MINUTES OF THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Monday
March 21, 2016

Maryland State Board of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

The Maryland State Board of Education met in special session on Monday, March 21, 2016, at 8:30 a.m. at the Nancy S. Grasmick State Education Building. The following members were in attendance: Mr. Guffrie M. Smith, President; Ms. Linda Eberhart; Dr. Michele Jenkins Guyton; Ms. Stephanie R. Iszard (by conference call); Mrs. Madhu Sidhu; and Ms. Laura Weeldreyer. The following Board members were absent: Mr. James H. DeGraffenreidt, Jr.; Dr. Chester E. Finn, Jr.; Dr. S. James Gates, Jr.; Mr. Larry Giammo; Mr. Andrew Smarick; and Ms. Quinn M. Wandalowski.

Elliott Schoen, Esq., Assistant Attorney General, Derek Simmonsen, Esq., Assistant Attorney General and the following staff members were also present: Ms. Kristy Michel, Deputy State Superintendent for Finance and Administration, Dr. Miya Simpson, Executive Director to the State Board, Dr. Henry Johnson, Interim Deputy State Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, and Dr. Karen Salmon, Deputy State Superintendent for School Effectiveness.

President Guffrie Smith opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. and welcomed members of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education. He then asked Dr. Jack Smith, Interim State Superintendent of Schools, to introduce the first presenter.

PARCC RESULTS BY MODE EFFECT

Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith briefly went over the history of the introduction of the PARCC assessments. He said, "It is going to take some time to know the results of online testing. We do know that we won't be giving paper and pencil tests throughout the country over the next couple of years." He asked Dr. Henry Johnson and Dr. Douglas Strader, Director of Assessment, to discuss a study of the PARCC results by mode of delivery (mode effect).

Dr. Johnson provided details on the numbers of tests given in grades 3-8 in English Language Arts (ELA), English 10, Algebra I and Algebra II and how they were administered -- either online or paper testing. Dr. Johnson brought the Board's attention to a *Final Technical Report for 2015 Administration* as well as an article entitled *Here's How the Method of Testing Can Change Student Scores* which support the findings of the study. He noted that pre-test files for the 2015-2016 school year administration indicated that over 92% of tests will be completed online (10% increase from last year) and that for school year 2016-2017 and beyond, all students will be assessed online. He said the only exceptions will be for students needing specific accommodations and situations where the school infrastructure will not support online testing.

Dr. Johnson provided graphs depicting school year 2014-2015 PARCC results by mode, content/test and performance level for math and ELA. He noted that there is a difference in the math results stating that some students had not been totally introduced to the new standards until 2014. He said, "That would have a bearing on performance levels." He also noted the greatest impact was in ELA, which reflected higher performance levels using paper and pencil. He provided the following findings:

- Comparison of mode by performance level illustrates that students that took the test on paper, tended to outperform the online test-takers on the ELA tests and higher level math tests
- Greater percentage of higher performing students in Maryland took the paper form
- No evidence of any particular student group impacted more than the population as a whole
- Items requiring extended responses most greatly impacted by mode favoring paper
- There is no evidence of any technical issues in the development, administration, scoring or reporting of the results.

In response to a question by Ms. Sidhu, Dr. Johnson said, "My opinion is that now that students know what is expected, I think you will see a greater concentration on preparing students."

Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith explained that there are three gaps:

1. The use of technology, day to day, has grown but is still uneven across the state
2. Students who are uneven in the skill level vary by classrooms
3. This is the first time students are looking at a test where there is no pre-identified writing.

In response to a concern expressed by Ms. Sidhu, Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith said, "The design of the test provides all information that you need to answer except the answer."

Ms. Weeldreyer suggested gathering input from teachers and students about their experiences with the PARCC tests. Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith said he will provide this information for the Board and said, "This is for life such as doing taxes and other things we do in our work. They will be learning new life skills."

In response to a question by Ms. Iszard, Dr. Johnson said that students with a Section 504 Plan will be able to opt out of online testing.

In response to another question by Ms. Iszard, Dr. Johnson said that keyboarding is only taught in elementary school and that students in middle and high school are expected to provide their work online.

In response to a question by Ms. Eberhart, Dr. Strader said that an analysis was done on students who scored a performance level of 3 or above to see if the length and time of the tests was an issue and the results showed that this was not an issue for students. Dr. Johnson said that the Consortium (PARCC) made adjustments to the length of the tests.

In response to a question by Ms. Sidhu about students who are unable to take online tests, Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith said that about one percent of the population will get a test with a different format and structure which will be used for the first time. Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith agreed to provide a presentation on this item. Dr. Strader said the test is entitled the *Multi-state Alternate Assessment (MSAA).* Dr. Strader went over the differences between Maryland's prior assessments and PARCC. He provided two computer links for understanding the student experience and discussed three possible reasons for the mode effect:

1. Technical issues with the test itself in the development, administration, scoring and/or reporting of results;
2. The population of students that took each mode of delivery varied, and/or
3. Readiness – students were not equally prepared to engage both modes of delivery.

Ms. Eberhart requested a more informed discussion about *computer adapted testing.* Dr. Strader agreed to provide more information on this topic.

