

**JOINT MEETING OF THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION WITH THE  
ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION BOARD  
Minutes of the January 28, 2025 Meeting  
200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201**

The Maryland State Board of Education met on January 28, 2025, at 9:02 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. Clarence Crawford, Mr. Nick Greer, Dr. Joan Mele-McCarthy (virtual), Mr. Samir Paul, Mr. Kenny Clash, Dr. Kim Lewis, Ms. Xiomara Medina, Mr. Chet Chesterfield, and Dr. Irma Johnson were in attendance. Mr. Abhiram Gaddam was not present, and Ms. Chuen-Chin Bianca Chang attended virtually.

All members of the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) were present.

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 offered opening remarks that emphasized the importance of protecting the constitutional right of immigrant students and families to access public education.

Chair Leggett reiterated Dr. Michael's points and introduced the AIB's members. He then discussed the role and work of the AIB. Dr. Kirwan and Chair Leggett also discussed the Governor's proposed changes to the Blueprint and the teacher shortage that is impacting the implementation of collaborative time.

Dr. Michael provided an overview of the status and progress of workstreams across each Blueprint Pillar.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

1. Riya Gupta - Blueprint for Maryland's Future
2. Hillary Roberts-King - Pre-K Expansion
3. Olutunde Clarke - Pre-K Expansion
4. India Ivery - Pre-K Expansion
5. Paul Lemle - Assessment and Accountability Framework
6. Sean Johnson - Blueprint Funding Impact

7. Monica M. Wiedel-Lubinski - Drafted regulations for outdoor preschool licensing with MSDE's OCC
8. Sharon Saroff - Special Education
9. Buzzy Hettleman - Proposed budget cuts to blueprint funding
10. Alicia Renee - Special Education & PGCPS FY26 Budget

#### **UPDATE FROM THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT AND AIB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (INFORMATION ONLY)**

Rachel Hise provided an update on local education agencies' (LEA) Blueprint Implementation Plans. The AIB approved 20 plans unconditionally and three conditional approvals. At the next AIB meeting the Board plans to approve the remaining district plan. AIB and MSDE are now discussing progress monitoring of LEAs' implementation. Ms. Hise also shared more information about the Career Ladder delay for the administrator track and Level 4 Teacher Leadership. Current school administrators who do not have National Board Certificate (NBC) will be grandfathered into the administrator track, and MSDE and AIB will share additional guidance to this effect in the coming weeks.

Dr. Wright discussed the launch of the no-cost School Leadership Training for principals and other school-based leaders; an update on the timeline for the Standards and Framework Review Committees' work; the impending release of the final draft of the new assessment vendor Request for Proposals (RFP); the introduction of the new statewide math policy; and new funding from the Walton Foundation and a new partnership with Instructional Partners to support the rollout of science of reading and the new math policy. Lastly, she announced the partnership with AttendanceWorks to address chronic absenteeism as part of a statewide task force.

Chair Leggett responded to Dr. Wright's update by emphasizing the need for collaborative time reform and addressing the teacher shortage.

#### **JOINT POLICY ON BLUEPRINT PRE-K IMPLEMENTATION (ACTION)**

Dr. Wright shared an overview of Pre-K enrollment counts in public and private settings. Ms. Hise then outlined the joint implementation policy, which includes giving LEAs discretion in accepting family shares, prioritizing all Tier 1 four-year olds in public settings to allow private providers, including Head Start, to serve Tier 1 three-year olds and Tier 2 and 3 three- and four-year olds.

Mr. Manko moved to suggest an amendment to add to the policy statements in the joint document to emphasize that private providers and Head Start providers may focus on serving Tier 1 three-year olds and Tier 2 and 3 three- and four-year olds while continuing to serve Tier 1 four-year olds. AIB member Stapleton suggested that language for public providers should mirror that amended language for private providers. They agreed to change the language to read as follows: "Private providers may choose to serve Tier I four-year-olds. Public providers may

choose to serve Tier II and III four-year-olds. Those providers that serve Tier II and III four-year-olds may choose to collect the family share, but are not required to do so.”

