

THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes of the July 23, 2024 Meeting
200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

The Maryland State Board of Education met on July 23, 2024 at 9:02am in the State Board room located within the Maryland State Department of Education.

The following Board members were present in the Board room:

Mr. Clarence Crawford (Board President), Dr. Joshua Michael (Board Vice President), Ms. Rachel McCusker, Ms. Chuen-Chin Bianca Chang, Mr. Nick Greer, Dr. Susan Getty, Mr. Abhiram Gaddam, Dr. Joan Mele-McCarthy, Mr. Samir Paul, Dr. Irma Johnson, and Dr. Monica Goldson 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 Crawford called the meeting to order at 8:59am and led the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Schoen declared that a quorum was present. President Crawford welcomed Mr. Abhiram Gaddam as the new student member of the State Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Diane Roberts – Blueprint Sustainability
2. Dr. Vermelle Greene – Differentiated Instruction
3. Olga Lloyd – Increase Success of African American Boys
4. Brandon Cogdell – Increasing Efforts to Impact the Achievement of African American Boys
5. Ebony Cogdell – Increasing Efforts to Impact the Achievement of African American Boys
6. Dr. Daryl Howard – Status of AAEEBB Initiative
7. Jason Ray - Disproportionality for Black Boys
8. Dr. Christopher Wooleyhand – MSDE Draft Literacy Policy

NEW BUSINESS

- Approval of the Consent Agenda
 - Approval of the June 25, 2024 Meeting Minutes
 - Personnel Actions
 - Budget Adjustments, June 2024

ACTION: The State Board granted approval by unanimous consent.

EXECUTIVE SESSION I

Pursuant to § 3-305(b)(7) of the General Provisions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon motion of Dr. Mele-McCarthy seconded by Dr. Johnson and with unanimous approval, the Maryland State Board of Education met in closed session on Tuesday, July 23, 2024, in Conference Room #6, 8th Floor, at the Nancy S. Grasmick Building. All board members were present. Also in attendance were State Superintendent Dr. Carey Wright, State Board Executive Director Zachary Hands and Assistant Attorney General Elliott Schoen. The Executive Session commenced at 9:35AM and ended at 10:00AM.

The Board conducted an administrative function and nominated candidates for board leadership and discussed elections for President and Vice President.

ELECTION AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW OFFICERS

Upon reconvening, Dr. Mele-McCarthy conducted the voting process for the election of State Board officers. The State Board unanimously elected Dr. Joshua Michael as President of the State Board and unanimously elected Dr. Monica Goldson as Vice President of the State Board.

Dr. Michael and Dr. Goldson made introductory remarks.

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING CLARENCE C. CRAWFORD AS PRESIDENT EMERITUS OF THE STATE BOARD

Without objection, Dr. Michael requested that the State Board amend the agenda to add Resolution 24-02, designating Former State Board President Clarence C. Crawford as President Emeritus of the State Board.

Mr. Hands read the resolution and several Board members made comments thanking Mr. Crawford for his years of service as Board President.

ACTION: Upon motion by Dr. Mele-McCarthy, seconded by Dr. Goldson, the State Board voted to adopt Resolution 24-02. (In Favor: 10, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 1)

BOARD RECOGNITION

Dr. Michael welcomed outgoing President of the Maryland State Educators Association (MSEA), Ms. Cheryl Bost and shared remarks thanking her for her service to the students and teacher leaders in Maryland during her six years at MSEA President.

Ms. Bost joined the State Board and made remarks about the progress made with the State Board over the years, including the development of the teacher member role on the State Board. She thanked the Board for their recognition and joined members for a photo where she was presented with a citation for her service from the State Board and the State Superintendent.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SESSION: MARYLAND READS AND THE READING LEAGUE

Ms. Trish Brennan Gac from Maryland READS provided the State Board with some background on the organization, including their founding and mission to improve the effectiveness of reading instruction. She reviewed the organization's approach to building systems of support to close the literacy gap, including improving reading instruction through the Science of Reading, developing thriving reading ecosystems, and addressing barriers to reading proficiency.

