

MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Wednesday  
March 11, 2009

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

The Maryland State Board of Education met in special session on Wednesday, March 11, 2009, at the Nancy S. Grasmick State Education Building. The following members were in attendance: Mr. James H. DeGraffenreidt, Jr., President; Mr. Blair G. Ewing, Vice President; Mr. Dunbar Brooks; Dr. Mary Kay Finan; Ms. Rosa M. Garcia; Dr. Ivan Walks; Ms. Kate Walsh; and Mr. D. Derek Wu. Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, Secretary/Treasurer and State Superintendent of Schools, was also in attendance. Dr. Charlene M. Dukes, Mr. Richard Goodall, and Dr. Karabelle Pizzigati were absent.

Elizabeth Kameen, Esq., Assistant Attorney General, and the following staff members were also present: Dr. John Smeallie, Deputy State Superintendent for Administration and Mr. Anthony South, Executive Director to the State Board.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

President DeGraffenreidt explained that this special meeting was convened for the Board to discuss the Governor's long-term vision to transform what is now the number one state public education system into a truly world class public education system. He listed the Governor's key strategic areas as follows:

- Measure Maryland student performance against international measures
- Establish single PreK—20 longitudinal data system
- Close the college readiness gap
- Improve Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education
- Strengthen and expand career and technology education
- Improve recruitment and retention of teachers and principals
- Seek federal competitive grants

He asked Superintendent Grasmick to discuss each area and provide the Board with the next steps in formulating a plan for their implementation.

Dr. Grasmick provided the Board with a comparison of the education priorities of the Governor and the U.S. Secretary of Education and noted the tremendous overlap. She explained that she will provide the Board with the current status, the challenges involved and the next steps for each strategic area.

## MEASURE MARYLAND STUDENT PERFORMANCE AGAINST INTERNATIONAL MEASURES

Dr. Grasmick reported on two international measures being conducted currently. She said that the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) compares students in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in the United States with students in thirty-seven other countries and that the next administration would be conducted in 2011. She explained that the cost is \$300 per student with a minimum requirement of 1500 student participants.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measures student skill development and is administered in fifty-seven countries. She said the next administration will be conducted in 2009 at a cost of \$450 per student with a minimum requirement of 1500 student participants. She noted that the State would not receive an individual state score but rather a score for the entire nation. Dr. Grasmick said that there is an opportunity for Maryland to collaborate with other states and said she would investigate this option with neighboring states.

Mr. Ewing explained that he met with Dr. Andreas Schleicher, Head of the Indicators and Analysis Division, PISA, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, who would like Maryland to participate in a Maryland specific program which would provide the State Board and Department with its own results. He noted that this would advance both the Governor's agenda and that of the U.S. Department of Education.

Dr. Grasmick urged that the Department work in tandem with ACHIEVE, Inc., on this effort and noted that the recently accepted technology literacy standards are benchmarked internationally. She also discussed the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program which is currently being conducted in forty schools in Maryland. Dr. Grasmick discussed a list of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills needed by students to compete in a global economy.

Ms. Walsh noted the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills list has been criticized in some education venues. She indicated that TIMMS is ready to go and that PISA has never been administered at the state level.

There was discussion about the selection process for the students and perhaps the need for a larger pool of students to insure adequate representation of all student groups. Mr. Brooks expressed his concern that students would not perform to their highest potential knowing that the test "does not count."

In response to a question by Ms. Garcia, Dr. Grasmick said that student diversity is not "teased out" in results of these tests.

In response to a question by Dr. Walks regarding what we would do with the information gained from either of these assessments, Ms. Walsh said that in the State of Minnesota the math standards were redesigned as a result of the TIMMS Report. Dr. Grasmick noted that the PISA Report would not provide an individual State report on results.

Mr. Ewing explained that the PISA test covers all students at age fifteen and that other countries have used the results to examine their core standards. He noted that the results are used by the countries to see if student measure their national standards.

Mr. Brooks said that the TIMMS results often show that students can do the computations in math but can't apply them as life skills.

Mr. Wu suggested that offering to provide an opportunity for students to travel to other countries if they participate in the test would provide a motivation for them to perform to their best ability.

Mr. Ewing explained that many of the PISA test questions deal with the ability of students to take what they know and apply that knowledge to unfamiliar challenges. He noted that the information gleaned from this measurement is very valuable.

