

THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes of the August 27, 2024 Meeting
200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

The Maryland State Board of Education met on August 27, 2024 at 9:02am in the State Board room located within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

The following Board members were present in the Boardroom:

Dr. Joshua Michael (Board President), Dr. Monica Goldson (Board Vice President), Ms. Rachel McCusker, Ms. Chuen-Chin Bianca Chang, Mr. Clarence Crawford, Mr. Nick Greer, Dr. Susan Getty, Mr. Abhiram Gaddam, Dr. Joan Mele-McCarthy, Mr. Samir Paul, and Dr. Irma Johnson were in attendance.

State Superintendent Dr. Carey Wright, State Board Executive Director Zachary Hands, and Assistant Attorney General Elliott Schoen were also in attendance.

MEETING OPENING

President Michael called the meeting to order at 9:02am and led the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Schoen declared that a quorum was present.

Dr. Michael shared information about the Board's visits to schools and districts across the state to celebrate the first day of school. He thanked Maryland's educators, parents, and students.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Ian Linde - Student Safety
2. Shamoyia Gardiner - Threats to the Blueprint
3. Sharon Saroff - Special Education Oversight and Training
4. Delvin Champagne - Opposition to Dora Kennedy French Immersion Relocation
5. Courtney Evans - Support Statewide Fully Synchronous Virtual Education
6. Sterling High - Support Statewide Fully Synchronous Virtual Education

NEW BUSINESS

- Approval of the Consent Agenda
 - Approval of the July 27, 2024 Meeting Minutes
 - Personnel Actions
 - Budget Adjustments, July 2024

ACTION: Ms. McCusker motioned, Mr. Paul seconded. The State Board granted approval by unanimous consent.

DISCUSSION OF MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (MCAP) 2023-2024 RESULTS

Mr. Geoff Sanderson and Dr. Deann Collins shared an overview of 2024 MCAP English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science results, as well as MSDE's response. Overall, 48.4% of students were proficient in ELA, very close to the prior year's proficiency level. Mr. Sanderson said there has been a three percentage point increase over the past three years in ELA; however, there are large proficiency gaps among student subgroups.

In math, the overall proficiency level is about half of that of ELA. For all students, 24.1% of students were proficient in math, slightly above the prior year's proficiency level, though large proficiency gaps remain across student groups.

Results for first-time Algebra I test takers in 2024 show that students taking Algebra I in lower grades perform much higher than those taking it in higher grades. High school students have lower rates of passing the Algebra I assessment. Mr. Sanderson said that students taking Algebra I in lower grades tend to be the highest performing students, which could explain their higher rates of passage. Approximately 18% of 7th and 8th graders take Algebra I assessment rather than grade level MCAP math assessment.

There were declines in science proficiency across 5th and 8th grades. There were declines across all racial and ethnic groups in 5th grade science and across most racial and ethnic groups in 8th grade science.

Dr. Collins shared what actions and programs MSDE is implementing to support math, literacy, and science improvement, including Statewide Professional Learning for teachers and administrators with higher education partners, standards revision, High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), and course sequencing. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) will be submitting Comprehensive Literacy and Math Plans in the coming weeks.

Mr. Paul asked about what explains the spike in performance by 11th graders for Algebra I.

Ms. McCusker asked about 5th grade science and what master schedule guidance for daily science instructional time is being provided to LEAs.

Dr. Goldson asked about math sequencing and the placement of Geometry within that sequence. She also asked about the number of changes MSDE has made in science and the Technical Assistance (TA) provided by MSDE to LEAs around these changes. Ms. Chang asked about student growth metrics on MCAP.

Mr. Greer asked about additional ways MSDE can present analysis for multilingual learners and Hispanic/Latino students.

Dr. Michael asked when educators got this data; when school level data will be available on the website; when parents will get data reports; and when that will flow into the Report Card.

Mr. Sanderson responded that LEAs and schools received this data in early August. Parents can review the data from the vendor site and that a hard copy for parents will be delivered to schools in mid-September. Data download files will be on the Report Card at school, LEA, and state level this week. This data was also provided to local Superintendents last week.

Mr. Crawford asked about creating an accessible, standardized dashboard for this data at LEA and state level to allow stakeholders to see where their school, district, and state are in relation to our targets.