She also spoke about efforts Maryland READS had made to endorse the State Board's reading resolution from earlier in the year and to gather feedback on the draft literacy plan before the Board from listening session in the state. She concluded with opportunities for MSDE and the State Board to work with Maryland READS on their approach to reading.

Ms. Susan White from the Reading League gave the State Board an overview of their organization and the work they have done to promote the Science of Reading and implementation of the Ready to Read Act. She also spoke about collaborative efforts with the Maryland Initiative for Literacy & Equity (MILE), Loyola University Maryland, and MSDE on reading events. She also shared a series of resources for Board members to review related to the Science of Reading and improving literacy.

DRAFT LITERACY POLICY REVIEW

Dr. Deann Collins and Dr. Tenette Smith reviewed the January 2024 State Board Resolution 24-01 for improving literacy outcomes in Maryland. This resolution tasked the State Superintendent with drafting a comprehensive literacy policy aligned with the Science of Reading for the State Board's review. They outlined that the proposed policy before the State Board aims to clarify and further develop rigorous requirements, some of which are already embedded in state law, such as the Ready to Read Act and § 7-202 of Maryland's Education Code, which set minimum levels of reading ability.

They also highlighted some statistics that 88% of students who failed to earn a diploma were struggling readers in third grade and research suggesting that two-thirds of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of 4th grade will end up incarcerated or on welfare. Maryland currently ranks 41st in the nation on 4th grade reading National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) scores.

Dr. Smith and Dr. Collins outlined the four major components of the draft comprehensive literacy policy: Supports for Teachers and Policy, Assessment and Parent Notification, Instruction and Intervention, and Retention and Intervention. They discussed MSDE's collection of feedback from the public and stakeholders. As of July 12th, 583 individuals had provided feedback on the draft literacy policy. Concerns and considerations centered on staffing, concerns about student retention, parental involvement, and issues of funding.

Dr. Smith and Dr. Collins presented some of the research related to efficacy of student retention policies in other states and school systems around the country with some research showing improved academic outcomes and others provided mixed results. They concluded by discussing next steps of continuing to compile feedback to further review and revise the policy and laid out a timeline for it to return to the State Board.

Dr. Michael noted that the State Board is going to be deliberative on this matter and will not be voting on any final adoption prior to the September State Board meeting. Dr. Goldson reiterated that it is important to highlight the ways that the public can provide feedback on the policy.

Dr. Johnson asked if an evaluation cycle of the policy was embedded in the content. Dr. Smith noted that this will be included as a part of implementation guidance documents provided by MSDE.

Ms. McCusker made comments noting that MSDE should be certain to recommend materials and assessments that are user-friendly, and that professional development is in place to guide educators, and to ensure that we are helping teachers build the supports in the policy into master scheduling. She provided additional comments on the volume of students that would be impacted by a potential retention policy and asked about a timeline for getting the supports in place to address this.

Mr. Greer stated a concern that those students most impacted by the retention policy would be Black and Brown students and that it is critical to not hold students accountable to the state's adults. Mr. Greer also noted that parents and families need to be engaged earlier in the process and provided with clear and practicable guidance and resources. He also shared some concerns about the retention aspect of the proposed literacy policy.

Mr. Paul asked about reading screening instruments and processes that are already in place and asked the MSDE team what the national landscape looks like in terms of efficacy of retention policies.

Dr. Goldson noted that it would be helpful to have a breakdown of the reading screening instruments by each local school system and the frequency of the use of each screener, and whether students are being tested again or if it is just students who are low achieving.

Dr. Mele-McCarthy expressed concerns with the retention portion of the literacy policy and the need to further review the research that demonstrates the efficacy of grade retention. She shared with the Board that she is not ready to support a retention policy at this time. She also noted that quality guidance will be necessary to implement the multi-tiered system of support pillar of the proposed policy.

