

**September 22, 2015**

## **Announcement of New State Board Members and Interim State Superintendent**

Board President Guffrie Smith opened the meeting by announcing the appointments of new State Board Members Stephanie Iszard and Laura Weeldreyer; the appointment of Dr. Jack Smith as Interim State Superintendent of Schools, following the resignation of Dr. Lillian Lowery; and Dr. Henry Johnson as Dr. Smith's replacement as Chief Academic Officer.

## **Principals of the Year**

The State Board recognized elementary and secondary school principals of the year.

The Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals (MAESP) presented the 2015 National Distinguished Principal of the Year award to Mrs. Carol Hahn, Principal at Bellows Springs Elementary School in Howard County. The Assistant Principal of the Year is Mr. Mathew Wagner, currently Principal at Boonsboro Elementary School in Washington County.

The Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) presented the 2015 Middle School Principal of the Year award to Dr. Monifa McKnight from Ridgeview Middle School in Montgomery County. The 2015 High School Principal of the Year is John Baugher from Francis Scott Key High School in Carroll County.

[Handout](#)

## **Legal Argument**

The State Board heard oral arguments in the case: *Colin Murphy, et al. v. Anne Arundel County Board of Education*.

## **Annual Teacher/Principal Evaluation Report**

David Volrath, MSDE, and representatives from the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center at WestEd presented the Annual Teacher and Principal Evaluation Report: "Change in Practice in Maryland: Student Learning Objectives and Teacher and Principal Evaluation." Mr. Volrath acknowledged Dr. Lowery's leadership in launching the program of outside, third party evaluation of Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation system. William Slotnik, Daniel Bugler, and Guodong Liang, presented the study.

Mr. Slotnik presented the study methodology and survey responses. The overall response rate from teachers was over 30% and over 60% for principals. The overall perceptions of the evaluation system were presented over the three year period from 2013 through 2015, and show significant increases in

positive perceptions of the evaluation system. Similarly, both principals and teachers are reporting a decrease in the type of support they need to implement the evaluation system.

Three groups or types of districts were identified: instructionally focused; compliance driven; and range of capacities and approaches. Some school systems were described as having a “this too shall pass” attitude, and attitudes of certain administrations and teacher associations were criticized. Emphasis was placed on school systems implementing their evaluation system with a focus on using student learning objectives (SLOs) and creating a coherent instructional improvement process.

Presenters described the role of teacher observations, and the use of the Charlotte Danielson model in most Maryland school systems. The study found that improvements are needed in building the capacity of teachers and principals in conducting high quality observations to ensure that all parties are communicating and collaborating on positive outcomes. In addition, the presenters addressed the implementation of principal evaluations. A concluding recommendation was that school systems use the new evaluation system as a means to review, reconsider and restructure many other programs.

Board Member Chester Finn asked why the study refers to school systems anonymously. Mr. Slotnik and Dr. Smith responded that participants are assured of anonymity. Dr. Smith distinguished this from the reporting next month on the actual evaluations, which do identify the respective school systems. Mr. Slotnik described the participants as including teachers, teacher organization representatives, administrators, and in several cases the superintendents. He stressed that the systems with the highest levels of implementation are those with superintendents who have attended the evaluation trainings.

Board Member Laura Weeldreyer asked if each school system will receive a copy of the report, and the process of soliciting survey responses. Panelists responded that the report is being distributed, and that the survey is conducted over a four week period with a strong role of the teacher unions in promoting responses. Ms. Weeldreyer commented further on her belief that this is critical moment to maintain if not accelerate the efforts to build on the significant investment already made and the value to instruction across the state. Board President Guffrie Smith urged identification and promotion of best practices. Mr. Slotnik agreed, and responded that this is a very recently emerging field of developing measures such as student learning objectives (SLOs) and corresponding measurable evaluation systems.

