

**Maryland Council for Educator Effectiveness  
Minutes from Meeting of April 14, 2011**

**Absent:**

*Dr. Andres Alonso*

*Senator Delores Kelley*

*Cheryl Bost*

*Dr. Bonita Coleman-Potter*

*Dr. Mary Kay Finan*

**Minutes**

Betty Weller, MCEE co-chair, opened the meeting at 9:11 a.m. and asked members to review the minutes of March 28, 2011. With no discussion, the minutes were approved as presented.

**Teachers of the Year Summit on Teacher Evaluation Feedback**

Dr. Grasmick noted there is a wonderful brain trust of teachers and award winners in Maryland--Milken winners, teachers of the years, etc. MSDE convened those individuals to garner their thinking in terms of what would make sense in terms of determining teacher effectiveness. Dr. Grasmick stated the turnout at the summit was impressive and distributed a summary of their feedback.

**Interim Report to Governor O'Malley**

Dr. Grasmick directed the Council's attention to some suggestions that were made for the interim report to Governor O'Malley. Dr. Grasmick asked members to notify Debbie Lichter if they have corrections or suggestions so that she can incorporate their comments. Dr. Grasmick said the Ms. Lichter needs to have the input by next Wednesday, April 20, 2011.

Betty Weller said the packet includes a timeline for implementation of the model performance evaluation system. Dr. Grasmick will submit an amendment to the Race to the Top application based on this timeline. Dr. Grasmick then reviewed the chart and said the Council will meet again in December to evaluate what is happening with the recommendations at that point. From January 2012 to June 2012 locals will still be piloting and developing their evaluations. If USDE gives its approval to the amendment that is being submitted, the statewide system of evaluation will be piloted in the other systems as well in the 2012-13 school year. It would then become fully operational in the 2012-13 school year. Ms. Weller and Dr. Grasmick agreed that the pilot period should be a no fault period because the evaluations are still in the developmental stage and the goal is for a good product that improves instruction. Dr. Grasmick added that there will probably be no regulations promulgated until the summer of 2012 to allow for changes that may be needed.

Dr. Leak verified that the pilot window is two years if the amendment is approved by USDE. Ms. Weller responded 2011-2012 will be for pilot counties, the following year all systems will have a pilot evaluation system in place (2012-2013). Dr. Grasmick added that the goal is to try to create some level of alignment that makes sense. Then, when the Common Core Standards are implemented in 2013-2014 everything will be aligned. In terms of the instrument the seven school systems are working with, MSDE is interested in their feedback to determine whether or not adjustments need to occur. Dr. Grasmick said the amendment will speak to that second year. She added that she does not know if USDE will approve the amendment, but she did have a meeting with Secretary Duncan at which she raised this question. No one said no at that point in time, but a formal submission must be done and she hopes USDE will be responsive. Any adjustment to the RTTT application has to go through an amendment process; she is hopeful USDE will see the merit in not rolling out something that has not been fully vetted or for which appropriate professional development has been provided.

June Streckfus asked if other states are asking for an extension on the evaluation system and how will MSDE develop the argument. Dr. Grasmick responded yes, and some states are not as far along as Maryland. Dr. Grasmick said the part of the application on which USDE was firm was the 50 percent of student growth; there is absolutely no flexibility. She believes there was receptiveness to two years. Her point is when this evaluation system is rolled out, MSDE wants it to be a strong, transparent, fair plan that has gone through a significant amount of vetting to ensure it is a quality product.

Ms. Streckfus added that during her conversation with the Delaware representatives that presented to the Council, they stated that Maryland's timeline was impossible compared to their timeline, so Maryland may want to use them as an example. Dr. Grasmick then announced that Maryland received final approval for all of its \$250M in grant money. MSDE has the letter of approval and scopes of work for each local school system, but because approval occurred in April, there are many amendments to be submitted to deal with timeline issues. Dr. Grasmick said that the end date does not change for the overall grant.

Dr. Grasmick asked if the Council supports the amendment. There was consensus to move forward.

