

MEETING OF THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes of the May 29, 2025 Meeting
200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

The Maryland State Board of Education met on May 29, 2025, at 9:00 am 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, Mr. Nick Greer, Mr. Kenny Clash, Dr. Kim Lewis, Ms. Xiomara Medina, Mr. Chet Chesterfield, Mr. Abhiram Gaddam, Ms. Chuen-Chin Bianca Chang, Dr. Joan Mele-McCarthy, Dr. Irma Johnson, Mr. Clarence Crawford, and Mr. Samir Paul were in attendance.

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

MEETING OPENING

Dr. Michael called the meeting to order at 9:11am and led the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Dunklow declared that a quorum was present.

Dr. Michael offered opening remarks that emphasized the importance of realizing excellence in public education, highlighting the Teachers of the Year, the forward-looking vision of the Department's Strategic Plan, and the progress underscored by the 2024-25 Annual Report. Dr. Michael then celebrated Dr. Mele-McCarthy's service as this is her final in-person Board meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Virtual

- Sharon Saroff

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of April 29, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- Personnel Actions
- Budget Adjustments, April 2025
- Allegany County Public Schools Waiver Request
- COMAR 09.37.01 Alternative Ways to Earn a High School Diploma (Permission to Adopt)

ACTION: Dr. Michael requested Board approval of the consent agenda. Ms. McCusker motioned, Mr. Chesterfield seconded. (In Favor: 14, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 0).

UPDATE FROM THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT (INFORMATION ONLY)

Dr. Wright highlighted her work this past month, including her school visits across the state, a convening of the Teachers of Promise Institute as well as the third School Leadership Training, her participation in the May Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) meeting where she highlighted this year's Pre-K Expansion Grant application cycle. Lastly, she celebrated MSDE staff who have worked for the agency for over 40 years.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) UPDATE - WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (WCPS)

Dr. Sovine of WCPS talked about their reading tutor apprenticeship program, which has 35 high school student tutors working with over 700 elementary students. Nearly all elementary students that worked with tutors saw growth in their reading over the school year. They plan to grow their tutor apprentices to 70 next school year, with half focusing on math.

Mr. Paul asked how WCPS is approaching recruiting more high school male students into teaching. Dr. Sovine said they are seeing more male students in the pipeline and that a few student graduates have joined WCPS staff as paraprofessionals or substitute teachers while they complete their four-year degree. Dr. Lewis shared that WCPS was her first school visit as a Board member and how impressed she was to see so many students interested in working in special education.

TEACHERS OF THE YEAR RECOGNITION

Dr. Michael and Dr. Wright highlighted the critical work that teachers do every single day on behalf of students. Below are the 2025-2026 Teachers of the Year:

- Allegany County Public Schools - Jeannette Milburn
- Anne Arundel County Public Schools - Jacqueline Sanderson
- Baltimore City Public Schools - Jevons Liu
- Baltimore County Public Schools - Brittany Jakubowski
- Calvert County Public Schools - William Voshell
- Caroline County Public Schools - Andrew Buffenmyer
- Carroll County Public Schools - Amy Glascock
- Cecil County Public Schools - Taylor Schafer
- Charles County Public Schools - Alison Cheney
- Dorchester County Public Schools - Tanya Travis
- Frederick County Public Schools - ALonna Soward
- Garrett County Public Schools - Laura Witt
- Harford County Public Schools - Shelby Hultquist
- Howard County Public Schools - Natalie Pretzello
- Kent County Public Schools - Cheryl Fracassi
- Montgomery County Public Schools - Megan Campbell
- Prince George's County Public Schools - Lafiya Tunstall
- Queen Anne's County Public Schools - Marcie Mamas
- Somerset County Public Schools - Kristen Bratcher

- St. Mary's County Public Schools - Tylita Butler
- Talbot County Public Schools - Lauren Rose
- Washington County Public Schools - Marjorie Chapman
- Wicomico County Public Schools - Emma Cohn Matthews
- Worcester County Public Schools - Phillip Cropper

BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS RECOGNITION

Dr. Wright introduced the four Maryland public schools that joined the prestigious group of National Blue Ribbon Schools:

- Chapel Hill Elementary School, Baltimore County Public Schools
Nancy Hill, Principal
- Worthington Elementary School, Howard County Public School System
Robert Bruce, Principal
- Bells Mill Elementary School, Montgomery County Public Schools
Dr. Stacy L. Smith, Principal
- Woodfield Elementary, Montgomery County Public Schools
Katherine Schwartz, Principal at time of nomination

JOINT IMPLEMENTATION POLICY #4: CAREER LADDER (ACTION)

Ms. Meadows of MSDE provided a status update on the Career Ladder. This legislative session, funding for collaborative planning was paused until FY29, though for FY26, funding at \$163 per pupil remains in place as a portion of the foundation per pupil allocation. In FY27 and FY28, additional funding is paused, although the foundation in these years will include the \$163 per pupil amount from FY26 and increase by the inflation factor. When implementation begins in FY29, school systems will receive \$334 per pupil for the program.

During this pause, however, the career ladder development and implementation do not pause. On July 1, 2025, LEAs must submit a plan for the Level 4 Teacher Leadership track, but they are not required to implement Level 4 roles during the 2025-2026 school year. The 8-year phase-in plan for collaborative time, Professor Distinguished role, School Leader Administrator track, Level 3 Assistant Principal, and the Peer Assistance and Review system are currently deferred.

Ms. Meadows then shared more about the structure of the Level 4 Pilot that will allow MSDE and AIB to see how participating districts manage implementation challenges. The pilot requires Level 4 Lead and Distinguished teachers to be a teacher or co-teacher for at least one course/subject for all marking periods, though teaching only up to an average of 50% of their time. Districts that choose to implement a pilot will receive funding for Level 4 teachers who meet the criteria established in the policy.

Ms. McCusker thanked the Department for making this a pilot year because this touches on so many complex school-based roles. Dr. Johnson asked if districts must choose from a set list of options for implementing the Level 4 Teacher pilot. Ms. Meadows said that because this is a

pilot, districts can choose to focus on one aspect of the Lead Teacher role as they continue to work towards full implementation. Mr. Greer asked how many districts would be interested in participating in this pilot and how to ensure that the learnings from the pilot can be replicated and implemented equitably across all schools. Ms. Meadows said many districts' budgets are already locked and so if they didn't budget for Level 4 teachers, they likely won't be able to participate. Further, she said that the AIB and MSDE staff have been working together to collect Level 4 teacher feedback to inform future policy, but that better understanding how this pilot will be equitably implemented would be a question for AIB, who will manage the governance of the pilot. Dr. Michael asked to reiterate why this policy needed to come now. Ms. Meadows said that pause in collaborative time is only temporary, so MSDE can't wait to implement the career ladder, iron out details, and understand what legislative changes, if any, may be needed in time for the resumption of collaborative time.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to grant permission to adopt the joint policy. Dr. Mele-McCarthy motioned, Mr. Paul seconded. (In Favor: 14, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 0)

STRATEGIC PLAN DRAFT OUTCOMES (INFORMATION ONLY)

Mr. Reese of MSDE provided an overview of the department's update to its Strategic Plan to reflect the aligned metrics adopted by the State Board; align to the five widely-used Blueprint pillars; anchor the Department's work in concrete, measurable goals; and ensure ease of understanding for all stakeholders by using plain language and a clear structure.

MSDE shared the structure of the updated plan, the development process so far, and the major priorities of the Department for the current school year. MSDE also presented the current draft list of 32 proposed Outcomes aligned with each Pillar.

