

February 28, 2023

On Tuesday, February 28, 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 February 28, 2023 meeting agenda, materials, and video.](#)

Public Comments

Public comments were delivered by the following individuals: Jonathan Kurtz, an arts teacher, urged expanded inclusion of the arts in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and in middle school and high school instruction. Dr. Mike Martirano, St. Mary's County Superintendent, representing the Public School Superintendent's Association of Maryland (PSSAM), described the critical shortages of teachers in teacher preparation programs and in school systems, the Blueprint's demand for additional teachers, and the success of new initiatives. Richa Tripathi, a student, spoke in favor of eliminating the mandated graduation requirement for one credit of technical education and the limited value of a year of computer science for many students. Sharon Saroff, a special education advocate, urged greater attention to the role that COVID continues to play in impacting the health of students and staff, and the need to address the remote learning needs of medically compromised students. Liz Zogby, with the Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition and Education Advocacy Coalition, spoke in favor of greater accountability for special education funding and programming in the Blueprint. Cheryl Bost, President of the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA), requested the State Board's support for the Maryland Educator Shortage Act (HB 1219/SB 893) and a bill to improve the Blueprint by making more educators eligible for the mandated minimum salary and salary increases and other needed adjustments (HB 883/SB 791).

Consent Agenda

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

Regulations

Mary Gable, Assistant State Superintendent Division of Academic Policy, presented brief summaries of the following regulations recommended for final adoption following their publication in the Maryland Register and availability for public comment. The State Board approved both regulations.

- [COMAR 13A.06.10 Purple Star Schools Program - Permission to Adopt](#)
- [COMAR 13A.08.01.01 Attendance - Permission to Adopt](#)

Oral Argument

The State Board heard oral arguments in the following case: *Leslie Floyd v. Prince George's County Board of Education*.

County Government Stakeholder Engagement

The State Board welcomed representatives from the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) to share their association's priorities and perspectives on public education funding and policy matters. MACo representatives included: MACo President, Calvin Ball, Howard County Executive; MACo 1st Vice President, Johnny Olszewski, Jr., Baltimore County Executive; MACo 2nd Vice President, Jack Wilson, Queen Anne's County Commissioner; and Ted Zaleski, Carroll County Director of Budget and Management.

MACo President Calvin Ball provided remarks in support of the expansion of full-day prekindergarten required by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, but described serious concerns with the lack of adequate state operating and capital funding to support this enormous initiative. He emphasized that while local governments appreciate their funding obligations under the Blueprint, they are not immune from the impractical requests from local school systems that exceed the requirements of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

County Executive Olszewski noted that he is a former public school classroom teacher and shared that while his county government is not required to exceed maintenance of effort it provided \$70 million more than in the prior year. He also described the recent adjustments in MSDE budget documents which result in a significant reduction in the number of schools eligible for community school funding. He requested further clarification from MSDE on these adjustments and county interest in expanding community schools. Mr. Olszewski specifically requested that the department help ensure transparency for school system financial data, MSDE providing professional development for local school systems on the most effective ways to utilize Blueprint funding, and support for increased state funding for school meal programs.

County Commissioner Jack Wilson shared that he served as the rural county representative on the Kirwan Commission Funding Workgroup, and highlighted Queen Anne's County's progress in expanding career and technical education (CTE) programs. As an electrician who benefited from an apprenticeship program he is pleased with the Blueprint emphasis on CTE. He also urged clarification of the school facility standards for private prekindergarten providers to help ensure that they can play a major role in meeting the prekindergarten expansion needs under the Blueprint. Mr. Zeleski outlined his concerns with the adequacy of state and local funding to support the salary increases and career ladders mandated by the Blueprint, including the role of pay scale compression and the costs of providing raises not funded by the Blueprint being requested of local governments. He also stated that his school system certainly lacks adequate school facility capacity and classroom space to accommodate the Blueprint requirements for expanded prekindergarten and other requirements for additional teachers.

Board members expressed their appreciation for the presentation and support for ongoing dialogue on the county government role and perspectives on Blueprint funding and implementation.

[Baltimore County Presentation](#)

State Board & MSDE Strategic Plan Update – Phase 2 of 3

Superintendent Choudhury presented on the value and role of a strategic plan to reinforce the Department's work, especially as it relates to implementing the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Board member Chip Dashiell, who chairs the State Board's Strategic Plan Subcommittee, presented his overview of the completion of Phase 2 of the Maryland State Board of Education's and the Maryland State Department of Education's Strategic Plan. The Board and Department are developing a multiyear Strategic Plan that is being released in three phases. The Strategic Plan anchors the vision, mission, values, priorities, enablers, goals, and flagship programs, initiatives, and strategies to realize the Blueprint for Maryland's Future promise of an excellent and equitable education for every student. Phase 1 was released in October 2022 and included details of the vision, mission, values, priorities, and enablers. Phase 2 includes the goals and metrics to track progress and measure success in connection to each priority and enabler. Phase 3 will be released in June 2023 and will include the targets that must be met to fulfill the goals on a specific timeline, as well as the flagship strategies, initiatives, and programs outlining the concrete work that needs to be completed for achieving each priority and enabler.

