

December 5, 2023

On Tuesday, December 5, Board President Clarence Crawford convened the State Board's monthly meeting and was joined by Vice President Joshua Michael, Shawn Bartley, Chuen-Chin Bianca Chang, Susan Getty, Monica Goldson, Nick Greer, Irma Johnson, Joan Mele-McCarthy, Rachel McCusker, Samir Paul, Warner Sumpter, Holly Wilcox, and student member Abisola Ayoola from Howard County.

[Link to December 5, 2023, meeting agenda, materials, and video.](#)

## Public Comments

Public comments were delivered by:

- Cheryl Bost, President of the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA), acknowledged many positive aspects of the teacher certification regulations being adopted by the State Board, but raised concern with adding the additional requirement to receive instruction in the science of reading to qualify for National Board Certification (NBC).
- Sharon Saroff, a special education consultant and advocate, reiterated her concerns with overburdening students with instruction without providing ample time to learn the content before proceeding to other content.
- Bill Hudson, Executive Director of the Family Childcare Alliance of Maryland, described the work of family childcare providers and larger childcare centers, both of which he believes deserve the benefit of a state centralized network such as the Aspire program already available to family childcare providers.
- Shamoyia Gardiner, Executive Director of Strong Schools, which is also the organizing body of the Blueprint Coalition, urged the State Board to adopt a College and Career Readiness standard consistent with the recommendations of the AIR Study without adding additional criteria, supported continued efforts through the MSDE's special education workgroup, and urged bold leadership and advocacy of the State Board for full funding and implementation of the Blueprint during the 2024 legislative session.
- Dr. Kevin Kendrick, Evaluation Specialist with Prince George's County Public Schools, critiqued MSDE's method of reporting state assessment results because it fails to disaggregate data and account for variables particularly regarding the numbers of students eligible for Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) or English learners. He noted that using more disaggregated data would allow parents, home buyers, and business owners to make better informed decisions about how schools are truly performing.
- Dr. Andrae Townsel, Calvert County Schools Superintendent and President-elect of the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland (PSSAM), highlighted PSSAM's adoption of a strategic plan, the second year of the successful Aspiring Superintendents Program, and the selection of Sean Bulson, Harford County Schools Superintendent, as the

Maryland Superintendent of the Year. He also shared his belief in the value of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), which has five components: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

### **President's Remarks**

President Crawford made a statement addressing the media coverage and awareness of the budget challenges confronting the state and decision makers in Annapolis. He acknowledged the state board's role as a partner but also having the responsibility to lead and to make the decisions as difficult as possible as it relates to education funding. He also stressed that building relationships and telling a story will strengthen the board's advocacy work.

President Crawford, joined by other board members, recognized Dr. Tim Tooten, the long-time education reporter and journalist with WBAL, for his years of service reporting on education issues and in this way benefiting students, schools, and communities.

President Crawford announced that Warner Sumpter would be stepping down from the board for personal reasons, and other board members joined in thanking General Sumpter for his years of service and leadership, including as a local board member in Somerset County and as President of the State Board.

### **Consent Agenda**

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

### **Superintendent's Remarks**

Superintendent Wright highlighted how pleased she is to announce the hiring of Tenette Smith as the new Executive Director for Literacy Programs and Initiatives. She shared that Ms. Smith was on her team in Mississippi and led successful work there.

### **Stakeholder Engagement with the Maryland Center for School Safety**

Kate Bryan, Executive Director of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), presented a comprehensive overview and update of the programs and services provided by the Center. She briefly described all MCSS programs, including the Safe Schools Maryland (SSMD) Anonymous Reporting System, School Resource Officer (SRO) & School Security Employee (SSE) Training Academy, Behavior Threat Assessment, Emergency Tabletop Exercises, Student Voice Programs, Annual School Safety Conference, and School Safety Grant Administration.

Ms. Bryan reviewed the history, development, and operation of the SRO/SSE Training Academy Program and highlighted the following points:

- Required for all SRO or SSE assigned to Maryland public schools

- Law Enforcement objectives approved by the Maryland Police Certification and Training Commission (MPCTC)
- 70 hours of content delivered using a hybrid instructional model
- Taught by MCSS staff and “Subject Matter Experts”
- Maryland SRO training academy serves as a national model
- Additional Training for SRO Supervisors and School Administrators

Ms. Bryan highlighted the role of the student voice in the Center’s governance and ongoing work. In addition, she identified areas for continuous improvement including the development of shared terminology and best practices.

