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State Superintendent of Schools

**MSDE Digital Learning Advisory
Stakeholders Committee Meeting**

**December 11, 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, Dr. Julie Evans, Ms. Marquita Friday, Ms. Anna Gannon, Ms. Robin Hopkins, Ms. Yasmine Juhar, Ms. Marsye Kaplan, Mr. H. Andrew Moore, Mr. Scott Nichols, Ms. Rebecca Pensero, Dr. Peggy Pugh, Ms. Nina Riggs, Ms. Kelly Ruby, Ms. Leann Schubert, Ms. Amy Shepler, 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. Joey Jones, and Dr. Gina Solano

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. when a quorum was established.

Welcome & Approval of Minutes

Dr. Carol Williamson, chairperson, welcomed the members and the members reviewed the meeting minutes from the November 13, 2020 meeting. A motion to approve the November 13, 2020 meeting minutes as presented was made by Dr. Christine Welch and seconded by Ms. Leann Schubert. A roll call of the members was conducted to approve the minutes.

Roll Call Vote: 24 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstained. Members absent from the vote: Ms. Yasmine Juhar, and Ms. Susan Spinnato. The motion carried.

Committee Updates and Subcommittees

The members reviewed the meeting agenda and the content that would be covered during the course of the meeting. Dr. Williamson shared that the State Board of Education Virtual Learning Work Group had assigned a new charge to the committee that would be discussed further during the meeting. Ms. Erin Senior, MSDE staff, reviewed with the members the Request for Information (RFI) that the members had discussed during its October 2020 meeting. Ms. Senior shared that the RFI had been published with a closing date in late December 2020. The

committee staff and the members would not be able to review any information collected through the RFI until after it had closed.

Ms. Senior stated that the committee is looking for volunteers to review the videos collected through the RFI; Ms. Senior clarified that volunteers would not be responsible for rating the videos but would be looking at the videos for ideas and content that would be helpful in the development of a virtual school. Ms. Senior stated that any members interested in volunteering would be able to sign up at the conclusion of the meeting, and that ideally volunteers would be able to review the submitted videos on their own schedules. Ms. Carol Beck asked whether the RFI was limited only to video submissions and not written submissions; Ms. Senior clarified that vendor submissions to the RFI would be video only.

Ms. Leann Schubert asked what the time commitment would be to volunteer to review the submissions; Ms. Senior stated that the question could not be answered until it was known how many videos had been submitted. Dr. Williamson clarified that feedback collected from the volunteers and from the Board Work Group would be consolidated into one document and would be made available to the committee members.

Ms. Val Emrich, MSDE staff, reviewed with the members the Technology Survey Results subcommittee that being established to review the results of a recent survey disseminated to all local school systems (LSS) in the State of Maryland on their current technology infrastructures. Dr. Williamson reviewed the details of the survey, which encompassed over ninety questions to assess technology needs across the State. Members were asked to participate in the subcommittee if they were interested; additional information would be shared after the meeting. Mr. Andrew Moore discussed the technology survey and the value of collecting information on the current infrastructure and needs of LSSs, as well as areas that the survey may not have sufficiently captured.

Ms. Senior reviewed the feedback collected from the members on hybrid teaching and learning that was discussed during the committee's November 2020 meeting. Ms. Senior shared that a subcommittee would be established to meet to review next steps to bring back to the full committee and to the Board Work Group. Members were encouraged to reach out if they were interested.

Ms. Senior reiterated that a sign-up document would be distributed to the members after the meeting for them to sign up for the subcommittee of their choice. Dr. Williamson emphasized that all of the subcommittees were critical, and shared with the members that LSSs have consistently expressed a need for more guidance regarding virtual teaching and learning.

Presentation: Future Ready Schools

Dr. Williamson reviewed with the members recent discussions by the Board Work Group regarding the creation of a State master plan for digital learning. The Board members are interested in establishing a comprehensive master plan to guide and implement digital learning state-wide. Dr. Williamson shared with the members that the work group had heard a presentation from the Future Ready Schools Alliance for Excellent Education and was very

interested in getting feedback from the committee members regarding Future Ready Schools (FRS) and the idea of a state-wide master plan. An update on the activities of the Board Work Group and on the committee was made during the State Board of Education meeting on December 8, 2020, and the Board is very interested in receiving the feedback and contributions of the committee members on a number of areas in the coming months.

Dr. Williamson introduced Mr. Tom Murray, Director of Innovation for Future Ready Schools Alliance for Excellent Education, to facilitate a presentation on FRS. Mr. Murray facilitated several ice-breaker questions and discussions with the members to gather the insights and perspectives of the members. Mr. Murray shared the FRS vision statement and framework that ensures successful personalized student learning. The framework contains five core components: Vision, Planning, Implementation, Assessment, and Refinement.

Mr. Murray reviewed various components involved in the implementation of future ready schools, which includes:

- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
- Personalized professional learning;
- Budget and resources;
- Community partnerships;
- Data and privacy;
- Robust infrastructure, and;
- Use of space and time

Mr. Murray reviewed considerations for each component, such as how to partner with businesses, how to budget efficiently, how to make data-informed decisions and to make sure district decision-making ensures student data privacy, adequacy and access of technology devices, and ensuring that learning is flexible and accessible from anywhere. Mr. Murray discussed the importance of ensuring equity for all students, emphasizing that equity issues existed prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and have only been exacerbated throughout the pandemic.

