

**May 19, 2015**

## [Agenda](#)

### **Local School System Calendar Modification Requests**

The board considered requests from superintendents in Howard and Kent Counties to waive the last day of school in due to this past winter's inclement weather. Both requests were granted.

#### [Handout](#)

### **Early Childhood Update**

The board was provided information from the report, *Readiness Matters - 2014-2015 Maryland School Readiness Report*. Rolf Grunwald, MSDE, explained that this report establishes a new baseline - statewide, by subgroups, and for each of Maryland's 24 local jurisdictions. Based on the new higher standards, the new baseline results for this first year are:

- Nearly half of entering kindergarteners in school years 2014-2015 (47%) are demonstrating that they possess the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare them for the curriculum that is based on Maryland's new more rigorous kindergarten standards.
- 54% of females are demonstrating readiness compared to 40% of the males.
- More than half of Asian kindergartners (53%) white kindergarteners (57%), and kindergartners reporting two or more races (52%) are demonstrating this new level of readiness.
- Kindergartners with disabilities, those learning the English language, and those from low-income households have fewer students demonstrating readiness than Maryland's kindergarteners as a whole.
- Children who attended child care centers (57%) and non-public nursery schools (68%) the year prior to entering kindergarten exceed the statewide readiness average.

Dr. Grunwald also provided the board an update on the progress the implementation of the *Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant*. The early childhood reform efforts through the RTT-ELC enhanced Maryland's ability to be awarded one of the 18 federally funded Preschool Development Grant for expanding prekindergarten programs and Judy Center partnerships. MSDE is currently engaged in receiving a no-cost extension of the RTT-ELC for an additional year from January through December 2016.

Board members asked questions about the availability and affordability of programs. Dr. Grunwald stated that affordability is a concern for families whose income is above the low-income levels, and that this was being taken into account with pre-K expansion plans.

Board members asked about program assessment. Dr. Grunwald explained that Johns Hopkins University is doing a validation study that will be available at the end of the year.

Dr. Grunwald introduced a kindergarten teacher who was a member of the committee working on the assessment. She outlined the work of the committee and the process for administering the assessment. She stated that KRA is a much broader test than MSSR and gave much more detailed information that could be used immediately to inform instruction. Teachers are able to access tools and resources via an online site and also able to communicate with colleagues for support. Professional development has provided multiple avenues and resources for using the assessment results.

Board members asked questions regarding the time it takes to administer tests and pushback that cited stress on teachers and students. The teacher explained that part of the stress was as a result of using a new process and tool. She stated the process would become streamlined and improved over time, and her colleagues had shared they felt their feedback was accepted and taken into consideration when making changes.

The board also asked about the timing of information gathered and then shared with principals. Dr. Grunwald explained the process of disseminating the information not only to schools but also to communities in both English and Spanish, stating it was similar to the process used with the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR).

Board members asked questions about timing, participation, and data. New guy asked about gap - Lowery clarified that state is well aware and working vigorously to address the gap.

[Early Learning Challenge Grant Progress Report](#)  
[Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Report](#)

### **Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools, COMAR 13A.03.02**

The board considered adoption of the proposed amendments to the Graduation Requirement regulations that revise assessment regulations for the two year transition from HSA English and Algebra assessments to the PARCC English 10 and Algebra I assessments.

MSDE proposed to phase in passing the PARCC English 10 and Algebra I as a graduation assessment requirement, and phase out passing the HSA English and Algebra assessments. It was recommended that passing the PARCC English 10 and Algebra I become a graduation requirement in the 2016-2017 school year.

The proposed amendments to the Graduation Requirements regulation that reflect the transition plan as described above were presented on December 16, 2014. The proposed regulations allow a student who has taken an HSA-aligned or PARCC-aligned test in English and/or Algebra prior to the 2016-2017 school year to meet graduation requirements by passing the course and

taking the aligned assessment. The definition section of the regulation to define "HSA" and "PARCC Assessment" was also amended.

[Handout](#)

## **Update on State Tests**

Henry Johnson and Doug Strater, MSDE, provided an update to the board on the administration of the PARCC assessments (2014-2015) and the performance level setting process. Along with the updates of the current assessment program, they also included information needed for a discussion of future assessment programs after the 2014-2015 administration.

