

January 25-26, 2021

## Special Meeting of the State Board (Jan. 25, 2021)

On Monday, January 25, 2021, Board President Clarence Crawford convened the teleconference meeting and was joined by members, including: Vice President Jean Halle, Warner Sumpter, Rose Li, Joan Mele-McCarthy, Gail Bates, Charles Dashiell, Jr., Rachel McCusker, Lori Morrow, Shawn Bartley, Susan Getty, Holly Wilcox, and student board member Jason Wu.

[Meeting agenda, materials, and video](#)

### Opening Remarks

President Crawford opened the meeting with brief remarks thanking Governor Hogan for his budget proposal, including the critical hold harmless provision for enrollment-based funding and his support for reopening schools to return students to safe, in-person instruction. Board member Rachael McCusker also made opening remarks on behalf of educators who she described as being hurt and filled with anxiety by the Governor and Dr. Salmon's recent comments, including the directive to reopen schools for in-person learning in March.

### New State Superintendent Search Update

Board President Crawford introduced board member Gail Bates who described the work to select Greenwood/Asher Associates as the search consultant. Ms. Bates thanked Jan Greenwood and her team for their work, and Ms. Greenwood led the presentation of the key findings from their surveys, conversations, and other information gathering efforts.

Ms. Greenwood also reviewed the draft outline of professional qualifications and personal qualities, or soft skills, to solicit applicants for State Superintendent of Schools in Maryland. She noted whether to include specific references to the Kirwan Commission, which she described as being attractive to candidates, but also raised the concern about not wanting to get ahead of the recommendations going into effect.

Board members engaged in a lengthy discussion, seeking clarifications on the context of Maryland's search in terms of the 4-year contract, proximity to the nation's capital, the response rate to the survey to gather input on desired qualifications, the impact of the COVID crisis on the pool of candidates, and other factors.

[Greenwood/Asher Presentation on the National Search](#)

[Draft State Superintendent Job Description](#)

## COVID Dashboard and Student Performance

Dr. Carol Williamson, Deputy Superintendent, introduced Dr. Dara Shaw, MSDE's Director of Research. Dr. Shaw provided a detailed overview of the department's findings relating to the modes of delivery of instruction and student performance outcomes for the first quarter of the 2020-2021 school year.

Dr. Shaw also provided a detailed presentation of data gathered from local school systems on student enrollment, student attendance and participation/engagement, learning modes, equity in technology for learning, and personal protective equipment in schools. She highlighted the drop in enrollment from the fall of 2019 to the fall of 2020 from 909,414 to 882,538. She also noted that while white student enrollment has dropped by 6%, other student enrollment has dropped by less than 2%. The steepest grade level declines have been in prekindergarten and early grades.

Board members raised several questions about school facilities' issues to student performance and asked about available data on public school students enrolling in private schools or registering for home school. President Crawford asked about the department's response, through outreach and technical assistance, to outliers such as a system with only 60% of students having devices or a system reporting it had not had contact with 15% of students.

Dr. Salmon stressed that the report reflects only a snapshot of the last day of the first marking period in the fall of 2020. She described her weekly meetings with local superintendents and systems and the continuous efforts to utilize the available federal funding and benefit from best practices in other jurisdictions. Dr. Salmon highlighted the very recent allocation of another installment of federal funding, which will greatly benefit school systems in their efforts.

Dr. Williamson delivered a presentation entitled "Disrupted Instruction: A Path Forward." She described the extraordinary efforts to transition from school-based to home-based learning and the significant learning, social, and emotional toll on students. Dr. Williamson outlined strategies to address disrupted instruction through evidence-based acceleration. She highlighted the value of formative assessments, expanded learning time through summer and year-round programs, and focused on small groups of students and high-intensity structured tutoring. Also, Dr. Williamson noted the importance of sustaining early childhood education programs and Governor Hogan's commitment to these programs. Lastly, she described the need for MSDE's plan to monitor and ensure that local school systems invest funding equitably and with fidelity.

President Crawford asked Dr. Salmon for clarification on how the department could hold school systems accountable in a more directive manner than the guidance and "guardrails" provided in 2020, which has been criticized as inadequate. Dr. Salmon responded that a wealth of guidance had been provided since last June. Dr. Williamson responded that the department's more hands-on work to assist local school systems would have been beneficial. This is planned now as systems prepare to transition from mostly remote to much more hybrid instruction.

President Crawford also asked Dr. Salmon about whether the department should be concerned and monitor teacher burnout and a resulting teacher shortage in the coming school year. Dr. Salmon responded that she has not heard of educators leaving the profession but that she is concerned about the workload imposed on all school employees, including superintendents and principals, and certainly the food services and facilities staff, during this extended emergency.

- [COVID Dashboard and First Term Performance Metrics](#)

## Regular Meeting of the State Board (Jan. 26, 2021)

On Tuesday, January 26, 2021, Board President Clarence Crawford convened the teleconference meeting and was joined by members, including: Vice President Jean Halle, Warner Sumpter, Rose Li, Joan Mele-McCarthy, Gail Bates, Charles Dashiell, Jr., Rachel McCusker, Lori Morrow, Shawn Bartley, Susan Getty, Holly Wilcox, and student board member Jason Wu.

