

April 30, 2024

On Tuesday, April 30, Board President Clarence Crawford convened the State Board of Education's regular monthly meeting. Members in attendance included: 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 April 30, 2024, meeting agenda, materials, and video.](#)

### **Public Comments**

Public comments were delivered by:

- A Montgomery County high school student shared her difficult experience with meeting graduation requirements due to her chronic illness.
- Dr. Patricia Saelens, Queen Anne's County Schools Superintendent, representing the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland (PSSAM), shared PSSAM's congratulations to Dr. Wright for being selected as the State Superintendent for the next four years, and PSSAM's appreciation for the proposed dual enrollment guidance which addresses the serious funding challenges arising from unfunded costs of dual enrollment in the coming school year.

### **Consent Agenda**

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

### **Superintendent's Update**

Dr. Carey Wright highlighted the launch of MCAP assessment season, shared test administration dates, and wished all students well. She noted the number of multiple language learners has doubled in recent years, and the thousands of students graduating with Maryland's Seal of Biliteracy. She emphasized the shift from English Learners (EL) to multilingual learners (MLL). Dr. Wright described the successful ongoing engagement with local school systems through the workgroup of superintendents established with PSSAM. She also shared the recent selection of Milken Award winning teachers, recent school visits, and other updates.

## Regulations for Discussion and Action:

The State Board received recommendations from Assistant Superintendent Mary Gable for approval of the following requested actions on proposed policies and regulations. For each recommendation, Board member Rachel McCusker, as chair of the State Board's Policy Committee, informed the Board that the Committee also voted to support the recommendations.

- [COMAR 13A.05.09 Programs for Homeless Children](#) (Permission to Publish)
- [COMAR 13A.03.02.12 Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland](#) (Permission to Publish)

## School Year Calendar Modification

MSDE's Ombudsman, Teresa Dantzler, described the rationale for Garrett County school system's requested calendar waiver of one school day to avoid the last day of the school year falling on a Monday. The State Board approved the requested calendar waiver of one day from the 180-day school year requirement.

- [Garrett County Public Schools Calendar Modification Request](#)

## Blue Ribbon Schools Recognition

President Crawford and Dr. Wright welcomed representatives from Maryland's 2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools. Dr. Wright described the achievements and introduced the local superintendents and principals of the schools.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. These awards affirm the hard work of students, educators, families, and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging and engaging academic content. The Board presented awards and had photos taken with award recipients.

Six Maryland Schools have been selected as Blue Ribbon Schools, including:

- Northeast Elementary School/Allegany County – Principal, Daniel Clark
  - Oakdale High School/Frederick County – Principal, William Caufield
  - Stone Mill Elementary School/Montgomery County – Principal Kimberly Williams Cascio
  - Church Hill Elementary School/Queen Anne's County – Principal Susan Walbert
  - Matapeake Elementary School/Queen Anne's County – Principal Carrie Mitten
  - Smithsburg Middle School/Washington County – Principal Matt Hoffman
- Presentation: [Blue Ribbon Schools Recognition](#)

## Arts Education

President Crawford welcomed representatives from Arts Education in Maryland Schools (AEMS). Rachel McGrain, AEMS Executive Director, and Peter Dayton, AEMS Director of Operations, presented an overview of the work of AEMS.

Ms. McGrain shared that AEMS is a statewide nonprofit organization that collaborates with statewide arts organizations, regional organizations, fine arts supervisors, and the State Department of Education. The Vision of AEMS is for a public education system in Maryland that supports, cultivates, nurtures, and uplifts ALL students' creativity through a robust arts education experience so that they can thrive in a healthy society. Mr. Dayton reviewed the requirements for comprehensive arts education in state regulation, the lack of awareness with these requirements, and value of reflecting arts education in local school system budgets and programming decisions. He also stressed concerns with arts education being a casualty of funding decisions being made as the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is being implemented. Ms. McGrain highlighted that several of AEMS's major concerns have been addressed by MSDE in the past year, including the lack of convenings of Fine Arts Education Advisory Panel, the vacancy for the Director in the Office of Fine Arts at MSDE since December 2021, that Maryland does not have P-6 Theater Educator Certification (only grades 7-12), and the lack of transparency and communication from MSDE.

Mr. Dayton reviewed the AEMS Data Project to compile information on school offerings and student participation in arts education and in what disciplines (Dance, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts, Media Arts). He shared that 83.5% of Maryland K-12 public school students were enrolled in an arts course in SY22-23 (714,704 out of 856,100 students) and this puts Maryland far ahead of many other States. However, only 16 out of 24 school systems offer courses in dance.

Board Vice President Michaels spoke to his experience and belief in the role of the arts and music programs in creating more well-rounded students. Board member McCusker, who is a music teacher, addressed the significant requirements to become a licensed arts educator in Maryland. Student Board member Ayoola shared her concerns with the adequacy of classroom space for orchestras and updating state standards for music programs.