BRIDGE PLAN FOR ACADEMIC VALIDATION

Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith asked Dr. Johnson and Cecilia Roe, Director of Instructional Assessment and Professional Learning, to provide the Board with information regarding an update on the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation as referenced in COMAR 13A.02.06.

Dr. Johnson said, "The Board has said repeatedly that whatever happens, we continue to have alternative methods for students to learn." He explained that the Bridge Plan adopted by the Board in the year 2007 needs to shift to new standards. He said the goal is to ensure that all students have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills of state standards.

In response a concern expressed by Ms. Sidhu about no representative from the Division of Special Education in attendance, Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith said that staff present can answer any questions that are posed. Ms. Eberhart said, "This is an alternative assessment, not special education."

In response to a request by Ms. Sidhu, Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith agreed to provide the Board with a breakdown of the percentage of students in Maryland that participate in the Bridge Program who are served through the Special Education Program.

Ms. Roe said, "This program was not designed just for special education students – that wasn't the original intent." Ms. Roe discussed the current structure of the Bridge Program and provided a chart showing the number of projects to be assigned in the four content areas. She also presented a chart depicting graduation rates for Maryland students which included bridge completers.

In response to a question by Ms. Eberhart, Ms. Roe explained that the reason more and more students are doing Bridge Projects is because some students are more comfortable with this type of assessment.

In response to a question by Ms. Weeldreyer, Ms. Roe explained what the term *combined score* means.

Ms. Roe discussed the revisions that have been made to the Bridge Process/Protocols and the Student Bridge Projects in each content area. She explained that focus groups were created to gain input from LEAs and provide recommendations.

Dr. Johnson said, "We will be able to work with teachers and students in the creation of projects on some of the weakest areas for a student, conduct an item analysis and develop a plan project around that area."

Ms. Eberhart said, "It is individualized for each student."

Ms. Roe explained that it is a large burden on schools to grade Bridge Projects. She reported that the structure of the Program has been revised to reduce the number of projects and take advantage of the learning component/increase flexibility. She also explained that students can complete a Bridge Project as early as ninth grade.

Ms. Roe reported that in the spring of 2016, Pilot Programs for PARCC English 10 and PARCC Algebra I and projected 2016-2017 pilots for Government and the new Maryland Integrated Science Standards will be conducted. She provided a list of the districts involved in the pilot program and said that districts will provide feedback to MSDE as far as time and scoring of the assessments.

Ms. Eberhart summarized the following:

1. The Bridge Program is designed by the State with input from all districts;
2. The teacher of a student doing a Bridge Project will not score the Project;
3. The MSDE does an audit of random samplings of Projects to provide feedback to districts and to ensure that they are being scored consistently across the State.

Dr. Johnson reported that training is provided to those who score Projects.

In response to a question by Ms. Eberhart, Ms. Roe said that if a student's Bridge Project does not pass, they are given an opportunity to revise the Project.

In response to a question by Dr. Guyton, Ms. Roe said that teachers who work with students doing Bridge Projects vary across the State but that there is a Bridge Project Monitor in every district.

President Guffrie Smith said, "Education and awareness is key. Special effort is needed to get information out."

MARYLAND SCIENCE PROGRAM

Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith asked Dr. Johnson and Heather Lageman, Director of Curriculum, to provide follow up information regarding the implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which have been adopted as the Maryland State Science Standards.

Dr. Johnson said that with the adoption of the NGSS, Maryland is moving to a higher level of learning in Science.

Ms. Lageman provided a graph showing the states that have adopted NGSS from 2013 forward. She also provided a list of states that used the *Framework for K-12 Science Education* as the guiding document for standards development and have modeled their standards in a similar manner to NGSS.

In response to a question by Ms. Eberhart about why the Massachusetts Department of Education didn't adopt NGSS, Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith explained that MSDE is doing a comparison of what Massachusetts is doing.

In response to a question by Ms. Eberhart, Dr. Johnson said that every states does different assessments and that a comparison of Maryland to other states has not been done. Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith talked about testing options being done in other states and agreed to look into this for the Board.

Ms. Lageman said, "We are on the cutting edge. Other states aren't. We are working with national groups that are looking at implementation." Ms. Lageman provided communication materials that have been shared with district Science Supervisors which will be rolled out to all stakeholders.

Ms. Eberhart said, "There are a lot of additional questions on the sequence of courses. I think we will need to go deeper for our understanding."

Dr. Johnson said, "One of the things districts want to determine is when the assessment will be given. It will allow them to get through all of the various courses. We are there to support and help them. We would like to field test for a couple of years."

In response to a question by Dr. Guyton, Ms. Lageman referenced a link that will provide information on the percentage of students who are participating in higher science courses. Interim State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith said he can provide this information as well as the number of teachers who are certified to teach upper level Science courses.

President Guffrie Smith reported that he will discuss additional informational topics at the regular Board Meeting tomorrow.

Dr. Guyton suggested making these meetings more flexible and would like to add an opportunity for stakeholders to speak to the Board at the regular Board meetings. She agreed to bring this up at tomorrow's Board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack R. Smith, Ph.D.
Interim Secretary/Treasurer

Date: 4/26/16