



**Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.**  
State Superintendent of Schools

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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.  
**DATE:** June 22, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** BOE Digital Learning Update

**PURPOSE:**

To provide an overview of the Board of Education's Work Group past and present work.

**BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:**

Prior to the pandemic, the State Board of Education (BOE) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) realized that additional virtual options were required to meet the needs of all Maryland students. In July of 2018, a Board of Education Work Group was developed to identify existing online opportunities, examine other state virtual offerings, and to suggest ways to expand virtual teaching and learning in Maryland. This research led to the September 2019 establishment of a Digital Learning Advisory Committee (DLAC) comprised of various stakeholders. DLAC was tasked with providing guidance and timelines to ensure equitable experiences and opportunities for all students.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This presentation provides an overview and updated information regarding various accomplishments and activities related to virtual and blended programs. It will incorporate the past and present work of the Board of Education Work Group and the members of Digital Learning Advisory Committee as well as future plans. A virtual project supported by ESSER set-aside funding will be shared.

**ACTION:**

Information for discussion.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Digital Learning Update PPT



# **BOE Work Group Digital Learning Report**

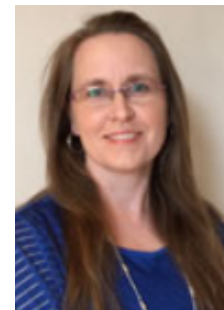
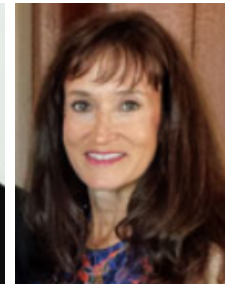
**June 22, 2021**





# BOE Work Group

- Established in July 2018 to explore existing and new opportunities for online learning in Maryland
- Meetings occurred regularly for last two years
- Last full report was presented to the State BOE - September 22, 2020
- Periodic updates provided during BOE meetings
- Current Committee Members:
  - Four Board of Education members
  - One former student board member
  - Five MSDE staff





# Digital Learning Advisory Committee (DLAC)

- State BOE approved the creation of the DLAC in September 2019
- Monthly meetings beginning January 2020 included twenty-two members
- Twelve additional members joined in 2020 to include:

# DLAC Committee Members

Member Name	Title
Donna Baker	Teacher Specialist, AACPS
Brian Beaubien	Supervisor Online Learning, MCPS
Carol Beck	Director, Office of Innovation, MSDE
Brian Dulay	Executive Director, Maryland Business Roundtable for Education
Colleen Eisenbeiser, Ph.D	AACC Dean, Learning Advancement and the Virtual Campus
Brad Engel	MSDE, School Effectiveness Specialist
Julie Evans, Ed.D.	Project Tomorrow, Executive Officer
Marquita Friday	Director of Career Programs, MSDE
Anna Gannon	Maryland State Education Association Representative
Robin Hopkins	Parent
Joey Jones, Ph.D	Montgomery County Public Schools, Administrator
Yasmine Juhar	Prince George's County Public Schools, Student



# DLAC Committee Members

Member Name	Title
Marsye Kaplan	Special Education Specialist (Early Childhood), MSDE
Andrew Moore, II	Director of Technology, Harford CPS
Scott Nichols	Acting Coordinator of Career Programs, STEM, and Computer Science, MSDE
Becky Pensero	Coordinator of eLearning, Harford CPS
Peggy Pugh, Ed. D.	Assistant Superintendent for Administration & Leadership, Washington CPS
Nina Riggs	Mathematics Specialist, MSDE
Kelly Ruby	Coordinator of School Counseling, Howard CPS
Leeann Schubert	Director of Educational Options, Baltimore Co. PS
Amy Shepler	Supervisor of Instruction, Caroline CPS
Gina Solano, Ph.D.	Professor, Salisbury State University
Susan Spinnato	Director of Instructional Programs, MSDE