- Presentation: [Arts Education in Maryland Schools](#)

## High Quality Instructional Materials

The State Board approved the adoption of the newly developed MSDE High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) Selection Frameworks following a detailed set of presentations from MSDE's Office of Teaching and Learning by Dr. Deann Collins, Deputy Superintendent; Phil Lasser, Senior Executive Director; and Amreena Hussain, Senior Advisor on HQIM Strategy.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires that MSDE develop a system to identify and promote High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) that support students in achieving the College and Career Readiness standard. MSDE has created a foundational HQIM framework document that outlines the definitional underpinnings of this signaling system. This framework was developed in consultation with national experts and Maryland educators, and the department has been advised by an additional panel of national experts on each of the core content areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, as well as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and supports for multilingual learners. This framework will be used to inform the development of the Maryland HQIM evaluation rubrics and to train Maryland HQIM reviewers.

State Board members and panelists engaged in lengthy discussion, focused primarily on the challenge to move beyond requiring alignment of standards and instruction to taking the numerous

implementation steps required to ensure that teaching and learning are being modified in the classroom. Dr. Wright emphasized the need to engage and learn from teachers regarding instructional materials and practices.

- [High-Quality Instructional Materials Overview](#) (Action)

## **Purple Star Schools Program**

President Crawford and Superintendent Wright welcomed Maryland Governor Wes Moore to recognize the 2024 Purple Star School designees. Before welcoming the Governor, Dr. Wright described the Purple Star Schools Program, which was established in state law following legislation passed in 2022. Along with 37 other states, Maryland has joined this nationwide initiative aimed at recognizing and supporting the unique needs of students whose parents or guardians serve in our country's armed forces.

Governor Moore expressed his appreciation for the leadership of Board President Crawford, Vice President Michaels, and Superintendent Wright. He described his decision to enlist and his commitment to the promise and governance philosophy to leave no one behind and to ensure that the work of his administration is inclusive and that the benefits of the work are collective. He thanked Secretary of Veterans Affairs Tony Woods and highlighted the expansion of medical and dental care for members of the National Guard.

Col. Michael A. Sapp, base commander of Fort George Meade, and resident of 10 States as he moved with this family throughout his career, spoke to the military family's experience moving from states, towns, and schools, and the educational and social challenges this presents. He shared his concerns for military families and students in terms of their sense of worth, trust, and hope. He noted his family's experiences with Maryland's service learning hours graduation requirement, special education challenges when transitioning his child with Cerebral Palsy to a new school system, and the recognition and transfer of course credits. Capt. Douglas Burfield, Commanding Officer of the Patuxent River Naval Air Station in St. Mary's County, also spoke to the meaningful benefits to military families and communities of the Purple Star School designation.

At a minimum, schools seeking Purple Star designation must demonstrate that they have: 1. A military liaison who serves as the point of contact for military-connected students and their families; 2. An easily accessible resource webpage for military-connected students and their families containing information that facilitates a smooth transition to the school; 3. A peer-led transition program tasked with orienting military-connected students to the school's physical and academic environments; and 4. Appropriate training for school staff aimed at fostering an understanding of life as a military-connected student.

Superintendent Wright recognized the following schools as Purple Star Schools for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years:

- Bellows Springs Elementary School, Howard County Public Schools
- Captain Walter Francis Duke Elementary School, St. Mary's County Public Schools
- Kent Island High School, Queen Anne's County Public Schools
- MacArthur Middle School, Anne Arundel County Public Schools Meade High School, Anne Arundel County Public Schools

- Mt. Harmony Elementary School, Calvert County Public Schools
- Queen Anne’s County High School, Queen Anne’s County Public Schools
- West Meade Early Education Center, Anne Arundel County Public Schools
- [Purple Star Schools Program](#)

## Trauma Prevention and Postvention

The State Board received a briefing from Assistant Superintendent Mary Gable on the trauma-informed educational and prevention practices required and being carried out in school systems across the State. The presentation addressed Maryland and national data, Maryland statute and COMAR regulations, the national perspective, local education agency (LEA) suicide prevention practices, and next steps.

In February 2022 the State Board adopted amendments to the original regulation, COMAR 13A.07.11 Student Suicide Prevention and Safety Training, which required each local board of education to ensure that all certificated school personnel who have direct contact with students on a regular basis shall complete training on or before December 1 of each year, by a method determined by each county board, in the skills required to: 1) Understand and respond to youth suicide risk; 2) Understand and respond to student mental health, student trauma, student safety and other topics related to student social and emotional well-being; 3) Identify professional resources to help students in crisis; 4) Recognize student behavioral health issues; 5) Recognize a student experiencing trauma or violence out of school and refer the student to behavioral health services, which include, but are not limited to, the school counselor, school psychologist, school nurse, school social worker, and student support team; and 6) If the school is a community school, support any students needing the services at a community school.

The next steps include MSDE developing model training materials as outlined in Education Article, Sections 2-205, 6-122, and 6-704. These materials will incorporate emerging best practices and previous professional development feedback. MSDE will also develop sample communication materials which LEAs can share with school staff, parents, and community members, and provide training and technical assistance upon request.

Board member Chang asked about data collection and accountability for staff completing the training, Board member Samir Paul asked about the departmental and State Board role in promoting experimentation and the best practices developed at the local level. Ms. Gable added that these sharings are a facet of the ongoing mental health response team process.

