

April 26, 2022

On Tuesday, April 26, 2022, Board President Clarence Crawford convened the meeting and was joined by Vice President Charles Dashiell, Jr., Shawn Bartley, Gail Bates, Chuen-Chin Bianca Chang, Susan Getty, Vermelle Greene, Jean Halle, Rachel McCusker, Lori Morrow, and Warner Sumpter.

[Link to meeting agenda, materials, and video](#)

Public Comments

Public comments were delivered by Dr. Maria Navarro, Charles County Superintendent, who described the school system's expansion of full-day prekindergarten for four-year-olds in the coming school year and plans to expand the program in the next year. She noted the need for partnerships and alliances with private providers and higher education and the need for additional funding to enable each local jurisdiction to expand quality early childhood education. Ashley Esposito, a Baltimore City resident, spoke in opposition to the closing of her community school and other schools in the City. Sharon Saroff highlighted the need to identify and meet the educational needs of students she described as twice exceptional based on their physical or learning disabilities as well as giftedness. Michelle Nunn, a parent and teacher, spoke to her concerns about social media and the schools, through new content standards, teaching students about options not aligned with their church's family life curriculum. Susan Scott, criticized the indoctrination of children through revised human sexuality content standards adopted in 2019, noting that 72 of the 80 comments received at that time were favorable. Cheryl Bost, President of MSEA, highlighted Teacher Appreciation Week, and the importance of the relationships teachers build with students and parents. Carol Vidal described the high rates of fights and injuries to students and teachers and called for revised standards for school safety and a standing item on the State Board's monthly agenda.

Consent Agenda

The Board approved the consent agenda including personnel actions and budget adjustments.

Recognition

The State Board and Superintendent Choudhury welcomed and recognized Math and Science Teacher Presidential Award Winners, including:

- Joanie Gulden, Math Teacher: Glen Burnie Park Elementary School, Anne Arundel County
- Melissa Thompson, Science Teacher: Arlington Elementary School, Baltimore City

Superintendent Choudhury highlighted the teachers' exemplary classroom strategies and noted the \$10,000 prize accompanying the prestigious award.

Achieving Academic Equity and Excellence for Black Boys

The State Board received presentations from the following:

- Anthony Esposito, Principal, and Olga Lloyd, Teacher: Running Brook Elementary School, Howard County
- April Franklin, Principal, and Anne Hammel, Assistant Principal: Southwest Academy, Baltimore County
- Diane Roberts, Principal: Westlake High School, Charles County
- Kalisha Miller, Principal, and Anthony Jackson, Assistant Principal: Pikesville Middle School, Baltimore County

Howard County presenters, Mr. Esposito and Ms. Lloyd, highlighted programs and principles underlying their innovative grant-funded approaches to engaging students through arts instruction, classroom breakfasts, mentoring programs, and after school programs. Presenters emphasized the successful use of restorative practices to reduce office referrals and disciplinary actions, and the role of the pilot program in promoting the expanded use of these techniques throughout the school system.

Baltimore County's Southwest Academy Principal Ms. Franklin and Assistant Principal Ms. Hammel reviewed their school's strategies, including the Black Boy Joy and Genius program, and other culturally responsive instructional and professional development practices. A video shared the students' enthusiasm for the school's structured mentoring program, and staff noted the mentoring role of the school resource officer.

Charles County Principal Ms. Roberts of Westlake High School described the development of a rights of passage program and peer mentoring program. She reviewed the process of gathering the students and having them craft the program with the assistance of staff, including the SRO, and outside consultants. Ms. Roberts also reviewed the evidence-based proof of concept items including attendance, academics, discipline and other measurables.

Baltimore County's Pikesville Middle School Principal Kalisha Miller and Assistant Principal Anthony Jackson presented their school's adoption of culturally responsive teaching and related professional development through a yearlong book study with staff and after school and Saturday planning sessions. Mr. Jackson reviewed the mentoring program and activities. Students also shared their experiences through a video.