Ms. McCusker asked if early August is the earliest MSDE can provide this data to LEAs and schools, reiterating that getting this data even a month before could be helpful. She also asked about End-of-Course (EOC) testing timing.

Dr. Wright said that testing occurs after the semester in which a student completes the course, not at the end of the year.

Dr. Michael asked how Maryland's Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools performed on MCAP and how schools are performing by poverty level and community schools designation. Dr. Michael also highlighted the disconnect between MSDE's focus on literacy and 3rd grade students' declining performance on ELA MCAP.

Dr. Wright responded that this is a PK-3 issue, not just 3rd grade, and that implementing screeners will help.

Dr. Johnson asked about midpoint assessments to give stakeholders directional information about student performance.

Dr. Wright said she talked to fellow Superintendents about common benchmark assessments throughout the school year that are tied to statewide assessment.

Dr. Goldson asked if we add a benchmark assessment, what current assessments should be taken away. She encouraged MSDE to analyze data at school level by student subgroups. She also added more context to the presentation of district rankings to clarify that some districts ranked toward the bottom on average aren't on the bottom for all grade levels or subjects.

Ms. McCusker asked about the number of teachers trained in the science of reading.

MSDE brought to the Board new aligned metrics for students scoring at or above proficient in ELA in 3rd grade and grades 3-8 and in math in 5th grade and grades 3-8. Mr. Sanderson noted that they updated the targets using the 2024 MCAP data as baseline.

ACTION: Upon motion by Dr. Goldson, seconded by Mr. Greer, the State Board voted unanimously to approve the revised targets of 10% growth over two years (5% increase by 2025 and an additional 5% increase by 2026). (In Favor: 11, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0).

Dr. Michael called a break for 10 minutes.

RIGHT TO READ VIDEO AND DISCUSSION

Dr. Michael returned the Board to order at 10:41am. Dr. Wright introduced the *Right to Read* documentary and special guests, Dr. Kymyona Burk and Mr. Kareem Weaver. After the video, Mr. Weaver provided remarks and emphasized the importance of studying success. Dr. Burk discussed the importance of accountability and the trends of Maryland's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores over the past decades.

Mr. Greer asked about the eight factors Mr. Weaver uses to analyze the strength of literacy policies and the two factors that Maryland is missing. Mr. Weaver said Maryland is missing the higher education alignment factor and an emphasis on cultural responsiveness. Mr. Weaver noted that access to high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) is one of the biggest factors, as is having a safety net to prevent students from slipping through the cracks. Building supports into the school day and having a dedicated staff member at the LEA that oversees early literacy are also important considerations.

The Board discussed the steep drop in NAEP ELA between 2013-2015 and that has continued since then.

Mr. Crawford emphasized the importance of implementing this literacy policy with fidelity.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED LITERACY POLICY COMPONENTS

Dr. Wright and the MSDE team thanked the public for their comments and engagement during this process. MSDE received nearly 1,000 comments, with the most common strengths across commenters being the provision of interventions and focus on science of reading. Common concerns are related to adequate staffing and coherence of assessments.

Dr. Collins reviewed the purpose of the draft Comprehensive K-3 Literacy Policy and outlined the expectations for curriculum, assessment, data analysis, multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and interventions, and accountability. MSDE staff also reviewed the revisions made to the policy since the last Board meeting.

Mr. Crawford asked for a delineation of the Board's responsibility in implementing and overseeing this policy. He asked if LEAs have the resources and staff to implement science of reading. He also urged more work to increase parent and community awareness and buy-in.

Dr. Mele-McCarthy asked about special education's role within multi-tiered systems of support, particularly in Tier 3 and for students who can't access Tier 1.

Dr. Johnson asked about the state's role in supporting teacher training for data-based decision making. She also asked if librarians, both school-based and public, receive science of reading training.

Mr. Greer said the revisions seem very reflective of public comment. He has concerns around parents' "right to waive" language and suggested shifting instead to "informed consent," similar to the terminology used in the medical field. He further emphasized that the plain language explanation of risks and benefits related to retention and progression should come from MSDE, not LEAs. Mr. Greer said that the burden of due process should be on schools, not on parents. He also requested that reporting to the Board on implementation be included in this policy.

