

Maryland Council for Educator Effectiveness (MCEE)
Minutes from Meeting of December 13, 2010

Absent:

Dr. Andres Alonso

Mr. John Ratliff

Ms. Pamela Pedersen

Dr. Nancy Grasmick, MCEE Co-Chair, opened the meeting at 1 p.m. by introducing Mr. Matt Gandal, Executive Vice President, of Achieve, Inc., an organization of corporate leaders working to ensure that students are college and career ready when they graduate from high school. She described the organizations as “enormously helpful to Maryland.” She said the organization led the way on the American Diploma Project and the national effort to have states adopt common core standards and assessments.

Achieve’s Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

Matt Gandal, Executive Vice President, Achieve, Inc.

Mr. Gandal introduced his colleague attending with him and explained that Achieve was created as a non-profit organization in the mid 1990’s with a focus on academic expectations for high school and post secondary education. He reported that 43 states and the District of Columbia adopted the Common Core State Standards which he described as very high quality and rigorous.

Mr. Gandal reported that a \$350 million Race To The Top (RTTT) grant was set aside for awards to consortia of states to design and develop common K-12 assessment systems aligned to common, college- and career-ready standards. He said that the US Department of Education awarded two grants: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Mr. Gandal explained that Achieve was selected as the Project Manager for the PARCC Partnership through a bidding process.

Mr. Gandal said that a goal of the Project is to ensure that student achievement is measured throughout the school year rather than only at the end of the year and that technology will be maximized in the measurement process. He discussed the intended outcomes expected by PARCC states in using the common assessments. Mr. Gandal went over the assessment system design for administration and scoring noting that a combination of artificial intelligence (AI) and human scoring will be employed, the extent to which will be

determined by each state. He explained that assessments will be conducted throughout the year at approximately one-quarter intervals with one end-of-the-year summative assessment.

Mr. Gandal described the tools and resources which will be available for teachers to identify student needs. He said that all stakeholders will regularly and quickly have a wider variety of useful performance data and that assessments will identify whether students are ready for and prepared to succeed in entry-level, credit bearing postsecondary courses by the time they graduate from high school. He noted that these assessments will, for the first time, give information about student performance relative to students in other states. He discussed the teacher engagement in the development and scoring of the assessment as well as the commitment by Institutes of Higher Education to be partners in the process.

Mr. Gandal reported that the US Department of Education (USDE) awarded an additional grant to PARCC to support states' transition to the Common Core State Standards and common assessments. He described the two-part strategy proposed by PARCC to make the transition in schools smooth and seamless. He reported on the strategic planning and implementation support for states including multi-state support to build educator leadership cadres and the production of a coherent, complete set of tools from which all states could benefit.

He provided a timeline beginning with the launch and design phase this year, the development in 2011 and piloting during the third and fourth years. He noted that 2014-15 would be the first full administration across all states.

Senator Kelley thanked Mr. Gandal for a very helpful and interesting presentation and urged the need to train novice teachers about item design and assessments and provide them with best practices. She suggested that RTTT funds should be used to develop online modules. She said that the MSDE should develop professional development opportunities around item analyses and see that they are available to teachers online. Senator Kelley said, "teachers who know they need help, usually volunteer. Many don't volunteer or don't know they need help." Mr. Gandal said that they have heard this from other state leaders to move the process where assessments are modeling good instructional practices back to teachers. He said that state leaders want educators involved in the scoring of tests.

In response to a concern expressed by Ms. Bost, Mr. Gandal said that growth measures can be done throughout the school year and that states in the consortium can decide to conduct baseline tests at the beginning of the school year.

In response to a concern by Mr. Burton about the lack of computer access for some students, Mr. Gandal said that they are grappling with this challenge.

Dr. Leak noted that assessments throughout the year are very informative to parents and students and asked if they would be a centerpiece for all of the assessments. Mr. Gandal said yes. In response to another question by Dr. Leak about how teachers will use the tool kits, Mr. Gandal said they have not been developed yet but will include a set of tasks to use for instruction. In response to a third question by Dr. Leak, Mr. Gandal said that if a student exceeds expectations in a course, the ceiling can be raised and anchored to higher education.