MSDE staff asked if this language would apply only to Blueprint formula funds. Ms. Hise said this likely would also apply to Pre-K Expansion Grant funds. AIB members unanimously approved the amendment.

Mr. Greer asked how this proposal would impact income diversity in Pre-K classrooms. Dr. Wright said that this policy focuses on ensuring all Tier 1 four-year-olds are served. Mr. Greer said that he just wanted to make sure that this policy wouldn't have a disincentive for ensuring Tiers 1, 2, and 3 students are still in classrooms together.

Dr. Mele-McCarthy asked about the funding stream for this. Ms. Hise said there are two funding streams - Pre-K Expansion grant, administered by MSDE, for Tier 1 students in public and private settings and the Blueprint formula grant. Expansion Grant funding has been used to expand programs into full-day programs. The Blueprint formula money is a per-pupil amount for every student enrolled in publicly funded pre-K. When providers receive the Expansion Grant, they are not yet receiving Blueprint formula funding, which kicks in for providers in the second year. As providers move into Blueprint funding, that frees up more Expansion Grant money for additional slots.

MSBE ACTION: Dr. Michael requested Board approval. Dr. Lewis motioned, Ms. McCusker seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

### **CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM (INFORMATION ONLY)**

Mr. Geoff Sanderson and Ms. Mary Gable of MSDE provided an update on the state's 2023-24 chronic absenteeism data. Currently, the state's goal is to cut chronic absenteeism to 15%. For the 2023-24 school year, rates dropped from 29.8% to 26.7%. Student groups with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism include Black students, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners. MSDE staff also shared each LEA's chronic absenteeism data from 2023-24. Ms. Gable shared more about the Chronic Absenteeism Task Force MSDE is working with AttendanceWorks to assemble.

Dr. Kirwan of the AIB asked how Maryland compares to other states. Mr. Sanderson said he'd get back to the Boards. Dr. Kirwan then asked about school employees who reach out to families when a student has been absent. Ms. Gable said the Pupil Personnel Workers in schools are those that handle that type of outreach. Mr. Crawford asked about research on the connection between student achievement levels and propensity for chronic absenteeism. Dr. Johnson asked why the Department of Social Services was not represented on the Task Force. Ms. Gable thanked her for that recommendation. Ms. Medina asked about targeted interventions based on students' ages. Mr. Paul asked what the dominant causes of chronic absenteeism were. Ms. Gable said that is what the task force is focused on understanding better. Dr. Lynch of the AIB

emphasized the importance of creating safe and supportive school communities to address chronic absenteeism. Mr. Manko of the AIB asked if there was a role for Expert Review Teams to support schools as they address chronic absenteeism.

### **NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION (NBC) UPDATE (INFORMATION ONLY)**

Ms. Kelly Meadows and Mr. Sanderson provided the update on NBC teachers, whose numbers across the state have increased by 40% since October 2023 and now comprise 3% of the total workforce. The majority of NBC holders are white and do not work in community or low-performing schools.

Dr. Kirwan of the AIB asked about any efforts to increase enrollment of teachers of color in NBC. Ms. Meadows said that as part of LEAs' implementation plans they each had to address how they plan to increase enrollment of teachers of color. Dr. Lynch of the AIB asked if this data meant that we should reexamine the incentive structures. Dr. Johnson asked about the tension of supporting NBC teachers while also ensuring conditionally licensed teachers can become fully licensed. Mr. Robinson of AIB asked about what statewide conversations or surveys are in the field to better understand why NBC teachers are not going to community or low-performing schools. Ms. Meadows said she had not conducted such a survey. Mr. Greer asked about racial and demographic make-up of the 40% increase. Ms. Meadows said she'd get that data. Dr. Doss of the AIB asked if there were any LEAs that were performing better on recruiting teachers of color into NBC and if there were any sharing of best practices across districts. Ms. Meadows said that each LEA has NBC coordinators, and MSDE conducts Professional Learning Committees (PLCs) and an annual conference. Mr. Manko of AIB asked if the salary supplement was drawing more out of state teachers here. Ms. Meadows wasn't sure if they could parse that out yet. Dr. Mele-McCarthy expressed her concerns about the NBC alignment with the science of reading.