Board President Crawford made concluding remarks listing three major themes, including 1. Students working together as a group to make connections, 2. Principals working with teachers to lead change, and 3. Giving students hope. Board member Dr. Vermelle Greene, who first proposed and led the State Board's work in this area, thanked the presenters and praised their accomplishments on behalf of black boys through these programs.

Covid Transmission Rates and School Logistics

Superintendent Choudhury opened the presentation of recent data for the monthly update on state logistics and transmission rates related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including data on the number of students and staff who have needed to be quarantined, positivity rates, 7-Day moving average case rates per 100K by jurisdiction, community transmission levels, and statewide hospitalizations. The presentation also featured updated reports on local school system COVID protocols and mask mandates and the new interim K-12 school and childcare COVID-19 guidance. Board members noted the impressive reduction in rates and progress being made in returning students to in-person learning. Highlights of the presentation include:

- Data collected related to COVID-19 logistics from the 24 local education agencies (LEAs) through April 22, 2022 (LEAs update the data weekly);
- Data published by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on positivity rates, 7-day moving average new daily case rates per 100K population, vaccination rates, hospitalization rates, and death rates for each jurisdiction;
- The CDC's new COVID-19 community levels metric;
- MDH and federal guidance and testing programs;
- MDH/MSDE's new Interim K-12 School and Child Care COVID-19 Guidance; and
- MDH information on Omicron variants.

Presentation: [School Logistics and Transmission Rates Related to COVID-19 Update](#)

Blueprint Deep Dive: Early Childhood Education

Superintendent Choudhury emphasized that early learning and prekindergarten is a major component of our education system, it's where learning begins, and therefore is a major facet of the Blueprint. He also stressed the need to revitalize and rebuild the private childcare industry following Covid.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Deann Collins and Division of Early Childhood Director Steven Hicks presented a comprehensive overview of the history and current developments of the State programs expanding access to high-quality early childhood services and prekindergarten. Dr. Collins outlined the five broad policy areas including: 1. Mixed-delivery Prekindergarten 2. Program Quality 3. Workforce 4. Expanded Support Programs and 5. R4K Assessment System. Superintendent Choudhury suggested and the State Board agreed to defer the presentations on areas 4 and 5 until the next meeting.

Dr. Collins reviewed legislative and departmental work dating back to 2016 to study and develop recommendations for expanding high-quality early learning services. She outlined the six goals of the Maryland Ready strategic plan for 2020-2025 and the work to operationalize the plan through over \$100 million in pre-Blueprint investments:

- Increasing programs and services for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds in a mixed-delivery PreK system of both private providers and public schools with five school systems (Garrett, Kent,

Somerset, and Talbot Counties and Baltimore City) offering universal PreK to all four-year-olds;

- Increasing the number of programs participating in Maryland EXCELS;
- More teachers attaining higher degrees and credential program levels;
- Expansion of Judy Centers and Patty Centers (Family Support Centers);
- Increased funding for Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program by \$5 million; and
- Increased the number of school systems administering the KRA to all students from 18 districts to 21.

Mr. Hicks provided a detailed presentation and explanation of the Mixed Delivery and Program Quality sections and Dr. Collins presented on the Workforce programs and services.

1. Mixed-Delivery PreK	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prekindergarten Expansion Grant• Maryland State Prekindergarten Program
2. Program Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maryland EXCELS• Child Care Accreditation Support Fund• Child Care Incentive Grant Program
3. Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maryland Child Care Credential Program• Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund
4. Expanded Support Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ulysses Currie Head Start State Supplemental Grants• Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program• Judy Centers• Patty Centers (Family Support Centers)
5. R4K Assessment System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kindergarten Readiness Assessment• Ready for Kindergarten (R4K) Grants

Mr. Hicks outlined the key provisions of the mixed delivery system, described the Tiers of income-based eligibility, and emphasized that enrollment in either the public or private options in completely voluntary. He described the incremental increase in the percentage of eligible slots to be provided by private providers, beginning at 30% in the 2022-2023 school year, and increasing by 5% per year until reaching 50% in the 2026-2027 school year. He stressed that meeting the 30% threshold in the 2022-2023 school year will be a major challenge given that in the current school year private providers represent 0% of eligible slots in 12 school systems and only 5% in the other 12 jurisdictions. MSDE will issue waivers as needed and continue to work with LEAs over the next few years to make progress toward these goals, recognizing the need for a significant amount of capacity building in both the public and private sectors.