[Strategic Plan Phase 2](#)

School Profile: Snow Hill Elementary (Worcester County Public Schools)

Superintendent Choudhury welcomed the Worcester County Superintendent, Lou Taylor, and the team of local school system staff he brought to Baltimore to join the representatives from Snow Hill Elementary School, including: Matthew Record, Principal; Erica Matlock, Assistant Principal; Colleen Hood, Kindergarten; Nyoka Mumford, Third Grade; Beth Shockley-Lynch, Interventionist; Jennifer Spivey, Interventionist; Aisha Tariq, Early Childhood Special Education; Jamie Tellish, First Grade; and Charles Townsend, Head Custodian.

Mr. Choudhury described his visit to Snow Hill Elementary and why he wanted to share their success in executing amazing things for students in entrenched poverty. Matthew Duque, Director, MSDE Office of Research, Planning and Program Evaluation, presented slides on demographics and student achievement, noting that Snow Hill elementary is outperforming the trends for similar schools in terms of math and reading proficiency and closing achievement gaps. He concluded by noting that Snow Hill's per pupil funding is 12% higher the LEA median, and 31% higher than schools with similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students.

Principal Record described the presentation's focus on his school's "secret sauce" which began with learning how to teach again after returning to school after the pandemic school closing. He highlighted the need to pay attention to data and set the goal of "no reading emergencies" to establish the foundation on which all students reading on grade level can be achieved in the next school year. He shared that they have full-day prekindergarten for both 3- and 4-year-olds. Nyoka Mumford, Third Grade Teacher, emphasized that every staff person, educator and noneducator, makes it a priority to be in relationship with every student, focusing on the whole student academically and socially, and through the student's PreK through third-grade years.

[School Profile: Snow Hill Elementary \(Worcester County Public Schools\).](#)

Assessment, Accountability & Performance Reporting Updates

Maryland School Report Card

Assistant State Superintendent Chandra Haislet provided a brief overview of the contents of the State Report Card and update on results. She reviewed the graduation rates for the Class of 2022, including only slight changes in the rate, but significant disproportionate graduation rates based on racial and other indicators. Superintendent Choudhury highlighted that this is a unique cohort of students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Ms. Haislet covered the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Maryland's ESSA State Plan which reflects the requirement for a statewide accountability system. She noted Maryland received federal approval for state plan modifications during COVID, and that this will be the first release of updated school report cards in three years. She presented on how the School Report Cards use stars and performance percentage points to provide information on the performance of student groups within a school and comparisons to other schools. She continued to explain the other components of the Report Card, and the criteria for identifying schools identified for Comprehensive School Improvement (CSI) and Targeted School Improvement (TSI). She also shared the timeline for releasing the new State Report Card and release date of March 9, 2023.

Superintendent Choudhury and board members discussed the issues of disproportionality and equity. Superintendent Choudhury shared that he remains concerned that Maryland's accountability system places much more weight on factors other than academics, and his interest in a system that not only tracks proficiency but also meaningfully gives credit for growth. He believes that it is time to revisit the Report Card, citing results such as a 3 star school with 13% of students proficient in math and a 5 star school with just over half of students proficient in math. He stressed that he is not okay with the numbers of continuously repeating low-performing schools, especially as the state is increasing funding. Board President Crawford and board members discussed the need to direct changes in school leadership in these schools, while recognizing the challenges to do so.

Presentations on Assessment, Accountability, and Performance Reporting:

- [Maryland Graduation Rates](#)
- [Maryland School Report Card Update](#)

Board Opinions

The State Board issued legal opinions for the following cases:

- *William and Chivonne P. v. Charles County Board of Education*, reversing the local board's decision to uphold the student's removal from a CTE program as arbitrary and unreasonable.
- *Leslie Floyd v. Prince George's County Board of Education*, adopting the ALJ's proposed decision and affirming the local board's employee termination decision.
- *Marcus Hayes v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners*, dismissing the appeal as untimely.
- *Zaharah Valentine v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners*, ordering the local board to identify a new position for the appellant within 45 days of the order. The Order

reads: “We find that the local Superintendent’s broad statutory power to transfer employees has limits. It exceeds the limits of the local Superintendent’s authority to place a transferred employee into a ‘yet to be determined position’ for an indefinite waiting period.”

- *In the Matter of Request for Removal of Local Board Members Shayla Adams-Stafford, Kenneth Harris, David Murray, and Joshua Thomas*, dismissing the request to remove members of the local board.