

October 24, 2023

On Tuesday, October 24, 2023, Board President Clarence Crawford convened the State Board's monthly meeting and was joined by Vice President Joshua Michael, Chuen-Chin Bianca Chang, Susan Getty, Monica Goldson, Nick Greer, Irma Johnson, Joan Mele-McCarthy, Rachel McCusker, Warner Sumpter, Holly Wilcox, and student member Abisola Ayoola from Howard County. President Crawford welcomed Dr. Carey Wright to the meeting, her first as Interim State Superintendent of Schools.

[Link to October 24, 2023 meeting agenda, materials, and video](#). (Note: if the video does not download, please use [this YouTube link](#) to the video instead.)

Public Comments

Public comments were delivered by:

- Sharon Saroff, a special education consultant and advocate, introduced herself to interim State Superintendent Dr. Carey Wright, and encouraged the department to recognize the detrimental impacts on students with disabilities of focusing on graduation-based credits earned rather than the more important measures of learning goals and objectives achieved.
- Cheryl Bost, President of the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA), thanked former Superintendent Choudhury for his engagement with MSEA during his tenure, and welcomed Superintendent Wright. She then commented in support of incorporating the GPA into the criteria for college and career readiness in favor of PRAXIS teacher examinations not being the sole measure of competency, and requested more statewide consistency regarding student learning objectives (SLOs).
- Carolina Reyes, an advocate for early child care, spoke on behalf of private childcare providers and urged the use of surveys to communities of speakers of languages other than English to sure that all student and families benefit for the expansion of full-day prekindergarten under the Blueprint.
- Hilary Roberts-King, a representative of Downtown Baltimore Childcare, advocated for sufficient funding for the state child care scholarships to address historic disparities in access to high-quality childcare and avoid a wait list. She also described the value of high-quality early childcare to brain growth.
- Elizabeth Benevides, representing the Maryland Education Advocacy Coalition (EAC), welcomed Superintendent Wright and shared the priorities of the EAC. She highlighted the EAC's close monitoring of implementation of the regulations to reduce the use of restraint and seclusion, and MSDE's role in promoting, training and enforcing the use of trauma-informed practices. She also noted the lack of progress toward academic achievement for students with disabilities, and the continued disproportionate use of discipline for students with disabilities and black and brown students.

- Shamoyia Gardiner, Executive Director of Strong Schools Maryland, described the role of the organization to advocate for continued funding, transparency regarding funding, and also broad public engagement and access to the state policy making processes. She emphasized the priority to inform all parents of the vision of the Blueprint and their role in advocating for its implementation to benefit their children. She welcomed Superintendent Wright and thanked State Board Vice President Josh Michaels for his conversation with the coalition at their recent meeting.
- Christina Peusch, Executive Director of the Maryland Early Childcare Association, welcomed Superintendent Wright, and asked the Superintendent and State Board to make an emergency funding request to provide additional funding for the State Childcare Scholarship Program which will run out of funding in January 2024, and urged increased funding in the FY 2025 state budget. She urged that this program not become a victim of its own success.
- Sharlimar Douglass, representing the Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE), a coalition of education advocacy, civil rights, and community-based organizations that are committed to eliminating racial disparities in Maryland’s education system, welcomed Dr. Wright and outlined the organization’s work. She also thanked members of the State Board for their roles in supporting programs at UMBC and Coppin which have resulted in many conditionally certified teachers of color in Baltimore City becoming fully certified.

President’s Remarks

President Crawford shared highlights from the recent Teacher of the Year gala and awards ceremony on October 13, 2023. He thanked Board member Rachel McCusker, a former Teacher of the Year herself, for making remarks on behalf of the Board. Governor Wes Moore addressed more than 800 attendees at the event to recognize all 24 local teachers of the year and recognize the Maryland Teacher of the Year, Mary Kay Connerton, a physical education, health, and wellness teacher at Annapolis High School in Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS).

Consent Agenda

The Board approved the consent agenda including prior meeting minutes, personnel actions, and budget adjustments.

Stakeholder Engagement with PSSAM

Board President Crawford highlighted the focus on how the State Board can work even more effectively together with local school systems toward the success of all of our students. Dr. Jeffrey Lawson, Cecil County Superintendent and President-Elect of the Public School Superintendents Association (PSSAM), described PSSAM’s initiatives to convene a council of local chief academic officers and an academy for aspiring superintendents. He shared that PSSAM is developing these new programs to support and develop leaders consistent with PSSAM’s focus on the need for “continuity of principles” of high-quality educational leadership.