Dr. Mele-McCarthy recommended MSDE change language in Pillar 4, which aims to decrease identification of students with disabilities. She worried that it sends the message not to identify students who may have a disability. Dr. Lewis agreed with Dr. Mele-McCarthy and instead should reorient around ensuring students with disabilities highly achieve. Mr. Reese concurred. Ms. Medina said the Plan's school counselor ratio metric should instead be about ensuring full-time counselors at school buildings rather than schools having multiple counselors a week, which can inhibit student relationships. Mr. Clash asked about the vision for incorporating innovation into our strategic plan. Ms. McCusker urged MSDE to ensure that these metrics are within our locus of control and highlighted the counselor ratio metric as an example because MSDE currently doesn't have the levers to improve that ratio. Mr. Chesterfield said that the chronic absenteeism metric might be too imprecise because it's also a responsibility of families and circumstances.

Dr. Johnson asked if the actual numbers and metrics are coming in the next layer of work. Dr. Wright said that's correct. Ms. Chang reiterated a need for baseline data and metrics so that the Board can monitor progress. Mr. Crawford said the power of this is in its use and

implementation. He suggested MSDE convene parents to inform how data can be presented to be useful and actionable. Dr. Michael requested that the next time this comes to the Board, MSDE include a plan about when this data will be compiled.

STATE BOARD ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 11:41 am, Dr. Michael called for a motion to adjourn to an Executive Session. Mr. Greer motioned, Dr. Mele-McCarthy seconded. (In Favor: 14, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 0)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to § 3-305(b)(1) and (7) of the General Provisions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon motion of Nick Greer and seconded by Joan Mele-McCarthy and with unanimous approval, the State Board of Education met in closed session on Thursday, May 29, 2025 in Conference Room #1, 8 th Floor, at the Nancy S. Grasmick Building. All board members were present. Also in attendance were State Superintendent Carey Wright, Executive Director Zachary Hands, Deputy Executive Director Hannah Oakley, and Assistant Attorneys General Alan Dunklow and Jackie LaFiandra. The Executive Session commenced at 12:22 p.m. and ended at 1:30 p.m.

The State Board reviewed and approved five Opinions and four Orders.

- *A.B. v. Montgomery County Board of Education – Opinion No. 25-19.* The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *Troy Brittingham v. Somerset County Board of Education – Opinion No. 25-20.* The Board remanded the matter to the local board.
- *E.C. and M.K. v. Montgomery County Board of Education (I) – Opinion No. 25-21.* The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *E.C. and M.K. v. Montgomery County Board of Education (II) – Opinion No. 25-22.* The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *J.D., et al. v. Anne Arundel County Board of Education – Opinion No. 25-23.* The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *Barry Lebowitz v. Montgomery County Board of Education – Order No. OR25-11.* The Board denied the motion for reconsideration.
- *Pamela Oliver v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners – Order No. OR25-12.* The Board dismissed the appeal for lack of jurisdiction.
- *Stephen Price v. Howard County Board of Education – Order No. 25-13.* The Board lifted the stay of the appeal.
- *C.S. v. Montgomery County Board of Education – Order No. 25-14.* The Board dismissed the appeal as moot.

In addition, Mr. Dunklow and Ms. La Fiandra provided an update on pending cases. Next, President Michael provided an informational briefing on his recent meetings with stakeholders. Finally, the State Board discussed the evaluation of the State Superintendent and Board Executive Director.

COMAR 13A.07.12 CRITERIA FOR DISQUALIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES (PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)

Ms. Meadows outlined changes to the regulations, which include the addition of certain sexual offenses as cause for disqualification as well as separating out resignation from allegations of student misconduct from termination as a result of substantiated student misconduct. Ms. McCusker said the Education Policy Committee unanimously recommended these move to be published.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to grant permission to publish the regulations. Ms. Medina motioned, Dr. Lewis seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

STATE BOARD RESOLUTION 25-01 ADOPTION OF GUIDANCE ON COMMENSURATE FUNDING FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS (ACTION)

Dr. Michael shared the history of charter school funding oversight, which began nearly 20 years ago, and hinged on interpreting “commensurate” funding as written in statute. In the Blueprint era, weaving minimum school funding with “commensurate” required further clarification. The resolution introduced today does not make new policy but rather underscores the Superintendent’s existing guidance.

