




Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

To: Members of the State Board of Education
From: Mohammed Choudhury, State Superintendent of Schools 
Date: June 27, 2023
Subject: National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Presentation of Maryland Self-Assessment Results

Purpose

To provide a briefing from NASBE to the State Board on the aggregate results of a self-assessment survey taken by the Board in the spring.

Background/Historical Perspective

In March 2023, the State Board began a self-assessment process through an opportunity offered by NASBE. This process concluded with the completion of a survey provided to the State Board in April 2023 that covered several topics related to Board operations, functioning, and policy focus. The goal was to collect an overall internal assessment of the Board's adherence to its mission, priorities, and goals.

Executive Summary

Paolo DeMaria, Executive Director of NASBE, will provide summary information on the various topics that the State Board provided feedback on through the self-assessment tool developed by NASBE for review and discussion to the State Board.

Action

No action is required; this information is for discussion only.

Attachments

NASBEMD-selfassessmentresults.pdf

NASBE

National Association of
State Boards of Education

Maryland State Board of Education Self-Assessment Survey Results

Prepared by the National Association of State Boards of Education
May 2023

Purpose

As with any organization, a state board of education can often benefit from a look in the mirror, and an honest assessment of how effectively and productively the board is performing. A well-designed self-assessment allows a board to identify strengths as well as improvement opportunities that can inform its future practices and actions. Such reflection ensures that the board of education maintains fidelity to the common mission of providing educational excellence with equity for all students.

Process

The self-assessment evaluation for the Maryland State Board of Education is based on feedback from individual board members regarding their overall board effectiveness. Individual board members ranked a series of reflection statements by stating whether they strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, or strongly agree. The statements align to four categories:

- **Mission, Priorities and Goals (9 questions):** The board has defined its mission and developed priorities and goals. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future plan is integral to defining the direction for the future of education in Maryland. These questions gauge the extent to which the board's work reflects those defining ideas.
- **Agendas, Meetings and Support (12 questions):** This category reflects the mechanics of how the board operates, so that it can work efficiently and with focus.
- **Collegiality and Collective Voice (5 questions):** Boards work best when members engage collaboratively and feel comfortable expressing their perspectives.
- **Stakeholder Engagement and Public Interaction (9 questions):** How the board collects and seeks feedback from the community and other agencies and uses this to inform board work matters greatly. These questions probe board members' perceptions on the type, degree and amount of public engagement.

An additional three open-ended questions were included at the end of the survey asking about overall impressions of the board's work.

Report Contents

The best approach to processing the information in this report is through review and discussion by board members. To help inform those discussions there are three parts to this report. First is this introduction which includes a short set of "**Observations**" at the end. The observations are meant to be a very high-level factual synthesis of the responses. Next, the "**Snapshot**" is a one-page compilation of all the questions and the percentage of responses by category for each. This allows

for a quick scan of all responses in a relatively concise format. (For reference, Appendix A include the exact wording for all questions.) Following the “Snapshot” are the **open-ended questions** (questions 11, 24, 30, 40, 41, 42, and 43) of the survey with responses presented verbatim. For these open-ended questions, highlighting is used to indicate the primary idea(s) in each response to facilitate the identification of patterns.

Respondents

Twelve Maryland State Board of Education members completed the Self-Reflection Survey between April 14 and April 28, 2023.

Observations

The following are some neutral, aggregate response-based observations:

- One statement received 100% of members responding “strongly agree” (priorities consistent with pillars of *Blueprint for Maryland’s Future*). All board members responded “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” on 12 questions; board members showed the strongest overall agreement for items in the Mission, Priorities, and Goals category.
- One or more board members responded “strongly disagree” on 11 statements.
- Seven questions had 15% or more of respondents marking “somewhat disagree” or “strongly disagree.” The majority of these (4) are in the “Agendas, Meetings, and Support” category.