### **TEACHER RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND RETENTION (INFORMATION ONLY)**

Ms. Hise and MSDE's Mr. Reese provided an update on the collaborative time policy proposal and the data on conditionally licensed teachers and the state's teacher shortage. Mr. Reese highlighted the ongoing work and proposals related to teacher development and retention, including the Collaborative Time Innovation grant proposal included in the Governor's bill this session, statewide instructional coaches, and school leader development.

Dr. Mele-McCarthy added that for the state to get and retain fully licensed special education teachers is a three year process for those teachers due to federal law. Mr. Robinson of the AIB said we must consider our school environment if we want to retain teachers for the long term. Dr. Johnson said there is a very negative perception of the teaching profession, and the state must build campaigns to address that. Mr. Kirwan noted that with our \$60,000 salary floor for teachers, there are pieces that Maryland is getting right, and that the state needs to capitalize on those. AIB member Lynch said that she's heard from folks that it's really hard to recruit students of color into the system that has not treated them well. She also said that the Collaborative Time Innovation grants are an opportunity for districts to explore time outside of the school day or

extending teachers' school day or year. Dr. Lynch then highlighted the focus on conditionally licensed teachers and how we can encourage those folks to come into the classroom and provide them immediate support. Mr. Greer asked about an update on the P-20 Collaborative work that was happening around recruitment and retention. Mr. Reese said he would follow up offline to share more. Mr. Manko emphasized the retention side of the equation and exploring more at the school-level those who are retaining teachers and those that are churning through teachers. Mr. Crawford said the key here is strong leadership and supporting and empowering school leaders. Ms. Chang encouraged us to look to other states' practices on recruiting and retaining diverse teachers.

### **LEA BLUEPRINT IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS MONITORING (INFORMATION ONLY)**

AIB's Emma Pellerin and MSDE's Phil Lasser covered the timelines for Phase 1 and 2 of LEA Blueprint Implementation Plan submissions. Phase 2 plan submission begins in 2027, and in the interim, MSDE and AIB will hold monitoring conferences with LEAs to track and support implementation.

Mr Greer reiterated his support for this process. Dr. Kirwan of the AIB asked if our teacher preparation programs are implementing science of reading instruction for teachers. Dr. Lynch of the AIB responded that the University system of Maryland does incorporate science of reading for their students directly and through partnerships with other entities. Dr. Lynch said that they hear from their students wanting more opportunities for practice with science of reading and higher-quality internship opportunities with mentorship and professional development to take what they're learning into the classroom setting. Dr. Lynch also encouraged the group to find where this data already exists that we can pull in in different ways so we're not asking for additional reports from LEAs. Dr. Doss of the AIB asked if Superintendents would be involved in the development of the LEA progress monitoring conferences.

Lastly, Dr. Wright shared an update on the federal funding pause announced by the Trump administration. Not including the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS), MSDE currently has approximately 390 staff members that are paid in part with federal funds.

### **STATE BOARD ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION/AIB ADJOURNS**

At 12:00pm, Dr. Michael called for a motion to adjourn to an Executive Session. Ms. McCusker motioned, Dr. Mele-McCarthy seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Pursuant to § 3-305(b)(7) and (13) of the General Provisions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon motion of Ms. McCusker and seconded by Dr. Mele-McCarthy and with unanimous approval, the State Board of Education met in closed session on Tuesday, January 28, 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, and Assistant Attorneys

General Elliott Schoen and Jackie LaFiandra. The Executive Session commenced at 12:45 p.m. and ended at 2:30 p.m.