Mr. Murray shared information with the members about the FRS dashboard, which provides free resources to participating LSSs and staff. The dashboard includes a five-step process for stakeholders to do activities such as assemble an FRS planning team, measure district readiness, and create a future ready action plan. Mr. Murray shared that the FRS website also includes several digital resources, and directed the members to the FRS website. The website includes resources targeted to the FRS framework, and also includes resources that are categorized to specific professionals, such as teachers, administrators, etc. Mr. Murray shared that FRS also provides professional development opportunities through team based workshops. Mr. Murray shared that the presentation would be made available to the members.

Maryland's Digital Learning Strategic Plan

Ms. Emrich and Ms. Senior asked the members for feedback on the FRS framework. Dr. Peggy Pugh shared that after reviewing the FRS website a number of LSSs in the State of Maryland

have joined the FRS dashboard, and that the tool may not be unfamiliar to a number of districts. Dr. Pugh recommended that the dashboard would best be utilized on a district level basis. Dr. Pugh stated that Washington County Public Schools utilized the framework to help in developing its digital learning plan, but that for new districts it requires local superintendent buy-in and sign up to be able to utilize it.

Ms. Emrich asked whether any of the members felt that the dashboard tool would not be useful or would be inappropriate to utilize. Ms. Anna Gannon asked whether the dashboard would be intended to help determine if the State would create a State department virtual school. Dr. Williamson clarified that would not be the purpose of LSSs utilizing the dashboard. Ms. Gannon expressed that the FRS framework could be valuable to LSSs but that in order to make it valuable to all LSSs the recommendations of both the current committee and the previous committee would need to be implemented. Ms. Gannon expressed concern that information collected through the FRS dashboard would be used to compare LSSs to each other and create potential conflicts.

Dr. Pugh stated that from her perspective the dashboard is not intended to compare LSSs but was geared to assessing the readiness of individual districts. Ms. Gannon expressed the importance that each LSS come to the table with the same perceptions of what districts are to be looking at, and that if there is no clear outcome visible to stakeholders, in terms of district administrators, school administrators, teachers, etc., or clear value in terms of buy-in then it would not be worth investing into. Ms. Emrich clarified that Mr. Murray did not address the stakeholders that would have to be included in conversations about utilizing the FRS dashboard and framework, but that these conversations would have to be inclusive of all stakeholders.

Ms. Amy Shepler stated that her school district participated in the FRS framework survey but that it would likely need to complete it again, and clarified components of the survey that districts are asked to complete. Mr. John Tompkins stated that there may be a reason why some LSSs did not participate or did not complete the process, and if it was worth asking the reasons why these districts chose not to complete. Ms. Emrich stated that in conversation some of these districts had indicated that their priorities had changed and that is why these districts elected not to complete the survey.

Ms. Tonya Sweat stated that from her perspective as a parent the FRS framework and dashboard would be a valuable tool, and that now would be a good time to find out what LSSs are utilizing, what LSSs know, and to find out areas where LSSs may be deficient or need greater resources. Dr. Julie Evans shared in the meeting chat feature that data collection is only one part of the discussion, as data has to be interpreted and analyzed to understand respondents' perspectives. Ms. Leeann Schubert expressed her support with the views expressed by Dr. Pugh and Ms. Sweat about the potential value of the survey to LSSs, particularly given that it does not carry a cost.

Discussion of Draft Purpose, Vision, & Beliefs

Ms. Emrich reviewed with the members a draft of the State of Maryland's proposed digital learning framework. The members were asked for their feedback on the draft framework, which

includes a statement of purpose and a vision statement. Ms. Emrich emphasized that the draft framework was developed several years prior but was not adopted due to various changes in standards. Dr. Williamson clarified that the members would be responsible for reviewing the draft framework to identify key words and phrases that the committee would like to be included in the Board of Education's digital learning master plan.

Dr. Colleen Eisenbeiser asked in the meeting chat feature whether the vision would be for all education levels including higher education. The members expressed approval in trying to incorporate all education levels, encompassing both K-12 and higher education. Ms. Carol Beck asked in the meeting chat feature whether there should be a more explicit statement regarding the needs of students with special needs, such as students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Ms. Emrich agreed that the statement should include students with special needs, but should also include other at-risk and disadvantaged student populations.

Ms. Emrich shared with the members that a link to the document would be shared with the members to add additional comments and feedback. Ms. Gannon expressed that most of the language written is still relevant and applicable but that it could use updates. The members were asked to submit their comments and feedback by December 17.

Next Steps and Adjournment

Dr. Williamson reminded the members to sign up for one of the three subcommittees discussed earlier in the meeting. The members were reminded that the committee's next meeting will be Friday, January 15, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. Ms. Emrich shared with the members that the committee staff will identify potential meeting dates outside of Friday's beginning with the February 2021 meeting. Dr. Williamson thanked the members for their attendance and contributions.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.