

Minutes

Commission to Review Maryland's Use of Assessments and Testing in Public Schools

April 14, 2016

9:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m.

House Office Building, room 142

6 Bladen Street, Annapolis

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m.

1. Welcome
2. Review and approve March 7 minutes
 - a. The March minutes were adopted as written.
3. Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals (MAESP) presentation
 - a. Terry Ball, principal of Friendship Valley Elementary School in Carroll County, and Lou D'Ambrosio, principal of Arthur Middleton Elementary School in Charles County, presented on behalf of MAESP. MAESP is a professional association that includes 700 members in all 24 school systems. Members include principals, assistant principals, aspiring leaders and central office personnel who support school leaders.
 - b. There are three types of assessments with different purposes and intent: diagnostic – individual assessment of student strengths and needs; formative – monitoring of learning; and summative – accountability for teachers, schools, school systems and the State. Accountability is a three tier process with tests, professional practice and quantitative data.
 - c. MAESP made the following recommendations:
 - i. In Charge area #7:
 1. Local schools and school systems should have control of all assessments NOT federally or state mandated. This allows for immediate data feedback in order to adjust curriculum and instruction; the opportunity to adjust pacing, interventions, and acceleration for students; and the ability to target professional development for teachers to meet student needs.
 2. If the Commission finds that the allotted time for administering assessments is resulting in reduced instructional time, the most efficient and effective methods to ensure adequate time is allotted to both

administering and instruction, then: standardized testing must assess what it is designed to assess first and foremost; instructional time should not be used to teach to the test, rather instructional time may be used to allow students to practice with testing formats, presentations and response choices; school systems should use an assessment team to review type, format and time allotment for all system assessments on an annual basis to determine ongoing purpose, reliability and validity; and all assessment data results should be returned in a time efficient manner to be used to measure student achievement and school accountability, including as one data point for teacher and principal performance.

3. Regarding kindergarten assessments: Standardized testing must assess what it is designed to assess first and foremost; sampling of kindergarten students to assess readiness skills does not give information to teachers for learning and instruction; all kindergarten students assessed in pre-academic skills, social-emotional skills, gross and fine motor skills gives teachers information for instruction and student learning; summer assessment of kindergarten students is financially prohibitive in some school systems and does not capture classroom observational data; and ESSA was passed, therefore pre-k to 12th grade are included in the same guidelines for assessments.
4. There should be an audit of all assessments required by the State and local school systems. This should include clear and common understandings of the language used. It should also include monitoring of all school systems to ensure they have adequate materials and technology resources to facilitate assessment administration within a timely manner without impact to instruction.

ii. In Charge area #8:

1. PARCC and NAEP are the only summative assessments that meet the ability to compare student achievement across local school systems, the State and the nation. Local school systems should have control of all other assessments. PARCC scheduling will be better this year because it has been tweaked based on experiences last year.

iii. In summary, single assessments are snapshots to improve student achievement, professional practice, and schools. Teaching to the test does not increase student learning, it just increases test scores.

d. The following questions were asked of the panel:

- i. Regarding your audit recommendation, are you suggesting something beyond the survey that MSDE did this summer? Answer: The results were not as accessible as they could have been. The times reported were not consistent with what principals know is happening in their schools.

