



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

**MSDE Digital Learning Advisory
Stakeholders Committee Meeting**

**January 15, 2021
Virtual Meeting**

Meeting Minutes

Council Members in Attendance: Dr. Carol A. Williamson (Chairperson), Mr. Brian Beaubien, Ms. Carol Beck, Mr. Brad Engel, 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. Leeann Schubert, Dr. Gina Solano, Ms. Susan Spinnato, Ms. Tonya Sweat, Ms. LaTanya Taylor, Mr. John Tompkins, and Mr. Jonathan Turner

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

Members Not in Attendance: Ms. Donna Baker, Mr. Brian Dulay, Dr. Colleen Eisenbeiser, Dr. Julie Evans, Dr. Joey Jones, Ms. Amy Shepler, and Dr. Christine Welch

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 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 December 11, 2020 meeting. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Ms. Marsye Kaplan and was seconded by Ms. Leann Schubert. A roll call of the members was conducted to approve the minutes.

Roll Call Vote: 19 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstention: Ms. Carol Beck. Members absent from the vote: Ms. Anna Gannon, and Ms. Yasmine Juhar. The motion carried.

Dr. Williamson reviewed the meeting agenda with the members and the topics that would be discussed. The meeting would begin with updates from the subcommittees that were assigned during the December 2020 committee meeting. The members would then break out into groups to review the draft document of Maryland's Digital Learning Framework.

Subcommittees Updates

Ms. Erin Senior, MSDE staff, reviewed with the members the activity of the subcommittee that was assigned to review the Request for Information (RFI) that had been posted in December

2020 to collect information from prospective vendors about online platforms and services in the interest of potentially opening a virtual school. Ms. Senior shared that fifteen submissions had been received in response to the RFI. Ms. Senior clarified that some of the submissions were targeted towards specific content due to an error in the RFI posting; nine of the submissions received focused specifically on virtual learning and virtual schools. Ms. Senior summarized the planned activities of the subcommittee moving forward.

Ms. Senior shared that the hybrid teaching and learning subcommittee met on January 14, 2021, and reviewed the feedback collected from the committee members during the November 2020 committee meeting. The members had discussed their experiences with and the successes and challenges of hybrid teaching and learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the continued needs of local school systems (LSS) in implementing hybrid learning. The subcommittee also focused on the needs of students and parents to be able to adapt and thrive in a hybrid learning environment, and on resources that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) could provide to LSSs.

Ms. Senior shared that the subcommittee will have additional meetings moving forward, and informed the members that a subcommittee folder had been created in the full committee Google Drive and encouraged the members to submit pertinent resources to the folder that may be valuable to other LSSs and stakeholders. Dr. Williamson expressed to the members that hybrid learning was likely to be the learning model used in the LSSs in the coming months, and so there will be a need to make available as much information and resources as possible.

Ms. Val Emrich, MSDE staff, shared information regarding the technology survey results subcommittee and commended the members that served on the subcommittee for their contributions. The subcommittee reviewed the responses received to a technology survey that was distributed to all of the LSSs in the State of Maryland through local systems' technology offices and all twenty-four local superintendents' through the Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM). Dr. Williamson shared additional background information about the survey with the members.

Updates from the State Board of Education Virtual Learning Workgroup

Dr. Williamson shared with the members an update on the State Board of Education Virtual Learning Workgroup. The workgroup met on December 3, 2020, and will meet again on January 20, 2021. Dr. Williamson shared that the members' feedback on the RFI had been shared to the workgroup, and that the workgroup had also received a presentation on Future Ready Schools (FRS), which Dr. Williamson shared that the State Board is interested in pursuing further. The members received information on the Board's recommendations for the committee, which includes:

- Establishing three subcommittees:
 - Hybrid Teaching and Learning Best Practices Subcommittee
 - Request for Information (RFI) Subcommittee
 - Maryland Technology Survey Subcommittee

- Providing feedback on the Vision and Mission for Maryland's Digital Learning Framework
- Identifying the profile of a Maryland graduate
- Providing suggestions on how to roll-out the Future Ready Assessment and Program
- Creating framework for localized vs. centralized initiatives

Dr. Williamson shared with the members that their contributions and expertise have been critically important in the Board Workgroup's discussions, and that the workgroup members greatly appreciate and value the input of the committee.

