



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

**MSDE Digital Learning Advisory
Stakeholders Committee Meetings**

**November 13, 2020
Virtual Meeting**

Meeting Minutes

Council Members in Attendance: Dr. Carol A. Williamson (Chairperson), Ms. Donna Baker, Mr. Brian Beaubien, Ms. Carol Beck, Dr. Colleen Eisenbeiser, Mr. Brad Engel, Ms. Marquita Friday, Ms. Anna Gannon, Ms. Robin Hopkins, Dr. Joey Jones, Ms. Marsye Kaplan, Mr. Andrew Moore, Mr. Scott Nichols, Ms. Rebecca Pensero, Dr. Peggy Pugh, Ms. Nina Riggs, Ms. Leann Schubert, Ms. Amy Shepler, Dr. Gina Solano, Ms. Susan Spinnato, Ms. Tonya Sweat, Ms. LaTanya Taylor, Mr. John Tompkins, Mr. Jonathan Turner, and Dr. Christine Welch

MSDE Staff in Attendance: Ms. Val Emrich, Mr. Shane J. McCormick, and Ms. Erin Senior

Members Not in Attendance: Mr. Brian Dulay, Dr. Julie Evans, Ms. Yasmine Juhar, and Ms. Kelly Ruby

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. when a quorum was established.

Welcome & Approval of Minutes

Dr. Carol Williamson, chairperson, welcomed the members and discussed the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on local school systems (LSS) and on the activities of the committee. The members exchanged introductions, shared professional affiliations, and rated their knowledge levels of hybrid learning. The members reviewed the meeting minutes from the June 9, 2020, and October 16, 2020 meetings. The original committee members were asked to vote to approve the June meeting minutes, and the full committee comprised of both previous and new members were asked to vote to approve the October minutes.

A motion to approve the June 9, 2020 meeting minutes as presented was made by Ms. Nina Riggs and seconded by Ms. Tonya Sweat. A roll call of the members was conducted to approve the minutes.

Roll Call Vote: 15 Yes, 0 No, 8 Abstained. Members absent from the vote: Dr. Joey Jones and Ms. Leann Schubert. The motion carried.

A motion to approve the October 16, 2020 meeting minutes as presented was made by Ms. Marsye Kaplan and seconded by Mr. Brian Beaubien. A roll call of the members was conducted to approve the minutes.

Roll Call Vote: 23 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstained. Members absent from the vote: Dr. Joey Jones and Ms. Leann Schubert. The motion carried.

RFI Update

Dr. Williamson provided the members with an update of the Request for Information (RFI) that was discussed during the October meeting. The information collected from the committee was shared with the State Board of Education Virtual Learning workgroup during its meeting on October 19, 2020. Dr. Williamson shared that the board workgroup members were greatly appreciative of the feedback provided by the committee members.

The information collected was incorporated into the RFI and the RFI was posted by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Division of Business Services for comments and responses by prospective vendors. The members were informed that the RFI would be open for a period of thirty days. Dr. Williamson expressed that the members would receive an update on the information collected through the RFI at the December committee meeting.

Dr. Williamson reviewed the meeting agenda with the members and the planned meeting activities. The meeting would begin with a presentation on hybrid teaching and learning, and would include time for the members to break into three work groups to identify and discuss current successes, challenges, and opportunities within LSSs with regards to hybrid teaching and learning.

Presentation on Hybrid Teaching and Learning

Ms. Val Emrich and Ms. Erin Senior, MSDE staff, facilitated a presentation on hybrid teaching and learning. The members were provided a technical definition of hybrid learning, which is an educational model in which some students attend class in-person while others join the class virtually from home or another remote location. Students in both learning settings are taught at the same time using tools such as video conferencing hardware and software. Ms. Robin Hopkins asked whether further definitions or guidance had been established to define hybrid learning, citing an example of students bringing technology devices such as chrome books to in-person classes. Ms. Senior stated that there is variance between schools and LSSs in how hybrid learning is implemented.

Breakout into Work Groups

Ms. Senior shared that the members would break out into three small groups and that each group would have a facilitator and a recorder. The members would be responsible for discussing LSS needs and concerns to implement hybrid learning and to identify best practices for successful implementation. The members broke out into groups at 9:52 a.m.

Work Session Summaries

The full committee reconvened at 10:37 a.m. Ms. Rebecca Pensero presented on behalf of Group 1. The group identified the social and emotional needs of students as a critical need and concern facing LSSs to successfully implement a virtual learning environment. The group discussed from both their personal and professional experiences that some students have flourished in a virtual learning environment but that such successes are not universal for all students and that some students need more assistance. The group discussed the possibility of a toolkit or document created by the MSDE regarding hybrid teaching and learning; the group recommended collecting and sharing online and digital resources through a database or online portal to assist LSSs. The group felt that it was important to include resources to be able to assist vulnerable student populations that have been adversely impacted by the pandemic, such as English Learners, students with social and emotional needs, students with diagnosed learning disabilities, etc.

Mr. Scott Nichols presented on behalf of Group 2. The members of the group who work within the LSSs reported their systems had targeted populations back for in-person instruction, but that was changing in response to the ongoing pandemic. The members felt it was important to provide support for mental health for both students and teachers, including first-year teachers without an in-person classroom. The members identified providing guidance in a shared toolkit or document about how to be a virtual student and parent of a virtual student to be able to assist students and parents in adjusting and thriving in a virtual learning environment. The members recommended including guidance for at-risk student populations.

Ms. Leeann Schubert presented on behalf of Group 3. The members discussed consistency with the hybrid teaching and learning approach, and the possibility of creating a single sign-on option for households with multiple students attending school virtually. The members felt that it was important to develop and implement a social-emotional support structure before focusing on the instructional component. The members discussed potential guidance from the MSDE, such as the number of students that should be in a face-to-face classroom setting compared to a virtual or hybrid setting, and having guidance on what testing or assessments should be facilitated in the current learning environment.

Ms. Emrich shared with the members that the feedback and comments from all of the groups would be collected and condensed into one document. The document would be shared with the members during the December committee meeting.

Adjournment

The members were reminded that the next meeting will be held virtually on December 11, 2020. Dr. Williamson thanked the members for their attendance and participation. Dr. Williamson shared with the members that a technology survey had been disseminated to the LSSs; the results of the survey would be available to share with the members during the December meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.