Superintendent Lawson outlined PSSAM’s concerns with MSDE’s ongoing staff transitions and the significant challenges regarding implementing the Blueprint. He urged continued recognition of the opportunities to engage in frank discussions of what’s working and what’s in need of adjustment.

Superintendent Lawson addressed concerns with the State budget projections for FY 2025 and the challenges for ongoing local negotiations and other components of the Blueprint. He described a public forum held by Carroll County Superintendent McCabe to share projections of how the Blueprint would impact each of the schools in Carroll County, based on the Blueprint's charge to reallocate resources through a "money follows the child" financing system. He emphasized that the outcome of this system will be to reduce the numbers of teachers at some schools as staffing levels are increased at other schools. Dr. Lawson also presented a slide developed by the Anne Arundel County Public School System which displays the implications of the Blueprint for two hypothetical schools with similar student enrollments but different demographics based on student categories with restricted funding requirements under the Blueprint.

Board Vice President Josh Michael stated that moving our higher-paid, more experienced teachers to our highest-need schools seems like the right thing to do and that he recognizes these transitions will be hard. He asked for insights on how this can be implemented successfully. Board member Nick Greer suggested that local superintendents begin now to consider the effectiveness of teachers being assigned to highest-needs schools based on factors other than length of tenure, and to compensate teachers based on performance. Dr. Lawson responded by focusing on the importance of getting teachers to stay in challenging schools, acknowledging the role of financial incentives and supports for these teachers. He also described the process of evaluating teachers based on classroom performance. Board member Rachel McCusker shared what she described as a caution regarding the legal realities that teachers have collectively bargained contractual rights regarding their transfers between schools.

Board member Irma Johnson urged the consideration of not only tenure but also the aptitude and attitude of teachers before we presume that transferring a teacher who is successful in one school to a more challenging school environment will improve student outcomes.

Board member Monica Goldson focused on the challenges for many school systems to adopt and implement the Blueprint's shift to school and student-based budgeting, because while some school systems already administer student-based budgeting, most do not.

Board member Warner Sumpter asked about the challenges for school systems with less resources than others to implement the Blueprint. Dr. Lawson reminded the State Board of the Department of Legislative Services report on amounts of state and local education funding which shows differences between counties of several thousands of dollars per student, which amounts to millions of dollars in per pupil funding per school system. He rejected the notion that school systems can do less with more, since following that logic would mean we can do everything with nothing, and reiterated that current funding projections may not be adequate.

Board member Susan Getty suggested that PSSAM capture the unintended consequences of the Blueprint and highlight them for the legislature and the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB). Dr. Lawson agreed, noting the clear merits of expanding prekindergarten but the inadequate Blueprint funding to staff PreK classrooms with one adult educator for every 10 students.

Dr. Lawson concluded by stressing that many wonderful things are happening as a result of the Blueprint, from the addition of classrooms for four-year-olds, to tutoring individual young students, to offering dual enrollment experiences for high school students.

Board President Crawford thanked PSSAM for the engagement session and noted that future sessions would engage the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) and the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo).

[PSSAM Presentation](#)

Blueprint Deep Dive: Judy and Patty Centers

Dr. Shayna Cook, Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Early Childhood, briefed the State Board on the Judy Center and Patty Center programs, both of which provide multi-generational supports for families and their young children, and are facets of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future law and mandated state funding to support their dramatic expansion throughout the State.

- Patty Centers (formerly named Family Support Centers) provide comprehensive services to support families and promote healthy child development, aiming to enhance family stability and self-sufficiency. The primary focus of the program is children from birth to age three and their families.
- Judy Centers (Judith P. Hoyer Center Early Learning Hubs), on the other hand, aim to prepare young children for school and provide a strong educational foundation in collaboration with families. They primarily serve children from birth to age five and their families within a specific catchment area. Judy Centers are located in Title I and high-needs schools in every Maryland jurisdiction. The Maryland Family Network (MFN) serves as MSDE's intermediary and provides management of the State's network of community-based Patty Centers.

Assistant Superintendent Cook outlined the levels of services, positive impacts, and next steps for both types of centers.