The Center also administers the following state grant programs:

<b>School Safety FY24 Grants Administered by MCSS</b>	
<b>School Safety Grant Program</b> administered on behalf of the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC)	\$10,000,000
<b>Nonpublic School Security Improvement Grant</b> administered on behalf of the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC)	\$0
<b>School Resource Officer (SRO) Grant Program</b>	\$10,000,000
<b>School Safety Evaluation Grant</b>	\$3,000,000
<b>Hate Crimes Grant</b>	\$3,000,000
<b>Safe Schools Fund Grant</b>	\$600,000

The Center’s priorities for 2024 include:

- Increasing knowledge and skills of Maryland public schools Behavioral Threat Assessment teams through direct instruction, communications, resource documents, and exercises.
- Extending knowledge to include planning for interventions that decrease the risk a student poses allowing them to maintain healthy connections to the school community.
- Expanding awareness and access to Maryland’s anonymous school safety tipline, Safe Schools Maryland (SSMD), through communication and outreach. Empowering bystanders to come forward with information about behaviors or concerns and providing school officials with the knowledge and skills to appropriately respond to reports.
- Coordinating emergency response and recovery planning, training, and exercises across State agencies in an effort to support a rapid and coordinated response to a school-based incident in all jurisdictions.

- Through training, communications, and exercises for all Maryland schools, increase use of standard response language across agencies and jurisdictions to include the terms Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter.
- Increase school leaders' knowledge and skills identifying the appropriate response protocol to use given an evolving emergency situation.

J.T. Ridgely, School Psychologist and manager of the Howard County Public School System's crisis response teams, introduced Howard County staff in attendance and highlighted the ways in which the school system works to ensure a safe and secure environment for learning. He presented on the Umbrella of Supports, including: Multi-Tiered Systems of Behavioral Health Supports, Emergency Preparedness, Crisis Intervention Teams, Suicide Intervention Procedures, and Threat Management Process. He described the annual training of all school-based teams and the focus on delivering a multi-tiered system of supports.

Board member Holly Wilcox asked what the Center is doing to address gun violence, and the deaths of Baltimore City school students, due to gun violence in and around schools. Ms. Bryan responded by describing the Center's participation in thorough after-action reviews. Ms. Johnson requested a response focused on preventative measures, and Ms. Bryan responded that evidence shows that in the majority of cases someone knows in advance that an incident is to occur, and so public education, in schools and communities, about the value of reporting before the fact can help prevent these incidents and save lives. Board member Joan Mele-McCarthy voiced her concerns with the lack of funding for nonpublic school safety needs, focusing on the publicly funded nonpublic special education schools. Board members asked several questions regarding the operation and need for greater awareness of the anonymous tipline, the use of school climate surveys and student voice to drive school-based trainings, and the value of law enforcement officers receiving the SRO training.

[MCSS and Howard County Presentation](#)

## **Executive Session**

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

## **Superintendent's Update**

Superintendent Wright began by describing the work led by Phil Lasser to upgrade the department's Blueprint tracking tool to keep track of the many pieces of the Blueprint to include more detail and to combine the action steps and the money allocated for those purposes. The goal is to use the tracker "just in time" to monitor the Blueprint. She shared that the MOU is being finalized between MSDE and the University of Maryland and Morgan State who are MSDE's partners in onboarding and hiring of the literacy instructional expert teams and preparations for getting them deployed. Superintendent Wright also highlighted a successful listening session she held as an in-person and online opportunity for more than 300 staff within the department who shared their questions and concerns and heard Dr. Wright share her vision and mission.

## College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standard Setting Exploration

Board President Crawford offered opening remarks framing the State Board's decision to delay making a decision on the new College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard until the Board's January meeting. He noted that you can't make transformational change if you don't change anything, and that the Blueprint law clearly requires action. He shared that as the State Board of Education they have the responsibility to proceed in an appropriate and thoughtful manner, especially as they consider doing things that are completely new. President Crawford concluded that the Board needs to make some adjustments based on what they have heard from the public and stakeholders, so that while they originally intended to make decisions at the December meeting, they have decided to take more time to be prepared to make a decision in January.

Board Vice President Josh Michael noted he agrees with President Crawford and believes the public deserves to see the Board deliberate before adopting the new standard. He also emphasized that based on the input the Board has received he believes that in addition to identifying the standard, there is a need to ensure rigorous and equitable secondary pathways that are communicated and implemented in ways that are clear.

Superintendent Wright agreed regarding the need to listen to and incorporate all of the parent and public feedback, which clearly favors multiple measures of student success, including what pathways are to be available to students not meeting the standard. In addition, she identified the need to address what she presumes to be very different grading policies throughout the state and the need for state guidance to provide more consistency. She also spoke to the need to focus on math pathways beginning in kindergarten through 8th grade. She specifically referenced progress already being made through departmental engagement with the Dana Center Launch Years Initiative at The University of Texas at Austin, which is doing great work to strengthen mathematics.

