

January 23, 2024

On Tuesday, January 23, 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, Samir Paul, Holly Wilcox, and student member Abisola Ayoola from Howard County.

[Link to January 23, 2024, meeting agenda, materials, and video.](#)

Public Comments

Public comments were delivered by:

- Dr. Pepukayi, Talbot County Superintendent, shared her school system's top three priorities which are academic equity in mathematics, fostering and engaging environment for students and staff, and hiring and retaining a highly qualified and diverse staff. She emphasized that these three priorities are aligned with the Blueprint. On behalf of PSSAM, she highlighted Talbot County's successes in the Blueprint's expansion of dual enrollment through the work of their Blueprint coordinator and career counselors and urged support for the funding necessary to sustain this work on the Eastern Shore and around the State.
- Piya Scielzo, Miss Montgomery County Teen, addressed the need to raise awareness about neurodiversity including ADHD, autism, and dyslexia, by training teachers in strategies including having neurodiverse students share their experiences.
- Jessica Shiller, a professor at Towson University and expert on community schools, described the 10 years of Towson's work promoting and supporting community schools through research and professional development.
- McKenzie Allen, with the Maryland Association of Charter Schools, described MACS' role as the administrator of Maryland's federal charter school program grant.
- Sharon Saroff, a special education consultant and advocate, alerted the Board to her concerns that Maryland is moving backwards in providing special education services based on the failure or refusal to evaluate students for vision-related disabilities.
- Karin Bright, a career teacher of students with dyslexia, spoke in strong support of adopting the science of reading based on the research and to prevent the harm to students and families when this teaching method is not used.

Consent Agenda

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

State Board Resolution on the Science of Reading

President Crawford introduced the Board's proposed resolution calling for the "STATEWIDE ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCIENCE OF READING." He shared his personal experience as a child and student with dyslexia, the many years he was unable to read, including up until he was in high school, and the need to ensure that Maryland public schools provide high-quality reading instruction for all students, including students with disabilities such as dyslexia. Following the reading of the Resolution, Mr. Crawford noted that the State Board is in full agreement with the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) in this matter.

Board member Joan Mele-McCarthy shared her strong support for the resolution based on her professional experience and decades of neuroscience and the developments of teaching strategies based on what we know works for students with reading disabilities. Superintendent Wright spoke in support of the resolution, and the benefits of the science of reading-based instruction for students in poverty. She rebutted the complaint against the science of reading that "we want students to love to read" by emphasizing that "we need children to learn to read before they can love to read." Board member Irma Johnson spoke in support of involving speech language pathologists in this work to assist teachers and students. Board member Rachel McCusker asked about the plan to provide teachers the professional development and curricular tools they will need to adapt their teaching practices as soon as during the coming school year. Board member Nick Greer made a similar request for more information regarding outreach and assistance for parents and child care providers.

Key provisions of the Resolution:

- I. The State Board aims to dramatically improve reading proficiency for students from all backgrounds in Maryland as indicated by improved outcomes on the state MCAP assessment and the NAEP exam. The State Board sets a statewide aspirational target for Maryland to rank as one of the top 10 states in reading on the 4th and 8th grade NAEP exams by 2027.
- II. All literacy instruction in Maryland public schools must be aligned to the Science of Reading, including structured literacy, effective School Year 2024-25.
- III. The State Board charges the State Superintendent of Schools with drafting a comprehensive literacy policy aligned to the Science of Reading for consideration to the State Board for approval, including but not limited to curriculum adoption, assessment, data analysis, early warning system, intervention, and accountability.

Superintendent Wright presented MSDE's "Framework for Continuous Literacy Improvement: Building a Comprehensive State Literacy Plan" and her vision for implementing the Resolution through the expansion of the Department's programming and services to local school systems.

Board member Samir Paul asked about concerns with the National Board Certification (NBC) program which is not aligned with the science of reading. Superintendent Wright agreed this is an issue and that the NBC program is aware of concerns with their continued use of queuing in reading instruction, and that the NBC program must adapt based on the nationwide adoption of the science of reading. She noted that 39 states have passed laws shifting to reading instruction based on the

science of reading, including instances of banning the practice of using queuing in reading instruction.

