

January 24, 2023

On Tuesday, January 24, 2023, Board President Clarence Crawford convened the State Board's monthly meeting and was joined by Vice President Susan Getty, Chip Dashiell, Jr., Shawn Bartley, Gail Bates, Chuen-Chin Bianca Chang, Vermelle Greene, Jean Halle, Joan Mele-McCarthy, Rachel McCusker, Lori Morrow, Warner Sumpter, Holly Wilcox, and student member Merin Thomas, from Wicomico County.

[Link to Jan. 24, 2023 meeting agenda, materials, and video](#)

### **Public Comments**

Public comments were delivered by the following individuals: Dr. Karen Couch, Kent County School Superintendent, representing the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland (PSSAM), thanked Superintendent Choudhury, MSDE and the State Board for the many opportunities for program improvement made possible through the Maryland Leads grant program. She stressed that as educational leaders the superintendents are worried about sustainability and committed to work to secure funding to continue the progress being made. She also thanked Superintendent Choudhury for allowing virtual programs to continue through 2024. Alexandria McKone spoke as a parent concerned with the excessive use of screen time resulting from virtual learning and online homework. Melissa Idleman spoke as a parent supporting parental involvement in addressing the low proficiency rates reported based on statewide assessments. She spoke against the state health framework and flags other than U.S. flags in schools as distracting from the mission to educate students. Sharon Saroff, a special education advocate, described her work with medically compromised students who learn better in permanent distance learning situations and being inadequately served by local school systems and teachers. Cheryl Bost, President of the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) highlighted the association's appreciation for the Governor's budget and funding levels for education and recognition of the teacher of the year. Frank Patinella, representing the Maryland ACLU, requested that MSDE form a broad group of stakeholders to define cultural competency and race equity and develop a framework aligned with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Faith Hah, a Montgomery County student, spoke in support of comprehensive health education to address the challenges, risks, and direct experience of students relating to sexual activity and drug use. Dr. LaShaune Stitt, spoke as a parent and educator in support of a curriculum that reflects the social inequities that exist, including courses in African American Studies.

### **Consent Agenda**

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

## **Legislative Update**

President Crawford welcomed the new administration of Governor Wes Moore and shared that the State Board looks forward to working in the best interests of students. Superintendent Choudhury described information on education-related bills that he had provided to the State Board. He described the dual language bill as being duplicative of ongoing work at MSDE under his leadership (HB 56). He briefly outlined the bill to make class size subject to collective bargaining, noting that MSEA is passionate in support but that there are other views as well (HB 65). He discussed Chair Atterbeary's bill calling for a research-based health education framework (HB 119). The superintendent also described the career technology education bill as duplicative of what the Blueprint already requires (SB 121). Lastly, he shared that the Governor will be supporting a teacher shortage reduction act.

## **Maryland Teacher of the Year Recognition**

Superintendent Choudhury introduced Berol Dewdney, 2023 Maryland Teacher of The Year, an early education teacher at Commodore John Rogers School in Baltimore. He praised her for her energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to her students' learning, noting that she shares her work in inspiring social media posts. Baltimore City Schools CEO Dr. Sonja Santelises also introduced Ms. Dewdney, highlighting her impressive ability to maintain a balance of play-based and academically rigorous instruction, and that many of her students are learning to read before they leave prekindergarten. Ms. Dewdney shared a story about one her student's transformative educational experiences. She urged the updating and revision of early learning standards to reflect the scientific developments relating to executive function skills and social-emotional learning. Ms. Dewdney also requested attention to the building of an early learning ecosystem that includes free curriculum supports and professional development resources for all public and private educators and parents. Board members offered their congratulations and shared their interest in pursuing her recommendations for specific reforms.

### [Maryland Teacher of The Year Recognition](#)

## **Maryland Leads Grant Spotlights**

Deann Colling, Deputy State Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, introduced Justin Dayhoff, Assistant State Superintendent Division of Financial Planning, Operations, and Strategy, who provided an overview of the seven categories of Maryland Lead grants and the two largest being the Grow Your Own Staff and Science of Reading initiatives. He outlined Maryland Lead programs underway in Montgomery County Public Schools.

Montgomery County Public Schools presenters included Niki T. Hazel, Associate Superintendent, Curriculum and Instructional Programs, Melaika Brown, Supervisor of Elementary English Language Arts, and Travis Wiebe, Director of Human Capital Management. Ms. Brown provided a detailed overview of the system's Science of Reading programs. Mr. Wiebe described the system's Grow Your Own Staff program and examples of partnerships with higher education institutions

including Bowie State and Towson, and the successes of the first cohort of students. He emphasized the focus on the diversity of participating students and in overall workforce development.

Dr. Jeffrey Maher, Chief Strategic Officer in St. Mary's County Public Schools, provided a detailed presentation on the school system's implementation of innovative professional development programs and strategies to support each of their Maryland Leads program areas. Lisa Bachner, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, presented St. Mary's County's extensive work benefitting from the Science of Reading grant funding. She described the LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) program and presented the DIBELS assessment results demonstrating measurable progress.

Members of the State Board were very impressed with the local spotlight presentations and the clear use of data and graphics to communicate the measurable progress being made.

### [Maryland Leads Spotlight Presentations](#)

- MSDE, Montgomery County Public Schools, and St. Mary's County Public Schools

### **Educator Preparation & Licensure Updates**

Kelly Meadows, MSDE's Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Educator Certification and Program Approval Office, described the extensive history of the development of the comprehensive reforms to the state regulations governing educator preparation and educator licensure. She emphasized the major impact of the passage of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and the role of the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) in providing assistance in reviewing revisions and public comments on the revised regulations. She outlined major themes of concern and AIB recommendations incorporated in the regulations. Ms. Meadows also highlighted the overarching goal of creating a set of systematic flexible strategies to pave the way for diverse, highly qualified teacher workforce.

