

Minutes

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

June 8, 2016

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Howard County Public Schools, Board Room B

10910 Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City, MD

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

1. Welcome
2. Review and approve May 16 minutes
 - a. The May minutes were adopted as written.
3. Subcommittee reports and Commission discussion for findings and recommendations

The three subcommittees:

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	Nathaniel Malkus Mark Newgent Paul Pinsky Karen Prengaman
As needed: Chris Berry Henry Johnson Nancy King		

a. General Infrastructure Group

The Commission discussed pages 1-4 of the recommendations from the General Infrastructure Group.

Focus Area I: The impact of the implementation of mandated assessments on the instructional program

1. **Require Superintendents to annually report two measures of testing time from the prior school year to their county Board of Education:**
 - **the number of hours students spend taking mandated assessments, disaggregated by grade level for all students, English language learners and students with disabilities, at the county and school levels, and**
 - **the number of days the school schedule was changed school-wide, beyond an individual classroom, by mandated assessments for each school.**
- Question: Will there be a document or template used for schools to compile the data

collection?

- Comment: Subgroups make this very complicated. Teachers said loud and clear that it is important to collect the data to determine what is reasonable.
- Question: How do we make sure that there is someone objective/out of the school building collecting this? Should it be MSDE?
- Question: Could this be combined within the concept of the local assessment commission? They would have various stakeholders including parents, community members, business, etc.
- Comment: Suggested using something other than grade level because that does not always apply in high school.
- Comment: Thinks the superintendent would be more appropriate than the local assessment commission.
- Comment: Could there be a check and balance approval process with this? Then all stakeholder groups can be included.
- Question & Comment: What do they do with the data once it comes in? We should suggest what they should be looking for.
- Consensus for this recommendation.

2. Provide annual need-based competitive technology grants to districts designed to minimize the impact on instruction in the Maryland schools with technology deficits that drive extended testing schedules. MSDE should develop evaluation criteria for awarding grants to districts that balance need—identifying schools that demonstrate assessment-related technology deficits that have significant extend testing schedules that impact instruction—with action plans to cost-effectively meet those needs—developing viable and sustainable plans to effectively reduce computer administered assessments impact on instruction. MSDE criteria should a) favor district plans that provide local funds to maximize the effectiveness of state grant funding and b) ensure that grant funds will not replace existing or planned local technology expenditures.

- Question: Do we scale this to a certain amount of money?
- Comment Technology became a bottleneck to the successful implementation in many LEAs. This is any attempt to address this.
- Comment Competitive grants allow LEAs to self-identify schools with greatest problems.
- Question: Is this technology for assessment only?
- Comment: The focus is the technology problem to be solved regarding assessment, but externalities are certainly allowable.
- Comment: When we look at minimizing the impact on instruction, you have to look at where the computers are coming from (i.e. instruction) for testing. We need to include this in the criteria for application.
- Comment: Students should be able to use the technology to experience the way they will be assessed.
- Question: E-Rate Funding – is it not enough? It was said there have been some changes in the program but almost all LEAs use the program.
- Comment: Criteria should favor LEAs that incorporate other funding – have some “skin in the game” – it shows how much effort they are making. Counties need to own up and provide sufficient resources; many superintendents are owning up – they need to work together.
- Comment: Suggests that MSDE develop instructions that get at these principles.
- Comment: This is a money item.

- Question: Where are we taking the money from? This is a concern.
- Comment: This should not be an unfunded mandate. There needs to be something coming from the State as well.
- Comment: There should be some sort of consideration to the time range of the grant so that there is sustainability over years (not just one year for technology).
- Comment: The section was set up so that they would have to create viable action plans to impact instruction in order to make sure they look at sustainability. More detail was requested.
- Consensus for this recommendation.