Current Literacy Initiatives and Support

- Professional Learning: Literacy Learning Labs
- Maryland Leads Grant Initiative: Science of Reading High Leverage Strategy
 - Provide training directly to all K-3 teachers, including special education teachers, principals, and other relevant staff
 - Identify and implement high-quality, content-rich instructional materials and assessment tools aligned to the science of reading
 - Create systems for progress monitoring to ensure all students are reading by the end of third grade and have the appropriate supports
 - Science of Reading Community of Practice
- Literacy Expert Instructional Support Teams & Implementation of Statewide Coaching Model
- Local Education Agency (LEA) Comprehensive Literacy Plans
- Literacy Parent Engagement Nights (Virtual, Winter and Spring)
- Monthly collaborative meetings and on-going Office Hours with Reading Supervisors/Directors

Board member McCusker stressed the need to message that this is not an initiative to teach to the the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and Dr. Wright agreed. Board member Getty spoke in favor of adding a question to the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) and staff confirmed that the KRA enrollment form has already been updated to include that question to support the assignment of coaching teams to areas of highest needs.

Board member Monical Goldson emphasized that local superintendents and boards of education need to be engaged so this is not viewed as a curriculum mandate but a focus on standard setting and monitoring for the use of curriculum that is clearly identified as based on the science of reading. Dr. Wright agreed and Board President Crawford suggested that perhaps MABE could develop and provide training for local boards on the science of reading.

[Resolution on the Science of Reading](#)

[MSDE's Literacy Framework](#)

Stakeholder Engagement with the Maryland Association of Boards of Education

President Crawford welcomed all of the representatives from MABE in attendance, including: Executive Director Milt Nagel, MABE President Michelle Corkadel, MABE Legislative Committee Chair Jennifer Swickard Mallo, MABE President-Elect Karin Bailey, MABE Treasurer Diana Hawley, and MABE Board members Marsha Herbert, Judy Mickens Murray, and Carol Mueller.

Michelle Corkadel thanked the Board for the opportunity to present and to engage in dialogue on MABE's legislative priorities. She presented an overview of MABE's programs and services, including:

- Professional Development – MABE provides the skills and knowledge required for its members to become effective leaders.
- Advocacy – MABE represents all 24 local school boards on legislative and regulatory matters before the General Assembly, State Board, and federal government.
- Legal and Policy Services – MABE provides legal assistance, including amicus briefs, and policy training and alerts.
- Insurance Programs – MABE manages three member-owned Property/Casualty, Workers' Compensation, and Health Insurance self-insurance programs.

In addition, MABE President Corkadel reviewed innovative programs recently launched by MABE:

- The MABE-MACo Time to Care Act Collaborative – In response to the new law, in 2023 MABE initiated this collaborative to leverage purchasing power so that school systems and local governments could save costs in administering the new law's 12 weeks of paid time off for employee and family needs.
- The MABE Health Center Program – This program, through Everside Health, is cost-efficiently providing comprehensive primary care services to local school system employees and their dependents in their communities.

Jen Mallo, MABE's Legislative Committee Chair, reviewed MABE's four legislative priorities and highlighted the comprehensive coverage of major legislative policy issues in MABE's Legislative Positions publication. She then presented the specific legislative proposals MABE has developed and is requesting be enacted to improve the implementation and help ensure the success of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Specifically, MABE supports legislation in the 2024 session to make alterations to state and local funding formulas for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future by:

- Adding an inflation adjustment to the minimum Maintenance of Effort (MOE) amount of local funding;
- Re-establishing the MOE "escalator" to require increased local funding in certain jurisdictions;
- Removing Foundation Program funding from the 75% school-based funding allocation requirement;
- Adding a population density-based adjustment to state funding for lowest populated counties; and
- Requiring state and local government cost-sharing for the salaries of local Blueprint Implementation Coordinators.

Ms. Mallo also noted that MABE anticipates legislation governing the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to address concerns about its use in educational settings, particularly relating to student data privacy, transparency, academic integrity, equity, bias, and ethical use. MABE supports equitable access and high standards regarding the use of educational technology in the classroom and school setting, including AI.

Ms. Corkadel concluded the presentation by highlighting that in Maryland, by proclamation of Governor Wes Moore, January is Board of Education Recognition Month, and how MABE also greatly appreciates President Crawford's awarding of certificates of appreciation to each of Maryland's 24 local boards of education.