Ms. McCusker asked for further clarity in the Department’s forthcoming regulations on what services can be negotiated between charter schools and districts. Dr. Johnson asked if there has been any analysis on the impact of charter school funding on public schools. Mr. Greer echoed Ms. McCusker’s request, particularly around the debt service deduction. Dr. Johnson asked for further consideration on the impact on districts with lots of charters compared to those with much fewer charters. Dr. Michael said the “commensurate” funding law did not necessarily consider districts like Baltimore City which have almost 20% of schools as charter schools.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to adopt the resolution. There was discussion in the first vote about abstaining, in which Dr. Michael encouraged Board members to vote up or down on the resolution. Ms. McCusker clarified that this resolution just reiterates the Board decision from last winter as well as Dr. Wright’s previous guidance on the issue. Mr. Crawford motioned, Dr. Lewis seconded. (In Favor: 13 , Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

KINDERGARTEN READINESS ASSESSMENT (KRA) UPDATE (INFORMATION ONLY)

Mr. Guy of MSDE provided an overview of the new Kindergarten Readiness Assessment for math, literacy, and social emotional development. This includes an optional assessment for public and private pre-K providers to use as well as an optional progress monitoring feature that Kindergarten teachers can utilize throughout the school year. Professional learning for teachers has been ongoing, and MSDE will hold formal training in August. The KRA will be administered through early October, and 45 days after the end date, public reporting of results will be available. However, teachers will get student data in real time. This KRA vendor also provides a literacy screener that aligns with the *Ready to Read Act* requirements.

Mr. Greer asked what it would take for childcare providers to be able to utilize this program. Mr. Guy said they are all already able to use this assessment. Dr. Michael asked how the ELA and KRA assessments are aligned. Mr. Guy said that both ELA and KRA are from the same vendor and vendor program, which helps with alignment. Ms. Oliver of MSDE said that the early literacy portion of each assessment is the same across both. Mr. Greer urged the Department to think about looping in pediatricians in assessing students. Ms. McCusker asked how students and teachers will be able to access KRA. Ms. Oliver said that each student will have a login, and many districts already utilize single sign-on technology. Ms. Chang asked about the length of time it takes students to be assessed. Ms. Oliver of MSDE said it takes about 10 minutes. Dr. Johnson asked if there were paper versions for students that may require it. Ms. Oliver said they worked closely with the Special Education Branch to develop those resources. Dr. Lewis asked if the Department will collect data on students requiring accommodations, which it plans to. Ms. Chang asked about the scientific basis for the social emotional assessment. Mr. Guy said that it should be coupled with the observational tool and to ensure that a student has known their teacher for at least 30 days before being assessed. Dr. Michael asked for a regulations clean-up on KRA administration timeline to reflect current practice.

STATE BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Ms. McCusker announced the next Education Policy Committee will be held on June 12th at 4 pm, and Mr. Crawford announced that the Education Transformation and Finance Committee will be held on June 10th at 4 pm.

LEGAL OPINIONS AND ORDERS

Mr. Schoen announced the following opinions and orders:

- *A.B. v. Montgomery County Board of Education – Opinion No. 25-19.* The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *Troy Brittingham v. Somerset County Board of Education – Opinion No. 25-20.* The Board remanded the matter to the local board.
- *E.C. and M.K. v. Montgomery County Board of Education (I) – Opinion No. 25-21.* The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
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- *C.S. v. Montgomery County Board of Education – Order No. 25-14.* The Board dismissed the appeal as moot.

Mr. Chesterfield motioned to adjourn, seconded by Dr. Mele-McCarthy. With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 2:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carey M. Wright". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Carey" being more legible than the last name "Wright".

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

Date: June 24, 2025

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://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Pages/Meetings-2025.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, June 24, 2025.**

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.