### **Draft Student Growth Measures for Teacher Evaluation and Questions**

Dr. Grasmick called attention to the handout which included information from various subcommittees and said staff tried to eliminate redundancies. The suggestions have not been vetted to ensure they are valid measures. The Council's work is to review them and determine if there are structures/measures that can be consistent.

Ms. Streckfus said as this document is developed, the information and feedback provided by the experts presenters to the Council need to be taken into account and the final piece needs indicators of some evidence that this is effective.

Dr. Grasmick said MSDE will ask experts to look at some of these things and do that kind of assessment/response to those questions in order to better determine whether or not a consistent structure can be created from the things on this list, i.e. an expert on portfolio and how it can be structured, what are prominent elements, how to structure it by grade level, so that LSS can be provided with templates.

Dr. Grasmick also commented that the PreK-3 group has been working closely with Rolf Grafwallner, assistant state superintendent, Division of Early Childhood Development, MSDE. He is convening a group of people and issuing an RFP for an expert to look at specific measures for PreK-3. By May 15 he expects to submit a list of those things that have been vetted by those experts. That is challenging because other than the MMSR, there has not been much under NCLB because it is not a required area for assessment.

Donna Hanlin discussed the portfolio with colleagues and their feeling was there needs to be a high level of specificity in terms of what should go into portfolios, as opposed to what some think of as a portfolio—teacher collecting samples of student work. Dr. Grasmick agreed and said that is why MSDE is having an expert help determine what is included.

Dr. Leak asked if MSDE is collecting the expert information in a way that can be stored and tapped into from the field, a place where educators around the state can go to access best examples, i.e. the Laura Doe presentation. Dr. Grasmick responded that is a stunning suggestion and as MSDE drills into some of these things, it could have at least looked for pieces of those presentations, and perhaps have them videotaped/recorded. Jim Foran noted there is a portion of current website where all materials are posted. He added that as Dr. Grasmick mentioned, one of projects in the application concerns hiring a center coordinator for executive officers across the state to engage in professional development regarding the

changes in the teacher/leader evaluation system. That role could possibly include working with LSSs to create a best practices portion for the website. Dr. Grasmick will arrange for somebody to video future presentation that could then be edited and put on the website.

June Streckfus said it is not just a matter of putting up information, it's packaging the information so that it's usable. She suggested exploring partnerships with writers who could compose introductions for these pieces of work because it is difficult for those on front lines to use the information effectively. Dr. Grasmick agreed that if it's a lot of reading material vs. visual, the visual appears more usable. Ms. Streckfus said teachers wanted to be able to query it, to post a question so that piece of the video would come up for them. It will take a lot to package information in that way. Dr. Grasmick said MSDE will probably have to do that piece.

David Burton said he would like student self-assessment to be part of it at the high school level. Dr. Grasmick responded MSDE will ask an expert to comment on that suggestion.

Dr. Grasmick asked the Council if MSDE is on the right track with this proposal. The consensus was yes. Dr. Grasmick thanked everyone and said she will follow up on Ms. Streckfus' suggestions and go through minutes and reports for other ideas, and the ideas developed by the teachers of the year.

#### **Proposed Teacher Evaluation Framework Draft**

Ms. Weller called the Council's attention to the two bubble charts enclosed in their materials. Ms. Weller reviewed the first chart (with Maryland Teacher Evaluation Model at the top). Dr. Grasmick added that the chart begins to look at a structure for putting into place the kinds of things the Council has generated so it has a way of looking at the structure. Later, the Council will discuss how it will configure the items and how to get to the idea of effective, highly effective, etc. Dr. Grasmick called attention to the bubble labeled "complexity". She said this is to reflect the discussion points that every teacher doesn't have a group that is exactly same and there are schools with tremendous challenges. Complexity signals in this particular classroom, school (true for principals too), that there is a very complex population and it will be front and center; it is not saying it's the only thing, but she believes it is important to reflect the idea of complexity.

Dennis Pataniczek said complexity might mean other factors too; for instance, the physical education teacher teaching without space, so it could be any of the contextual factors. Dr. Grasmick agreed and said she believes there will be a requirement that there will be some identification of what complexity means, but the general heading helps us to think in terms of what are the challenges.