The State Board and MABE panel engaged in a discussion following the presentation, focusing on the challenges and opportunities school systems face in reorganizing programming and staff and allocating funding to implement the Blueprint. Ms. Corkadel described the benefits of her school system having completed a performance audit in 2019, just before the pandemic, and that the school system has been making systematic changes to staffing infrastructure to create a culture of innovation that is well aligned with the Blueprint.

Board member Goldson appreciated MABE raising the issue of artificial intelligence and focusing on equitable access rather than banning AI. Ms. Mallo agreed that it is critical to recognize that AI is here to stay, and provided the example of its benefits to practices such as Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) testing. Ms. Mallo also shared that she explored using AI to draft her graduation speeches in the voices of George Washington, William Shakespeare and Lizzo. She reiterated the need to ensure equity in the delivery of not only AI-based technology but all educational technology.

President Crawford reiterated his suggestion that MABE should consider providing professional development on the science of reading and that the State Board is also looking ahead to tackling the issue of the science of math and numeracy instruction. He also highlighted the need to manage relationships and the strain on relationships when money is tight and we're implementing the Blueprint's systemic changes. He thanked MABE for the thoughtful engagement and urged that all of the adults engaged in public education, at the state and local level, move forward in a reasonable and trusting way with the common goal to educate all children.

[MABE Presentation, Legislative Positions & Priorities](#)

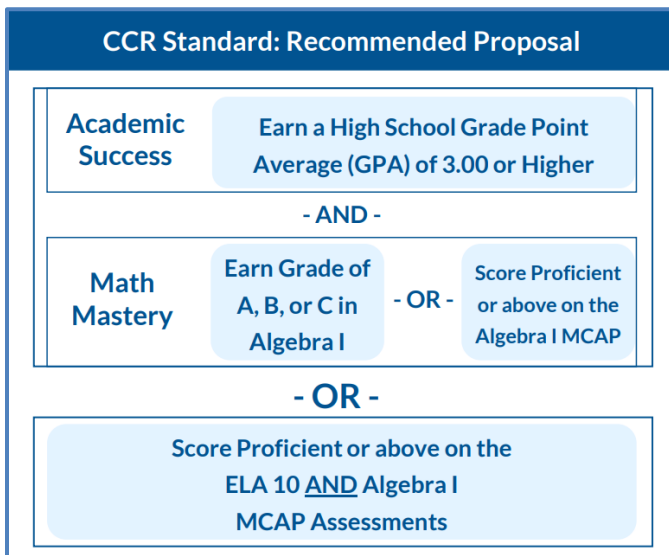
College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standard Setting Exploration

Board President Crawford introduced the presentation of the Department's briefing about the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standard, the empirical research study, and options, context, and implications for adopting a revised version of the CCR Standard, as directed by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Following the presentation, the State Board unanimously adopted the revised CCR standard recommended by the Department. MSDE's panel included Dr. Diann Collins, Deputy State Superintendent; Phil Lasser, Executive Director of the Office of the State Superintendent; and Matt Duque, Director of Research, Planning, and Program Evaluation.

Mr. Lasser reviewed the proposed CCR standard and distinguished the role of the CCR standard from the graduation standard. Mr. Duque reviewed the extensive community and stakeholder engagement leading to the development of the CCR standard being proposed, and Dr. Collins provided a comprehensive overview of MSDE's engagement with local school systems. She highlighted the significant amount of work for the Department and local chief academic officers to implement this new CCR standard beginning this coming school year.

Dr. Collins noted the needed work to determine the content standards for Algebra I and Algebra II and grading policies. She also stressed that the use of these assessments is to determine where students are and not what pathway they should be assigned to, commonly referred to as tracking.

Board member Irma Johnson asked about whether the graduation requirement means that students pass the assessments or only take the assessments. Board Vice President Josh Michael clarified that the current graduation requirements to take but not pass the state assessments in English, Government, Mathematics, and Science are not the subject of the CCR standard before the State Board, but will be revisited in the near future.



Earlier in the presentation Mr. Lasser shared that state funding based on the new, broader and more flexible CCR standards would not go into effect until FY 2026 for the 2025-2026 school year. Board member Nick Greer raised the concern that the delay or lag in funding following assessment results will make it very difficult to provide programming as envisioned by the Blueprint and indicated by the data.