Mr. Hicks presented the high-quality program and staff qualification requirements under the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program, which will be carried forward in the State PreK Program.

He described the different per pupil funding amounts and significant amount of state funding to support these two programs. By FY 2026 the state must integrate these programs into one program.

Program	Description	Funding
Prekindergarten Expansion Grants Program §7-101.2	Private and public providers may apply for a grant to provide full-day, high-quality prekindergarten for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds from families with incomes at 300% FPL or below. Children with disabilities and English learners are eligible regardless of income. There is no cost to the families nor the District.	The FY2023 budget includes \$26,644,000. Grantees receive \$13,000 per pupil
Maryland State Prekindergarten Program §5-229 §7-1A-01 to §7-1A-09	This program provides funding to Districts based on prior year enrollment of 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds in full-day, high-quality prekindergarten. Private providers may apply for a grant.	The FY2023 budget includes 144 million. Funding begins at \$10,094 per pupil in FY2023 and rises to \$19,526 per pupil by FY2030 , with increases for inflation thereafter.

MSDE is currently reviewing grant applications from private providers and local school systems, with school system funding under the state PreK program being provided by formula based instead on prior year enrollment. Also, in Garrett, Kent, Somerset, and Talbot counties and Baltimore City full-day PreK is already provided to all eligible four-year-olds.

Board members asked questions about the impacts of the different per pupil funding amounts and other distinctions between the expansion grant program and state program. Superintendent Choudhury noted the critical role of strong MOUs between school systems and private providers to create a mixed delivery system that provides clear options for parents to choose among. Mr. Hicks and the Superintendent also highlighted the department’s focus on providing inclusive settings for all students with disabilities in early learning programs including through the infants and toddlers program.

Mr. Hicks proceeded to the Program Quality issues, including the terms and conditions of the Maryland EXCELS program developed in partnership with Johns Hopkins. He noted that under the Blueprint public school systems must for the first time be EXCELS accredited to be eligible for the state share of PreK funding.

Board members discussed possible ways in which the department could assist family childcare providers and small providers, and any prospective providers. Mr. Choudhury noted that there are not start-up grants for private childcare providers as there are for charter schools.

Dr. Collins presented on the policy area of Workforce, including the Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program and the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund. She outlined that the Maryland Child Care Credential is a voluntary professional development career pathway that recognizes child care providers who go beyond the minimum requirements of State regulations. There are seven staff credential levels and four administrator credential levels, each one recognizing a child care provider’s achievement of a specified number of education and training clock hours, experience and professional activities. Dr. Collins reviewed the Child Care Career and Professional Development

Fund (CCCPDF) which is a tuition assistance program for child care providers to obtain a college education at 23 participating colleges and universities in Maryland (9 universities and 14 community colleges). She highlighted that there more than 55,400 persons employed in the child care workforce, and the role of regional resource centers to provide dedicated assistance to providers and employees. The Child Care Resource Network in a service of the Maryland Family Network, with all training approved by MSDE. Board members raised questions about the availability of these services in rural regions and communities.

Presentation: [Blueprint Deep Dive: Early Childhood Education](#)

State Board Resolution

The State Board adopted a new resolution presented by the State Superintendent which “underscores the State Board of Education’s commitment and partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education to lead the implementation of the once-in-a-generation Blueprint for Maryland’s Future with a new strategic plan, so that all students are prepared and poised for success in their college and career choices.” Board President Crawford emphasized the intent of the resolution to clearly state not only the mission of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future but also the commitment to work collaboratively and transparently with families, educators, local education agencies, local boards of education and other stakeholders in its implementation. He described upcoming small group meetings between the State Board and local board of education leadership coordinated with MABE to ensure genuine engagement on successful Blueprint implementation.