David Burton suggested that the professional development box needs to be added at the top as well as the bottom and stretched out the width of the chart because it is pervasive to all areas. Dr. Grasmick and Ms. Weller both agreed.

Dawn Pipkin expressed agreement and noted that the professional development pieces need to evolve as standards continue change. Highly effective shouldn't mean I got here and I'm done. She liked the idea of the complexity piece because it goes to the root of the Council discussions and acknowledges the demands teachers/principals are facing. She added that for the NBCT process the candidate writes a contextual context of his/her class and it's from that piece that the teacher frames all of his/her decisions because what the teacher knows about his/her students goes into the decisions the teacher makes to provide effective instruction. She added that teachers don't always know who is economically disadvantaged and they need to know the make-up of the class to consider how they plan instruction.

Dawn Pipkin then added that when the Council is looking at all measures, she does not think the group is at the point where it is discussing guidance; i.e., state menu/local menu shouldn't have things counting

twice. For instance, if the state menu says portfolios and the local says portfolios; she just wants to ensure there is integrity in the data and there is not double scoring. She asked what LEA weighting policy means. Dr. Grasmick responded these are LEA decision making points, and there may be in certain LEAs more emphasis on instruction than planning preparation because LEAs have strategic plans that may influence those factors.

Dawn Pipkin asked for verification that those weighting decisions are up for local negotiation. Dr. Grasmick responded yes; she does not think the Council wants to dictate that piece. It is at the decision making level of the LEA based on their priorities.

June Streckfus stressed the importance of clear communication of what the Council agrees upon. She said there needs to be discussion around wording and to ensure communicates accurately and effectively.

Betty Weller suggested that perhaps a narrative be written to accompany the bubble charts to offer additional explanation. Dr. Grasmick concurred stating that would ensure a consistency of interpretation.

Judy Walker asked if the PreK-3 subgroup asked teachers about the creation of a growth plan as they reflected on quarterly data; just one page, to address how they plan to help how students grow. It could also ask what teachers plan for themselves to help their students---adding professional development piece and merging two thoughts.

Dawn Pipkin said every time there is a certificate renewal, teachers have to create a professional development plan. She would like to think every professional development plan is created for needs of where the teacher is, what the teacher sees as his/her needs as a teacher/principal---the challenge, if you will, is where the teacher needs support. She believes that piece is already in place when one thinks about a growth plan. Maybe that's the piece that is wrapped in.

Dawn Pipkin said the Council has had conversations about the focus of this endeavor being about professional development and support for staff and ensuring they have what they need to recognize here is where this employee is, here are the next steps. If there are concerns about those steps being put in place, and she hears what USDE is saying, but she also thought this group really wanted this evaluation to be about professional development. She thinks the personnel decision making will take care of itself because the Council already talked about needing years of data. She wants to hear from the group if they had any thoughts in terms of this marrying with the Council's conversations on professional development.

Dr. Grasmick believes the Council agreed with putting professional development at the top of the chart and along the bottom to cover all areas and so it's in both places. There is an application that has been approved for Maryland. She does not think it's subject to the Council changing it. There has to be integrity and fidelity in the implementation of the application; however, all of the surrounding pieces that speak to professional development--emphasizing those components are the Council's focus.

Donna Hanlin added that she does not believe the conversation with USDE conflicts with the discussion of this group in terms of the purpose being professional development. Dr. Leak said stretching the personnel decision bubble would make sense because wouldn't every kind of evaluation trigger some kind of decision? He likes where the group is heading with respect to professional development and thinks what the model does for him is make professional development a priority and the Council has done that by making it appear in both places--not as an add-on or a fringe benefit.

Christopher Barclay stated in previous Council discussions there was clearly commitment that the Council is doing all of this to improve teaching and learning and he thinks the chart will ultimately reflect that. The concern expressed previously was the potential "gotcha", and the sense he's gotten in all

discussions is that is not where the Council is going. He believes it's important for locals to understand that, and the graphic shows this is really about growing the quality of teaching in the state. The Council is putting forth the expressed commitment to professional development. The Council will continue to deal with the growth issue, but the spirit is clear: ultimately trying to get to a point of improving instruction.