Board members Samir Paul, Monical Goldson, and Susan Getty shared their enthusiasm for the new standards and specific focus on math mastery, but as a gateway not a gatekeeper. Dr. Wright emphasized the role of early warning systems to identify students needing additional supports in elementary and middle schools to ensure that all students are prepared to meet the new standards.

State Board and MSDE Future Policy Initiatives

1. Prioritize the Launch Years Initiative, which is charged with using data to develop recommendations to improve alignment of mathematics content, courses, pathways and related educational policies. The goal is to complete this work by June 2024.
2. Draft and adopt a Statewide secondary grading policy, to be implemented in School Year 2025-2026.
3. Examine the CCR Support Pathway, for students who do not meet the standard, and provide guidance for LEAs by Fall 2024.
4. Tentatively study aligning the CCR Standard with Graduation Requirements and provide recommendations by Summer 2024, to be implemented in School Year 2025-2026.

[Presentation: College and Career Readiness Standard](#)

Regulatory Actions for Discussion and Action:

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

- [Virtual Education for Severe Weather Conditions \(2024—2025 School Year\)](#)
 - Assistant State Superintendent Mary Gable presented on the Virtual Education for Severe Weather Conditions, under § 7-103.2 of the Education Article. This statute

outlines a new policy by which local education agencies (LEAs) can develop severe weather conditions virtual education plans.

- Senate Bill 610 Primary and Secondary Education – Virtual Education (Chapter 804) was passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor on May 28, 2023. § 7-103.2, a section of the legislation, defines a new set of allowances and requirements for Virtual Education for Severe Weather Conditions beginning with the 2024-2025 School Year. The general requirements of the new statute include: the county school board may authorize the use of virtual education days in severe weather conditions; before this authorization is given to local school superintendents, the county school board must discuss this topic at an open meeting and vote affirmatively on the authorization; the county school board shall publish the county’s plan for virtual education on the LEA’s website; and the county superintendent may decide to provide a day of virtual education (not less than four hours of synchronous instruction) only if the LEA has used all the days incorporated into its calendar for school closures for severe weather conditions.
- [6th and 7th Grade Social Studies Frameworks](#)
 - The Social Studies branch of the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) presented revised 6th and 7th grade Social Studies Frameworks for the State Board’s approval.
- [Waiver of COMAR 13A.12.01.11C Conditional Teacher Certificate](#)
 - Assistant State Superintendent Kelly Meadows presented on proposed action to modify the Conditional Teacher Certificate waiver. In response to a request from the Anne Arundel County school system for an expansion of the Conditional Teacher Certificate waiver, and given the impending transition to new licensure regulations, the State Superintendent of Schools recommends the State Board of Education modify the current waiver of COMAR 13A.12.01.11C, collectively for all LEAs, State operated schools, and nonpublic schools approved under COMAR 13A.09.10 for good cause.
- [Queen Anne’s County Public Schools Calendar Modification](#)

Review of the Governor’s FY 2025 Education Budget

Assistant State Superintendent Donna Gunning presented highlights from Governor Wes Moore’s proposed State Budget for FY 2025, specifically as it provides funding for MSDE Headquarters and operations and State Aid to Education for the 24 local school systems.

Dr. Akilah Alleyne, MSDE’s Executive Director for the Office of Governmental Affairs, Education Policy, and External Relations, briefed the Board and recommended positions on several pending bills.

[Education Budget Highlights](#)

[Legislative Updates](#)

State Superintendent Search Update

Representatives from Hazard Young Attea (HYA), including former State Superintendent and Montgomery and Calvert County Superintendent Jack Smith, presented a comprehensive overview and updates on the State Superintendent search.

- [Update on Search Process](#)
- [Presentation of Candidate Profile](#)

Board Opinions

The State Board issued legal opinions for the following cases:

- In the Matter of Request for Removal of Local Board Member Renee Dixon, finding the request from a Cecil County resident to remove Renee Dixon as a member of the Cecil County Board of Education for a social media post not sufficient on either a factual or legal basis.
- *Joy Woods v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners*, adopting the ALJ's proposed decision and affirming the local school system's employee dismissal.
- *K.B. v. Montgomery County Board of Education*, dismissing certain claims for lack of jurisdiction and directing the local board to provide a response to the remaining claims regarding violations of local policy to the State Board by February 12, 2024.
- *Tonya Wingfield, et al. v. Prince George's County Board of Education*, dismissing the appeal for lack of jurisdiction.