- Presentation: [Trauma Prevention and Postvention](#)

## Career and Technical Education (CTE) Update

The State Board received a presentation on Maryland’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and alignment of Maryland’s CTE programs to the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future from Dr. Deann Collins, Deputy Superintendent, Office of Teaching and Learning, and Richard W. Kincaid, Senior Executive Director, Office of College and Career Pathways. The briefing showcased CTE programming in Carroll County Public Schools at their Technical Education Center which Dr. Wright and members of the State Board recently visited. Dr. Collins provided a brief overview of CTE programs and Mr. Kincaid emphasized the Blueprint’s requirement to align CTE programs with industry standards and coordination of high school and post-secondary programs.

Dr. Collins noted that February was CTE month, with events held across the State, including many site visits by MSDE staff and members of the State Board.

Carroll County Superintendent Cynthia McCabe introduced her staff members including Nick Shockney, Bill Eckles, and Tom Riddle. Carroll County's CTE program highlights include:

- 45 programs across 7 high schools and the Carroll County Career & Technology Center (CCCTC)
- 3,557 enrolled in CTE courses in 22-24
- 438 students met industry certification in 22-23
- 320+ internships and apprenticeships in 23-24
- SkillsUSA, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Future Farmers of America (FFA), & Educators Rising
- Community partnerships & engagement
- [CTE Presentation and Carroll County School Visit](#)

### Dual Enrollment Guidance

President Crawford and Vice President Michaels described the process and outcome of developing this joint policy arising from recent legislation and collaboration with the local superintendents' workgroup. Phil Lasser, MSDE, outlined the budget dilemma created by the increased enrollment of students in dual enrollment courses under the interim standard of college and career readiness (CCR). To address concerns raised from local school systems to ensure broad access to dual enrollment courses, but within parameters aligned with funding constraints, the State Board and Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) agreed to issue Joint Implementation Policy #1 – Dual Enrollment. This joint policy will not take effect until the AIB votes to approve it at their May meeting.

Board Vice President Michaels pointed out that school systems are to receive \$8 million less than in the previous year due to the State Board's delayed action to adopt a new CCR standard. Related to this delay and funding situation, with the support of the State Board of Education and the AIB, Chapter 164 (2024) (HB1426) was recently enacted. Effective June 1, 2024, this legislation amends Education Article § 7-205.1 to include this provision:

To phase in expansion of dual enrollment to maximize the number of students who can earn the maximum number of dual enrollment credits consistent with the phased increases in school funding, for Fiscal years 2025 through 2027, the State Board and the Accountability and Implementation Board, in consultation with each local school system, may limit the number and types of courses that a student dually enrolled at the student's public high school and at an institution of higher education may enroll in during the school year at the institution of higher education as part of the Post-CCR pathway in accordance with paragraph (1) of this subsection and § 15–127 of this article.

Under this new authority, the State Board and AIB consulted with the local superintendents and other strategic partners to develop the policy, including the dual enrollment course provision described below.

1. For students who have met the CCR standard, as it relates to the responsibility to cover the costs of tuition and fees of dual enrollment courses that are part of the Post-CCR Pathways taken during the school year, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are responsible for, at a minimum:

- a. 2 dual enrollment courses per Fall and Spring academic semester per student, for a possible total of 4 dual enrollment courses per year per student; and
- b. Exam fees directly connected to courses that students are enrolled in for their first attempt at a specific exam.

Dr. Wright shared how appreciative local superintendents are that the State Board and AIB are taking this action.

- [Joint State Board/AIB Dual Enrollment Guidance](#)

## Legislative Update

Dr. Akilah Alleyne, MSDE's Executive Director of Government Affairs, and Laurel Cratsley, Education Policy Analyst, presented an overview of MSDE's legislative priorities and summary of major legislative actions in the 2024 legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly. The presentation highlighted bills on which MSDE collaborated with the AIB, the impacts of bills on MSDE and local school systems, and implementation timelines and requirements. They noted that several of the major bills would be presented in more detail at future meetings as policies and/or regulations are proposed to implement the new laws.

President Crawford shared how pleased he is with the State Board's and MSDE's increased level of engagement and advocacy in Annapolis. Board Executive Director Zach Hands noted that last session the Board took positions on only two bills compared to 72 bills in 2024.

- Presentation: [MSDE 2024 Legislative Session Overview](#)

## Board Appeals and Orders

The State Board issued legal opinions for the following cases:

- *D.C. and N.C. v. Carroll County Board of Education*, affirming the local board's decision to deny transportation to out-of-district school.
- *M.D. and D.C. v. Montgomery County Board of Education*, affirming the local board's grading policy decision.
- *T.J. and D.J. v. Montgomery County Board of Education*, affirming the local board's decision to not exempt a student for religious reasons from the requirement to complete one credit in health education.
- *Vincent Shipp v. Anne Arundel County Board of Education*, denying appellant's request to reconsider the State Board's decision to affirm the local board's nonrenewal of his probationary non-tenured teaching contract.