In response to board member Finn's question about promotion from grade-to-grade, Dr. Smith discussed past and current assessments and accountability systems, and decisions that are made at the state or the local level. Dr. Johnson said the state is not aware of any district that retains or promotes students based solely on state assessments.

Board members asked questions regarding cut scores, membership in the consortium, and test confidentiality and confidence in the test. Dr. Lowery explained test integrity and the ability to work interactively with test items online, and said that a bank of test questions was building.

Dr. Lowery also discussed working closely with Pearson to monitor what they are doing. She mentioned that states that have left the consortium are struggling because they do not have the expertise that Pearson does.

President Finan asked former board members Donna Hill-Staton and Charlene Dukes to join them at the table for the purpose of thanking them for their service. Several board members and staff expressed their thanks and appreciation for their service and leadership.

[Handout](#)

## **Recognition of Maryland's 2015-2016 Teachers of the Year**

The board recognized Maryland's newly named 2015-2016 local Teachers of the Year who will represent their school systems in the state and national Teacher of the Year competition.

[Handouts](#)

### **Permission to Publish:**

COMAR 13A.08.01.01E (Amend)

COMAR 13A.08.02.01 (Amend)

COMAR 13A.02.06.02B(9) (Amend)

Student Records Manual

MSDE staff made a presentation to the board, reviewing proposed revisions to the Maryland Student Records Manual System (MSRMS). Changes fall into four categories: updated language for increased clarity, updates to align the amended policy and/or regulation, updates to reflect changes in procedures at MSDE, and removed duplication and/or replication.

Staff highlighted specific changes to the manual regarding Maryland's Guidelines for a Code of Discipline that will impact how local school systems report data to the state, but does not stipulate what codes are used at the local level.

Staff highlighted next steps which include working to solidify an SRSM annual review process aligned with state procedures for updating regulations, and assembling a committee to review and create procedures for the collection of arrest data for collection in SY 2015/16.

The board members asked about discipline codes, how records are completed and how they travel with students from school to school, and classification of race and gender identification. Staff explained that Maryland used the same race classifications as the federal government.

[Handouts](#)

## **Legislative and Budget Summary**

Dr. Lowery introduced Amanda Cann, MSDE, who provided with a summary of actions taken by the 2015 Maryland General Assembly that affect Maryland public schools.

Staff highlighted the following items:

HB452/SB497 Commission to Review Maryland's Use of Assessments and Testing in Public Schools

SB635 State Board of Education and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board  
- Alternative Teacher Certification Program

HB298 - Student privacy

HB942 - 450 hours of workspace training

Board member Finn requested that information on charter bills be compiled and provided to the board for discussion.

[Handout](#)

## **Race to the Top Update - LearnMD Demo**

The board was provided a high-level assessment of the current status of MSDE's RTTT project with a No Cost Extension (NCE).

MSDE staff provided an overview of the LearnMD Portal which provides access to a collection of systems and resources for educators and other interested stakeholders. Users have access to instructional resources, online learning and professional development, data dashboards, and information on educator certification.

[Handout](#)

## **State Superintendent's Update**

Dr. Lowery reported that as a result of the Augustine Commission Report, an apprenticeship program to give students work-based applied opportunities is being designed at the national level. As this work progresses, she will report back to the board.

Dr. Jack Smith presented Maryland Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators, which is part of the flexibility waiver through the U.S. Department of Education. He explained that each state is to submit a plan describing the steps it will take to ensure that "poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of field teachers.

[Maryland State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators](#)

## **Public Comment**

Katherine Grace Harness, Prince George's County Public Schools student and 2015-2016 state board student board member, spoke about the need to reduce testing.

Theadora Scarato addressed carcinogen risk from wireless devices in schools.

## **Opinions**

The State Board issued opinions in the following cases:

- Brian and Audra Lew v. Montgomery County Board of Education, dismissing the appeal as untimely
- Montgomery Soccer, Inc. v. Montgomery County Board of Education, staying the appeal for 60 days until the court case is concluded
- Rhonda T. v. Montgomery County Board of Education, affirming the local board's decision regarding student compensation
- Paula R. v. Charles County Board of education, affirming the local board's decision regarding a homeless student classification
- Thomas Tyler v. Harford County Board of Education, affirming the local board's decision regarding an employee demotion
- Violeta G. v. Howard County Board of Education, affirming the local board's student residency decision;
- Allison York v. Prince George's County Board of Education, remanding the employee dismissal case for a full evidentiary hearing