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State Superintendent of Schools

EDUCATOR PREPARATION & CERTIFICATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 4, 2019
Meeting Summary

The first meeting of the Educator Preparation & Certification Advisory Committee was held at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), 200 W. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201. Dr. Karen Salmon called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

The following members were in attendance: Dr. Karen Salmon (MSDE), Ms. Sarah Spross (MSDE), Ms. Kelly Meadows (MSDE), Ms. Alex Cambra (MSDE), Ms. Amy Alvord (Ivymount School), Dr. Thurman Bridges (Morgan State University), Ms. Garima Bhatt Handley (The New Teacher Project), Mr. Joshua Smith (Loyola University), Dr. Barbara Marinak (Mount St. Mary's University), Dr. Laurie Mullen (Towson State University), Dr. Jennifer Rice (University of Maryland), Dr. Daniel Curry (Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland), Dr. Theresa Alban (Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland), Ms. Marie Bercaw (Montgomery County Public Schools), and Dr. Dale Farrell (St. Mary's County Public Schools)

Dr. Salmon welcomed everyone to the meeting and facilitated introductions. She shared that the charge of the committee is to provide policy recommendations to the MSDE for consideration. Dr. Rice stated that the purpose of the committee should be discussing the draft regulations that are currently being discussed at the State Board of Education (SBOE) and the Professional Standards for Teacher Education Board (PSTEB). Dr. Salmon provided an update on the status of the regulations; the SBOE has granted permission to publish regulations and the PSTEB will take action during their September meeting. Until such a time that both Boards have taken action on the draft language it would be premature to discuss changes. Dr. Salmon stated that she anticipates having those discussions during the next Committee meeting.

Ms. Meadows shared that MSDE is seeking feedback and recommendations from the Committee on two issues at today's meeting and disseminated documentation for consideration during the discussion.

Challenge #1

Background:

The SBOE approved the use of a minimum GPA of 3.0 in lieu of passing scores on a basic skills assessment (e.g., Praxis Core, SAT, ACT, GRE) to be effective by July 1, 2020.

Charge:

Determine a way in which traditional Maryland Approved Programs (MAPs) can use this certification policy to accept candidates who are not able to pass the basic skills assessment without placing them in a position of having to take the basic skills assessment at the end of their candidacy (if they don't graduate with a 3.0).

Considerations Provided by MSDE:

- Current program approval regulation allows individual colleges and universities to determine entrance and exit policies.

- The MAP statement required currently reads that the candidate has completed all of the requirements of the Maryland Approved Program although some IHEs do not require tests for completion. Given this, MSDE certification requires copies of test score reports.
- Maryland imports 60% of our teachers; therefore, certification policy must look at the GPA of the most recently earned degree (not entrance into an out of state program).
- Maryland approved alternative programs must adhere to COMAR 13A.12.01.07 and therefore must present a passing score on an approved basic skills assessment for the issuance of a Resident Teacher Certificate.

Discussion:

- GPA is another measure to assess if the candidate has the basic skills required to teach. This new policy will open up the candidate pool.
- In some programs, candidates are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA to remain in the program so this policy will nicely align.
- This policy could potentially increase enrollment in teacher preparation programs, particularly with teachers of color.
- How will the GPA be calculated? Consensus is to use overall GPA of degree.
- Colleges and Universities will need to decide if this policy will drive changes to their own current entrance/exit policies.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recognizes that because MAPs currently determine their own entrance and exit requirements, some MAP candidates may not be able to use a GPA in lieu of passing scores on a basic skills assessment, and given that, the recommendation is for MSDE to open the teacher pipeline by releasing this policy immediately.

MSDE Policy:

Policy memorandum published September 5, 2019 (attached)

Challenge #2

Background:

The SBOE is responsible for adopting certification test requirements. When a new test requirement is adopted, there will always be a group of applicants/candidates who are in process and therefore may have to submit a different test, an additional test, or a higher score, to qualify for certification.

Charge:

Determine what time of year will have the least impact on all candidates when adopting new test requirements.

Considerations Provided by MSDE:

- Maryland educator preparation programs have multiple conferral dates.
- Maryland educator preparation programs have reported that the registrar determines when a degree may be conferred/transcript stamped with a completion statement and those times are limited.
- Maryland local school systems and publically funded nonpublic schools employ teachers on a conditional certificate, many of which are not enrolled in an approved program.

Discussion:

- Can the requirement be based upon the date the applicant took the test? No, because a candidate may have taken the test years ago but is applying for a certificate much later. Must balance the need to align assessments with current standards and not overburden candidates.
- The current MSDE grace period of two years is reasonable. Again, MSDE needs to balance alignment with current standards and allowing those candidates who sit for the test early in their candidacy the ability to submit those scores.
- Historically, tests were often adopted on September 1 or October 1, which seemed to work in the interest of all.
- Each university confers degrees at different times but usually the cohort at the end of the summer is small.

- The current MAP statement of completion does not indicate what tests the candidate has taken or what tests are required.
- Could a candidate can use a letter of good standing from the program to apply for certification prior to the conferral of their degree if a test change is impending? A certificate may not be issued until the degree is conferred and the transcript is “stamped” completed.
- September 1 may not allow those summer graduates the time they need to receive a conferred degree and stamp of completion.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee decided tentatively that October 15th may be the most ideal time; however, feedback from their constituency groups is warranted. Dr. Salmon asked the Committee members to confer with their constituents, to include college/university registrars and send a recommendation to Sarah Spross at sarah.spross@maryland.gov.

Dr. Salmon shared that the Committee will be kept apprised of the status of the draft regulations that are being discussed at both Boards. Ms. Spross shared that a follow up email will go to the Committee with the remainder of the 2019-2020 meeting dates.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Attachment: September 5, 2019 Memorandum- Educator Certification: Basic Skills Assessment Policy