Discussion: Maryland's Digital Learning Strategic Framework

Ms. Emrich reviewed with the members the draft of *Maryland's Digital Learning Strategic Framework: A Vision for the Future*. The members were asked to provide their feedback and input to the document. Under the mission statement the members agreed to add a statement to provide opportunities for students to think creatively and critically, both individually and collaboratively. The members agreed to add a statement regarding long-term transformational change with continuous improvement embedded within the learning model.

The members discussed modifying a statement which specified for the providing of communication avenues for parents/guardians and other stakeholders. The members expressed disagreement with the original wording of the statement that specified providing reciprocal communication, and provided several alternative terminology for consideration. In the interest of the time, the members were asked to contact the committee staff with their recommended terminology for the statement regarding communication.

The members reviewed the language that tied the mission statement to the FRS foundational components and were asked to provide their feedback. The members provided no additional feedback. The members were asked to provide their feedback on the communication statement and any other items prior to the Board Workgroup meeting on January 20.

Discussion: Profile of a Maryland Graduate

Dr. Williamson reviewed with the members the profile of a graduate document, and referenced the presentation from the State of Utah during the November 2020 meeting that the State of Utah has created its own portrait of a graduate. The members were directed to both the Utah definition, and to the Queen Anne's County Public Schools (QACPS) profile of a graduate document. The QACPS document highlighted the qualities and characteristics that each student of QACPS would represent and achieve upon graduation.

The members were asked for their feedback about adopting a similar profile standard at the State level. Several members expressed that they felt that the graduate profile was beyond the scope of the committee and would be more appropriate to assign to a different group. Dr. Williamson summarized the views of the members that the committee feels that such a topic was beyond its scope, and that the committee would be focused on developing the digital literacy framework.

Discussion: Future Ready Assessment

Dr. Williamson shared with the members that the FRS framework had been presented to the Board Workgroup, and had also been presented to the local superintendents' and assistant superintendents'. The members were asked for suggestions on how to encourage LSSs to participate, and stakeholders or roles at the local levels that should be included. Dr. Peggy Pugh stated that the messaging to LSSs should be that the FRS framework is a self-assessment tool to identify their areas of need and where they can focus their attention. Dr. Pugh recommended including staff such as library services within the framework. The members recommended including stakeholders such as special education, ESOL teachers, and charter schools. Ms. Robin Hopkins recommended including higher education stakeholders within the framework.

Mr. John Tompkins asked for clarification on State guidance on participation in the framework in comparison to other local priorities. Ms. Emrich stated that from her perspective the framework would be a benefit to LSSs in assessing where they are and areas of need. Dr. Williamson stated that she would raise this question with the Board Workgroup.

The members were asked again the question regarding LSSs buy-in to the framework. Dr. Pugh reiterated the messaging of the value of a self-assessment, and stated that State guidance may need to be in the form of providing assistance to LSSs on how to address their areas of need. Ms. Emrich recommended securing testimonials collected by FRS from LSSs that have utilized the framework and their experiences.

Ms. Tonya Sweat recommended a letter from the State Superintendent to the local superintendents' and to PSSAM may be beneficial to secure local buy-in to participate in the framework. Ms. Sweat stated that in light of the pandemic it is in the interests of local systems to be as self-reflective as possible to identify their needs to be able to get students back in the classroom. Dr. Williamson shared that the State Superintendent has shared this information with the local superintendents'. Dr. Pugh clarified that several local systems have participated in the framework; Ms. Emrich added that some systems started the framework but did not complete due to changes in district priorities.

Next Steps and Adjournment

The members were reminded that the next meeting would be on Thursday, February 11, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. Dr. Williamson shared that the subcommittees would continue to meet as needed. The members were reminded of the Board Workgroup meeting on January 20, and that any pertinent information from that meeting would be provided at the next committee meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.