In response to a question by Ms. Streckfus, Mr. Gandal said that if higher education institutions are not involved in creating the college readiness tests for high school students, they will not agree to use the test in lieu of a college placement exam. In response to another question by Ms. Streckfus about how Maryland can prepare for this work, Mr. Gandal said it is important for Maryland leaders to know where this is heading, be comfortable with the measures to be used and to look at other states to monitor their progress.

In response to a question by Ms. Coleman-Potter, Dr. Grasmick said that the vision for Maryland is to make assessments compatible with the classroom. She said we would be using the Through-Course and Summative assessment model and would not prohibit a school system from using its own assessment tools.

In response to a concern expressed by Ms. Pipken, Dr. Grasmick said that teachers would receive real-time data on their students' progress that would go beyond just a final score on an assessment. She said, "there is a commitment for assessments to model what the standards say."

Mr. Rutledge introduced a representative from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and explained that they created a proposed framework which includes the following five components:

1. Professional teaching standards
2. How to assess or measure teacher practice
3. Implementation
4. Professional context in which the learning takes place
5. How to connect with standards for professional learning

He said it is important to look at multiple measures of instruction and multiple measures of learning which should stand up to the following criteria:

1. purpose of each measure
2. fairness
3. rigor
4. alignment with what we want students to be able to do
5. focus
6. administrative capacity
7. cost
8. usefulness for teacher development

The co-chairs thanked Mr. Gandal for his excellent presentation and agreed to forward his PowerPoint document to the Council members.

Discussion and Minutes

In response to a request by a Council member, Dr. Grasmick said that representatives of institutes of high education can be included in the discussions at Non-Tested Content Area Meetings.

Ms. Weller asked for approval of the minutes of the November 29, 2010 meeting. Ms. Pipken asked that a revision be made to her report on page 4 of the minutes regarding “a value added model.” With no further discussion, the minutes were approved, as amended.

In response to a request by Ms. Bost, Dr. Grasmick agreed to forward minutes from the Non-Tested Content Area Meetings to the Council members.

A list of proposed meeting dates for the Council was distributed and Ms. Pipken noted that one of the dates occurs the day before the administration of the MSA to students in Maryland making it difficult for school-based Council members to attend the meetings.

Ms. Weller asked Council members to break into Committee groups and report back at 3:45 p.m. She noted that Dr. Rolf Grafwallner, head of MSDE’s Division of Early Childhood Education, is available to meet with the Pre-K-3 Committee as they had requested at the last meeting.

Committee Reports

Committee members reported as follows:

PreK-3

Facilitator: Judy Walker

Ms. Walker reported that Dr. Grafwallner provided the group with changes being made to MMSR and how to merge this assessment with the proposed PARCC assessment.

Tested 4-8

Facilitator: Bridgette Blue

Ms. Blue said the Committee discussed student growth and definitions for effective and highly effective teachers. She said the group agreed to include pieces of Dr. Danielson's Framework in the evaluations.

Non-tested 4-8

Reporter: Dennis Pataniczek

Mr. Pataniczek said his Committee came up with a temporary conclusion as to what this area assessment would look like and that it will be informed by the content area meetings. He said the group agreed to create a framework or structure into which different content area would fall. He said the framework may have to be nimble enough to take into account the different grade levels.

There was some discussion between Dr. Grasmick, Ms. Bost and Ms. Weller about the apparent confusion in the interpretation of the law regarding the percentage of the statewide default model. Dr. Grasmick said that the Governor will be asked to weigh in on this issue for the Council.

High School

Facilitator: Christopher Barclay

Mr. Barclay said they worked on a definition of "highly effective" and "effective" principals and discussed a framework and the elements of that framework.

Adjournment

Ms. Weller announced that the March 7 meeting will be eliminated from the meeting schedule to accommodate school-based members. With no further discussion, the meeting ended at 4 p.m.