# DLAC Committee Members

Member Name	Title
Tonya Sweat	Maryland PTA
LaTanya Taylor	Child Care Credentialing Specialist, MSDE
John Tomkins	English Language Arts Educator, Charles CPS
Jonathan Turner	Lead Specialist-School Counseling, MSDE
Christine Welch, Ph.D.	Administrator, Worcester CPS
Carol Williamson, Ed.D.	Deputy State Superintendent for Teaching & Learning, MSDE
Shane McCormick (staff)	Executive Assistant, MSDE
Erin Senior (staff)	Digital Learning Educational Specialist, MSDE
Val Emrich (staff)	Director of Instructional Technology, School Library Media, Mathematics, MSDE



# BOE Work Group

## Five Areas of Focus

- Learning Management System
- Online Courses
- ESSER Funds
- Virtual Programs
- Digital Learning Framework



# State Learning Management System

**Goal:** Provide an option for all local school systems (LSS) to access resources and/or utilize space in the state learning management system (LMS).

## Benefits:

- Optional space for an LSS to use if needed
- Economy of scale
- Consistent platform for cross collaborative initiatives for professional learning and development of student courses
- Identify best practices/processes for resource conversion





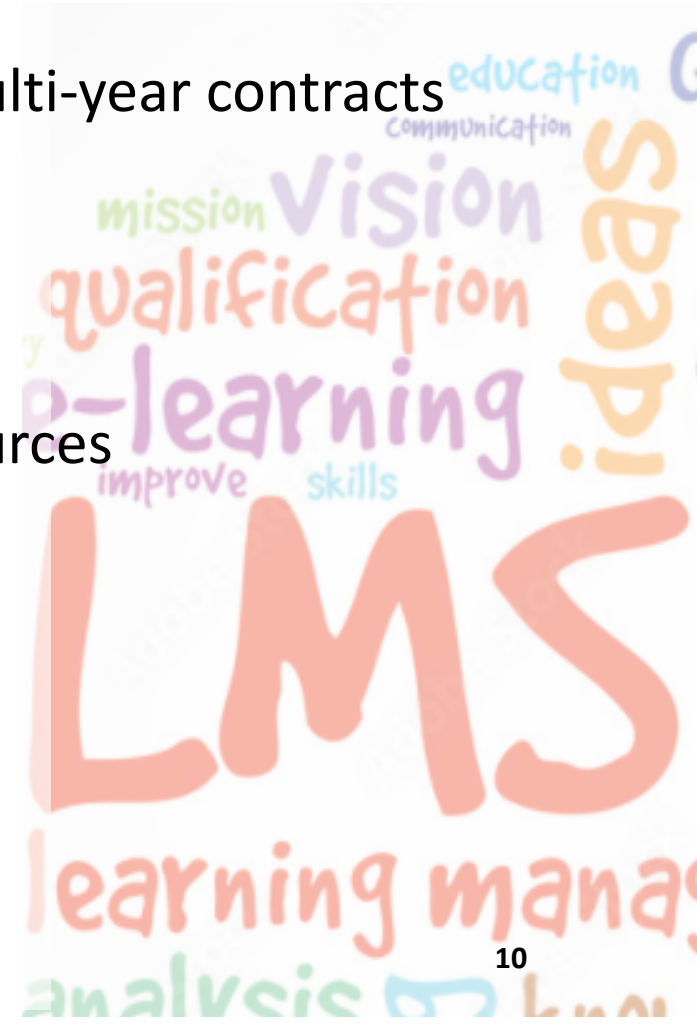
# State Learning Management System, cont.

## Current:

- State acquired Canvas/Instructure
- Canvas and LMS inventory of what other LSSs are using and multi-year contracts
- LSS platforms – 10 Schoology, 1 Blackboard, 3 Canvas, 1 Frog Education, 1 ItsLearning, 2 Other
- Migration of all resources, course, and eCommunities
- Development of new courses and uploading of statewide resources

## Recommendation:

- Task DLAC to develop a communication strategy that demonstrates benefits of collaboratively using the State LMS



# Online Courses

**Goal:** Provide equitable opportunities across the state for students to participate in online credit-bearing courses.

**Current:**

- Catalog of over 300 approved MSDE and vendor courses (content and accessibility)
- Local practices vary in allowing student enrollments in online courses
- MSDE courses are favorably priced as opposed to vendor courses
- MSDE student and professional learning courses under development