Dr. Wright shared an administrative update with the State Board.

The State Board reviewed and approved seven Opinions and two Orders.

- *B.L. and W.L. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-01. The Board remanded the matter to the local board for further proceedings.
- *C.P. v. Queen Anne’s County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-02. The Board affirmed the local board’s decision denying Appellant’s request for temporary relocation of bus stop.
- *E.D. and M.D. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-03. The Board affirmed the local board’s decision denying early kindergarten entry for Appellants’ daughter.
- *K.B. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-04. The Board affirmed the local board’s decision denying Appellant’s Complaint concerning school construction safety issues.
- *K.E. and G.E. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-05. The Board affirmed the local board’s decision denying Appellants’ Change of School Assignment (“COSA”) appeal.
- *K.S. v. Baltimore County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-06. The Board affirmed the local board’s decision of expulsion but overturned the length of the removal.
- *Karl Perry, et al. v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners* – Opinion No. 25-07. The Board dismissed the claims for lack of jurisdiction and remanded the case to be resolved through binding arbitration.
- *E.B. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR25-01. The Board affirmed the local board’s decision and dismissed the appeal for untimeliness.
- *Margaret Wilson v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR25-02. The Board dismissed the appeal for lack of jurisdiction.

Dr. Michael then provided several general updates to the Board.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Approval of the Consent Agenda
  - Approval of December 3, 2024 Meeting Minutes
  - Personnel Actions
  - Budget Adjustments, December 2024
  - COMAR 13A.06.10 Purple Star Schools (Adopt)
  - COMAR 13A.07.06.02 and .08 Definitions and Program Approval Requirements (Adopt)
  - COMAR 13A.12.02.03 Pathways to Teacher Licensure (Adopt)
  - COMAR 13A.08.01.17 Reportable Offenses (Adopt)
  - COMAR 13A.12 Educator Licensure (Adopt)

- COMAR 13A.14.15 Outdoor, Nature-Based Child Care License Pilot Program (Adopt)
- Change in July 2025 State Board Meeting Date to July 29, 2025
- Garrett County Public Schools Waiver Request
- Queen Anne’s County Public Schools Waiver Request
- Calendar Modifications – Granting Authority to State Superintendent
- Additions to Section III.A.4.I Meeting Procedures of the State Board Governance Manual

ACTION: Dr. Michael requested Board approval of the consent agenda. Mr. Paul motioned, Dr. Goldson seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

Dr. Mele-McCarthy removed the following from the consent agenda: COMAR 13A.07.08 Incentive Program for Certification by the National Board (Adopt). Dr. Mele-McCarthy is concerned there is not a strong focus on science of reading in the NBC standards. Dr. Smith of MSDE asked the NBC organization to correct this issue, and they did not. Mr. Crawford also recalled that NBC did not address the requested changes and therefore does not support this regulation. Ms. McCusker said that if we pull this regulation, and the NBC is the gateway to rise up in the Career Ladder, teachers will be penalized. Dr. Wright said the Department can send a letter to NBC.

ACTION: Dr. Michael requested Board approval of the Incentive Program regulations . Ms. McCusker motioned, Dr. Goldson seconded. (In Favor: 9, Opposed: 3, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

**MATH POLICY (INFORMATION ONLY)**

Dr. Smith and Lyndsey Brightful of MSDE provided an overview of the Department’s new policy. Dr. Michael then shared next steps for this policy.

Mr. Paul appreciated the Department’s nuanced approach to acceleration. Ms. Medina asked to expand family engagement to ensure they understand the concepts in addition to understanding the process and progression. Ms. McCusker asked about implementation timelines and ensuring teachers have enough time to receive training and balance workload. MSDE will roll out math first for grades 3-8 and then roll out to older grades. Ms. McCusker asked if the foundation funding will be sufficient to support both math and literacy initiatives. Mr. Greer asked about the Accelerated Pathways Taskforce as a gatekeeping force rather than a launchpad for students and asked for a report back to the Board on how that Task Force is working. Mr. Paul asked about how MSDE will support high-quality instructional materials and teacher training. Dr. Goldson asked about the implications for junior and senior year of high school after they have taken Integrated Algebra I & II. Dr. Mele-McCarthy asked about the inclusion of students with disabilities in the policy.