3. Provide timely results for all mandated assessments so the results can be used to guide instruction and to plan for prospective programming decisions

- Comment: MSDE & LEAs to provide timely return on assessment.
- Comment: Dissemination of scores will be available to LEAs by July 15, 2016. LEAs choose how to disseminate the data. The data will be available for summer use. Dr. Strader talked about how there is a wide range of time on the dissemination to teachers.
- Question: What is the range?
- Comment: We need clear markers so that teachers can get the data and impact instruction.
- Comment: Our student information system is included in their data warehouse – every LEA is in a different place. To make assessments immediately usable to teachers, we must strive to make the results immediately available.
- Comment: Timeliness is not always a virtue – it can come at a cost (specificity, etc.). Can we really do this with ALL mandated assessments? It seems like a universal statement and that is concerning.
- Comment: It takes time to process and improve the data before you send it out.
- Comment: I fear that if we don't put time restrictions/guidelines, LEAs won't get teachers the information in time. As teachers, we can't help our students move without the data. We need to ensure the LEAs are doing their part.
- Question: Can we change it to “mandated formative assessments” for those assessments that have a time-sensitive factor?
- Question: What is our primary purpose of assessment? That is the crux of the issue.
- Comment: I think we are moving away from assessment solely for data collection. Why not keep the language and instead put a caveat about assessments simply for explicitly data collection purposes? Ideas:
 - “To inform instruction”
 - Could we define it? “or meet the specific purposes of assessment”
 - I'm worried we are treating all tests the same, and there is a cost to that.
 - I really think our tests should guide instruction so that we can figure out what to do better.
 - We can make this explicit to LEAs as well.
 - Use the “local, state, and federally mandated assessments”
 - Suggested change to “available to all interested stakeholder groups” – others disagreed – this section is specific to educators
- Consensus for this recommendation.

4. MSDE will provide additional financial resource assistance to LEAs to allocate “Assessment Coordinator” positions for elementary, middle, and high schools. The responsibilities of the “Assessment Coordinator” would include, but not be limited to:

- **Responsibility for logistics, scheduling and resource allocation to accomplish mandated assessment**
- **Collection, distribution, and analysis data related to assessment to all stakeholder groups in a timely fashion**
- **The facilitating of data chats related to assessment results, empowering educators, parents and students themselves to understand student results and the implication for learning**
- **Facilitate/lead professional learning opportunities for teachers to understand the standards-based implication of assessments and their results, particularly as related to career and college readiness**
- **Coordinate/disseminate student information specifically on the career and college readiness of students as it relates to state requirements on such**
- **Provide updates and professional learning to staff on changes and adjustments to State and LEA mandated assessment programs**

While most LEAs provide some level of coordination accomplish those responsibilities, preferably, the “Assessment Coordinator” would be a distinct facilitative and leadership position, not additional responsibilities added to an existing position.

- Question: Is this a full-time position for all levels?
- Comment: It has to be worked out how much time this would be.
- Comment: We welcome a better name for this person.
- Comment: We should shoot for the moon.
- Comment: We should consider the funding. We have things in here as recommendations with no funding and we need to be careful about that.
- Comment: This is very prescriptive to principals.
- Comment: A big part of the charge is to reduce testing. I want to echo what was just said. Another alternative is to say this should be a recommendation to the Equity and Adequacy Study. We need to get in the queue for any future statewide funding. Give this to the Thornton Group.
- Comment: There must be some recommendation that acknowledges the impact on schools an individual regarding coordination. We must convey this to have done our job appropriately.
- Question: Could we consider that since the local assessment committees will be gathering baseline data, we should quantify the human resources time that is included in this work to provide true and accurate pictures.
- Comment: I like the idea – we need to know what it is costing us and request funding for those costs. I am worried about where the money is coming from. We should not take funding away from instruction. We need a person at each level, and if we do that, we solidify testing because it is there job.
- Comment: This is costly because the people who do this now are not necessarily well-qualified (paraeducators, etc.) and someone new will be much more expensive.
- Question: We need to make it part of the data collection – what are the characteristics of those organizing this now?
- Question: Are we answering the question that legislators’ had in mind?
- Comment: We are using people who should be helping with instruction to handle these assessments. This could be a position that encompasses much more than just the test – CCR, etc.
- Comment: You have to have someone driving the train. It can’t always just the AP – they have many other roles.