Superintendent Choudhury and board members engaged in a lengthy discussion including explanations and clarifications on the additional flexibility provided in the final regulations, including the revised definition of the year-long period of student teacher practicum.

Following the discussion on teacher preparation program regulations, Ms. Meadows presented a thorough summary of the educator licensure regulations. This presentation was followed by remarks from Maleeta Kitchen and Darren Hornbeck, the co-chairs of the Professional Standards Teacher Education Board (PSTEB). Ms. Kitchen and Mr. Hornbeck praised the work of Ms. Meadows and their fellow PSTEB members for the engagement of key stakeholders in generating the buy-in necessary to craft such a comprehensive set of reforms.

- [Presentation on Regulations Deep Dive: Educator Preparation and Licensure Updates](#)

The State Board then granted permission to publish these regulations.

- [COMAR 13A.12.01—.07 Educator Licensure](#) - Permission to Publish
- [COMAR 13A.07.06 Programs for Professionally Licensed Personnel](#) - Permission to Publish

### **Assessments and Accountability Updates**

Chandra Haislet, MSDE's Executive Director of Performance Reporting and Accountability, presented the English Language Arts (ELA) results for tests administered through the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP). She highlighted that all student groups have returned to or are exceeding pre-pandemic levels of ELA proficiency. Math results, however, show that students have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Ms. Haislet explained the content standard assessment components and also focused on the large numbers of students on the cusp of meeting the proficiency standard. Superintendent Choudhury shared his perspective that the high numbers of students who are very close to achieving proficiency, often based on one, two, or very few questions, deserves more positive attention because we can make individualized efforts to benefit these students and make dramatic improvements in state proficiency rates.

The board received an accountability update on school year 2022-2023 Maryland public schools enrollment data, school year 2021-2022 attendance rate data, and the most recent college readiness assessment results (SAT, Advanced Placement, ACT). Overall, Maryland has experienced a 0.8% decrease in enrollment since the 2018-2019 school year. However, school system experience varies dramatically from a 9.8% increase in Frederick County to an 8.9% reduction in Garrett County, and regarding the spectrum across the 12 systems with declining enrollment and six with increasing enrollment.

Ms. Haislet also reviewed the flexibility states, including Maryland, are receiving in response to the data collection challenges posed through the pandemic. She explained that Maryland was approved for an addendum in December 2022 for certain requirements in the State's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan and accountability system. In the addendum, Maryland has secured approval for one-year adjustments for the following: interim targets, accountability calculations including growth, and the identification of schools for Comprehensive and Targeted School Improvement (CSI/TSI).

Materials on Assessment, Accountability, and Performance Reporting:

- [Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program 2022 Results, Part 2](#)
- [Accountability Update](#)
- [Maryland School Report Card Update](#)

### **Student Transportation Regulations**

The State Board approved for publication technical amendments to regulations recently updated following the passage of legislation.

- [COMAR 13A.06.07 Student Transportation](#) – Permission to Publish

## Graduation Requirement Regulations

The State Superintendent explained the background on his request for approval to publish amendments to high school graduation regulations (COMAR 13A.03.02 Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland). These amendments are needed due to the legislation around statewide assessments for high school mathematics and English language arts to meet the College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard found in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The State Board adopted the amendments on May 25, 2021, and the final regulation was published in the Maryland Register on June 14, 2021. The regulations were scheduled to go into effect in the 2022-23 school year; however, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) indicated that additional time was needed to successfully implement the necessary systemic changes to transition the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment program to account for 20 percent of the student's final grade in respective high school level courses.

- [COMAR 13A.03.02 Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland](#) – Permission to Publish

## Child Care Subsidy Regulations

The State Board granted permission to publish amended regulations to waive COMAR 13A.14.06.03F(1) Exemptions for Public Assistance, COMAR 13A.14.06.04 Child Support, COMAR 13A.14.06.05D Presumptive Eligibility, COMAR 13A.14.06.07B(1)(a)(i) Presumptive Eligibility, COMAR 13A.14.06.10A(3)(f) Child Support, and COMAR 13A.14.06.12A(1) Exemptions for Public Assistance. Temporarily waiving these regulations will allow MSDE to carry out the pilot program and prepare for full-scale implementation of the state law passed in 2022 (HB 995). For these reasons, MSDE is asking to waive certain portions of current regulations to reflect these changes.

- [COMAR 13A.14.06.03—.05, .07, .10, and .12 Child Care Subsidy Program](#) – Waiver Request

## Board Opinions

The State Board issued legal opinions for the following cases:

- *S.E. v. Baltimore County Board of Education*, affirming the local board's student residency decision.
- *S.A. and O.S. v. Anne Arundel County Board of Education*, affirming the local board's early kindergarten admission decision.
- *MBEF College and Career Academies, Inc. v. Montgomery County Board of Education*, reversing the local board's decision not to award a charter and directing the local board to issue a conditional charter for school opening in the 2024-2025 school year.
- *Stephanie Brown v. Carroll County Board of Education*, dismissing the appeal regarding the school system's flag policy for untimeliness.

- *S.E. v. Baltimore County Board of Education*, dismissing the appeal regarding the denial of the request to accelerate her child from kindergarten to first grade for mootness.
- *Sherry Frazier v. Prince George's County Board of Education*, dismissing the appeal regarding employee discipline for failure to exhaust administrative remedies.