# Online Courses

## Recommendations:

- Task DLAC to identify best practices (awareness, application, approval)
- Task MSDE to:
  - continue development of courses
  - provide State guidance for cross-district instruction
  - continue to identify high demand courses for MSDE development
  - monitor new course utilization



# ESSER Funds

**Goal:** Utilize designated State set-aside ESSER funding to expand digital opportunities.

## **Current ESSER Development:**

- Fifteen student courses and six professional learning courses
- Online and blended facilitator training
- LMS and associated development/design tools
- External evaluation of course development and piloting of courses
- Expansion of accessibility review capabilities
- Funds to support interested LSSs' adoption of two phases of Digital Learning Framework



# ESSER Funding

Student Courses	Educator Courses
<p>Develop, purchase, and/or customize 15 student online/blended courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social Studies 5 and 6 - MPT</li><li>• Algebra I, Geometry, Data Science - MPT</li><li>• Science 5 - MPT</li><li>• Chinese I, Chinese II, III, Spanish IV, French IV</li><li>• Health</li><li>• Foundations of Computer Science, Principles of Computer Science</li><li>• American Government</li></ul>	<p>Develop, purchase, and/or customize 6 educator online/blended courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data Science – MPT</li><li>• Social Justice (Equity) - MPT</li><li>• Remote Teaching (blended)</li><li>• SEL</li><li>• Learning Differences</li><li>• Teaching K-8 English Learners</li></ul>

# Virtual Programs and LSS Virtual Opportunities

**Goal:** Expand learning options for qualified students.

## **Current:**

- Application process in place for approving new virtual or blended programs/schools
  - Status of LSS virtual opportunities for SY 21-22
- Department is providing technical support to LSS exploration of virtual program options
- Many LSSs offer a virtual blended course recovery program and/or program for alternative students

## **Examples of Existing Programs:**

- Frederick County Virtual School (2012 - present)
- Baltimore County Alternative Program (2012 – present)
- Kent County Blended Virtual Program (2019 – present)



# LSS Virtual Programs 2021-22

## Current:

- **ESMEC Consortium Blended Virtual Program**
  - Application submitted and approved by MSDE Summer 2020
  - Opens fall 2021 for approximately three hundred middle and high school students
  - Nine Eastern Shore school systems participating – Talbot, Queen Anne's, Kent, Cecil, Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester, Caroline
- **Blended Virtual Programs:** Harford County, Cecil County, Frederick County, Worcester County, Baltimore County, Washington County, Charles County, Carroll County, St. Mary's County, Anne Arundel County, Prince George's County
- **Asynchronous Virtual Programs:** Carroll County, St. Mary's County

# LSS Virtual Programs 2021-22

## Potential LSS Operating Models:

- Vendor programs or LSS platforms
- Dedicated Vendor/LSS teachers
- Various audiences being considered such as:
  - Home school students
  - Students who exhibited success in virtual environment
  - Health compromised students

## Summary of Virtual Programs/Schools will be shared during the July 27<sup>th</sup> Board meeting

Included will be information related to:

- Type of programs
- Audience
- Testing
- Special Education accommodations



# Virtual Programs

## Recommendations:

- Task DLAC to develop best practice guidelines related to LSS evaluations of virtual programs
- Task DLAC and MSDE to recommend collaborative guidance for initial and continued student eligibility
- Task MSDE with monitoring plans

# Digital Learning Framework

**Goal:** Provide a framework that will assist interested LSSs as they address possible gaps related to the integration of digital teaching and learning throughout their school system

**Current:**

- Shared and discussed a recommended framework with Digital Advisory Committee, local leadership, and stakeholder groups (Superintendents, Asst. Superintendents)
- Provide financial incentives for participation in Future Ready self-reflection that informs future implementation
- Creating flexible milestones that interested LSS might follow regarding the framework





# Digital Learning Framework

## Recommendation:

- Task MSDE to identify pilot LSSs to participate in self-reflection.
- MSDE will provide a trainer to assist LSS pilots
- MSDE to provide funds to support implementation plan based on at least one identified gap area