Betty Weller said there is already an evaluation and a decision, the Council is looking at what is in between.

Dawn Pipkin hears what is being said, but wanted to express her public distress at USDE. She recently attended a presentation at National Council of Teachers of English meeting which looked at ESEA and the differences in NCLB. Although schools are assessing and are really data driven, there are pieces that do not meet kids' needs. She is disheartened that there is not enough dialogue about the reality of the classroom piece. The speed at which the applications and deadlines were set for RTTT did not allow enough time to have real conversations. Ms. Pipkin believes the Council conversations were as real as it gets; given what you have said about this being unmovable, there are some other realities in application that will present challenges. There was discussion about this being an even playing field in terms of qualitative measure and student growth. There are pieces in the proposed regulation that say in years when there is not a formal observation, 100 percent of the evaluation will be based on student growth only. And, there will be buildings across the state who cannot observe every teacher in every year to ensure the process has fidelity. She said the piece regarding basing the evaluation 100 percent on student growth undermines the importance the Council has placed on the goal of improving instruction and professional development. Ms. Pipkin believes the Council's great conversations have taken the group in new directions.

Dr. Grasmick responded one of benefits of pilot, and she liked what Ms. Weller said, that what really matters is everything combined. The goal of a pilot is what is beneficial and what is doable. She believes a lot will be gained from the reality of people attempting to implement the evaluation. But, she wants to be very overt and serious about the 50 percent; no state was immune to that and it was very clear that was an expectation of the application. How it is implemented and how guidance is provided to LEAs will be important. At the meeting with Secretary Duncan, Dr. Grasmick mentioned that Maryland wanted to pilot in seven systems and benefit from what they tell us about the reality of what is MSDE is proposing, then and additional year of no fault is needed so there is a benefit to a lot of feedback on the revisions in all other LEAs.

Dr. Leak wanted to understand every other year based on 100 percent on student growth. He asked if during the pilot all seven systems are doing the same type of evaluation, or are some doing the every other year one so the Council gets feedback on how they go about handling that scenario. Dr. Grasmick replied from her perspective, once the Council reaches agreement on this chart, and on the measures that the Council has brainstormed and that MSDE will vet, all seven systems would use this model because she believes it would be difficult to compare apples to oranges at the end. But, the second year could get into what Dr. Leak is suggesting. Jim Foran said he thinks there is flexibility in the application. There is no budget for the pilot system, but that was one area in which USDE as most interested. One area they spent a lot of time on was the pilot project.

Christopher Barclay said he doesn't think the issue is simply piloting the evaluation model because the issue is and he thinks the question was, what happens in the off years? As a project manager, he would want a three year pilot in order to have one year to pilot the model, the next year for feedback and evaluation/tweaking of it, and a third year to allow folks to reflect on the pilots that did have an off year and allowing additional time for feedback and revisions. There is a deficit for LEAs not in that initial pilot, because if in year two everyone else is doing the evaluation, what is being done in terms of reflection. He believes that is the challenge the Council may have to address because, to the point of an

off year being based on student growth, what guidance do people have? The Council hasn't worked on a framework for the off year, how it is done, etc. That is the question. The Council doesn't want to leave LEAs to flounder in the off year.

Jim Foran replied getting a second year will be a challenge; getting a third year is very unlikely. Dr. Foran said they would be evaluated formatively as well as summative.

Dr. Leak said if MSDE is granted a second year, great. Maybe during the pilot year when the model is being evaluated the Council pays particular attention to how the student growth information was collected and how to do that over a second year with particular attention on how to focus on that aspect during the off year. Dr. Grasmick reminded the Council it will be an off year for the seven pilot systems during that second year.

Maleeta Kitchen said as a classroom teacher she is having a hard time understanding what will happen in an off year. There will be a second year for somebody and she is nervous about that. She is thinking about the off years during which 100 percent of the evaluation will link to student growth. If MSDE is granted a second year, could the Council look at what is going to happen? Further, what if MSDE is not granted a second year? What happens in off year and the link to 100 percent of student growth?

