

MINUTES OF THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Tuesday, September 1, 2020
Maryland State Board of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

The Maryland State Board of Education met via videoconference on Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. The following members participated on the videoconference call: Mr. Clarence Crawford (President); Ms. Jean Halle (Vice President); Mr. Shawn Bartley; Ms. Gail Bates; Mr. Charles R. Dashiell, Jr., Esq.; Dr. Susan Getty; Dr. Vermelle D. Greene; Dr. Rose M. Li; Dr. Joan Mele-McCarthy; Ms. Rachel McCusker, Ms. Lori Morrow; Brigadier General (BG) Warner Sumpter (Ret.); Dr. Holly Wilcox; Mr. Jason Wu, Student Representative; and State Superintendent Dr. Karen B. Salmon.

The following staff members also participated: Elliott L. Schoen, Assistant Attorney General; Dr. Sylvia Lawson, Deputy State Superintendent, Office of School Effectiveness; Amalie Brandenburg, Deputy State Superintendent, Office of Finance and Administration; Dr. Carol Williamson, Deputy State Superintendent, Office of Teaching and Learning; and Dr. Miya T. Simpson, Executive Director, Office of the State Board.

President Crawford called the meeting to order and asked Dr. Simpson to conduct the roll call. Mr. Schoen declared the presence of a quorum.

President Crawford explained the virtual meeting procedures.

REPORTS TO THE STATE BOARD FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

- **Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education Updates**
(Presenter: Dr. Karen B. Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Carol Williamson, Ms. Mary Gable, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment & Educational Policy)

Dr. Williamson provided an overview and background on Maryland's Recovery Plan and the department's review of the local plans received. Dr. Williamson shared that the department has worked with districts throughout the review of the plans and expressed the departments concerns regarding the daily and weekly instructional hours set by some districts. Ms. Gable reviewed related COMAR, definitions of synchronous and asynchronous learning, and student engagement projections across local districts and grade bands. Dr. Williamson and Ms. Gable presented two recommendations for the State Board's consideration in establishing minimum requirements:

- Option A:
 - Schools must be open for students at least 180 school days.
 - All schools must include at least a total of six hours per day.

- A school day for each local school system must include the recommended minimum number of hours of synchronous instruction for each grade band per day, five days per week.
 - Half day pre-K school day for each local school system must include a minimum of 1.5 hours of synchronous instruction per day, five days per week.
 - School systems that have indicated that they are not returning students in person until second semester should reevaluate their reopening plans by the end of the first quarter (after nine weeks).
 - Recommended minimum hours need to be implemented by September 28.
- Option B:
 - Schools must be open for students at least 180 school days.
 - All schools must include at least a total of six hours per day.
 - Schools must have an average of 3.5 hours of synchronous instruction spread out over the course of the day.
 - Half day preK school day for each local school system must include a minimum of 1.5 hours of synchronous instruction spread out over the course of the half-day.
 - MSDE will collaborate with local school Superintendents and provide technical assistance as they work to implement the minimum hours of synchronous instruction and work with local school systems, in collaboration with their local health departments, to consider strategies to return students to in-person instruction by the end of the calendar year.

Ms. McCusker expressed concern and disappointment with the late timing of the information presented to the State Board and the public, noting that the public should also be able to weigh in on the proposed recommendations. State Board members also inquired about opportunities and a timeline for public input and feedback; how the department arrive at the 3.5 hour requirement; plans for special needs students and other vulnerable populations; the timeline for adoption of proposed requirements; and the pros and cons of each option.

Mr. Bartley shared that he believes there is an attempt to meet the needs of parents who need children to be in school. He noted that the situation is fluid and decisions are being made based on the best information available at the time.

Ms. Morrow made a motion, seconded by Ms. McCusker, to postpone a decision to allow time for districts to weigh in. After further discussion and input from State Board members, Ms. Halle proposed an amendment to the motion that the State Board would delay a decision for two weeks to allow an opportunity for the department to get feedback from districts that do not meet the requirement to explain why and to get information on students with special needs.

***ACTION:** Upon motion by Ms. Morrow and seconded by Ms. McCusker, the State Board denied the request to postpone the decision, as amended. (In Favor: 7; Opposed: 6; Abstained: 0. Mr. Bartley was not present)*

A majority (8) vote was required so the motion failed to pass.

State Board members continued deliberations regarding the proposed recommendations and modified language in Option B to reflect members' concerns and interests and provide clear guidance for districts. President Crawford emphasized the need for collaboration, noting that this will be key to success.

State Board members agreed to the following:

- 1) Schools must be open for students at least 180 school days;
- 2) All schools must include at least a total of six hours per day;
- 3) Schools must have an average of 3.5 hours across the grades (K through 12) of synchronous instruction spread out over the course of the day;
- 4) Half day PreK school day for each local school system must include a minimum of 1.5 hours of synchronous instruction spread out over the course of the half-day;
- 5) MSDE will collaborate with local school superintendents and provide technical assistance as they work to implement the minimum hours of synchronous instruction by the end of the calendar year; and
- 6) School systems that have indicated that they are not returning students in person until second semester should reevaluate their reopening plans by the end of the first quarter (after nine weeks) and submit to MSDE by the third week of November.

***ACTION:** Upon motion by Ms. Halle and seconded by General Sumpter, the State Board approved the new requirements. (In Favor: 13; Opposed: 0; Abstained: 0. Mr. Bartley was not present)*

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:18 a.m.

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

Date: September 22, 2020

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 video recordings of the meetings are the official record of the meetings and can be located at:

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Pages/meeting-agendas/2020/2020-06-23.aspx>

Meeting materials, Opinions, and Orders can be found at:

Minutes for September 1, 2020

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Pages/Meetings-2020.aspx>

The next meeting of the Maryland State Board of Education will be held on Tuesday, September 22, 2020. Appropriate accommodations for individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request. Eight business days notice prior to the event is required. Please contact Charlene Necessary at (410) 767-0467 or TTY at (410) 333-6442 so arrangements can be made.