Snapshot Table

Question	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	AGREE	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DISAGREE	Insufficient Knowledge
Mission, Priorities and Goals							
Understanding of Board mission & vision	76.9%	23.1%	100.0%				
Goals are appropriate to MD students & schools	46.2%	53.9%	100.0%				
Goals focus on evidence-based decision making	69.2%	23.1%	92.3%	7.7%		7.7%	
Goals based on disaggregated data	69.2%	30.8%	100.0%				
Focus on equity in all decision making	61.5%	38.5%	100.0%				
Board uses high-quality data to inform decisions	61.5%	38.5%	100.0%				
Communicates well with state commissioner	46.2%	46.2%	92.3%	7.7%		7.7%	
Stakeholders understand/support board mission/goals	30.8%	53.9%	84.6%	15.4%		15.4%	
Priorities consistent with pillars of Blueprint for MD's Future	100.0%		100.0%				
Agendas, Meetings and Support							
Agendas reflect board's role as citizens' voice	30.8%	61.5%	92.3%		7.7%	7.7%	
Agendas reflect board mission/goals	69.2%	30.8%	100.0%				
Agendas build on past work to move needle forward	53.9%	46.2%	100.0%				
Agendas prioritize student achievement & well-being	38.5%	53.9%	92.3%		7.7%	7.7%	
I understand process to submit items for agenda	76.9%	7.7%	84.6%	7.7%	7.7%	15.4%	
Adequate time spent on right issues	23.1%	53.9%	76.9%	23.1%		23.1%	
Time that meeting takes place is right & accommodates my schedule	30.8%	46.2%	76.9%	15.4%	7.7%	23.1%	
Frequency of board meetings is adequate	46.2%	46.2%	92.3%	7.7%		7.7%	
Enough time to review agenda before meeting	69.2%	30.8%	100.0%				
Sufficient resources and materials before meeting	84.6%	15.4%	100.0%				
I receive support needed to make informed decisions	61.5%	23.1%	84.6%	15.4%		15.4%	
Served well by staff of Department	61.5%	30.8%	92.3%		7.7%	7.7%	
Collegiality and Collective Voice							
Healthy, effective collaboration	76.9%	23.1%	100.0%				
When disagreement, consensus can be reached	46.2%	46.2%	92.3%	7.7%		7.7%	
Board operates in a nonpartisan way	53.9%	38.5%	92.3%		7.7%	7.7%	
Board makes decisions effectively	69.2%	30.8%	100.0%				
Easily engage in conversations/discussions during meeting	61.5%	30.8%	92.3%		7.7%	7.7%	
Stakeholder Engagement and Public Interaction							
Public provided with enough resources to understand and engage	38.5%	46.2%	84.6%	7.7%	7.7%	15.4%	
Board convenes right groups to inform decisions	38.5%	61.5%	100.0%				
Board works well with other state agencies	30.8%	53.9%	84.6%	15.4%		15.4%	
Board has strategy for communicating with stakeholders	30.8%	46.2%	76.9%	23.1%			
Receive valuable comments from public to make decisions	46.2%	38.5%	84.6%	7.7%	7.7%		
Meetings are effective and accessible to the public	69.2%	15.4%	84.6%	15.4%			
Public engagement is easy and accessible	61.5%	30.8%	92.3%		7.7%		
Meeting provides ample time for public engagement	61.5%	30.8%	92.3%		7.7%		
Necessary stakeholders appropriately involved in policy	53.9%	38.5%	92.3%	7.7%			

Appendix A - Survey Questions

The following are the questions that were used for the self-assessment by the Maryland State Board of Education.

Respondents were given five choices for response (Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree, and Insufficient Knowledge). A few questions were open ended, as indicated.

Mission, Priorities and Goals

1. Please enter your name below (OPEN ENDED)
2. I have a solid understanding of *our board's* mission and vision.
3. Our board sets goals that are appropriate to the needs of Maryland's students and schools.
4. Our board sets goals that focus on evidence-based decision making.
5. Our board sets goals that are based on disaggregated school, district, and state data where appropriate.
6. Our board focuses on equity in all decision making.
7. Our board seeks and uses high-quality data to inform all decisions.
8. Our board communicates well with the state superintendent of schools on mission and goals.
9. State stakeholders understand and are supportive of our board's mission and goals.
10. The board's priorities are consistent with the pillars of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
11. Reflecting on your answers above, what are your recommendations for improving the state board's focus on mission, vision, and goals? (OPEN ENDED)

Agendas, Meetings and Support

12. The meeting agendas reflect our role as the citizens' voice in education in accordance with our authority.
13. The meeting agendas reflect our board's mission and goals.
14. The meeting agendas build on past work to move the needle forward on education topics.
15. The meeting agendas prioritize student achievement and well-being as appropriate to the established goals.
16. I understand the process to submit and recommend items for our agenda as appropriate.
17. Our board spends an adequate amount of time on the right issues during each meeting to effectively accomplish goals and agenda actions.
18. The time during which the meetings take place is just right and accommodates my schedule.
19. The frequency of our board meetings is adequate for board effectiveness.
20. I have enough time to review our board agenda before each meeting.

