

**April 25, 2017**

In attendance were Board President Andy Smarick, Board Vice President Chester Finn and board members Laura Weeldreyer, Stephanie Iszard, Michelle Guyton, Rose Li, and David Steiner. Mr. Steiner was attending his first meeting following his recent appointment and confirmation.

### **Oral Argument**

The State Board heard oral arguments in the case: *In the Matter of Request for Removal of Local Board Member Karen Harshman*.

### **The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan: Policy Considerations**

The State Board received a series of reports on the work of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the department's internal committee on the State's implementation of ESSA.

### **ESSA Plan: Accountability Framework**

MSDE's Internal ESSA Committee, through its Accountability Subcommittee, produced a draft of the State accountability framework which includes definitions and methods of measurements for performance indicators. The report includes detailed accountability frameworks for elementary, middle and high schools; student growth indicators; and metrics for each accountability measure.

State Superintendent Karen Salmon presented an overview of elementary, middle and high school frameworks. For elementary and middle schools, the major components of the framework include: academic achievement, academic progress, English language proficiency, and school quality/student success. The high school framework includes: academic achievement, graduation rate, English language proficiency, college and career readiness, and school quality/student success.

MSDE staff, Dr. Mary Gable and Dr. Dara Shaw, presented on the measurement of student growth and the use of the student growth percentile (SGP) methodology. Dr. Salmon introduced Dara Shaw as MSDE's new Director of Research, and formerly the national research director with the Fordham Institute. The SGP methodology was described as comparing how much progress a student makes relative to other students who had similar prior test scores. In one scenario, a student whose 3 point increase was better than 57 percent of his academic peers would have an SGP of 57. In another scenario a student's SGP was 79.

Board President Smarick noted that although both are above average in their peer group, a student with an SGP of 57 may be performing above average but still at such a low level that he or she is falling behind. Board member Steiner asked why the decision has been made to a growth to norm referenced criterion referenced rather than growth to standard. He cited Louisiana as adopting the norm to standard approach. Dr. Shaw responded that the reason for rejecting the norm to standard approach arises from questions including what do you want to value, and how much do you trust a hard cut. She referred to

stakeholder input regarding not wanting to adopt a punitive system. Lastly, she cited the legislation that constrains how much of the system can be based on test scores.

Board Vice President Finn questioned having more weight on growth than on performance, especially if growth will be measured relative to the norm rather than against standards.

Dr. Shaw also described the proposed method for interpreting SGP for an entire school by taking the median SGP for the entire school across all grade levels. Board members Finn and Smarick questioned whether this method loses too much nuance to be helpful in determining the school's performance. Discussion clarified that the school's dashboard could include much more information which would provide this type of information. At the same time, an exceptionally low or high SGP would indicate outliers for accountability purposes. Staff also presented the possible use of a "level gain" methodology rather than the SGP methodology. She described the concepts of simplicity vs. precision and neutrality relative to both approaches.

Board members Steiner, Smarick, Finn and Weeldreyer engaged in a series of probing questions regarding the staff's reference to a value neutral methodology and concerns with not adopting a performance standards and ensuring performance against that standard. Staff clarified that the reference to neutrality is to mathematical neutrality and the avoidance of over reliance on a single score. Board members spoke in favor of adopting a standards-based accountability system and reference Ohio as having done so.

MSDE staff proceeded to review the definitions of measures for each indicator, beginning with 15% of academic achievement attributable to English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. Board members queried whether students are counted twice, and staff responded that 7.5% would be based on student performance in each subject area. Board members Steiner and Li questioned the binary approach to measuring proficiency and discussed revisiting any decision made previously by the State Board, given the time available before the State's Plan must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) in September.

Also discussed was whether the 5% attributable to the 95% participation rate should be in the academic or non-academic section of the accountability system; and whether moving it to the nonacademic section could provide 5% more for academic achievement (from 15% to 20%). Staff appeared to agree that since this participation rate is not based on assessment scores, it could be moved out of the academic section under the recently enacted state law.

Dr. Shaw discussed measuring growth for Kindergarten to grade 3 based on the census-based administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) and sampling of student performance by school. Board members supported the goal of measuring K-3 growth but requested more information on how the KRA sampling works under Maryland's revised law to determine if this component should be included.