Betty Weller said this is not a destination, it is a journey. She does not think permission is needed to do a third year. This is a journey and it won't end when RTTT is over. It will not end because as long there are schools and teachers, there will be a process. She encouraged Council members not to look at the evaluation as a two year picture with a finite point. She knows many classroom teachers are still not comfortable.

Dr. Grasmick said the Council is creating a model and it is an expectation. Dr. Grasmick asked, "Do we love everything that happened with NCLB? No, but we had an obligation to implement." There is a similar picture with this, and the Council is trying to come up with best possible model and it will continue to be refined, but she has to give a sobering message, "If we get the amendment, we have a second year of no fault, if not the expectation is that it will count, and I can't be disingenuous about that. It doesn't mean it won't continue to be refined, but I can't say it will be no fault for five years, just as what counted with MSA with NCLB, it was a reality."

Dr. Pataniczek said the seven systems are obligated to focus on growth because that is new; many others are already doing the process pieces in using the Danielson model in many cases. He believes the nervousness is about student growth, so the group really needs to take full advantage from those seven systems to get feedback from the get go. Dr. Grasmick added that's why on the timeline, MSDE is looking for feedback by January. Dr. Grasmick reminded Council members, this is a huge leap forward from NCL. She believes this places a high level of respect on teacher development and it will be the same for principals.

Dawn Pipkin suggested adding a narrative that expresses the intention of the model is to inform process of continuous professional development. The second important piece is multiple years of data. She is hearing Dr. Grasmick say there no wiggle room in the application. Dr. Grasmick said that is true in terms of the 50 percent; however, there is other wiggle room. For instance, the Council is saying multiple measures (not in application), the Council is saying locals get to decide (not in application, other than on 20 percent), the Council is saying for the whole thing. A lot of wiggle room has been put in. Ms. Pipkin asked about student growth requiring multiple years of data. She does not want the off year to be one determiner. Dr. Grasmick said that would not be a possibility. Ms. Pipkin advocated for multiple years of data to inform that decision.

Betty Weller said the concern is that a personnel decision could be made on an off year where nothing is evaluated but student growth. Dr. Grasmick said MSDE is not saying that. Betty Weller said, then, a personnel decision would need to have multiple years of data. Dr. Grasmick agreed.

Dr. Grasmick said, referencing the chart, the Council has agreed to place professional development at the top, define the domains or whatever the Council calls them so they are clear, pulling professional development across all performance standards, and personnel decisions across all performance standards. The consensus was yes.

Betty Weller said if Council members think of anything additional to let her and Dr. Grasmick know.

### **Student Growth Measures for the Principal Evaluation System**

Dr. Grasmick said it seems that the professional development and personnel aspects discussed regarding the teacher evaluation would also be changed on the principal framework. She asked Judy Walker and David Burton if they would agree with that. They agreed.

Judy Walker said principals will also need professional development so there is consistency from building to building. From the state level, she is hoping there will be modules and direction so that professional development is given consistently across the state. David Burton agreed that consistency is important. He also agreed that professional development is needed for principals on both ends of the models and thinks professional development needs to be treated as seriously for principals as it is for teachers. Judy Walker added again, that as one looks at school budgets and sees how LEAs allot days for professional development. It is clear that some superintendents still don't value professional development. For instance, when snow days need to be made up professional development days go first. This cannot work without enough professional development. Ms. Weller added in these times of austere budgets, some counties are cutting all professional development. Dr. Grasmick said MSDE will work with superintendents and to emphasize that high quality professional development is a responsibility.

Dawn Pipkin said the Council has talked a lot about parity between the teacher and principal evaluations. She said the complexity piece discussed earlier needs to be included in principal piece as well. Dr. Grasmick agreed. David Burton added that in speaking with colleagues, they want the latitude of being able to do the evaluation, but in his opinion, they need to be careful what they ask for because to evaluate every teacher is a lot to ask. Dr. Grasmick said there is a Principals Advisory Council (PAC) and that group weighed in on this and some of their comments have to do with the fact that they support idea of student growth. They do have comments about it; they want better definitions of some of the measures so it is not different from place to place; they want consistency. Dr. Grasmick offered to make their feedback available. She said she feels very strongly about the importance of the preparation of teachers and the preparation of principals so they come into their positions with a better expectation of their positions. Jim Foran reported the Principals' Advisory Council met two weeks ago and engaged in some of the very conversations the Council is having and had some of the same conclusions.