Phil Lasser, Executive Director in the Office of the State Superintendent, and Matt Duque, Director of the Office of Research, Planning and Program Evaluation, provided background on the Blueprint's call for a research study and adoption of a new CCR standard, and reviewed the feedback from the Department's stakeholder engagement.

Mr. Duque presented on the stakeholder engagement results to date, highlighting that over 90% of responses support adopting a CCR standard that includes multiple measures. When asked "Which metrics should be included in the CCR Standard, and which are most important?" responses were inclusive of a variety of measures. In descending order, public comments preferred: Overall High School GPA, GPA for Core Courses, State Assessment (MCAP), SAT, Algebra I Grade, Completing One Dual Enrollment Course, Completing One AP Course, Completion of One CTE Course, and other measures.

Board members discussed their concerns with the research study and proposed standard. Board member Joan Mele-McCarthy stressed her concern that the work fails to address neuro-diverse students. Board Vice President Josh Michael commented on the need to allow students not meeting the CCR standard to access programs beginning in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and the significant fiscal impacts for the standard that is set. Mr. Lasser described the per pupil funding provided by the Blueprint for each student who meets the CCR standard. Board member Nick Greer focused on his concern that the standard will prevent many students and student populations from accessing CCR and

specifically CTE programs in which they will succeed. Board member Samir Paul asked about the potential bottleneck or limitations resulting from adopting a math mastery standard. President Crawford thanked the board members for the discussion, noted that at some point legislation may be needed, but at this time they are working within the requirements of the law.

- [College and Career Readiness Standard Discussion](#)

## **2023 Maryland School Report Card Update**

Chandra Haislet, Assistant State Superintendent, provided an overview of the Maryland School Report Card, the results reported for the 2022-2023 school year, and the timeline for publication of the School Report Cards. She also noted that the 2022-2023 school year was the first administration of the MCAP Social Studies assessment, which is administered at the end of Grade 8 and consists of four 40-minute sections.

Ms. Haislet presented the following outline of the state's accountability system:

### Maryland Accountability System & Maryland School Report Cards

#### Total Earned Percent

- Each school's total earned points, divided by its total possible points.
- Ex: If a school earned 55 points out of a possible 85 points, its total earned percent is 55/85 or 65%.

#### Awarded Stars

- Each school will be awarded stars based on its total earned percent.
- Ex: If a school earned 65% of the total possible points, four stars will be awarded.

#### Percentile Rank

- Each school will receive a percentile rank, comparing its performance to all other Maryland schools of the same grade span (elementary, middle, or high).
- Ex: About 77 percent of Maryland elementary schools earned less than 65% percent of their total possible points. An elementary school with a total earned percent of 65% is therefore in the 77th percentile—it performed better than 77 percent of Maryland elementary schools.

Assistant Superintendent Haislet reviewed the statewide results by school type, highlighting that across all school types, 37% of schools earned a star rating of 4 or 5; and over 75% of schools earned a star rating of 3, 4, or 5. She noted that across all school types, more schools earned 3 stars in the accountability system in SY 2022- 2023 as compared to SY 2021-2022, and that this trend is accompanied by a decrease in the number of schools receiving 5 stars. She also highlighted that most schools had the same star rating in the 2022-2023 school year as compared to 2021-2022, but that for the schools that changed star ratings, more than three times as many had a lower star rating than had a higher rating.

Ms. Haislet outlined the timeline for releasing all state and local Report Card results, as follows: The 2022-2023 school year School Report Card data will be published on December 13, 2023; each school's results will be reported on the Report Card website ([mdreportcard.org](http://mdreportcard.org)); the School Report Card includes disaggregated data showing the performance of each student group; and a downloadable report is available for each school.

Board Vice President Josh Michael asked for an explanation of the results, particularly in comparison to the previous school year, with 30% of schools receiving a lower star rating. He also requested that in the next reporting cycle MSDE should release school data on the same day the statewide data is released. Ms. Haislet responded by noting the impact of chronic absenteeism which was not included as a performance measurement in the 2021-2022 school year but was included once again in this year's Report Card.

Board member Susan Getty asked whether any parent group has been consulted for feedback on the format and clarity of the information being provided. Ms. Haislet shared that when the accountability system was being developed there was extensive community and parent engagement and this could be revisited in collaboration with local school systems. President Crawford agreed that it is imperative that parents receive, understand, and can use the Report Card information to ask tough questions of local school administrators to address their concerns.