[Meeting agenda, materials, and video.](#)

### Public Comments

The State Board heard public comments from the following:

- Chris Lloyd, Chair of the Professional Standards Teacher Education Board (PSTEB), thanked the State Board for their consideration of his Board's recommended amendments to the State Board's proposed Educator Licensure regulations.
- Ojeda Hall, Executive Director of the One Love Foundation, which focuses on relationship health and preventing relationship violence, spoke in support of the State Board's decision to shift to a full year and course credit in health education required for graduation.
- A parent described the stress experienced by her children as Harford County public school students and urging the immediate reopening of schools for in-person teaching and learning without devices.
- Dr. Jack Smith, Montgomery County Superintendent, spoke on behalf of the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland (PSSAM), supporting the State Board's pending decision to transition the high school assessments from independent to end-of-course assessments.
- Dr. Patti Saelens, Caroline County Superintendent, spoke in favor of waiving all state-mandated assessments, not just the high school assessments, based on research demonstrating that grades rather than standardized test scores best reflect the learning and inform the instruction of our students.
- Michael Bunitsky spoke as a career educator and former school board member supporting decoupling high school assessments as high stakes graduation requirements.
- Colleen Bernard spoke in favor of civics education but opposed continuing to link the Government high school assessment as a graduation requirement.
- Cheryl Boast, President of the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA), provided remarks in response to what she described as being publicly disrespected and threatened with legal action by the Governor in support of school reopenings and Dr. Salmon's acquiescence in these actions. She outlined her support for continued progress towards safe school reopenings through vaccinating teachers and engaging educators in the process of educational recovery.
- Lisa Lake, a Prince George's County parent, spoke in support of reopening schools based on her son's experience and all students' needs for the benefits of the hybrid learning Governor Hogan is calling for beginning in March.

### Consent Agenda

In addition to the routine budget and personnel reports, the State Board also agreed to approve the 446 Title I schools roster as "comprehensive needs" schools to award the Quality Teacher Incentive Grants.

[Memo and Roster](#)

## **2021 Session Legislative Report**

Zachary Hands, MSDE Director of Government Relations, presented an overview of the legislative process and roles of MSDE and State Board during session and highlighted pending bills for the State Board's consideration and decisions. Mr. Hands explained that although MSDE, as a state agency, does not take positions on bills, the State Board may do so. He then presented the following bills, with the Board agreeing to oppose House Bill 465; the bill requires Senate confirmation for the State Superintendent's appointment.

[2021 Legislative Session Overview Presentation & Bill Report](#)

## **High School Assessments & Graduation Requirements**

The State Board heard a presentation on the recommendation to delink the high school assessments as an exit graduation requirement, which they approved. And move Maryland's current graduation exit assessments in algebra, English, science, and government to end of course assessments that account for 20 percent of the student's final grade in their respective high school level algebra, English, science, and government courses. Staff explained that the Maryland High School Graduation Task Force recommended delinking the assessments at the high school level because research shows that high stakes exit exams disproportionately and negatively impact minority and economically disadvantaged students, reducing their likelihood of graduation from high school.

The Board approved the department's recommendation that implementing this new policy for end of course assessments not go into effect until the 2022-2023 school year. During the transitional school years of 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, students will be required to take, yet not pass, the current assessments for these courses to graduate.

[End of Course Assessments for High School Memo & Presentation](#)

## **School Calendar Waiver Request**

The Board considered and rejected the Montgomery County Public Schools request for a school calendar modification to waive four days of student attendance for the 2020-2021 school year.

[Request from the Montgomery County Public Schools for a Calendar Modification](#)

## **Regulations**

### **Educator Licensure**

The State Board received a presentation on a set of revised regulations proposing comprehensive changes in the State's licensure of professional educators. Sarah Spross, MSDE, reviewed the over two-year series of actions by the State Board and Professional Standards Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) on these regulations. Ms. Spross explained that the pending regulations reflect some of the changes proposed by PSTEB, some blended language incorporating the State Board's and PSTEB's proposed language, and in some cases retain the language initially proposed by the State Board.

- [13A.12.01—.07 Educator Licensure](#) (*Repeal and Replace – Permission to Publish*); [13A.07.06 Programs for Professionally Licensed Personnel](#) (*Repeal and Replace – Permission to Publish*)

## Science Graduation Requirements

The State Board granted permission to publish for public comment in the Maryland Register regulations, reflecting the Maryland High School Graduation Task Force and the State Board's recommendations. These recommendations are to enhance the graduation requirements, adopt increased rigor, and move from stand-alone assessments to end-of-course assessments.

- [13A.03.02 Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland; 13A.04.01 Requirements for Computer Science, Engineering, or Technology Education Instructional Programs; 13A.04.09 Program in Science](#) (*Permission to Publish*)

## Student Transportation

On the department's recommendation, the State Board withdrew its previous approval to publish regulations governing disabled student transportation.

- [13A.02.06.07A State Financial Assistance Under the Disabled Student Transportation Grant; 13A.06.07.15B Reporting Requirements; 13A.06.07.18B Transportation Grant for Increased Ridership of Students with Disabilities](#) (*Withdrawal of Permission to Publish*)

## Opinions

The State Board issued legal opinions in the following cases:

- Northwood Appold Community Academy v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, affirming the local Board's non-renewal decision.
- George K. v. Montgomery County Board of Education, affirming the local Board's student assignment decision.
- C. M. and D. M. v. Montgomery County Board of Education, affirming the local Board's student assignment decision.
- Claire Zarrilli v. Anne Arundel County Board of Education, affirming the local Board's teacher contract non-renewal decision.
- India Ochs, et al. v. Anne Arundel County Board of Education, dismissing the appeal as moot.