

March 24, 2020

[Agenda](#)

Notice of Meeting via Teleconference

The State Board issued a media alert to inform the public: “Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the March 24, 2020 meeting of the State Board of Education will be conducted entirely via teleconference. State Board members and presenters will participate via conference call. Members of the public will be able to hear the audio of the meeting in real-time via live stream and access the meeting materials at <http://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Pages/meeting-agendas/2020/2020-03-24.aspx>.”

Unfortunately, the connectivity of the audio was severely limited throughout the meeting due to the department’s server being overloaded with viewers and listeners. Board President Warner Sumpter was attentive to the need to repeat certain remarks and results of final actions to help ensure the public was being fully informed.

Opening of Meeting

Board President Warner Sumpter convened the teleconference meeting and was joined by Vice President Jean Halle, and all fellow board members including Justin Hartings, David Steiner, Michael Phillips, Rose Li, Gail Bates, Clarence Crawford, Charles ‘Chip’ Dashiell, Jr., student board member Noreen Badwi, and newly appointed member (and MDPTA designee) Lori Morrow.

Ratifying State Superintendent’s Closing of Schools

The State Board voted unanimously to approve the decision made by Dr. Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools, on March 12, 2020, to close Maryland public schools from March 16, 2020, to March 27, 2020. Her action followed by Governor Larry Hogan declaring a state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency on March 5, 2020, to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the State. On March 12, 2020, Dr. Salmon directed public schools in Maryland to be closed from March 16, 2020, through March 27, 2020, to reduce the threat to human health caused by the transmission of COVID-19 in Maryland, and to protect and save lives. Dr. Salmon consulted with State Board President Warner Sumpter and Vice President Jean Halle before announcing the decision.

Approving Request for Federal Accountability and Assessment Waiver

Assistant State Superintendent Mary Gable explained the request for the State Board to support the department's request for a waiver from federal, statewide student assessment requirements for the 2019-2020 school year. Ms. Gable reviewed the Flexibility for States on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Assessment and Accountability Requirements that the Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos released on Friday, March 20, 2020. The State Board was informed that the U.S. Department of Education has promised a response within one business day to any State that submits a waiver request using the optional waiver template. Maryland would not be required to complete public notification in advance of submitting the request, but rather may notify the public of the request and the opportunity to comment at the same time as the submission or shortly thereafter.

The State Board unanimously approved the request to submit the waiver request.

[Memo & Correspondence](#)

Social Studies Standards Regulations

The State Board voted unanimously to grant permission to publish amendments to state regulations under COMAR 13A.04.08 governing the Program in Social Studies. The State Board received a brief overview of the regulatory review process, including the input from local school system social studies supervisors, and recommendation to comprehensively reform the phrasing of the standards consistent with the use of "Students will inquire" as the leading action for each standard.

[Memo, Presentation, and Standards](#)

Session Summary

Tiffany Clark, MSDE Director of Government Relations, presented an overview of education-related bills passed by the General Assembly before the adjournment on March 18, 2020, due to the health concerns raised by the coronavirus COVID-19. She described the session as truncated and noted that while several bills were passed, none are law yet, as they await the Governor's final decisions.

Ms. Clarke focused her presentation on a comprehensive outline of the massive Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation. Other bills passed concern medical cannabis administration by caregivers in schools, the directive that MSDE develop trauma-informed guidelines for school system use, and a bill establishing a State Coordinator for Autism Strategy in the Department of Disabilities.

[Bill Highlights and Blueprint for Maryland's Future Outline](#)

State Superintendent's COVID-19 Update

Dr. Salmon briefed the State Board on her coordination with the Governor, the status of federal waivers requested and approved, and those most recently requested. She highlighted the statewide provision of hundreds of thousands of school meals, her three-times-weekly calls with the 24 local

superintendents, and the ongoing work in each local school system to develop continuity of learning plans pending further State actions on school closures.

State Superintendent Search Update

The State Board unanimously agreed to continue their search for a new State Superintendent, while praising Dr. Salmon for her leadership in these extraordinarily challenging times. They voiced their sincere appreciation for her agreement to continue to serve indefinitely until a new State Superintendent is selected.

State Board Legal Opinions

The State Board issued legal opinions in the following cases:

- S.K. v. Montgomery County Board of Education, affirming the local board's decision.
- Vikki Rayman v. Harford County Board of Education, affirming the local board's decision.
- K.C. v. Prince George's County Board of Education, dismissing the appeal pending the local staff review and local board decision previously ordered on remand.