- There are 35 Patty Center sites for FY 2024. In FY 2023 Patty Centers served 725 families. 86 parents participating in General Education Development (GED)/Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes. Fifty-eight parents enrolled in alternate high school/teen parent program.
- There are 86 Judy Center sites for FY 2024. In FY 2023 and FY 2024 a combined total of 18 sites were added. Judy Centers served 16,288 children from birth to age 5 in FY 2023. Overall, schools with a Judy Center demonstrated a five-percentage point (28%-33%) increase on Kindergarten Readiness Assessments (KRAs) from their 2021-2022 scores.

Board member Josh Michael, echoing concerns raised by Board member Susan Getty, asked about the unintended consequences of having Judy Centers limit enrollment to students in catchment zones and the exclusion of students. Dr. Cook responded that strict catchment zones are identified by the local school systems, and that this is consistent with the law and funding parameters.

[Presentation](#)

Executive Session

President Crawford and the Board adjourned to Executive Session to address personnel matters.

College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standard Setting Exploration

Board President Crawford thanked the department staff for their work and shared the board's intention to adopt a motion to clarify the direction to the department to develop a standard based on the parameters of multiple measure of CCR adopted by the board. He emphasized that the action will provide the public and stakeholders the opportunity to engage the State Board between now and the December meeting at which the State Board intends to adopt a new CCR standard.

Phil Lasser, Executive Director in the Office of the State Superintendent, presented an overview of the Blueprint statutory charge and implications for adopting a CCR standard, which he described as a north star for the Blueprint. The Blueprint requires the adoption of a new College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standard that allows graduates to succeed in entry-level credit-bearing college courses. The goal is for all students to meet the standard by the end of their 10th grade year. Mr. Lasser described the work of the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and timeline and current status of the work. Matt Duque from MSDE Office of Research, Planning, and Program Evaluation, briefed the board on the extent of stakeholder engagement and the takeaways from the predictive validity analysis. He highlighted that the study found that an alternative CCR standard that allows students to demonstrate readiness through multiple measures by passing exams or earning a 3.0 GPA is a better predictor of postsecondary success and is more inclusive.

Mr. Lasser clarified that the recommendation is that students be identified as CCR based on data up to and including the 2023-2024 school year, and all eligible 9th-12th students will be identified as meeting the new CCR Standard for the 2024-2025 school year. In addition, CCR per-pupil funding amounts beginning with FY 2026 will be based on the new CCR Standard. He presented the upcoming public input and decision-making timeline:

- Online Feedback Survey Open: Oct. 25, 2023 – Nov. 30, 2023
- Virtual Public Hearing: Nov. 9, 2023, 5:00-8:00 p.m.
- Planned Vote to Adopt the CCR Standard: Dec. 5, 2023 State Board Meeting

Board Vice President Josh Michael described a proposal to incorporate a separate mathematics mastery standard in the CCR standard. He described the State Board's progress in garnering the AIB's support for incorporating GPA in the CCR standard, and the proposal to require either success on the Algebra I assessment or a passing grade in the Algebra I course.

Board President Crawford asked for a motion from Vice President Michael to amend the department's working recommendation to require multiple measures to include a measure of enhanced math mastery to the other options requiring either a passing grade of A, B, or C, or passing the MCAP assessment in Algebra I or equivalent algebra course.

Board members discussed the motion regarding issues such as the merits of also including a similar approach to English mastery, and the use of grades and implications for statewide grading policies. Board member Mele-McCarthy also raised concerns for students with Dyscalculia, which is a learning disorder that affects a student's ability to understand number-based information and math. Vice President Michaels responded to each of these concerns. In addition, he outlined several scenarios based on a student's success in achieving an overall GPA of 3.0 or better,

passing the requisite Algebra I course with a grade of C or better, or passing the MCAP state assessment at the conclusion of the Algebra course.

