

MEETING OF THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes of the March 25, 2025 Meeting
200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

The Maryland State Board of Education met on March 25, 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. Clarence Crawford, 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, and Mr. Samir Paul were in attendance. Dr. Irma Johnson was not present.

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

MEETING OPENING

Dr. Michael called the meeting to order at 9:03am and led the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Schoen declared that a quorum was present.

Dr. Michael offered opening remarks that celebrated Arts in Education month and emphasized the importance of arts education. He outlined the Board’s consideration of the proposed math policy and updated college and career readiness (CCR) standard. Lastly, he discussed the Blueprint’s promise and vision for high-quality education and thanked the elected leaders and advocates for their efforts on behalf of Maryland’s students.

PUBLIC COMMENT

In-Person participation:

- Yaroslava Yanevskyy - Online Education
- Paul Lemle - Social Studies Standards
- Dr. Jeanne Paynter - Math Policy
- Dr. Shannon Pugh - Blueprint Low Performing Schools

Virtual participation:

- Courtney Evans - Virtual School Access
- Andrea McDonald - Virtual School Access
- Diana Sung - Dual Enrollment Courses and the CCR Standard
- Sharon Saroff - Special Education
- Atasha James - Charter School Funding
- David Stein - Math Policy

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of February 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes

- Personnel Actions
- Budget Adjustments, February 2025
- Calvert County Public Schools Waiver Request
- Cecil County Public Schools Waiver Request
- Carroll County Public Schools Waiver Request

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

UPDATE FROM THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT (INFORMATION ONLY)

Dr. Wright highlighted Arts in Our Schools Month and the students who performed, contributed new artwork, and shared a video about a Maryland student’s dance. The new assessment RFP was released earlier in March and will be completed in June. She also highlighted MSDE’s decrease in staff vacancy rate; teacher, principal, and family advisory council meetings; and AIB’s new reports on the status of minimum school funding.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) UPDATE - CECIL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CCPS)

Dr. Jeff Lawson discussed CCPS’s data teams’ work to address chronic absenteeism in the spring. He emphasized the importance of the Blueprint and shared about his engagement in early literacy. His district’s middle schools have piloted Yondr pouches and his high school leaders are exploring implementing them as well.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SESSION: ARTS EDUCATION IN MARYLAND SCHOOLS (AEMS)

Leaders from AEMS shared more about the arts education ecosystem in Maryland and the impact that tighter local budgets have on arts offerings. They discussed recommendations for regulations to better support conditionally licensed arts teachers, increase representation on local Blueprint implementation teams, and add arts endorsements on high school diplomas. Arts educators felt slightly more negative about the 2023-24 school year and expressed concerns about the perceived underemphasis on arts in the Blueprint.

PATHWAYS INTO TEACHING FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

The Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) formed a subcommittee to look at alternative pathways to teaching, particularly for professionals with experience and content knowledge. MSDE is also studying more about where these federal professionals live and where they could work. A more robust presentation is forthcoming in April.

SPECIAL GUEST PRESENTER: SHALINEE SHARMA

Ms. Sharma shared more about how students learn math, which includes fluency, using pictures and objects, and ensuring there is a catch-up system for students. Dr. Mele-McCarthy thanked the presenter and said she sees the evidence in her school of using pictures to help students make sense of math. Mr. Greer asked about examples of strong catch-up systems. Ms. Sharma

shared about her time in Singapore and the emphasis in their schools on “belief.” Dr. Lewis asked about balancing authentic learning and conceptual understanding of math in the older grades when pictures and visual representation seem to phase out. Ms. Sharma said pictures and objects should continue through calculus and that the Concrete Pictorial and Abstract sequence of instruction is critical. Dr. Goldson emphasized that improving math instruction for our teachers is critical. Ms. McCusker shared how arts and math are interconnected.