The Resolution is grounded in the State Board’s focus on the “startling data that even before the pandemic, the education experience in Maryland did not prepare all students for post-secondary success.” The core of the resolution states:

WHEREAS, the State Superintendent of Schools, the State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education will work collaboratively and transparently with families, educators, local education agencies, local boards of education, collective bargaining units, institutions of higher education, the Accountability and Implementation Board, and employers to transform Maryland’s public schools so that all students in Maryland are prepared and ready to be successful in their college and career choices;

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education has general control and supervision over public schools and educational interests of the State under Title 2 of the Education Article; and education matters that affect the counties are under the control of a local board of education to carry out the applicable provisions of the Education Article and the bylaws, rules, regulations, and policies of the State Board of Education under Title 4 of the Education Article;

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education will develop a comprehensive Strategic Plan to ensure successful implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN IT BY THE LAWS OF MARYLAND, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, TITLE 2 OF THE EDUCATION ARTICLE, DOES HEREBY RESOLVE:

The State Superintendent of Schools is authorized to take actions under our jurisdiction, to the extent allowed by law that are necessary to carry out this Resolution for comprehensive transformation of Maryland's education system.

Handout: [Resolution: Committing to Transformative Action to Create a World-Class Education System in Maryland](#)

2022 Legislative Session

Ary Amerikaner, MSDE Chief of Staff, presented an overview of the 2022 legislative session, which focused on childcare funding and policy bills aligned with the presentation of early education and prekindergarten expansion the State Board received earlier in the day. Highlighted bills include:

Child Care Package

- HB 89 / SB 480 - State Department of Education - Stabilization Grants
 - The bill requires that MSDE distribute the \$50 million for child care stabilization grants allocated by the Governor in the FY 2023 budget to child care providers that faced financial hardship during COVID-19.
- HB 993 / SB 919- Child Care Capital Support Revolving Loan Fund - Established
 - Establishes a Child Care Capital Support Revolving Loan Fund for the purpose of providing no-interest loans for capital expenses to child care providers who already participate in the Child Care Scholarship Program. (Administered by the Department of Commerce, with support from MSDE.)
- HB 995 / SB 920 - Early Childhood Development - Child Care Scholarship Program - Alterations and Study
 - Presumptive eligibility: All applicants shall receive a minimum of 60 days of child care subsidy for a period beginning on the day on which the individual submits a form;
 - MSDE to conduct a study with stakeholders and nationally recognized experts, and report the results of the study to the Governor and General Assembly by December 1st, 2022.
- HB 1100 - Child Care Providers and Employees - Bonuses
 - In FY 2023, MSDE must distribute \$16 million in bonuses to child care providers and their employees.
 - \$10 million for retention bonuses
 - \$4 million for new hire bonuses
 - \$2 million for hiring assistance bonuses to providers

Presentation: [2022 Legislative Session Review](#)

School Calendar Waivers

The State Board granted the request to waive one day of student attendance for Dorchester County and Queen Anne's County Public Schools for the 2021-2022 school year. ([Dorchester County Request](#); [Queen Anne's County Request](#))

Board Opinions

The State Board issued legal opinions for the following cases:

- *Donnell Heard v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners*, affirming the local board's employment termination decision.
- *Tobias H. and Margaret H. v. Carroll County Board of Education*, dismissing the appeal of the local board's decision regarding Covid quarantine protocols as outside the jurisdiction of the State Board.
- *Mentoring By Example College and Career Academy Business Learning Institute ("MBLI") v. Montgomery County Board of Education*, referring the appeal of a charter school application denial to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) for a hearing on the financial sustainability of the charter school.