Another component of the accountability system for elementary and middle schools would allocate 5% for access to or credit for completion of a well-rounded curriculum. Staff described the strong support for this measure among stakeholders who have concerns with inattention to subjects such as art, music, physical education, social studies, and science. Board member Smarick voiced support for determining student success in addition to participation or access to participation in these subject areas. Staff responded by reiterating the limitations imposed by the state law and the inability to utilize assessment outcomes under this section. Board members and staff discussed other limitations regarding the access

component and the 10% attributable to the climate survey, whether these could be combined, or other creative approaches to implementing the state law while focusing on student achievement

Dr. Shaw proceeded to present the accountability system for high schools, including 10% allocated for the 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, 5% for the 5-year cohort, 10% for progress in achieving English language proficiency, 5% on-track in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and 15% allocated for AP, IB, SAT, ACT, Dual Enrollment, Career Technical Education (CTE) concentrator, and postsecondary enrollment.

Board members engaged in a lengthy discussion of their desire to be more comprehensive in this types of achievement recognized under the 15% allocated for completion of certain programs. Specifically, board member Guyton asked about students qualifying to enter the military and board member Finn asked about other employment qualifications not reflected in this category.

Dr. Salmon referred to this component as an incentive to schools to enroll students in CTE programs, and cited the new state law setting the goal that by 2025 45% of students will be CTE completers.

Board member Steiner spoke in favor of a measure of achievement for career and employment readiness, and cited such a measure in New York, as opposed to a measure of participation in a course or program that may be uneven in quality in rigor among school systems and schools. Dr. Shaw responded that the intention is to credit advanced standing in CTE, which would require the successful completion of certain courses.

Board member Guyton inquired about recognition of the programs for students receiving special education, and Dr. Gable responded that this issue has been raised by the stakeholder group and will be pursued.

Staff reviewed the components common to elementary, middle and high schools, including: 15% for chronic absenteeism, 10% for the climate survey, and 10% for access to effective teachers. Board members Weeldreyer and Finn voiced opposition to using access to effective teachers as a measure of school quality. Ms. Weeldreyer urged the removal of this component, and distinguished that she would not oppose showing it on a dashboard, but is opposed to counting it within the accountability system. Board member Steiner critiqued a system that would allow a school scoring a D academically to achieve a C or better based on the nonacademic factors.

Staff next presented data for an elementary school based on the measures described above, describing an elementary school demonstrating high performance and high growth. In the example provided, the school received a score of 86. The board engaged in lengthy discussion of the need for clarity that this score does not mean the school is in the 86<sup>th</sup> percentile. Dr. Shaw highlighted that this score is one of several and can be rescored relative to other scores and factors. She then presented results for elementary schools with high performance and low growth, high growth but low performance, and low performance and low growth. Board discussion focused on the merits of using multiple scores for the various factors rather than a summative score given the lack of clarity to parents as to what such a score actually means. Also discussed was whether the calculation and determination of the lowest 5% performing schools in the state must be based on the summative score or could be based on solely academic factors or other indicators. Staff indicated that they would research this question.

[Handouts](#)

## **ESSA Plan: Support for Excellent Educators**

MSDE's internal ESSA Committee, through its subcommittee on Support for Excellent Educators, presented a report on educator development, retention and advancement. The report by Sara Sprouse, MSDE, focused on certification, teacher preparation, and educator equity.

Ms. Sprouse described preliminary recommendations regarding teacher preparation, including the need for revisions of institutional performance criteria and professional development school standards. She outlined the needs to expand the routes to certification, increase the types of certificates, and revise the conditional certificate timeline and requirements.

Staff presented a slide not included in the materials that displays a flow chart of the role of the State Board and other entities in approving teacher certification and preparation standards. Board member Finn and Weeldreyer asked several questions regarding role of the State Board in crafting reforms, including raising standards for entry into teacher preparation programs and new teacher residency programs.

[Handout](#)

## **ESSA Plan: Support for Improvement for Schools**

Tiara Booker-Dwyer, MSDE, presented on the requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for identifying school for comprehensive support and improvement and targeted support and improvement. She highlighted the four domains of rapid school improvement including: turnaround leadership, talent development, instructional transformation, and culture shift. Ms. Booker-Dwyer described the root-cause analysis to be conducted by external stakeholders through engagement with a broad range of stakeholders including parents, students, and community partners.

Board member Steiner spoke to his concern with low performing schools diagnosing themselves and urged a clear role for the State in approving any turnaround plan. Ms. Weeldreyer spoke to the fact that root causes of school failure sometime falling outside the realm of what the school or system can control. Board member Steiner questioned if the state's response could include removing the school from the local board's control if the board was the problem.

