

MINUTES OF THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
RETREAT

Wednesday, December 7, 2005

Johns Hopkins University Downtown Center  
Room 102  
Baltimore & Fayette Streets  
Baltimore, Maryland

The Maryland State Board of Education held a retreat on Wednesday, December 7, 2005 at the Johns Hopkins University Downtown Center, Room 102, in Baltimore, Maryland. The following members were in attendance: Dr. Edward Root, President; Dr. Dunbar Brooks, Vice President; Mr. Henry Butta; Dr. Lelia T. Allen; Ms. Jo Ann T. Bell; Ms. Beverly A. Cooper; Mr. Calvin Disney; Dr. Richard L. Goodall; Dr. Karabelle Pizzigati; Dr. Maria C. Torres-Queral; Mr. David F. Tufaro; Mr. Joshua L. Michael, Student Member; and Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, Secretary/Treasurer and State Superintendent of Schools.

Elizabeth Kameen, Assistant Attorney General and the following staff members were present: Dr. Ronald Peiffer, Deputy State Superintendent, Office of Academic Policy; Mr. Richard Steinke, Deputy State Superintendent for Instruction and Academic Acceleration; Mr. Anthony L. South, Executive Director to the State Board; Ms. Mary Clapsaddle, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Business Services; and Dr. John Smeallie, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Certification and Accreditation.

**CONVENE**

Dr. Root called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. He explained that the purpose of this meeting was to gather information on and discuss the various recommendations contained in the September 2005 Report of the Governor's Commission on Quality Education in Maryland (The Steele Commission Report).

**INFORMATION SESSION -  
STEELE COMMISSION  
REPORT**

Dr. Grasmick distributed a chart which listed the thirty recommendations made by the Commission along with an analysis of each recommendation which had been prepared by MSDE and previously shared with the local superintendents of schools. The analysis included the level of governance that was either impacted by or would be impacted by implementation of the recommendation, i.e., legislation, State or local policy, or State regulation; if the recommendation or parts of the recommendation had already been implemented; and the feasibility of implementation of the recommendation.

She then introduced Mr. Thomas Lee, Executive Director of the Maryland State Retirement Agency and indicated that she would like for Mr. Lee to provide information on the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System as background for the State Board as it considers the second recommendation of the Commission regarding the Pension System. Before providing his remarks, Mr. Lee introduced Mr. Howard Pleines, Director of Legislation and Research for the State Retirement Agency. Mr. Pleines had accompanied Mr. Lee to the retreat and was there to assist in answering any questions that the State Board may have regarding the Pension System.

Mr. Lee gave an overview of the Pension System noting the downturn in investments over the years. He explained that the system is currently well funded but will see a downturn over the next several years. He said the Board of Trustees of the State Retirement System is recommending to the General Assembly that \$308 million will be needed in the next fiscal year to fully fund the current pension system. He said that if the State Board were to advocate a change in the current pension system he would urge them to propose a single system which will not burden the antiquated information technology system that is in place in the Agency.

In response to a question by Mr. Tufaro, Mr. Lee said that surrounding states are set up differently and it is difficult to compare retirement systems among other states. He noted that teachers and State employees are combined in the same system which is unlike several other systems. He explained that the total cost to provide everything that is needed for the System is approximately \$20 billion. He explained that salaries have the biggest impact on contributions to the System.

Dr. Grasmick said that information is needed as to whether teachers are leaving the teaching profession because of retirement benefits and going to other states where the benefits are better.

Using the chart and analysis, Dr. Grasmick then walked the Board through the other twenty-nine recommendations of the Steele Commission.

## **BREAK-OUT GROUPS**

Following the information session, Dr. Root assigned each of the Board members to one of three groups and indicated that Mr. Steinke, Dr. Peiffer, and Mr. South would serve as group recorders. He then provided the following directions to the group recorders:

1. Ask group members if they have questions or need additional information/data about any of the thirty recommendations. Record all questions and requests for data in appropriate box on sheet provided.
2. Ask the group to rank each recommendation on a scale of 1-3 (1 being high and 3 being low) in terms of the importance of Board action on the recommendation. Record ranking for each recommendation.
3. Ask the group to provide a brief rationale for all recommendations Receiving a rank of 1 (high). Record rationale in appropriate box.

He indicated that the groups should work through lunch in completing this task.

## **BREAK-OUT GROUPS REPORTS**

When the three groups had completed their discussions, Dr. Root asked that each recorder report the recommendations that received a ranking of 1 by their group and the rationale provided for that ranking.

The following recommendations were ranked high (1) by one or more groups:

1. Teacher Compensation
2. Pension
3. Tuition Waivers
4. Charter Schools
5. Statewide Summit
6. Process of Certification
7. Facilitate Innovative Programs
8. Support System Teachers and Principals
9. Delegate Certificate Decisions
10. Empower Principals
11. Enhance Parental Participation
12. Increased Accountability for Early Childhood Programs
13. Improve Early Child Care System
14. Best Practices Framework
15. Quality Process Improvement Approach
16. School Business Managers
17. Career Technology Education Programs

## **SUMMARY**

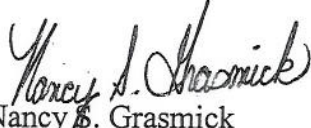
Dr. Root indicated that the results reported by the three groups will be evaluated by the Board officers as expeditiously as possible and that appropriate follow-up will be planned. Mr. Tufaro asked that any of the results that would require legislative action be expedited.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Dr. Root thanked the members for attending the retreat and for the effort put forward by all in considering the work and recommendations of the Governor's Commission. He also thanked Dr. Grasmick and staff for the information prepared for consideration by the Board.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Nancy S. Grasmick  
Secretary/Treasurer

NSG/jks

**APPROVED:**