NEXT STEPS: Mr. DeGraffenreidt asked Dr. Grasmick to report back to the Board about the possibilities of participating with other States on the PISA and/or TIMMS testing. Dr. Grasmick indicated that while having conversations with PISA and TIMMS, she will have a parallel conversation with Achieve, Inc. She will provide the Board with details on the richness of the data acquired and what Maryland can do with the information received.

### **ESTABLISH SINGLE PREK-20 LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM**

President DeGraffenreidt noted that along with a single preK-20 longitudinal data system for students, we should also have data on teachers to know why students are doing well.

Dr. Grasmick explained that there are ten data quality components that need to be tracked in such a data system and that Maryland currently has only three of these components – a unique student identifier, student level enrollment and demographic information, and information on students who are not assessed. She said that including the other seven components requires substantially more funding. Dr. Grasmick explained that the Department has applied for a \$6 million grant and is working to establish a teacher identifier. She noted that a teacher identifier is currently being implemented in twenty-one other states and that the teachers' associations are not receptive to this initiative. She expressed the importance of including all ten components in a preK-20 longitudinal data system and reported that there is a bill before the Maryland General Assembly requiring a preK-20 longitudinal data system.

In response to a question by Mr. DeGraffenreidt, Dr. Grasmick said that \$6 million would not cover the costs to implement such a system and that in order to qualify for stimulus funds, Maryland would need to join with other States to qualify. She said that the guidelines have yet to be issued.

Mr. DeGraffenreidt noted that this is an item for a multi-state alliance. He also stated that this item is very high on the Governor's priority list and asked Dr. Grasmick to update the Governor on a regular basis as to the Department's activities and plans to address this priority.

In response to Mr. Brooks' concern about the additional costs to local school systems to update their data systems, Dr. Grasmick said that Department staff members are integrating those costs into the entire scenario.

Dr. Walks suggested that Maryland's approach to a longitudinal data system should, at the least, be regional in nature. In response to his suggestion that we should track students following graduation not only into college but also into the workplace, Dr. Grasmick said that sustaining such a system would be a significant challenge.

Mr. DeGraffenreidt remarked that it may be of benefit to standardize the components and to keep it as simple as possible so that is easier to maintain.

NEXT STEPS: President DeGraffenreidt asked Dr. Grasmick to pursue the reporting process, take steps necessary to follow up on the guidelines for the stimulus funding, and look into multi-state alliances to move forward on a preK-20 longitudinal data system.

### **CLOSE THE COLLEGE READINESS GAP**

Dr. Grasmick explained that school systems have agreements with community colleges to provide college ready students and that the Department has gone through a very rigorous Advanced Placement (AP) audit. She explained that one of the challenges in preparing students for college is that they often don't take core subjects required for college and then end up having to take remedial courses in community colleges. The Superintendent said that she is working with on a task force with higher education personnel on this issue and that colleges are being asked to define "college readiness."

In response to a question by Mr. DeGraffenreidt, Dr. Grasmick said that ACHIEVE, Inc. is working on broadly accepted standards for college readiness.

In response to a question by Ms. Garcia, Dr. Grasmick said that the Task Force will be investigating why students of color are being accepted, attending but not graduating from colleges. Mr. DeGraffenreidt commented that we need to look beyond the color of students to look at the factors that are contributing to the lack of success of students who drop out of college. Mr. Brooks noted the critical importance of adequate support for students during their college years.

In promoting more awareness and interest in attending college in students at a younger age, Dr. Grasmick reported that the Department received a \$10 million grant to provide awareness to middle schools students of their opportunities to go to college.

Dr. Walks urged that students need to be taught that there is a lack of structure in college and how they must meet the demands of college on their own initiative. He deemed the issue as a "maturity readiness gap." He noted that college leadership often "diagnose and dismiss" students who perform well in high school and fall behind in college.

Dr. Grasmick reported that the Maryland Business Roundtable has a speakers' bureau which provides youthful business people who speak at our schools about what it takes to be successful after graduation.

Mr. Ewing expressed dismay at the lack of use of excellent counseling resources by students in the community colleges in Montgomery County. He also noted that many students who matriculate to community colleges are not graduates of Maryland public schools and, therefore, may or may not have the requisite skills to perform well.