**PRE-K SLIDING SCALE (ACTION)**

Dr. Cook shared an overview of the Pre-K Sliding Scale, which will now include 5 family income levels. There were no questions from the Board.

ACTION: Dr. Michael requested Board approval of the Pre-K Sliding Scale . Dr. Goldson motioned, Mr. Paul seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

**GOVERNOR'S FY 2026 BUDGET REVIEW AND 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE  
(INFORMATION ONLY – POTENTIAL ACTION ON LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS)**

Mr. Reese and Ms. Donna Gunning of MSDE provided the legislative update, an overview of the Governor's *Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act*, and the FY26 Budget. Board members asked if the 6.1% increase in FY26 for public education includes all education funding or just Blueprint money. The increase includes all state education funding.

**COMAR 13A.07.01 INDUCTION (ACTION – PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)**

Ms. Meadows shared an overview of the Teacher Induction workgroup process that ultimately provided recommendations for the Department to use to develop the induction program regulations. Ms. McCusker shared that the Education Policy Committee did request a slight modification to the regulations, which was made, around requiring programs that do not provide the mandated 180 minutes of monthly mentoring for new teachers to submit a reason to MSDE on the reason for not meeting that.

ACTION: Dr. Michael requested Board approval of the Induction regulations for permission to publish. Ms. McCusker motioned, Dr. Lewis seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

**COMAR 13A.07.06.03 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE (ACTION – PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)**

Ms. Meadows introduced these updated regulations which ensure educator preparation programs align their programs to the most updated national standards. Due to the volume of national standards referenced in the regulation, MSDE anticipates needing to amend this regulation annually.

ACTION: Dr. Michael requested Board approval of these regulations to publish. Dr. Johnson motioned, Dr. Mele-McCarthy seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

**STATE BOARD MEMBER UPDATES**

Mr. Crawford shared an overview of the Education Transformation and Finance Committee's budget oversight calendar for 2025. Dr. Michael shared that the Board has launched an Early Childhood Education and Care workgroup that will have its first meeting on February 18th and will meet quarterly thereafter. Dr. Michael shared an update on the upcoming changes to expect related to expanding public comment. Mr. Hands said the Board added 5 additional afternoon



slots for public comment and that the Board adjusted its sign up window for commenters to leave more time for staff coordination.

The next Education Policy Committee will be on February 13th at 4 pm, and the Education Transformation and Finance Committee will be on February 11th at 4 pm.

### **FUTURE BOARD AGENDA ITEMS**

Dr. Mele-McCarthy requested a report back on MSDE's interaction with the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and NBC to ensure closer alignment with the science of reading.

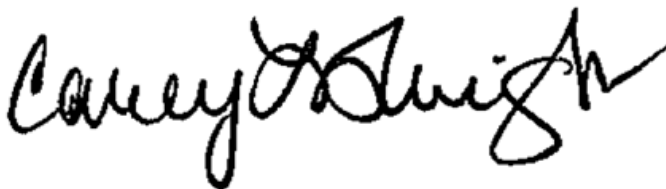
### **LEGAL OPINIONS AND ORDERS**

Mr. Schoen announced the following opinions and orders:

- *B.L. and W.L. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-01.
- *C.P. v. Queen Anne's County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-02.
- *E.D. and M.D. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-03.
- *K.B. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-04.
- *K.E. and G.E. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-05.
- *K.S. v. Baltimore County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-06.
- *Karl Perry, et al. v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners* – Opinion No. 25-07.
- *E.B. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR25-01.
- *Margaret Wilson v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR25-02.

Mr. Chesterfield motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Clash. With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 4:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



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

Date: February 25, 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://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, February 25, 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.