21. I have sufficient resources and materials to review before each meeting.
22. I receive support needed to make informed policy decisions.
23. The Board is served well by the staff of the Department of Education.
24. Reflecting on your answers above, what are your recommendations for improving the state board agenda, meetings and support for consideration within the next 1-2 years? (OPEN ENDED)

Collegiality and Collective Voice

25. Our board engages in healthy, effective collaboration.
26. When there is a disagreement, our board can reach consensus effectively.
27. Our board operates in a nonpartisan way to accomplish goals.
28. During each meeting, our board can make decisions effectively.
29. I can easily engage in conversations and discussions during each meeting.
30. Reflecting on your answers above, what are your recommendations for improving collaboration and collegiality over the next 1-2 years?

Stakeholder Engagement and Public Interaction

31. Our board provides the public with enough resources to fully understand and engage in each meeting as appropriate.
32. Our board convenes the right groups to inform our decisions.
33. Our board works well with other state agencies to make decisions.
34. Our board has a strategy for communicating with different stakeholders.
35. We receive valuable comments from the public to make decisions.
36. Our meetings are effective and accessible to the public.
37. Our meetings make public engagement easy and accessible.
38. Each meeting provides ample time for public engagement.
39. Our board appropriately involves necessary stakeholders in the policy process.
40. Reflecting on your answers above, what are your recommendations for improving stakeholder engagement for consideration within the next 1-2 years? (OPEN ENDED)

Overall Positives, Missed Opportunities, and Final Comments

41. What progress do you feel most pleased with over the past year? (OPEN ENDED)
42. What were the board's missed opportunities over the past year? (OPEN ENDED)
43. Other comments or feedback (OPEN ENDED)

Maryland State Board Self-Assessment

June 2023

Paolo DeMaria, President & CEO



Self-Reflection Survey



Mission, Priorities & Goals (9 questions)



Agendas, Meetings & Support (12 questions)



Collegiality & Collective Voice (5 questions)



Stakeholder Engagement & Public Interaction (9 questions)

Mission, Priorities and Goals:

Question	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	AGREE	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DISAGREE	Insufficient Knowledge
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Stakeholders understand/support board mission/goals	30.8%	53.9%	84.6%	15.4%		15.4%	
Priorities consistent with pillars of Blueprint for MD's Future	100.0%		100.0%				

Mission, Priorities and Goals

Comments

- Focusing on the needs of all students – low and high performing
- Engagement in legislative session

Key Takeaways

- Generally good agreement in this area; no strong disagreement
- Stakeholder theme shows up throughout

Agendas, Meetings and Support

Question	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	AGREE	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	DISAGREE	<i>Insufficient Knowledge</i>
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Agendas, Meetings and Support

Comments

- Focus agenda and time on priority issues that relate to action and impact
- Streamline presentations

Key Takeaways

- Use of time and meeting frequency worth discussing
- Agenda priorities and allocation of time
- Explain process for submitting agenda items

Collegiality and Collective Voice

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Collegiality and Collective Voice

Comments

- Foster honest and meaningful conversations even if there is disagreement

Key Takeaways

- Ensure members feel comfortable engaging
- Sensitivity to partisanship

Stakeholder Engagement & Public Interaction

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Necessary stakeholders appropriately involved in policy process	53.9%	38.5%	92.3%	7.7%		7.7%	

Stakeholder Engagement & Public Interaction

Comments

- Parent needs and perspectives
- Stakeholder engagement and awareness building; broad range of voices
- Invite and value all perspectives

Key Takeaways

- Better define stakeholder engagement and work to improve it
- Further discussion to discern ways to increase nature and value of public comments
- Clarify staff engagement

Other Comments

- Members are **pleased** with a variety of aspects of the board's work – focus on mission and vision, new hires, agenda, engagement, etc.
- **Missed opportunities** include legislative session/relations, building community and parent support

Further Processing, Pondering, and Planning Needed

What are the key takeaways from the survey?

What short-term actions do we need to take?

What long-term planning is required to improve board operations?

what's the
opposite of
pondering?



discard, ignore, disregard,
forget, neglect, agree,
go along



 Thesaurus.plus