The State Board ultimately approved a modified motion to propose alternative options, with one including the math mastery component. The Board agreed that these proposals will be published by staff as the subject for public input. These proposals will be available for public comment at the upcoming virtual hearing on November 9, 2023, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. In addition, the public can complete an online feedback survey to share opinions on the CCR Standards proposals at the following link: https://msde.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8wykCZth0XJFoSW

[Link to full explanation of the State Board's proposed options for a new CCR Standard.](#)

[CCR Memo & Presentation](#)

Professional Learning Labs

Dr. Deann Collins, Deputy State Superintendent, Office of Teaching and Learning, introduced the presentation on MSDE's launch of Professional Learning Labs in the 2023-2024 school year. Professional Learning Labs are a series of two-day, in-person, professional learning experiences that support districts with implementing new learning into their own local context. Professional Learning Labs will dive deep into a variety of content areas including math, science, social studies, literacy, and health, and will address current challenges facing educators in the field. District teams will explore high-leverage strategies through school visits, collaborating with colleagues across Maryland, workshop discussions, and content experts.

MSDE staff reviewed the major goals of the Learning Labs, and the steps to develop them within schools. The steps taken to develop and deliver Learning Labs include:

- Data Review; Outlier Investigation; Identify a Problem of Practice; Essential Question Development; Draft Learning Experiences; Engage Partners; and Identifying Host Sites & Introductory Conversations.

The goals of Learning Labs are:

- To have educators investigate and collaborate around a problem of practice.
- To have field experiences with opportunities to see practitioners at work.
- To reinforce or introduce new content.
- To provide opportunities to apply learning to local contexts.
- To change practice across a system from the district level to classrooms.

[Learning Labs Presentation](#)

Regulations

The State Board approved the following requested actions on proposed regulations.

- [13A.08.01.02-3 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment \(Permission to Publish\)](#)
- [13A.16.08 and 13A.17.08 Child Care Centers and Child Care—Letters of Compliance \(Permission to Publish\)](#)

- [13A.08.04 Student Behavior Interventions \(Permission to Adopt\)](#)
- [13A.16 Child Care Centers and 13A.18 Large Family Child Care Homes \(Probationary Child Care Teachers\) \(Permission to Adopt\)](#)
- [13A.15.02.02 Family Child Care; 13A.16.02.02 Child Care Centers; 13A.17.02.02 Child Care-Letters of Compliance; and 13A.18.02.02 Large Family Child Care Homes \(Licensing process includes obtaining either the SSN or ITIN from applicants\) \(Permission to Adopt\)](#)

Legislative Updates

Board member Rachel McCusker, chair of the State Board’s Education Policy Committee, informed the Board of the recent initial meeting of the committee and the development of a broad guidance document and set of principles for the board’s consideration. She also outlined the three major streams of policy areas under the purview of the committee, including: 1. legislation, 2. regulations, and 3. curricular frameworks.

The State Board’s Executive Director Zach Hands described the board’s decision to develop its own legislative platform and priorities, which he noted is a new practice. He outlined a series of principles that will guide decisions on whether positions on specific bills will be taken, while allowing for flexibility. He noted that this document is being provided to the board by the Education Policy Committee for input from the board.

Draft Legislative Principles:

1. The State Board supports the full funding of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.
2. The State Board calls special attention to the urgent need for educational equity and the Blueprint’s focus on closing entrenched opportunity and achievement gaps, so that all students — including but not limited to students with disabilities, students learning English, and students from historically underserved communities — can reach their full potential.
3. The State Board advocates for fiscal accountability and prudence during difficult budgetary times. The State Board prioritizes support for legislation that minimizes fiscal impact on the State budget and results in the strategic reallocation of funding from existing Blueprint or other existing educational appropriations.
4. The State Board may support policy amendments to the Blueprint that prioritize and accelerate improved outcomes for all students, particularly those who are historically underserved.
5. The State Board generally opposes unfunded legislative mandates for the State Board, MSDE, and local school systems.
6. The State Board supports maintaining the longstanding collaborative process between the State Board, MSDE, local school systems, and stakeholders to establish standards and frameworks for curriculum development by local school systems.

[Presentation](#)

Board Opinions

The State Board issued legal opinions for the following cases:

- *T.L and S.L. v. Howard County Board of Education*, affirming the local board's decision to deny early entry into kindergarten for their son.
- *MBEF College and Career Academies, Inc. v. Montgomery County Board of Education*, reversing the local board's decision to deny the application to operate a charter school, and remanding the matter with direction to the local board to grant contingent approval, and allowing the applicant until March 1, 2024 to meet the contingencies.
- *Chaya Brenner v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners*, remanding the appeal regarding an employee termination to the local board pursuant to a motion from the local board to consider new evidence.