- Comment: We need to recognize we are taking people away from what they need to do in the classroom.
- Comment: The only way I would support this is if it is taking teachers out of the classroom. I know that the State budget is over but we have to be careful about the requests for funding here.
- Comment: I believe that there have to be more resources. I am concerned that we have spent 90 minutes discussing this as opposed to reducing duplicative testing. There needs to be some relief – whether it is 2 or 5% - for teachers and students. I agree with it, but in the broader context, I am concerned.
- Comment: We are talking about 1.75% allocation on testing resources.
- Comment: This is costing us human resources. In my school, they are pulling guidance counselors – that means a suicidal child will not get help. This is important – it will hurt us in the long run.
- Comment: It has bothered me that we are not cutting down on the testing. Have we done our job if we haven't cut down the number of hours spent on testing? Should we be specific by grade? Do we need to go back and re-evaluate whether we have done what we need to do?
- Recommendation tabled pending more wordsmithing.

Focus Area II: The impact that accommodation requirements/guideline have had on students, teachers and other staff

1. MSDE should review and update the current MD Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual in light of allowable accommodations under PARCC to create appropriate consistency regarding accessibility and accommodations guidelines and clearly communicate them to staff.

- Comment: This sounds like we are adjusting to the dictates of PARCC. We should not be adjusting to a testing vendor.
- Comment: That is our intent – we will look at the language. The accommodations are not in conflict – PARCC is generous with accommodations.
- Comment: I have heard that there isn't enough training. Let's put out a single manual across all tests. Let's not throw out PARCC.
- Question: Just remove PARCC from the language?
- Comment: There should be recommendations in alignment with federal guidelines.
- Doug Strader: We have tasked our vendor with working on the Maryland Accommodations Manual (MAM) to make it the most accessible test possible. Our MAM is in compliance with federal regulations. It is a challenge to keep a common MAM across all vendors and levels.
- Comment: The intent of this is that what students get in the classroom should be what they get on the test.
- Comment: The use of paper/pencil is an accommodation.
- Comment: I heard that there were many instances where the accommodations did not match.
- Comment: It would be helpful to have specific examples to investigate.
- Comment: Can we leave this to MSDE to bring consistency in the MAM (knowing that it is already in process)?

2. Implement the accessibility and accommodations guidelines effective for all state mandated assessments in 2017-18.

- Consensus on these recommendations (1 and 2).

Focus Area III: Technology that is needed to implement testing programs and the impact of its availability

1. Analyze and disaggregate the results of MSDE technology needs assessment to determine the implications for administering the mandated federal, state and local assessments.

- Question: Who is this directed towards? The State has already done two technology assessments (and there is another one coming out in August).
- Comment: They are very old.
- Comment: The Technology Report is new. The Technology Plan is old and there is a group working on that. The Technology Needs Assessment Plan comes out in August 2016.
- Comment: The second part of the statement is very important. What are the implications for those schools without the infrastructure in place?
- Comment: You are asking MSDE to make a judgment call that we are not comfortable making for LEAs.
- Comment: Perhaps the survey should ask LEAs for their thoughts on the implications. There has to be some sort of “so what.” How will this help inform us in making decisions?
- Recommendation tabled pending wordsmithing.

2. Provide a paper-pencil option for state assessments, formalize a process to determine when schools or districts may use paper-pencil options, require districts using that option to complete and commit to a plan for transitioning to computerized assessments in no more than two years.

- Comment: Formalize a process as to when schools can use them.
- Question: Why is there a need to have commitment to go to computer testing in two years? I challenge the concept until I hear a reason.
- Comment: When we adopted PARCC, we knew that it would be an online assessment, so we began the transition. We have been using online testing for years and we wanted to move forward.
- Question: What is our goal? Assess properly or well? I’m concerned we are letting factors that do not need to be involved be involved.
- Comment: All RFPs for assessments that are out right now involve online testing. It is cheaper, easier to score, easier to get data back in a timely fashion, etc.
- Comment: We are moving instruction toward much more computer-based instruction, so we need to have a point for our vision for instruction in the future (or else we will not move where we need to go).
- Comment: I see a huge digital conversion to the resources that are at the fingertips of students and teachers. The level of engagement has increased in certain classrooms one hundred fold. It is an expectation of our learners.
- Comment: Our educational landscape is shifting because our standards require us to be critical thinkers. Type III items where students have to show their thinking concern me for AI scoring, especially in mathematics.
- Comment: How does this connect with the technology grant in section one?
- Comment: It is designed to fix instructional problems caused by technology. The requested language will be added.