PRE-K-12 COMPREHENSIVE MATHEMATICS POLICY (ACTION)

Ms. Brightful of MSDE walked the Board through the changes made to the policy based on public comments. Dr. Michael emphasized that these policies are living documents that the Board will revisit annually. Mr. Paul asked where Geometry falls in the Integrated Algebra sequence. Ms. Brightful said the concepts of geometry are throughout both Integrated Algebra I and II. Dr. Michael then asked about the engagement MSDE has done with higher education as the state shifts to the Integrated Algebra model. Ms. Brightful shared that the Launch Years Task Force that developed this new sequence is made up of multiple higher education faculty, researchers, and educators. There are 23 states that Maryland is working alongside to move to this new sequence as well. Mr. Greer asked about what support MSDE needs in order to provide the technical assistance to LEAs to roll out this new sequence across multiple different curricula. Ms. Brightful said her team has focused on the rollout of the revised Pre-K-8th grade math standards in the 2026-2027 school year, which means that MSDE has a year to focus on supporting these teachers with the shift.

Dr. Lewis thanked the MSDE team for their partnership and responsiveness in developing this policy. Ms. McCusker shared that the Education Policy Committee voted unanimously to approve the policy.

ACTION: Dr. Michael requested Board approval of the math policy. Ms. McCusker motioned, Dr. Goldson seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1).

STATE BOARD ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 12:20 pm, Dr. Michael called for a motion to adjourn to an Executive Session. Ms. McCusker motioned, Mr. Chesterfield 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 Dr. Mele-McCarthy and seconded by Ms. Medina and with unanimous approval, the State Board of Education met in closed session on Tuesday, March 25, 2025 in Conference Room #1, 8th Floor, at the Nancy S. Grasmick Building. All board members were present except Irma Johnson. Also in attendance were State Superintendent Carey Wright, Executive Director Zachary Hands, Deputy Executive Director Hannah Oakley, and Assistant Attorneys General Elliott Schoen and Jackie LaFiandra. The Executive Session commenced at 12:25 p.m. and ended at 1:35 p.m.

The State Board reviewed and approved three Opinions and one Order.

- *Brian Curtis v. St. Caroline County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-13. The Board affirmed the local board's decision regarding Appellant's Ineffective Evaluation.
- *Timothy Davis v. Prince George's County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-14. The Board affirmed the local board's decision regarding Appellant's termination.
- *Lynn Masterson v. Harford County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-15. The Board affirmed the local board's decision regarding Appellant's involuntary transfer.
- *Barry Lebowitz v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR25-05. The Board dismissed the appeal for lack of jurisdiction.

President Michael gave updates to the Board.

Dr. Wright gave a personnel update.

Assistant Attorney General Elliott Schoen provided legal advice regarding legal processes.

PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHING (PAEMST) RECOGNITION

Dr. Wright introduced three of Maryland's four recipients and presented them with the awards:

- Modupe Olafunmiloye - Grades 7-12 Science: Kenmoor Middle School, Prince George's Co.
- Joan Shane - Grades 7-12 Math: Sligo Middle School, Montgomery Co.
- Kate Sandoval - Grades K-6 Math: Bollman Bridge Elementary School, Howard Co.

The fourth recipient, Krishni Patrick, Grades K-6 Science teacher at Piney Branch Elementary School in Montgomery Co. was not present.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS (CCR) STANDARD POLICY (ACTION)

Mr. Kincaid and Mr. Lasser of MSDE presented an overview of the past versions of the CCR standard and the impact of each iteration of the standard on student populations. In addition to expanded pathways for demonstrating CCR, MSDE defined 'initial access' for students who have not yet met the CCR standard. MSDE staff also shared how the new math sequence will fold into this new version of the CCR standard. Mr. Crawford thanked the Department and said the Transformation Committee passed the policy unanimously. Dr. Mele-McCarthy expressed concerns about whether the policy was inclusive of students with disabilities. Mr. Greer asked for continuous data analysis on the impact of all policies the Board passes.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion for adoption of the CCR standard. Mr. Crawford motioned, Mr. Greer seconded. (In Favor: 12, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 2)

COMAR 13A.03.08 STUDENTS AT RISK FOR READING DIFFICULTIES (PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)

MSDE staff proposed a repeal and replace of the original 2021 COMAR with the updated language since changes were so extensive. The only piece of the literacy policy that is not included in these regulations is the retention and promotion policy because it lives in a separate section of COMAR. Ms. McCusker said that the Education Policy Committee unanimously recommended permission to publish.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to grant permission to publish the regulations. Ms. McCusker motioned, Dr. Lewis seconded. (In Favor: 12, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 2)

COMAR 13A.12.01.04 ISSUANCE AND TYPES OF LICENSES, 13A.12.04.02 LICENSES FOR SPECIALISTS, 13A.12.05.02 LICENSES FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERVISORS (PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)