- ii. Should the survey be conducted annually? Answer: Yes. MSDE’s newsletters to principals this year are awesome. Links to the reports referenced in the newsletter would be helpful.
- iii. Do you know why your numbers on testing were different from what was reported on the survey? Answer: There may not have been a common understanding of that is “mandated.” It is different in different schools. There may also have been a lumping of different tests.
- iv. Do you administer assessments that might not be administered in other schools in your district? Answer: Yes. We may administer some assessments based on our specific needs. Question: Can what you do be fluid from year-to-year? Answer: Yes – our needs may change.
- v. Should the State try to keep track of school-based assessments? Answer: There could be an audit by the school system, not the State. There could be a notation on the State report that the results may be different for specific schools based on school and classroom needs. The reader should contact the school for additional information.
- vi. It was helpful to hear MAESP’s position on the KRA. Why is there a difference between what you are saying and what teachers said on the availability and use of the data? Answer: Teachers may not know exactly what data is available and when it is available through their dashboards. Principals get great individual student data, enabling them to support and/or accelerate students. Without the KRA, principals and teachers would need an additional tool to get this data. We think there needs to be additional professional development supported by school systems for teachers on how to use the data on the dashboards.
- vii. New legislation requires a sampling administration of the KRA, with an option for school systems to administer it to all students. Answer: It will be hard to get a true sampling because students enter kindergarten with so many different prior experiences. On the first day they present so differently. Response by Del. Ebersole: A sampling, if done well provides good information and will have less impact on instruction. Answer: This speaks to the purpose of the use of the data. Sampling will not provide the data needed to individualize the student’s experience.
- viii. What is your opinion on what is “timely return of data”? Answer: For PARCC, we need the data in June to plan effectively for the next school year. For SLO purposes, “timely” should be immediately.
- ix. As the State Board of Education considers its accountability model, we ask what we want schools to accomplish. How would you like your schools to be assessed? Answer: Test scores are great snapshots, but it does not represent the full scope of what schools should do. Areas including parent involvement, after school activities, and teacher attitudes also contribute to what happens in schools every day. There should also be a component on how the community perceives

the school.

- x. What did you mean when you said that the State should “monitor that all LEAs have adequate materials and technology resources”? Answer: For example, in Carroll County, there is not enough technology in a school to test an entire grade level at one time. This makes scheduling difficult. In Charles County, there is more technology, but human resources for administration can be an issue – especially for students with special needs.
- xi. Can you speak to the time it takes staff to plan for test administration? Answer: This does take time away from other job responsibilities (e.g. teacher observations, evaluations, and instruction).
- xii. Can you speak to the timeliness of the return of test reports? Have you seen the item analysis from PARCC? Answer: We do have individual student reports, results broken down by grade, and item analysis broken down by subgroup. Question: Are they helpful? Answer: I don’t know yet. We need to look at the information over time. Since the test has changed, the results are not necessarily comparable to last year.

4. Legislative Update

- a. Delegates Ebersole and Hettleman reported on the legislation from this session.
 - i. SB787/HB 1427 – Federal Innovation Pilot Program - Failed – This bill may have been premature since USDE regulations are not out yet.
 - ii. SB 533/HB 412 – Assessment – Administration and Provision of Information - Passed. This is a transparency bill. Assessments must be posted on school system websites and included in their Master Plans.
 - iii. SB794/HB 657 – Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Assessments – Passed- KRA will shift to a representative sampling instead of census administration. LEAs and schools under certain conditions have the option to test all students, as long as the assessment is completed by October 1 and the aggregate results are returned within 45 days.
 - iv. SB786/HB 397 – Assessments – Best Practices in the Administration of Assessments – Failed. (Passed House but Failed in Senate committee)
 - v. SB407/HB 141 Assessments – Limits on Testing – Failed – (Passed House failed in Senate committee) This bill would limit testing to 2% of instructional time. It passed the House but got stuck in Senate committee.
 - vi. HB1233 – Failed. (Passed in House but failed in Senate committee) This is a parental notice bill.

- vii. HB633 – Teacher and Principal Evaluations – Revisions to Requirements- Failed. Standardized testing cannot be used as a part of educator evaluations. Repeals a State Board regulation.

5. Discussion of Draft Report

- a. Committee members made the following recommendations for changes to the draft report:
 - i. Add a section on Findings prior to Recommendations to set the stage.
 - ii. Move some of the details of the Commission’s work to later in the report.
 - iii. Organize Findings and Recommendations according to the Charge areas. This aligns with the templates being used by the subcommittees.
 - iv. Clarify that the recommendations and comments made by the various presenters may conflict.

6. Subcommittee Work

- a. The three subcommittees met for the remainder of the time.

Elementary/Middle	High	General/Infrastructure
Janet Wilson, Chair	Laura Potter, Chair	Larry Bowers, Chair
Alohaa Chin Leon Frison Shelly Hettleman Julie Hummer Guffrie Smith	Eric Ebersole Laurie Halverson Andy Smarick	Nate Mikalus Mark Newgent Paul Pinsky Karen Prengaman
Rotate as needed: Chris Berry, Henry Johnson		

Minutes Adopted: May 10, 2016