Dr. Finan discussed the problems surrounding students who are "over supported" by "helicopter parents" who have trouble managing their time and meeting the demands of college life.

In response to a question by Ms. Walsh about what areas students fall short once entering community colleges, Dr. Grasmick said that math and writing were most notable.

Mr. Wu said that targeting students early and establishing consistency between high school and college are very important issues. Dr. Grasmick said that there needs to be a preK-20 approach to college readiness and also noted the importance of financial literacy for students.

NEXT STEPS: Dr. Grasmick will pursue through the P-20 Council committee that she has been asked to co-chair with Dr. Lyons, Secretary of the Higher Education Commission,, the issues of college readiness, why more females are going to college than males and why students of color are dropping out of colleges.

### **IMPROVE STEM EDUCATION**

Dr. Grasmick said that Maryland has a long history of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education but that it has been fragmented. She said that this is jeopardizing America's competitiveness in a global economy. She reported that, as a result of legislation, there are now STEM programs in every school system in Maryland but stressed the need to integrate STEM education beginning in elementary school. Dr. Grasmick noted that 4000 students are currently enrolled in "Project Lead the Way." This program immerses students in STEM education with astounding results. She said that she is currently serving on a STEM Task Force and that there are a growing number of students taking online high level courses. Dr. Grasmick also noted that she is the co-chair of a task force on environmental education and that the task force will be presenting its report to the Governor very shortly. Mr. DeGraffenreidt suggested that financial literacy be combined with environmental literacy as well. Dr. Grasmick urged that a statewide advisory committee be created to work on ways to keep teachers of higher level classes up-to-date. She also noted the need to provide more training for elementary teachers in math and science.

In response to a question by Ms. Garcia, Dr. Grasmick said that school systems are tracking student subgroups in the various specialized academies to monitor STEM training.

In response to a question by Mr. Brooks, Dr. Grasmick said that STEM initiatives are reflected in many areas of the local school systems' Master Plans. She noted that school systems adjacent to military bases are using military personnel to provide professional development to teachers.

In response to a concern by Ms. Walsh about elementary school teachers' lack of math and science skills, Dr. Grasmick said that professional development standards need to be customized and noted the high quality of professional development offered online to teachers. Dr. Grasmick said that one of the findings at a summit held with Morgan State University found that a vast number of students felt that it was their elementary school teachers who motivated them to go to college.

NEXT STEPS: Dr. Grasmick said that the STEM Task Force will be examining international benchmarks and provide feedback to improve STEM education. She will keep the Board apprised of the efforts and recommendations of the Task Force.

### **STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION**

Dr. Grasmick stated that the Department is continuing to look at industry certification and that there are many recommendations provided by the Governor's Task Force on Career and Technology Education. She said that there are many technology focused high schools and that school systems are looking to develop more of these types of specific training environments. She explained that local school systems are clamoring to provide more career technology education in specific high schools and noted that every jurisdiction has a waiting list of students for these types of high schools. Dr. Grasmick said that the Task Force will provide a preliminary report in May.

NEXT STEPS: Dr. Grasmick will provide the Board with the preliminary recommendations of the Task Force on Career and Technology Education to strengthen and expand the programs in Maryland schools.

### **IMPROVE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS**

Dr. Grasmick reported that there are currently nineteen alternative routes for teacher certification and that the Department is very aggressive in applying for grants to improve recruitment and retention of teachers and principals. She said that this issue is part of the P-20 Council's efforts and that they are awaiting a strategic plan from the Higher Education Commission. She noted that a study done by Towson University found that giving student teachers experience in a school setting provided a fifty percent increase in teacher retention although the cost of such programs has been a challenge for universities. She noted that a recruitment fair was held last spring which included all 24 school systems and said that "the yield was incredible."

In response to a question by Mr. DeGraffenreidt, Dr. Smeallie said that the nineteen alternative certification routes are extremely rigorous and the standards are aligned with outcome-based traditional preparation.

In response to a question by Mr. Ewing, Dr. Grasmick said that the longitudinal data system could provide data on the colleges that trained successful teachers and principals.

Dr. Grasmick also stated that, regarding teacher salary schedules, she is in favor of separating salary from seniority. President DeGraffenreidt noted that the United States President and the U.S. Secretary of Education are both in favor of incentive compensation for teachers and principals.