### **Teacher/Principal Evaluation System General Standards**

Jim Foran and Ann Chafin distributed a handout Teacher/Principal Evaluation System General Standards.

Jim Foran shared that he participates in conference calls with other state leads for RTTT. The group spoke at length last month regarding evaluations and all states are struggling with many of the same issues as Maryland. He said Massachusetts and Rhode Island seemed to be further along. He noted that Rhode Island paid a consultant to help them think through what general standards might look like. Dr. Foran reviewed evaluation systems for a number of school systems and wanted to understand Montgomery County's system. One goal was to see if a conceptual model could be faithful to the RTTT application and allow flexibility for LEAs. He is convinced that is possible. For example, the

Montgomery County system has six performance standards and in his view 1, 3, and 4 could be used as part of a growth model; 2, 5, and 6 could be used to meet the professional practices and responsibilities part. That is just one example of how one system could fit and doesn't have to throw the baby out with the bath water.

Ann Chafin said the chart distributed reflects an attempt at quantifying a decision process; this occurs once decisions are made and how a decision would ultimately be made to come to bottom line decision of effective, highly effective, etc. Ms. Chafin then reviewed the document. She said some of the questions remaining are: What is the minimum score for highly effective? What is the maximum score for ineffective?

Once the professional practice and student growth charts are finished, then the final chart is completed. The question for this chart is: Which rating (highly effective, effective, or ineffective) should be assigned to each of the 9 cells above? Once these questions answered, there will be a decision tree to go through.

Dr. Grasmick added this would also be germane to principals. Betty Weller noted this is a concept, not a final anything.

Dennis Pataniczek said one issue to decide is what if someone is highly effective in professional practice and ineffective in student growth. He said determining the highest rating that teacher will get overall is a critical decision. Dr. Foran replied Rhode Island worked through this issue by sitting down with teachers groups to come to an agreement. There has to be some consensus around each cell.

David Burton expressed appreciation for the overall action. He noted that the application states that no teacher can be rated effective unless that teacher is rated effective/highly effective in student growth. He can see that statement will cause problems and believes it will cause a lot of pain and suffering for teachers. Perhaps simply stating the reverse, if teachers are rated effective in student growth then they cannot be rated ineffective.

Dr. Foran responded that he thinks the benefit of the doubt must go to the student growth component. Dr. Grasmick added she can see it causing angst the way it is expressed. Maleeta Kitchen said, on page 151 of grant application it reads that teachers and principals who do not meet effective in student growth cannot be rated effective overall and thus will be deemed ineffective. She asked what kind of message is being sent. Isn't this process about improving teachers? If a teacher is effective in student growth, but terrible in professional practice, it seems that does that not matter. Dr. Grasmick replied it matters in terms of the overall rating. Ms. Kitchen said the statement reads if a teacher is ineffective in student growth, the teacher cannot be deemed effective. Therefore, her understanding is if a teacher is highly effective in student growth and ineffective in professional practice that means those other components that make a teacher a great teacher are not important. So, student growth matters more than excellent professional practice. Dr. Grasmick said if one does the reverse, for instance if a teacher is highly effective for student growth and ineffective for professional practice she does not think the teacher would be rated as highly effective, maybe effective.

Dawn Pipkin said a teacher could have students with exemplary readiness and support and sometimes the teacher might not be on his/her A game. That teacher might not be completely responsible for growth because the students have parental support, etc. Sometimes students perform even if the instruction is not exemplary or effective. Is the wrong message being sent if we say as long as a teacher is effective in student growth, the teacher will be effective? As long as your students perform, you'll be effective, and does that encourage a whole additional realm the group does not want to go to in terms of assessment, rigor, etc.



Dr. Foran said he has evaluated many teachers over the years and cannot remember a single teacher who was highly effective in student growth and ineffective in professional practice. Dawn Pipkin believes if there is solid professional practice, student growth will be a result although she knows there are variables for which a teacher cannot control. It may be semantics again, but the group seems to be contradicting its message that the evaluation is about professional development.