Mr. Crawford raised an issue about the capacity of MSDE to fulfill these commitments and whether we may need to revisit staffing to meet that challenge.

Dr. Getty shared concerns about the retention policy and that it is not considered it best practice in the field. She also shared concerns about affordability for local school systems and the availability of staff to provide the support necessary to carry out the retention aspect of the literacy policy. She further offered that retention policies fall solely on the student and not on school leadership and parents.

Dr. Johnson asked how the literacy plan ensures instruction in digital print.

Mr. Gaddam expressed concerns about the proposed retention policy and shared skepticism of the research supporting a retention policy. He also spoke about mental health impacts on students who are retained in a current grade and that it is always going to be difficult to make up the gap in the year that they missed.

Ms. Chang spoke about the social-emotional impact of the proposed retention aspect of the draft literacy policy.

Dr. Michael offered comments on ensuring that our investments in education are hitting the core work of our schools, like improving literacy proficiency. He also shared that we do not get the information we need on how students are doing until it is too late and asked how we can leverage earlier measures to intervene.

NATIONAL CIVICS BEE FINALISTS

Ms. Whitney Harmel from the Maryland Chamber of Commerce provided background on the National Civics Bee and the finalists in attendance. She introduced the students and invited them to read their winning essays. Gianna San Juan, Meera Datta, and Gavin Gracey were all recognized by the State Board and presented with citations from the State Board and MSDE.

STATE SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Dr. Wright welcomed the new student member of the State Board. She provided an update on the implementation of the ENOUGH Act, Governor Moore's initiative to end childhood poverty. She encouraged school systems to apply for grants through the program that aim to promote social-emotional wellbeing, reduce food insecurity, combat youth homelessness, expand access to health services, and improve economic outcomes.

Dr. Wright discussed the work of the Special Education Workgroup. The Workgroup is finalizing its fall meeting schedule and is working to finalize a series of recommendations with a final report coming to the State Board in December.

Dr. Wright shared information on the formation of the Educate to Stop the Hate Committee, which is charged with reviewing social studies curriculum through a lens of diversity and equity.

She provided an update on the work of the Department surrounding math policy and how they are reviewing the practice of math instruction around the state and the regulations that are currently in place. Recommendations around a math policy will be coming to the State Board in the coming months.

Dr. Wright shared some of her, and the MSDE team's, recent media appearances and attendance at various education conferences around the state and country. Dr. Wright welcomed Dr. Mark Bedell to offer comments on behalf of the local superintendents.

REPORTS TO THE STATE BOARD FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION

EdTPA and PPAT ASSESSMENTS

Ms. Kelly Meadows outlined the proposal from MSDE to adopt a phase-in plan to set passing scores for the edTPA and PPAT to allow for a more robust data set of pass rates using Maryland test-taker data. She explored how this plan will allow teacher preparation programs to better understand how to support teacher candidates and shift practices as appropriate while holding candidates harmless during the first required year of implementation. MSDE will review Maryland first-time pass rates at the end of the 2025-2026 assessment submission window, consult with the Technical Advisory Committee, and recommend passing scores to the State Board for adoption at that time.

ACTION: Upon motion by Dr. Mele-McCarthy, seconded by Ms. McCusker, the State Board voted to adopt a phase-in plan to set passing scores for the edTPA and PPAT (In Favor: 11, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0).

PRAXIS CORE MATH SUBTEST (PERMISSION TO DISCONTINUE)

Ms. Meadows outlined MSDE's request for the State Board to discontinue the Praxis Core Math Subtest as a requirement for initial teacher licensure. The Praxis Core Reading and Writing Subtests will remain a requirement for those teacher candidates who demonstrate basic literacy skills mastery by passing an assessment.

ACTION: Upon motion by Dr. Getty, seconded by Ms. McCusker, the State Board voted to discontinue the Praxis Core Math Subtest as a requirement for initial teacher licensure (In Favor: 11, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0).