Dr. Grasmick noted that the Department has an entire Division of Leadership Development for principals and assistant principals and that the Division has created a framework to prepare people to become principals. Dr. Grasmick said that the Division staff connects with countries around the world sharing information on common areas of interest and problem solving. She noted that one of the challenges facing principals is to, not only serve as the educational leader of the school, but also that of a building manager and chief financial officer with responsibility in many schools for managing a budget of more than a \$1 million. She noted that one of the national principals' associations has provided a recommendation to fill the role of assistant principal with a business manager. The Superintendent said that the yield has been stunning when a business manager has taken over the role of assistant principal. She also noted the need for additional resources to evaluate principals.

Mary Cary, Assistant State Superintendent, Division for Leadership Development, reported that the Governor's Principals Task Force created by the P-20 Leadership Council will be providing a final report on May 5, 2009.

In response to a question by Mr. Brooks, Dr. Grasmick said that there is a need for more male principals and those who are bi-lingual.

Ms. Cary said that the Department offers school systems a "Leadership Learning Series" but that the program is limited due to budgetary constraints.

Dr. Grasmick said that there is an initiative being discussed to provide national certification for principals. In response to a question by Ms. Walsh, the Superintendent said that the regulatory requirements for principal certification were reviewed two years ago and that a Master's Degree, teaching experience and specific course work are required. She said there is also an alternative principal certification route which precludes the requirement of teaching experience.

Ms. Cary said that there is a two-tier approach in Maryland in which a test is administered. She reported that the Governor's Principals Task Force is investigating the current requirements and Dr. Smeallie elaborated on the various broad-based categorical requirements for becoming a principal.

Dr. Grasmick reported that Maryland was selected to participate in the national program "New Leaders for New Schools" explaining that it is a rigorous program that works in tandem with the Department's leadership development program.

In response to a question by Mr. Ewing, Dr. James Foran, Executive Director of High School and Post Secondary Initiatives, said that the Maryland Teacher Survey includes questions about the performance of school leaders.

NEXT STEPS: Dr. Grasmick will provide the Board with the findings of the study being conducted by the Maryland Higher Education Commission on teacher training and recruitment and also the recommendations of the Governor's Principals Task Force which are due to be released May 5, 2009.

### **SEEK FEDERAL COMPETITIVE GRANTS**

Dr. Grasmick provided a preliminary analysis of the grants available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). She discussed the various grants that would assist in meeting the Governor's key strategic areas listed above. She noted that the Governor has the ability to provide funding to local education agencies for the Geographic Cost of Education Index and other teacher incentive funding. Dr. Grasmick said that each grant requires very strong assurances of outcomes.

In response to a question by President DeGraffenreidt, Dr. Grasmick said that the Department will pursue grants to provide expanded early childhood education to Maryland children. She noted that the Department will be very aggressive in pursuing all grants and work in tandem with local education agencies. She noted that the Department is seeking grants in other areas that are also the responsibility of the Department: Child Care Development Block Grant; National Appropriation for Independent Living; Early Head Start; and National School Lunch Program.

In response to a question by Mr. Ewing, Dr. Grasmick reported that there are no high schools in Maryland currently receiving Title I funding. Ann Chafin, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Student, Family, and School Support, reported that the Department has asked the U.S. Department of Education to allow school systems to use Title I funds to serve eligible high schools. Dr. Grasmick said she will provide the Board with the response by the U.S. Department of Education regarding this waiver request.

Mr. DeGraffenreidt asked if the Superintendent was keeping a score card and she assured him she was.

NEXT STEPS: Dr. Grasmick will keep the Board abreast of all grant requests and approvals and how they will be allocated. She will inform the Board on the flexibility of the school improvement funding as well as any waivers of maintenance of effort for special education funding.



**SUMMARY**


Mr. DeGraffenreidt said that he thought that the meeting had been extraordinarily successful and that with the help of Dr. Grasmick, the Board now has an excellent outline of the content of the strategic objectives.

NEXT STEPS: The Board will use a facilitator to map out details of where we want to go and how we will know when we have accomplished what we set out to do.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Nancy S. Grasmick  
Secretary, Treasurer

NSG/rms

APPROVED: 3/24/09