### [Handouts & Report](#)

## **Home Instruction Regulations**

The State Board granted permission to publish proposed regulations to modify existing regulations governing home instruction (COMAR 13A.10.01.01-.05). The proposed regulations would expand the scope of recognized home instruction by replacing the phrase “teacher his or her child at home” with the following new language: “provide a home instruction program for his or her child”. This change is intended to facilitate the dual enrollment of students receiving home instruction in part-time or full-time college courses.

Board Member Chester Finn asked how many and what percentage of students are home schooled in Maryland. The total was reported as approximately 26,000, or 3%, which tracks the national average. Mr. Finn also asked about the definition of “school” under COMAR 13A.09.09.02B; and it was clarified that this is the definition of nonpublic school. He asked whether there was an association of home schoolers in Maryland, and it was clarified by the panel that there has been no association for many

years, but a stakeholder group does meet and was presented with this proposed regulation. A member of the audience stood and addressed the Board to lodge a complaint that home school stakeholders were not appropriately consulted on these regulations. Board President Smith assured her that there would be ample opportunity to comment on the proposed regulations.

## [Regulations](#)

### **Teacher Certification Assessments**

The State Board approved implementation dates and new qualifying scores for the PRAXIS II content assessments in Early Childhood Education and Computer Science. After lengthy discussion, the State Board approved the recommended scores but also modified the recommendation by limiting the duration of these new scores to two years.

## [Handout](#)

### **PARCC Performance Level Setting**

Dr. Henry Johnson, MSDE Chief Academic Officer, and Dr. Strader, MSDE, presented the report on the performance levels set by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) consortium for the PARCC assessments. The scores have been set for assessments in English/Language Arts and Mathematics (Grades 3 – 8) and English, Algebra I, and Algebra II for High School. Mr. Strader described the process of developing the performance levels and scores, and addressed the question of why the results are not yet available. He indicated that the preliminary data includes only online test takers, which excludes the over 18% of Maryland students who took the assessments using paper tests. For this reason, Maryland data will not be released until all results are compiled.

Board Member Eberhard highlighted for the Board the recent decision of the PARCC governing board to limit the successful levels to 4 and 5, in contrast to an earlier decision to include levels 3 through 5. Board Member Sidhu shared her experience in participating in the very positive and realistic discussions of the PARCC consortium in developing these scores, without compromises that lower the bar. She also voiced her enthusiastic support for recognizing that Common Core is in 43 states and these standards are important to preparing our students for success.

Board Member Iszard asked about the impact on students who do not score a 4 or 5, and asked if we are ready to equip teachers to achieve at these levels. Dr. Henry Johnson responded by observing that whenever we have adopted new assessments and standards, we have always seen scores at lower levels than desired, and commenced to work to address these inadequacies. He described professional learning opportunities already provided to teachers and principals under the new standards. Ms. Iszard also expressed strong support for involving parents in understanding the value and importance of these tests. Dr. Johnson responded by pointing to the unprecedented parental involvement materials being developed by MSDE, and discussions with Maryland PTA to continue collaboration in this important area.

Board Member Chester Finn criticized the report by asserting that a parent would have to have a Ph.D. to figure out that a child scoring a 2 is not on track for college readiness in the subject. Board Member Sidhu opined that mandating parent involvement starting in early education would help to solve these communication problems. Board President Guffrie responded that the MSDE and the State Board has to continue to identify and highlight best practices.

Board Member Linda Eberhart clarified whether the report will be from PARCC or MSDE. Dr. Smith responded that it is correct that the report is issued by PARCC, with the logo of MSDE placed on the issued report. Ms. Eberhart followed up by observing that the criticisms would therefore not be directed at PARCC but at MSDE.

PARCC is being evasive as to what parents are going to understand about the high standards they have set while making the outcomes difficult to interpret.

