions would then be shared with Ms. Michel for response.

Ms. Conn reported that the Maryland General Assembly Session is off to a slow start. She provided information only bills to the Board and noted that there are many new members of the General Assembly. She reported that there will be two briefings this week.

Dr. Dukes stated that Ms. Conn will be providing the Board with regular updates on actions taken by the General Assembly as well as scheduling dates and briefings. She asked Board members to let Tony South know if they are interested in attending any legislative briefings.

Race to the Top Update

Ms. Thornton-Talley reported that all Race To The Top projects are completed other than twenty-four with a No Cost Extension. She stated that the Projects will all conclude by June 30th; with a final report after September, 2015.

[Handout](#)

Opinions

The State Board issued legal opinions for the following cases: Constance Jeanne Sammarco v. Prince George 's County Board of Education, affirming the local board's teacher termination decision; Gina D. v. Montgomery County Board of Education, affirming the local board's student transfer decision; David Eichelberger v. Board of

Education of Baltimore County, affirming the local board's employee termination decision; S. G. and D. G. v. Montgomery County Board of Education, affirming the local board's student transfer decision; Monica Jones v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, remanding the contract non-renewal decision to the local board; and Parent Advisory Council Friendship Academy of Math and Science v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, dismissing the appeal.