David Burton said he agrees with Dr. Foran; if kids are being successful, the practice is there. Betty Weller said the Council needs to make that decision. Dawn Pipkin said she is not suggesting a principal would manipulate the data, but in a resource and coaching role she knows there are folks who, because of who is in their classrooms that year, will have good data, but she is working with them on instructional practices and their ability to use data to inform instruction.

Dr. Grasmick said she does not think one can separate the chart from the evaluation piece. It is part of professional development for the teacher. There has to be integration. The outstanding question is for the Council to assign ratings in the empty boxes.

Enrique Melendez said there are two parts: professional practice and student growth and each one is 50 percent. He said the question is: What are weighted metrics for each of those and at end of day that will add up to 100? The Council needs to agree on scale of 100 what gets a teacher to highly effective, effective, and ineffective. He believes the Council needs to determine weighting areas and then from there, what is the range from composite, and within each content area what is the weight.

Dennis Pataniczek thinks the questions are really good, but they get the group ahead of where it is because the Council hasn't determined student growth yet. If we have a class of students with complexities, it will be challenging to determine absolute growth, but relative growth may be very high. The Council hasn't gotten there yet. On the basis of one year, wherever a teacher is placed on the matrix it will lead to professional development and/or assistance unless it's a probationary teacher and the Council hasn't even decided what that means. There are decisions the Council needs to make before it is comfortable with what goes in the empty boxes.

June Streckfus stated that when she left teaching, there was a debate between GT/special needs/other kids, and an argument heard from the public was that GT students didn't need separate classrooms because they would learn in spite of, and it's a deplorable argument that the Council should not perpetuate. The Council can't say that kids can learn in spite of, and yes they might be able to perform on an assessment. Dr. Grasmick believes the Council agrees that professional development should be pervasive to these three categories and good quality instruction should provide opportunities for all children regardless of where the children are on the continuum.

Dr. Foran noted that Rhode Island built in a great deal of flexibility for LEAs. He believes professional practice is an LEA responsibility---that's what LEAs do now. This is really not a radical departure from what is practiced. LEAs would develop guidelines for highly effective, effective, and ineffective, which would be approved by state, so that 50 percent is, in some ways, off the table. The 20 percent is a menu LEAs come up with and as long as it can be justified. What the Council is really talking about what is in the 30 percent that has to somehow come up with highly effective, effective, and ineffective. If the Council can zero in on that, it takes two leaps forward.

Dr. Grasmick asked the Council if this is a worthy path to pursue. The consensus was yes.

Dr. Leak said the Council is getting this information today for the first time and trying to take complexity and simplify it on two pages. The matrix works for him. Ultimately, the Council will have to develop a

rational way to determine what is highly effective, effective, and ineffective. He said the chart provides a framework for making a decision at how to get at the guts of what an evaluation is. He then expressed appreciation to Dr. Foran, Ms. Chafin, and MSDE staff.

Dr. Grasmick said USDE provided a general guideline that to be effective generally meant a year of growth. Dr. Foran said he would argue that expert observation of classroom instruction is one component. Student growth is point A to point B; an expert observer can determine whether or not a student has grown from A to B. It goes back to student growth being absolute or relative.

Dr. Grasmick said this was discussed at national level; the states wanted clarity on that point. The benefit of this process compared to NCLB, is NCLB is an absolute standard. This acknowledges the work a teacher does to get a student from one point to another. This is not an absolute requirement.

Dr. Grasmick said the Council needs to begin to take the next steps in terms of how it might configure this so that it is meaningful big step forward, with discussion of the corresponding questions raised. The Council needs something to structure its thinking.

Dr. Grasmick asked if this is the right path. The Council agreed.

Dr. Grasmick reminded members to get any comments on the interim draft to Debbie Lichter by Wednesday, April 20. The next meeting will be in the Appropriations Room on April 27 from 9:30 to 12:30.

Dawn Pipkin asked if the Council will get to review further iterations of the report. Dr. Grasmick responded yes.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.