Dr. Getty asked about the role of Pre-K in this plan, supporting PK-K teachers to engage parents in at-home reading practices, and including PK teachers in science of reading training. She also emphasized the importance of putting the most talented educators in the youngest grades.

Ms. McCusker reiterated the importance of balancing the number of assessments. For teacher certification on science of reading, she asked about the process for teachers who were already in cycle under the current licensure regime. She asked who is conducting science of reading teacher training, when it's happening during the school day, and how it's connected to the Blueprint.

Ms. Chang asked about considering students' perspective during the creation of the Student Reading Improvement Plan (SRIP) and retention decisions.

Mr. Paul emphasized the role videos could have in supporting parent interactions.

Dr. Mele-McCarthy shared that some parents don't feel comfortable engaging with school personnel and the disparate impacts that could have on retention across student subgroups. She encouraged school-day interventions, rather than after-school.

Dr. Michael asked about the TSI fund. Donna Gunning explained that the TSI program funding is directed to schools based on their students' 3rd grade assessment results. She said this funding is set to sunset in 2026.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to § 3-305(b)(7) of the General Provisions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon motion of Mr. Paul seconded by Dr. Mele-McCarthy and with unanimous approval, the Maryland State Board of Education met in closed session on Tuesday, August 27, 2024, in Conference Room #1, 8th Floor, at the Nancy S. Grasmick Building. All board members were present. Also in attendance were State Superintendent Dr. Carey Wright, Senior Executive Director of the Office of Policy Analysis and Fiscal Compliance Donna Gunning, Deputy State Superintendent of the Office of Finance and Operations Krishna Tallur, State Board Executive Director Zachary Hands, State Board Deputy Director Hannah Oakley, and Assistant Attorney General Elliott Schoen. The Executive Session commenced at 12:33pm and ended at 2:00pm.

The State Board reviewed and approved one Opinion.

- *Brenda F. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – student transfer – Opinion No. 24-16. The Board affirmed the local board’s decision.
- *In the Matter of Request for Removal of Local Board Member Renee Dixon* - The State Board approved the factual and legal sufficiency of the alleged charges and referred the matter to the Office of Administrative Hearings for a contested case hearing.

FY 2026 Budget Preview. Assistant Superintendent Gunning presented confidential budget targets and confidential allocations to state aided organizations.

Personnel matter: The State Board discussed a personnel matter pertaining to the evaluation process of the State Superintendent.

The Board reviewed and approved its process for reviewing Departmental legislative proposals.

BRIEFING ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN EDUCATION

MSDE staff provided an overview of ongoing and future work related to AI, including what state, regional, and national groups MSDE is a part of as they develop statewide policies.

The Board had questions related to ensuring students are critical readers of what chatbots produce, what states are leading in this space and what their policies are, and how to put guardrails around students’ and teachers’ use of AI.

Mr. Pat Yongpradit from TeachAI shared that as of August 2024, 23 states have AI guidance for education. Mr. Yongpradit also recommends expanding the MSDE AI Committee into a statewide task force, establishing a Computer Science and AI coordinator position in MSDE, promoting AI literacy in curriculum and instruction, providing professional development for staff, and funding pilot programs. Mr. Yongpradit walked through an example case of Khanmigo to show what capabilities this AI program offers teachers.

Mr. Greer asked if states, districts, and procurement offices within those entities are nimble enough to identify and purchase high-quality AI systems. Mr. Yongpradit said the procurement systems will be critical to AI success. Mr. Paul asked about the best case scenario for AI in education. Mr. Yongpradit shared an example and said that the problem is when we substitute AI for teaching rather than having AI complement it. Mr. Gaddam asked about how we can support students' understanding and use of AI in a way that builds upon their knowledge sequentially and in age-appropriate manner.

REPORTS TO THE STATE BOARD FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION

Ms. McCusker introduced the process behind the development of the Board's legislative platform. Mr. Hands walked through the principles and policy statements, which are as follows: increase academic achievement, bolster investments in public education, preserve a politically independent state education governance, build the workforce at MSDE, reduce the creation of unfunded legislative mandates, resist curricular mandates, lead with equity, and prioritize fiscal accountability.

