

## **MINUTES OF THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Monday

December 4, 2017

Maryland State Board of Education

200 W. Baltimore Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

The Maryland State Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, December 4, 2017, at 10:00 a.m. at the Nancy S. Grasmick State Education Building. The following members were in attendance: Mr. Andrew R. Smarick, President; Dr. Chester E. Finn, Jr., Vice President; Dr. Michele Jenkins Guyton; Dr. Justin M. Hartings; Ms. Stephanie R. Iszard (via telephone); Dr. Rose Maria Li; Mr. Michael D. Phillips; Dr. David Steiner; and Dr. Karen B. Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Irene M. Zoppi Rodriguez and student Board member Kyle J. Smith were not in attendance.

The following staff members were present: Elizabeth Kameen, Esq., Assistant Attorney General; Dr. Carol Williamson, Deputy State Superintendent, Office of Teaching and Learning; Kristy Michel, Deputy State Superintendent, Office of Finance and Administration; Dr. Sylvia Lawson, Deputy State Superintendent, Office of School Effectiveness; and Dr. Miya T. Simpson, Executive Director, Office of the State Board.

President Smarick called the meeting to order.

### **BRIDGE PLAN FOR ACADEMIC VALIDATION**

*(Presenters: Dr. Theresa Alban, Superintendent, Frederick County Public Schools and Dr. D'Ette Devine, Superintendent, Cecil County Public Schools (representing the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland (PSSAM)); and Ms. Joy Schaefer, Frederick County Public Schools Board of Education (representing the Maryland Association of Boards of Education))*

A discussion of the implementation of the Bridge Plan for Academic Validation (Bridge Plan), which provides a process that ensures all students have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills if the student has proven to be unsuccessful on traditional high-stakes assessments.

Dr. Salmon provided a brief overview of the purpose of the Bridge Plan and introduced Dr. D'Ette Devine and Theresa Alban, who were representing PSSAM and Ms. Joy Schaefer, representing MABE. Dr. Devine explained that the Bridge option gives students who are not successful on the first pass of the PARCC assessment an opportunity to have appropriate assistance because the goal is to have that student successfully pass the assessment on the second attempt. She explained that the instruction is built into the Bridge project in various ways but most have it built into a class. Dr. Devine noted that students who have historically struggled include students with special needs and those for whom English is a second language. She stressed that the Bridge option is not an easy way out but an alternative for students who have different learning styles and learn at a different pace to demonstrate mastery of the same standards required for graduation. She also noted that given the increased rigor of PARCC, more students are struggling to meet the passing score.

Dr. Alban explained that Bridge projects are designed to meet state standards. She noted that students are first given an opportunity to retake the test and reiterated that the goal is to help them successfully pass. For those who are unsuccessful and utilize the Bridge option, the standards are not modified.

Ms. Schaefer discussed the Bridge Plan as a way to provide alternate pathways to graduation for students. She noted MABE's emphasis on "*Excellence through Equity*" and ensuring equitable access to education for all students.

Board members raised questions regarding whether the same standard is being applied to Bridge as exist for other graduation requirements, why Bridge is used more frequently than in other districts, the audit/monitoring procedures in place for Bridge, and if there is data on post-graduation activities of students who graduate by Bridge.

Dr. Guyton emphasized that the Board be aware of language and assumptions made regarding the special needs student community. The Board should not suggest that Special Education students should be held to a lower standard than other students.

Mr. Phillips expressed concern that Bridge is utilized at a high level in districts that serve a majority of African American students.

Dr. Hartings inquired about the policy implications and where the State Board can make a difference and influence implementation, rigor and outcomes. He stressed the need to ensure that Bridge is implemented fairly and consistently across the State, and that the diploma means the same thing for all.

Dr. Alban suggested attendance, technical support, and monitoring by MSDE for districts that are of concern.

Dr. Salmon proposed next steps, to include: setting standards for satisfactory attendance; reviewing the use of Bridge and exploring anything over a certain percentage of people utilizing this option; and establishing a process to bring back before the State Board.

President Smarick supported Dr. Salmon's recommendations for next steps and emphasized that the same standards should be met by Bridge and the state assessment(s), that there is a need for a Bridge option and ensuring projects meet standards, and that there should be an audit process.

*ACTION: None. For information only.*

### **SOCIAL STUDIES MIDDLE SCHOOL TEST/REVIEW STANDARDS**

*(Presenter: Dr. Carol Williamson, Deputy State Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; Bruce Lesh, Director of Social Studies, Science, and Disciplinary Literacy)*

Dr. Williamson and Mr. Lesh provided a brief overview of statute related to social studies assessments in high school American Government and eighth grade United States History and an update on the status of MSDE's progress in meeting the statutory requirements. Md. Ed. Art §7-

203, was passed in 2012 and amended in 2016 and 2017. The statute reestablished the high school assessment in American Government as a graduation requirement and established a middle school assessment in social studies. The 2017 amendments found in Md. Ed. Art §7-203(5)(i)(ii)(iii) require that the high school American Government assessment: *(i) consist, to the greatest extent possible, of criterion-referenced, performance-based tasks that require students to utilize critical and historical thinking skills and analyze primary sources; (ii) be administered, to the greatest extent possible, within existing class periods; and (iii) be implemented in the 2018–2019 school year, and each year thereafter.*

In Md. Ed. Art §7-203(b)(4)(i)(ii)(iii) the law also requires a middle school assessment in social studies: *(i) consist, to the greatest extent possible, of criterion-referenced, performance-based tasks that require students to utilize critical and historical thinking skills and analyze primary sources; (ii) be administered, to the greatest extent possible, within existing class periods; and (iii) be implemented in the 2018–2019 school year, and each year thereafter.*

Mr. Lesh explained that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is required to meet the legislative expectations for the High School American Government assessment and the eighth grade United States History assessment within the implementation deadlines set forth by the Maryland General Assembly. For American Government, the MSDE convened an American Government work group of teachers to examine and revise the state framework for American Government which is based on the State Board approved Social Studies Standards. This work was completed by the twenty-four Local Education Agency (LEA) social studies supervisors, an external group of social studies advocacy organizations and university academics. In addition, the teacher work group and LEA social studies supervisors, in consultation with other state assessment programs through the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) social studies assessment group, vetted a variety of item structures to determine the appropriate tool to measure student knowledge of American Government. Items are currently in the design phase and will be field tested with students in early 2018.

The department will use a parallel process for the middle school social studies assessment and convened an eighth-grade United States History work group of teachers to examine and revise the state framework for eighth grade United States History based on the State Board approved Social Studies Standards. This work was reviewed by the twenty-four LEA social studies supervisors, and is currently under review by an external group of social studies advocacy organizations and university academics. Final determination about item types to populate the middle school social studies assessment will be made in March 2018.

The department will establish teacher work groups for the 2018-2019 school year to revise the preK-5 social studies framework and the high school United States History framework. A timeline will be established to review the elements of the Civics education offered to Maryland Students.

*ACTION: None. For information only.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.  
Secretary/Treasurer

Date: December 5, 2017

*The information included here provides a summary of the agenda items presented and actions taken during the meeting of the Maryland State Board of Education. The audio recordings of the meetings are the official record of the meetings and can be located at:*

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Pages/Meetings-2017.aspx>