- Comment: Our saying that it shouldn't be doesn't change things. It is incumbent upon educators.
- Consensus on the concepts of this recommendation (1 and 2) with wordsmithing.

Focus Area IV: The extent to which, if at all, data from mandated testing has been used as part of SLOs.

1. Student Learning Objectives

The topic of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) has come up during presentations to the Commission as well as during discussions of mandated assessments by the Commission. The Commission has tried to determine the extent to which decisions have been made to use mandated assessments as part of SLO; and when this has been done, has been decided by school system leadership or at the school level by the principals and the teachers.

The Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) and the American Institute of Research (AIR), leading experts on SLOs, have conducted trainings for local district teams, primarily made up of executive staff, building administrators, and teachers for the past three years in collaboration between MSDE and MSEA. Trainings have taken place three times a year covering various components of the SLO process. A major component emphasized by both groups is the need to have SLOs created, driven, and owned by teachers in order to garner the greatest impact on student learning.

Yearly, CTAC along with WestEd have been commissioned by MSDE to conduct statewide surveys on SLOs and the Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPE). In their September 2015 report, they categorize districts as “instruction versus compliance.” Some districts link instruction and the TPE process, including SLOs, by focusing on improving instruction and building capacity, and welcome genuine teacher-district collaboration. However, others are driven more by compliance and implement the TPE process—including SLOs—because it is required, resulting in “haphazard” links to instruction caused by a lack of teacher input and buy-in.

The language under Maryland’s waiver approved by the U.S. Department of Education requires that a SLO be “informed by” rather than “based on” state assessments. In an email message dated March 17, 2016, Mr. Ben Feldman, Teacher Principal Evaluation Team, MSDE, stated: “We construe that the state assessment is not the outcome measure, but is used to identify the salient issues that would represent big wins for the students and the school. For example, the school has done poorly on PARCC literacy scores, ergo, improving literacy--as assessed by something such as an LEA-developed and adopted benchmark having rigor--would be reflected in the SLO design. Informed does not mean ‘the percent of students achieving some standard on the PARCC...’ In the January 2013 guidance from USDE under RTTT they said, ‘The HSA, where appropriate, should be used as a data point within one SLO.’ For this one measure, we did recommend that the outcome should be passing the HSA. RTTT is gone, so this particular language does not continue in force. Some LEAs may use actual assessment scores as outcomes, but that is an internal decision and has never been formally articulated to us.” The MSDE website lists all 22 approved LEA models. (See Summary Table: “SLOs in State and LEA TPE Models”)

There also is significant variability of local school district procedures for implementing SLOs. Each district has defined the number of required SLOs, the measures for the assessment of student academic progress, and the weight or percentage that each SLO

counts in the evaluation ratings received by teachers and principals. Testimony presented to the Commission from both core and non-core subject teachers has suggested that the creation of the SLO student growth requirement in TPE has resulted in an increase in mandated standardized testing.

The SLO process in several districts has become a time intensive, top-down district mandate, and in many cases includes measures not directly relevant to the individual teacher and the students he or she teaches. Additionally, the number and documentation of SLOs remains the focus in many districts versus to focus the dialog on instructional strategies that can assist students with specific needs. This information is again cited in the WestEd/CTAC study.

Analysis

Educators can utilize multiple measures within the SLO process to determine and assist students to meet standards. The development and monitoring of up to two SLOs as developed by the individual teacher should provide sufficient measures to positively move instruction. Any number more than two rather than being aimed at improving student learning often results in increased testing and less time for instruction.

SLOs frequently are based, in whole or in part, on teacher-developed quizzes, tests, or other forms of classroom-based assessment used as an on-going means of monitoring student progress, enabling teachers to modify their instructional practices during the period of SLO implementation, rather than relying exclusively on the summative administration of a state or district mandated assessment.

Recommendations

1. Educators, in conjunction with school-based and district leaders, shall collaborate to determine what measures (including what if any standardized assessments are used) and targets to use, to monitor and to assess student progress. Districts should provide sample SLO's or assessments with clear language. SLO's will require multiple student measure that emphasize formative assessment or other measures which allow educators to provide feedback to students prior to summative assessment. SLO's should not be based singularly on mandated assessments.