[Handouts](#)

### **FY 2017 State Education Budget**

Kristy Michel, MSDE's Chief Financial Officer, requested and the State Board approved the department's submittals to the Governor's Office for funding in the FY 2017 operating budget for State Aid to Education, State Aided Educational Organizations, the Longitudinal Data Center, Governor's Children's Cabinet, and MSDE's agency budget.

[Handout](#)

### **FY 2017 Library Capital Construction Projects**

The State Board approved the FY 2017 project recommendations contained in the County Library Capital Grants Program. A total of 13 library projects in 10 jurisdictions are included in this capital budget request.

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### **Update on Financial Reporting Requirements**

The State Board approved its annual authorization to the Interim Superintendent to inform and direct the State Comptroller to withhold state education aid from any school system not on compliance with state school financial reporting requirements.

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### **Commission to Review Maryland's Use of Assessments in Public Schools**

State Superintendent Jack Smith introduced Dr. Henry Johnson who presented an update on the process of meeting with each of the 24 local school systems to conduct a survey and evaluation of assessments. He described the intention to address the role of formative assessments and the impact of assessments on instruction. Amanda Conn, MSDE, presented the 320 page report on the assessment survey conducted by the department. She highlighted the report's focus on work remaining for the local school systems and for the department. The first timeline includes the November 30, 2015 deadline for local school systems responses to the survey, and a December deadline for MSDE to report to the General Assembly.

The second timeline involves the Commission on Assessments, which has not yet been appointed by the Governor. This body is due to produce a report by July 1, 2016; followed by a second round of public comments and deadlines in late 2016 for responses by local boards and the State Board to that report.

Board Member Chester Finn asked whether a State Board Member has been appointed to the Commission; and Board President Guffrie Smith responded that he is the representative. Board

Member Linda Eberhart noted that it appears that local school systems responded with different types of assessments. Superintendent Smith responded that the meetings with each system were purposeful toward the goal of clarifying which types of assessments were being requested. Ms. Conn responded to Mr. Finn to further clarify that teacher developed assessments were specifically excluded from the types of assessments MSDE was to survey under the legislation.

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### **Update on Maryland Assessments**

Dr. Henry Johnson, MSDE, updated the State Board on the status of State Assessment issues pertaining to the High School Assessments (HSAs), PARCC Assessments, Maryland School Assessments (MSAs), and Kindergarten Readiness Assessments (KRAs). Board Member Eberhart asked about improvements in the administration of the KRAs based on problems brought to the State Board's attention following the initial KRA administration last year. Dr. Johnson also reported on the participation rates and performance levels on the SAT and ACT tests. A new PSAT will be administered this fall, with a decision pending for the College Board on the future schedule of PSAT administration. Dr. Johnson reported on Maryland's continued high performance nationally on Advanced Placement participation rates and assessment scores.

In the spring of 2016, every single student will be asked to take a college placement exam, to be selected by each local school system. Dr. Johnson noted that school systems may utilize the PARCC assessments, AP tests, SAT, ACT, or the Compass and Accuplacer assessments to satisfy this legislative mandate. As Ms. Eberhart noted, students who do not achieve the requisite score on these assessments must enroll in a transitional course in their senior year.

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### **NASBE Delegate Selection**

The State Board affirmed their designation of Madhu Sidhu as Maryland's delegate to the 2015 Delegate Assembly of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE).

[Handout](#)

### **Opinions**

The State Board issued legal opinions in the following cases:

- Linda C. v. Montgomery County Board of Education, affirming the local board's student transfer decision
- Christopher T. and Karen D. v. Montgomery County Board of Education, affirming the local board's dismissal of the appeal for untimeliness
- In the Matter of Montgomery County Maintenance of Effort FY 2016, declining to order the county to appropriate an additional \$1.4 million for FY 2016
- Glen Payne v. Dorchester County board of Education, affirming the local board's decision to censure a board member
- Deliscia Casey-Pack v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, remanding to the local board for a determination on the timing of the investigation and decision to terminate employment