- [2023 Maryland School Report Card Update](#)

#### **Regulations for Consent Agenda Action:**

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

- [13A.07.08 Incentive Program for Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards \(Permission to Withdraw\)](#)
- [13A.01.05 Appeals to the State Board of Education \(Permission to Adopt\)](#)
- [13A.01.07 Nondiscrimination in Education \(Permission to Adopt\)](#)
- [Emergency Intermediate Sanctions for 13A.15.13 and 14 Family Child Care; 13A.16.17 and 18 Child Care Centers; 13A.17.15 and 16 Child Care—Letters of Compliance; 13A.18.14 and 15 Large Family Child Care Homes \(Permission to Adopt\)](#)

#### **Regulatory Actions for Discussion and Action:**

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

- [Cannabis Regulations for 13A.15 Family Child Care; 13A.16 Child Care Centers; 13A.17 Child Care—Letters of Compliance; 13A.18 Large Family Child Care Homes \(Permission to Adopt\)](#)
  - Dr. Shayna Cook, Deputy State Superintendent for the Division of Early Childhood, presented on the final regulations and addressed concerns raised by the Board.
- [13A.08.01.02-3 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment \(Permission to Publish\)](#)
  - Assistant Superintendent Haislet presented on the KRA regulations as revised based on input on the previous version presented and discussed at the Board's October meeting.

- [13A.07.06 Programs for Professionally Licensed Personnel \(Permission to Adopt\)](#)
- [13A.12 Educator Licensure \(Permission to Adopt\)](#)
  - Kelly Meadows, Assistant Superintendent for the Division of Educator Certification and Program Approval, described and responded to questions on the proposed regulations for final approval.

## **Review of State Board Legislative Platform & Preview of Legislative Session Legislative Updates**

Board member Rachel McCusker, chair of the State Board’s Education Policy Committee, introduced the presentation on the final draft version of the legislative platform. The State Board’s Executive Director Zachary Hands presented the State Board’s legislative principles and priorities. Following the presentation the State Board adopted the proposed platform.

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, especially 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.
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.

The Platform also includes the following Policy Statements:

- The State Board supports the usage of the neighborhood indicators of poverty methodology in funding formulas over time, wherever appropriate, to better reflect the depths of poverty experienced by students.
- There are a number of strategies that the State Board supports to build on the progress we have already made in literacy, including but not limited to: strengthening accountability measures around implementation of evidence-based literacy principles through an ongoing review process and embedding professional learning requirements for all K-3 teachers focused on literacy.
- The State Board supports additional efforts to bolster the educator workforce including but not limited to: entering into the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact to increase Maryland’s ability to import high-quality educators, and codifying and sustaining the work that MSDE has



done through the establishment of grow-your-own-programs in 23 of Maryland's 24 local education agencies as a part of the Maryland Leads initiative.

- The State Board supports continued legislative efforts to build a sustainable model that moves Maryland towards universal access to full-day Pre-K.
- The State Board strongly supports growing access to affordable child care for families and offering assistance to child care providers as they operate in a challenging system. The State Board supports additional flexibilities for families and providers that minimize burden and offer stability in the availability of affordable child care.
- The State Board supports access to critical mental and behavioral health resources and empowering school systems to offer support to students through the identification and referral to appropriate services within the professional mental and behavioral health community.

In addition, Dr. Akilah Alleyne, MSDE's Executive Director for the Office of Governmental Affairs, Education Policy and External Relations, presented a comprehensive overview of the legislative process in preparation for the 2024 legislative session, which will convene on January 10, 2024 and adjourn on April 8, 2024.

- [Legislative Platform & Preview of Legislative Session](#)

## Board Opinions

The State Board issued legal opinions for the following cases:

- *Shanise S. v. Anne Arundel County Board of Education*, dismissing the appeal for untimeliness.
- *Zaharah Valentine v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners*, denying the request for reconsideration.
- *A.D. and E.W. v. Montgomery County Board of Education*, affirming the local board's decision in a case regarding student bullying.
- *T.J. and D.J. v. Montgomery County Board of Education*, denying the request for reconsideration.
- *M.T. and N.A. v. Montgomery County Board of Education*, denying the request for reconsideration.
- *M.A.H. v. Prince George's County Board of Education*, affirming the local board's decision in a case regarding student discipline.
- *Adrian Pugh v. Prince George's County Board of Education*, dismissing the appeal as not being ripe for review.
- In the Matter of Shannon Hinkhaus, dismissing the Petition for Declaratory Ruling for lack of jurisdiction.