Ms. Meadows of MSDE shared these regulations deal with the requirement for specialists and administrators to have a three-credit special education coursework requirement for initial licensure. These regulations now only narrowly expanded the flexibility for schools and districts to issue school social workers a temporary credential while they take the coursework. The last change MSDE made was to clarify for licensure partners that when educators advance in their career, all their credentials and endorsements follow. Ms. McCusker said the Policy Committee did not have a recommendation because they requested further clarification. These amended regulations will go back to the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board for consideration before receiving permission to publish.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to grant permission to publish the regulations. Ms. McCusker motioned, Ms. Medina seconded. (In Favor: 12, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 2)

COMPREHENSIVE ARTS UPDATE (INFORMATION ONLY)

MSDE staff shared an overview of the Comprehensive Arts Branch, including a data snapshot of arts educators and offerings in Maryland public schools; a summary of COMAR 13A.04.16.03, Certification Procedures for Fine Arts Instructional Programs, and the information submitted by local education agencies in 2024; and an informational update on Secondary Arts Pathways for students to be college and career ready in any of the five arts disciplines (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual art). Mr. Clash asked about Artificial Intelligence and arts education. Ms. McClusker emphasized the importance of middle and high school arts education and ensuring that scheduling doesn't hinder older students' access. Ms. Chang shared how arts education is connected with community service.

REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF ALTERATIONS TO COMAR 13A.05.02.13 LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY ADMINISTRATION (ACTION)

Mr. Hands of the State Board shared that a member of the public requested an amendment to regulations for licensure fees for audiologists and speech language pathologists. Dr. Hickman of

MSDE recommended that the Board deny the constituent's petition because it would be an unfunded mandate on our school districts. McCusker said the Policy Committee did not have a recommendation because they requested further clarification.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to deny the petition for changes to COMAR on the Department's recommendation. Dr. Lewis motioned, Ms. McCusker seconded. (In Favor: 12, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 2)

AFTERNOON PUBLIC COMMENT

In-Person participation:

- McKenzie Allen - Charter School Funding

Virtual participation:

- Corinne Savides Happel - Engaging Accelerated Learners in Grades 3-5
- Courtney Krauss - Charter School Funding
- Angie Vigliotti - Special Education and Executive Orders

2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE

MSDE staff shared an update on the following bills:

- SB0845 - School Personnel Vetting and Hiring Transparency Act (Hearing in Ways and Means on March 26, 2025)
- HB0477- Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers - Adult to Child Ratios - Alterations (Hearing in Education, Energy, and the Environment on March 27, 2025)
- HB1325 - Substitute Child Care Provider Pool Pilot Program – Established (no hearing scheduled in Education, Energy, and the Environment)
- SB0770 - Public Schools and Youth Services - Crisis Support and Assistance and Workgroup Study (Hearing in Ways and Means on March 26, 2025)
- SB0130- County Boards of Education - Student Cellular Device Use Policy – Established (Hearing in Ways and Means on March 26, 2025)
- HB1475- Mixed Delivery Model Viability Act (Hearing in Education, Energy, and the Environment on April 02, 2025)
- SB0252/ HB0150- Departmental Child Care Centers - Certificated Staff Ratio Requirement - Repeal (Hearing in Ways and Means on March 19, 2025; no Senate hearing scheduled)

STATE BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Ms. McCusker announced the next Education Policy Committee will be held on April 16th at 4 pm, and Mr. Crawford announced that the Education Transformation and Finance Committee will be held on April 15th at 4 pm.

LEGAL OPINIONS AND ORDERS

Mr. Schoen announced the following opinions and orders:

- *Brian Curtis v. St. Caroline County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-13. The Board affirmed the local board's decision regarding Appellant's Ineffective Evaluation.

- *Timothy Davis v. Prince George's County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-14. The Board affirmed the local board's decision regarding Appellant's termination.
- *Lynn Masterson v. Harford County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 25-15. The Board affirmed the local board's decision regarding Appellant's involuntary transfer.
- *Barry Lebowitz v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR25-05. The Board dismissed the appeal for lack of jurisdiction.

Ms. McCusker motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Clash. With no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 4:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



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

Date: April 29, 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, April 29, 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.