Ms. Booker-Dwyer described the process of conducting needs assessments, root cause analyses, assessing the allocation of resources, and prioritizing needs for supports. She emphasized the role of implementing an MSDE-vetted curriculum aligned with state standards.

Board member Li asked why school improvements had to wait three years. Ms. Booker-Dwyer responded that MSDE is not waiting, and has already identified schools in Baltimore City and intends to identify rigorous strategies based on processes required under ESSA.

[Handout](#)

## **Project Lead the Way**

Somerset County Superintendent John Gaddis and a panel presented a report on the school system's Project Lead the Way Launch program. Board President Smarick noted that Project Lead the Way is a

national STEM initiative that involves a network of schools. Dr. Salmon noted that Project Lead the Way is also one of Maryland's capstone CTE programs and is present in almost every school system. Project Lead the Way Launch is the elementary school program, and was the focus of the school system's presentation. In response to a question from Dr. Finn, staff highlighted that Project Lead the Way is aligned perfectly with the Next Generation Science standards, and is also aligned with common core reading and math standards. However, staff distinguished that Project Lead the Way satisfies the physics requirements but not life sciences. In addition, staff praised the benefits of the program in promoting student engagement.

[Handout](#)

### **Innovative School Calendar Report**

Tiara Booker-Dwyer, MSDE, presented the draft recommendations of the Innovative School Schedule Workgroup. She noted that Maryland requires more hours than many other states with a 180-day school year, but also place more restrictions on the school calendar. This leads to innovation within local school systems.

The first recommendation is to extend the school year rather than extend the school day or week. The reasons include the desire to address the summer learning gap, and to avoid extending the school day any earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon. However, extending the school year is expensive and constrains the hiring timeline. Other recommendations focus on providing state-level technical assistance to local school systems, measures of the effectiveness of innovative strategies, and adding a significant amount of additional instructional time in core content areas. She noted the most controversial recommendation dealt with using certificated educators to facilitate instruction when implementing additional time in core content areas.

Board member Guyton and Weeldreyer praised the workgroup but also noted their support for the use of outside partners. Board member Finn spoke in support of virtual learning and other means of making enhanced learning time accessible to students.

[Handout](#)

### **Budget Update & Legislative Update**

Kristy Michel, MSDE, presented a comprehensive overview of the General Assembly's action on the State Budget for Education for FY 2018. She outlined the actions of the General Assembly relative to the budget proposed by the Governor, and described the portions of the budget providing additional resources to the Baltimore city school system.

Tiffany Johnson Clarke, MSDE, presented summaries of the major education-related bills enacted during the 2017 legislative session. The board discussed their desire to have a more proactive approach to legislation in advance of the 2018 legislative session.

[Handout](#)

## **Post-Labor Day and 180-Day School Year Waiver Requests**

The State Board the following waiver requests. The Board approved the application to waive the post-Labor Day school start date and June 15 school end date for the 2017-2018 school year for: Baltimore Collegiate School for Boys; City Springs Elementary/Middle School; Furman L. Templeton Academy; KIPP Harmony Academy; Lillie May Carroll Jackson School; and New Song Academy.

The State Board also granted the request to waive the 180-day school year requirement for Carroll County Public Schools for the 2016-2017 school year.

[Handout](#)

## **Public Comment**

The State Board received public comments from an individual in support of action to require earlier start-times for public schools.

## **State Board Strategic Planning**

The State Board briefly discussed a strategic planning proposal offered by board member Stephanie Iszard. The Board agreed to discuss it further at a future meeting.

[Handout](#)

## **Legal Opinions**

The State Board issued opinions in the following cases:

- *Keith Goines v. Prince George's County Board of Education*, affirming the local board's employee termination decision.
- *In the Matter of Request for Removal of Local Board Member Karen Harshman*, concluding that Ms. Harshman committed misconduct in office and willful neglect of duty and removing her from the Washington County Board of Education.

The State Board issued orders in the following cases:

- *Bash Pharoan v. Baltimore County Board of Education*, dismissing the appeal for untimeliness.
- *Board of Education of Howard County v. Renee Foose*, concluding that the superintendent's authority to approve contracts does not extend to the local board's contract with legal counsel because the superintendent has a personal, interest in the matter.