2. School districts should require no more than two teacher directed SLO's for the purposes of meeting the student growth requirements within the TPE.

- Comment: "Directed to the teacher" language – do we need it?
- Comment: These are some markers that could be used later on to vet - change language in #1 to: "The primary purpose of a standardized assessment should not be to attain an SLO"
- Comment: The issue is some assessments given solely for the purpose of SLOs (but otherwise would not be given at all).
- Comment: UDL – instruction should provide students with an opportunity to show what they are able to do. Every day teachers provide ways to show they have fulfilled standards in pre-measures that do not necessarily mean assessments – UDL does that. There are ways that we can capture what kids can do without a formalized assessment.
- Comment: Now we are talking about what constitutes an assessment.
- Comment: As a teacher I have the autonomy to determine how to teach and assess my students along the way. Assessments should be more meaningful to the teacher.

- Question: Wouldn't it be helpful to have a district-wide, standardized measure – a pre-test – that all teachers can be compared against based on their student performance?
- Comment: SLOs are about picking something the teacher thinks is important – an objective – to focus on gathering evidence on.
- Comment: Best practices will also go in.
- Consensus on this recommendation (1 and 2) with change to #1

Focus Area V: Parent Communication

1. MSDE should provide resources to provide information on state mandated assessments that will:

- Provide information about student performance on mandated tests and how teachers will use these data in their classrooms,**
- Explain the assessment construction and format information**
- Identify the ties/links to curricular standards—assessment question examples and links to specific examples at all grade levels**
- Address how students with disabilities and who are ELLs may be affected by various assessments and why,**
- Communicate information on Maryland HSA and PARCC that answers:**
 - Why does my child need to pass these tests to graduate?**
 - What are the cut-off scores to meet the criteria?**
- Create FAQs**
- Disseminate the assessment psychometrics,**
- Communicate and provide access to statewide, countywide and local school aggregated and disaggregated results**
- Explain the results in layman's terms**
- Interpret the assessment results**
- Help parents to understand and answer the questions: What does this mean for my child? What should be the next steps for their education? What can I do at home to support my child?**

2. Local Boards of Education should communicate with parents before, during, and after testing by:

- publishing a comprehensive assessment calendar for elementary, middle and high schools;**
- providing and distributing information regarding what students will be tested, why, on what material, and how the assessments connected to the curriculum;**
- explaining what the results will mean, how they will be used, and how, when and where parents and students will be able to access results;**
- explaining what assessment results mean for the next steps in students education; and**
- ~~**ensuring all communication regarding the assessments and the results are translated in the diverse languages of the school system.**~~
 - Comment: This “diverse language” translation should be narrowed – it is a huge burden to the locals.
 - Comment: I suggest striking it because it is probably already being done.
 - Comment: I would like something about the timeliness being included here.
 - Comment: We just passed legislation that covers A, first 2/3 of B, and some more in the transparency legislation.

- Comment: We want information to be available at the school level and we keep hearing that communication is a need.
- Consensus on this recommendation (1 and 2) with removal of “e”

b. High School Group

1 Laurie (Biology HSA)

Findings: The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to have standards for Science. In addition ESSA requires MSDE to demonstrate, in consultation with local agencies, that a high quality Science assessment will be implemented at least once in grades 3-5, and in grades 6-9 and at least once in grades 10-12. (S. 1127-55.) The 2016/17 school year will be a transition year for implementation of ESSA, with full implementation expected in the 2017/18 school year. So, Maryland Public Schools are already aligning their curriculum to be ready for the new Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA). However, Maryland still requires through COMAR 13.A.02.06 that students pass the Biology HSA. In addition, Maryland is still operating under the rules in place before the enactment of ESSA, as federal funds are still tied to NCLB at least through the 2016/17 school year.