COMAR 13A.08.01.17 SCHOOL USE OF REPORTABLE OFFENSES AND COMAR 13A.07.02.01 CONTRACTS (PERMISSION TO ADOPT)

ACTION: Upon motion by Dr. Goldson, seconded by Dr. Getty, the State Board granted permission to adopt regulation under COMAR 13A.08.01.17 School Use of Reportable Offenses and COMAR 13A.07.02.01 Contracts (In Favor: 11, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to § 3-305(b)(1) and (7) of the General Provisions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon motion of Ms. Chang and seconded by Mr. Greer and with unanimous approval, the State Board of Education met in closed session on Tuesday, July 23, 2024, in Conference Room #6, 8th Floor, at the Nancy S. Grasmick Building. All board members were present.

Also in attendance were State Superintendent Dr. Carey Wright, Executive Director of the State Board Zachary Hands, Assistant Attorneys General Elliott Schoen and Jackie LaFiandra, MSDE Chief of Staff Alex Reese, Deputy State Superintendent Krishnanda Tallur, and Assistant State Superintendent Donna Gunning. The Executive Session commenced at 2:15 p.m. and ended at 3:25 p.m.

- Jessica B. v. Carroll County Board of Education – instructional material policy – Order No. OR 24-13. The Board denied the appeal.
- Melvin Holmes, Jr. v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners - untimeliness– Order No. OR24-14. The Board dismissed the appeal.
- In the Matter of Request for Removal of Local Board Member Shayla Adams-Stafford – request for removal of local board member - Order No. OR24-15. The Board dismissed the request for removal.
- In the Matter of Request for Removal of Local Board Member Judy Mickens-Murray – request for removal of local board member – Order No. OR24-16. The Board dismissed the request for removal.
- In the Matter of Request for Removal of Local Board Member David Murray - request for removal of local board member – Order No. OR24-17. The Board dismissed the request for removal.

The Board set a date for the upcoming Board Retreat.

Deputy Superintendent Tullar shared update and analysis of confidential budget projections. Assistant Superintendent Gunning shared confidential projected costs for the future.

Mr. Hands reviewed calendar dates for 2025 Board meetings with the Board.

STATE BOARD MEMBER COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

Dr. Michael announced that all committee assignments for Board members would remain the same. He also announced that President Emeritus Clarence Crawford would be serving as the new chair of the Education Transformation and Finance Committee, and that Rachel McCusker would continue to serve as Chair of the Education Policy Committee.

Ms. McCusker reported that the Education Policy Committee did not meet in May and is still planning its upcoming schedule.

2025 STATE BOARD MEETING DATES

ACTION: Upon motion by Dr. Mele-McCarthy, seconded by Ms. Chang, the State Board adopted the 2025 Board meeting dates. (In Favor: 10, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0).

FUTURE BOARD AGENDA ITEMS

None.

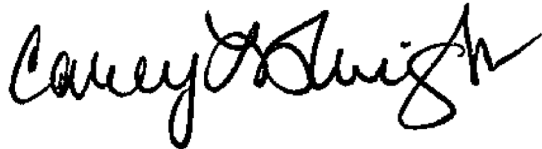
LEGAL OPINIONS AND ORDERS

Mr. Schoen announced the following opinions:

- *Jessica B. v. Carroll County Board of Education* – instructional material policy – Order No. OR 24-13
- *Melvin Holmes, Jr. v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners* - untimeliness- Order No. OR24-14
- *In the Matter of Request for Removal of Local Board Member Shayla Adams-Stafford* – request for removal of local board member - Order No. OR24-15
- *In the Matter of Request for Removal of Local Board Member Judy Mickens-Murray* – request for removal of local board member – Order No. OR24-16
- *In the Matter of Request for Removal of Local Board Member David Murray* - request for removal of local board member – Order No. OR24-17

With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 3:36pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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

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

Date: August 27, 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, August 27, 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.