ACTION: Upon motion by Ms. McCusker, seconded by Dr. Goldson, the State Board voted to adopt the Board's 2025 legislative platform. (In Favor: 11, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0)

PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED LITERACY POLICY

- Michelle Corkadel (President, Maryland Association of Boards of Education) - concerns about retention and funding sources
- Ken Patterson - role of technology in supporting literacy
- Riya Gupta (Senior Policy Advocate, Strong Schools Maryland) - concerns about retention, family engagement, and funding
- Liz Zogby (Co-Chair, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition) - concerns about alternate assessment exemptions
- Donald J. (DJ) Bolger (Director, Maryland Initiative for Literacy and Equity (MILE)) - MILE's partnership
- Paul Lemle (President, Maryland State Education Association) - push back implementation until 2028-29 school year, concerns about retention policies
- Sharon Saroff - implementing early interventions before 3rd grade
- Leslie Margolis (Managing Attorney, Disability Rights Maryland) - concerns with good cause exemption criteria, alternate assessment exemptions
- Evelyn Chung (Montgomery County's Council of Parent Teacher Associations Vice President of Education) - concerns about Multilingual Learners, public data collection, and assessments
- Dr. Christopher Wooleyhand (Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals (MAESP) Executive Director) - concerns about assessment and Student Reading Improvement Plan

- Byron Johns (Co-Founder, Black and Brown Coalition for Educational Equity and Excellence; Chair, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)-MC Parents' Council) - requests more details on parent engagement and retention
- Shannon Reed
- Theresa Mitchell Dudley (Maryland State Council NAACP) - concerns about the number of educators required to implement this policy
- Michelle Davis (Education Consultant, ABCs for Life) - requests closer connection between SRIP and IEP
- Phelton Moss - urged Board and MSDE to meet implementation timeline
- Trish Brennan-Gac (MD READS) - concerns about funding
- Lisa Blautenberger

STATE SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Dr. Wright previewed two videos celebrating the first day of school.

She then shared about her recent meeting with Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM) on assessment and accountability task force and literacy policy.

Dr. Wright also shared an update on teacher collaborative time and LEAs' concerns that they may need to hire more teachers (Blueprint says 40% of day should be non-teaching). Dr. Wright briefed the Board on the in-depth discussions she had with three LEAs about their budgets and concerns about increasing costs outpacing the foundational funding formula. MSDE is also starting stakeholder advisory committees with member applications going live this week and is continuing work on graduation rate, assessment and accountability, and College and Career Readiness in advance of the legislative session.

Dr. Wright shared more about the renewed partnership with Taiwan education agency and thanked Dr. Chang for her partnership.

MSDE has selected a vendor for Kindergarten Readiness Assessment starting in school year 2025-26 and will be rolling out teacher training on its administration over the next few months.

STATE BOARD MEMBER COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

Ms. McCusker reported that the Education Policy Committee did not meet in August. Both Committees will meet in September.

FUTURE BOARD AGENDA ITEMS

None.

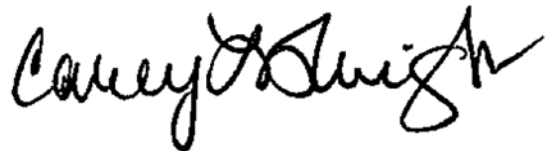
LEGAL OPINIONS AND ORDERS

Mr. Schoen announced the following opinions:

- *Brenda F. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – student transfer – Opinion No. 24-16
- *In the Matter of Request for Removal of Local Board Member Renee Dixon* - The State Board approved the factual and legal sufficiency of the alleged charges and referred the matter to the Office of Administrative Hearings for a contested case hearing.

Dr. Getty motioned to adjourn, and Mr. Greer seconded. With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 4:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.
Secretary/Treasurer

Date: September 24, 2024

The information included here provides a summary of the agenda items presented. The video recordings of the meetings are the official record and can be located at:

<https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Pages/Meetings-2024.aspx>

Meeting materials, Opinions, and Orders can be found at:

<https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Pages/default.aspx>

The next Maryland State Board of Education meeting will be held on **Tuesday, September 24, 2024.**

Appropriate accommodations for individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request. Eight business days' notice prior to the event is required. Please contact Charlene Necessary at (410) 767-0467 or TTY at (410) 333-6442 so arrangements can be made.