The High School Subcommittee reviewed specific recommendations of stakeholders after learning that the Biology curriculum would no longer be aligned with the Biology HSA for 2016/17 school year:

- The Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland (PSSAM) had consensus that curriculum, instruction and assessments be aligned.
- The Baltimore Teachers Union recommended that tests should be tied to the curriculum and that large amounts of instructional time are lost due to testing.
- The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) stated that more time was needed for instruction.
- Maryland PTA’s biggest concern was the loss of in class learning time and they recommended audits of assessments to reduce misaligned, unnecessary and redundant exams.
- On 12/17/15, Richard Laine’s presentation to the Commission included that “assessments should have the purpose of reinforcing good teaching and should provide actionable feedback to students, educators and parents. He also included that, “as the assessments change, accountability cycle needs to be reset.”

Despite the misalignment with the curriculum, the Biology HSA must still be administered and students must take the test in 2016/17 to be eligible for federal funding. Yet, it is under the purview of MSDE to adopt an amendment to COMAR regulations to remove the Biology HSA as a graduation requirement during this transition year. This would save time for students who do not pass the test since they would avoid participation in the Bridge program. Stress would be reduced for both teachers and students, as results would be reported but not tied to teacher evaluations or student performance. In-class regular instruction time would be gained and more resources would be available in the following year.

Recommendation: The Biology HSA during the 2016-2017 school year will be administered but achieving a passing score will not be a graduation requirement. The Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA) will be designed in a way that is least disruptive to the school day and classroom

instruction (each section will be of a length that allows testing within the classroom).

- Comment: This would require a change to COMAR graduation requirements.
- Comment: This is what we are proposing because for next year, they are being told that the students will not be prepared for the Biology HSA (as they prepare to move to NGSS).
- Comment: It is COMAR – not statute.
- Comment: Any time we start a new assessment (like MISA) we recommend at least a year or two of participate, not pass.
- Comment: We are asking that the “grace period” be moved back one year.
- Comment: The second part of the recommendation is that the new test be done in a least disruptive way.
- Comment: Changing COMAR should not stop us from making the recommendation.
- Comment: It was bad in middle schools during the MSA transition.
- Comment: The Commission needs to write a letter to the State Board (out of this meeting) to encourage them to promulgate emergency regulations to make this happen. It should only be specific for one year. One year because we will come back after a year to ask for the two year transition reprieve – so total of three years of participation.

Best Practices:

- LEAs should communicate the change clearly to parents and students. If there is a public comment period, the public should be made aware of the reason for the change: that the curriculum is no longer aligned with the assessment.
- Students and parents should be informed that the MISA science assessment may be required for graduation in a future year.
- Students who failed the Biology HSA before the 2016/17 school year could also be granted an exemption to wipe the slate clean: no Biology Bridge students for the 2017/18 school year.

Consensus on the Biology HSA recommendation – Plus draft the letter

2 Eric (MS and HS Social Studies)

Findings:

Recommendation: The current climate and attitude toward assessment is much different from the climate and attitude toward assessment that existed in 2012 when the State statute Md. Ed. Art. 7-203 (b) (3) (i) was passed. Therefore, the elementary/middle school committee recommends that an additional assessment in social studies at the middle school level not be added. Rather, the committee recommends that a similar approach, as was previously taken to ensure local accountability for teaching and assessing the standards in environmental and financial literacy be taken for middle school social studies. There should be district assurances that instructional program alignment exists for social studies content standards, skills, and processes at each middle school grade level and matched to a locally designed assessment program measuring students’ progress toward the standards.

- Comment: I am opposed to getting rid of it because there might be an opportunity to change what that assessment looks like. If you look at the disciplinary literacy PARCC concern, could

we take the ELA PARCC assessment and truly making it an assessment that also measures social studies? In addition, if we are already taking a stand on not entering into the middle school assessment, if we say the same thing on the high school assessment it sends a bad message about what we think about social studies.

- Comment: SB293 Handout
- Comment: I did some research on this and you could argue that the previous legislation was in a different world.
- Comment: Relatively, we could say there should also be a Foreign Languages and Art HSA. USED has drawn the line at 3 – Maryland has drawn it at 4.
- Comment: We don't want to send the message that we don't think this is important.
- Comment: In an ideal world, every teacher would be teaching to all of the standards well. After speaking with Bruce Lesh, I realized the value of having a certain floor in students' understanding of government. The concerns about resources and funding are important too.
- Comment: If we get rid of middle school and encourage MSDE to consider locally based alternatives because of the burden of assessments, there should be a shift to comparable locally based assessments that are less disruptive.
- Comment: It could be misperceived that we are not being patriotic....
- Comment: It does take on the impression that we don't support social studies...
- Comment: I want a hard recommendation to get rid of the middle school social studies assessment.
- Comment: Suggested language - "MSDE explore locally based assessments to measure civics mastery to be an alternative to the Government HSA."
- Comment: Please keep in mind that this is a graduation requirement.
- Comment: We can't hold the test up to guarantee that teachers will teach this material. I like the alternative assessment idea.
- Comment: We could lose equity and comparability very easily by doing this.
- Comment: I have seen some very good alternative assessment. Government HSA causes kids to lose a ½ day in many local school systems.
- Comment: Part of the RFP is asking the vendor to move away from event-based testing so that it is less disruptive.
- Comment: Maybe we should change the language to "pursue an assessment in government that is less disruptive to the school day (statewide or alternative, school-based)" This leaves our options open.
- Comment: If immigrants are expected to pass a civics test become citizens, how much more should our students be expected to understand how the government works and their rights. It is what America is based on.
- Comment: We should not use the Citizenship Test as an example.

Best Practices:

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Consensus on the MS/HS Social Studies recommendation – letter needs to be written to the State Board.

MSDE explore locally based assessments to measure civics mastery to be an alternative to the Government HSA

Pursue an assessment in government to assure knowledge in civics, with a structure that can be given within class periods so as to have less disruption to the instructional program.

3 Laura (SB740)

Findings: SB740 requires 11th grade students to take an assessment to determine their Career and College Readiness (CCR) status in English and Mathematics. There are a variety of assessments that meet this requirement (PARCC, SAT, ACT, Accuplacer, Advanced Placement Exams, IB Exams). These tests have been selected to measure a student's CCR status. In some instances, students are being required by schools or LEAs to take multiple assessments during their 11th grade year, which leads to over-testing. For example, if a student takes a qualifying CCR assessment in March, they have satisfied the requirement to take an 11th grade CCR assessment. Some school districts will then require a student sit for another 11th grade CCR assessment "just to be safe," in case the student does not meet a qualifying score on the first 11th grade CCR assessment. If parents and students wish, they should be able to elect whether to take additional assessments for career and college readiness, but should not be required to take multiple assessments to measure CCR status. This would eliminate possible over testing of students.

Recommendation: Students and parents will elect, with the guidance of school counselors and teachers, which 11th grade assessment(s) the student will take for English and Mathematics in accordance with SB740 at the beginning of the 11th grade year. Students must elect one assessment, but may elect additional assessments. Each LEA will share which assessment they will offer at no cost to the students. Students and parents may elect to take this free assessment even if they have already taken an assessment to determine their career and college readiness. Schools and LEAs should not require students to take more than one assessment during their 11th grade year for Career and College Readiness.

- Comment: Concern about over-testing
- Comment: PARCC is free and serves other purposes as well. It enables comparability – if you allow a smorgasbord that will cause issues.
- Comment: Federal requirements are that 95% of students take the test.
- Comment: This was an attempt to limit testing.
- Comment: The PARCC assessment is available for those students who don't (or can't afford to take SAT, etc.).
- Comment: PARCC 11 is 5 hours long; SAT is 3 hours long – this discriminates against those who can't afford to take the SAT.

Best Practices:

- Ensure that FARMS students and parents are aware of funding to help pay for assessments.
- LEA's will consider purchasing the SAT as the 11th grade assessment for English and Mathematics because this assessment is the one that most colleges require for admittance and also will satisfy SB740 requirements. Currently, Baltimore County and Wicomico County purchase the SAT for all 11th grade students.

Allow students to choose which test to use to satisfy

Voted 6 for/7 opposed – recommendation does not pass.

c. Elementary/Middle School Group

The hard copy of the report was shared and the Commission was asked to review and prepare to give feedback at the June 14, 2016 meeting.

4. Discuss Final Report

The hard copy of the report was shared and the Commission was asked to review and prepare to give feedback at the June 14, 2016 meeting.

Mr. Berry asked the Commission members to review and prepare edits for the draft report for the June 14, 2016 meeting. The report must be submitted by July 1.

Minutes Adopted: June 14, 2016