

MEETING OF THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Minutes of the April 28, 2026 Meeting
2644 Riva Rd, Annapolis, MD 21401, USA**

The Maryland State Board of Education met on April 28, 2026, at 9:00 am in the Anne Arundel County Public School Board Room.

The following Board members were present in the Boardroom:

Dr. Joshua Michael (Board President), Dr. Monica Goldson (Board Vice President), Dr. Kim Lewis, Mr. O'Marie Barnes, Dr. Irma Johnson, Mr. Nick Greer, Ms. Marcy Leonard, Ms. Nicole Murray-Lewis, Ms. Xiomara Medina, Mr. Chet Chesterfield, Dr. James Bell, Mr. Kenny Clash, Mr. Samir Paul, and Dr. Peggy Carr were all present.

State Superintendent Dr. Carey Wright, State Board Deputy Director Hannah Oakley, and Assistant Attorney General Elliott Schoen were also in attendance.

MEETING OPENING

Dr. Michael called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and led the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Schoen declared that a quorum was present.

Dr. Michael thanked the Anne Arundel County Public Schools Board of Education for the use of their Board room. Dr. Michael welcomed Dr. Carr to her first meeting as a Board member, recognizing her accomplished career and extensive experience in leadership and service. Dr. Michael offered additional opening remarks, honoring the Month of the Young Child and previewing the agenda items.

PUBLIC COMMENT

In-Person participation:

- Nicole Little-Cook – Library Media Regulations
- Marcie Taylor-Thoma, Maryland Council for Civic & History Education – Adolescent Literacy Policy
- Lorena Wu, upcoming Student Member of the State Board of Education – Library Media Regulations
- Dr. Francene Engel – Adolescent Literacy Policy and Civic Literacy

Virtual participation:

- Rachel McGrain, Arts Education in Maryland (AEMS) – Math Policy and Balanced Curriculum
- Mary Pat Fannon, Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM) – Charter School Regulations
- Paul Lemle, Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) – Collaborative time

- Sharon Saroff – Special Education
- Dr. Jeanne Paynter, Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education – MCGate Student Essay Contest Celebration

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Dr. Michael introduced Mr. Joe Goetz, the new Executive Director of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), as well as outgoing Executive Director Milt Nagel and current President Diana Hawley. Mr. Joe Goetz introduced himself and shared his background as former President of the Kent County Board of Education. He expressed appreciation for the work of the State Board and highlighted opportunities to strengthen collaboration and partnership between MABE and the State Board.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of March 24, 2026 Meeting Minutes
- Personnel Actions
- Budget Adjustments, March 2026
- COMAR 13A.08.01.05 Student Attendance Policy (Permission to Adopt)
- Garrett County Public Schools Calendar Waiver Request
- Community School of Maryland Calendar Waiver Request

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

STATE SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Dr. Wright announced Maryland's participation in the inaugural States Leading Network of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Dr. Wright also provided an update on Maryland's instructional coaching initiative, which is expanding the pilot program in Prince George's County Public Schools, and shared a video highlighting the model. Dr. Wright celebrated the 13 awardees of the state's Grow Your Own grant program and shared highlights from her recent attendance at the annual BOND Conference (Building Our Network of Diversity), emphasizing Maryland's collective work across State government to recruit and retain Black male educators. Additionally, she provided an update on the implementation of the new assessment system noting the new assessment's vendor, NCS Pearson, has presented to the state's Technical Advisory Committee and shared a transition plan. Lastly, Dr. Wright recognized Dr. Joshua Fine, principal at Flower Hill Elementary, who was selected as Maryland's National Distinguished Principal for 2026.

PURPLE STAR SCHOOLS RECOGNITION

Dr. Wright introduced Mary Gable, MSDE's Assistant State Superintendent of the Division of Student Support and Federal Programs, and Alex Reese, MSDE Chief of Staff, to honor this year's Purple Star Schools. Ms. Gable provided background on the Purple Star Schools Program, a nationwide initiative that recognizes schools for their efforts to support the unique needs of military-connected students and families. The Board celebrated 27 Purple Star schools from Anne Arundel, Calvert, Harford, Howard, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's public schools. Maryland's 2026 Purple Star Schools are:

- MacArthur Middle School, Anne Arundel County Public Schools
- Magothy River Middle School, Anne Arundel County Public Schools
- Meade High School, Anne Arundel County Public Schools
- West Meade Early Education Center, Anne Arundel County Public Schools
- Barstow Elementary School, Calvert County Public Schools
- Dowell Elementary School, Calvert County Public Schools
- Huntingtown Elementary School, Calvert County Public Schools
- Huntingtown High School, Calvert County Public Schools
- Mt. Harmony Elementary School, Calvert County Public Schools
- Mutual Elementary School, Calvert County Public Schools
- Patuxent High School, Calvert County Public Schools
- Southern Middle School, Calvert County Public Schools
- Sunderland Elementary School, Calvert County Public Schools
- Roye-Williams Elementary School, Harford County Public Schools
- Bellows Springs Elementary School, Howard County Public School System
- Thunder Hill Elementary School, Howard County Public School System
- Veterans Elementary School, Howard County Public School System
- Melwood Elementary School, Prince George's County Public Schools
- Centreville Middle School, Queen Anne's County Public Schools
- Kent Island High School, Queen Anne's County Public Schools
- Matapeake Middle School, Queen Anne's County Public Schools
- Queen Anne's County High School, Queen Anne's County Public Schools
- Stevensville Middle School, Queen Anne's County Public Schools
- Sudlersville Middle School, Queen Anne's County Public Schools
- Captain Walter Francis Duke Elementary, St. Mary's County Public Schools
- Leonardtown Middle School, St. Mary's County Public Schools
- Park Hall Elementary School, St. Mary's County Public Schools

COMAR 13A.02.01.01 RULES FOR MEETINGS (PERMISSION TO REPUBLISH)

Ms. Hannah Oakley, the State Board's Deputy Director, presented the Rules for Meetings regulations for permission to republish. MSDE received six public comments on the proposed regulations, and the State Board is recommending several revisions in response. The proposed edits would tailor in-person meeting requirements and public comment window requirements to

only regularly scheduled business meetings, clarify that boards are not required to first meet in person before convening a virtual closed session, and remove the requirement that a quorum of a local board be physically present in order to hold a virtual meeting, thereby allowing for hybrid meetings.

Dr. Lewis said the Education Policy Committee unanimously recommends permission to republish COMAR 13A.02.01.01

Mr. Greer proposed a motion to remove the word "monthly" and add "each month" from 13A.02.01.01(E)(1) such that 13A.02.01.01(E)(1) states "The local board shall permit a period during at least one of its regularly scheduled business meetings *each month* to hear comments from members of the public."

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to adopt the regulation as amended by Mr. Greer. Mr. Greer motioned, Dr. Lewis seconded. (In Favor: 14, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 0)

COMAR 13A.12.06.02 AND 13A.12.06.03 DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AND DENIALS (PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)

Ms. Kelly Meadows, MSDE Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Educator Effectiveness, presented COMAR 13A.12.06.02 and 13A.12.06.03. Ms. Meadows stated that the proposed amendments serve two primary objectives, aligning licensure regulations with contract regulations and providing the State Superintendent with discretionary authority for reciprocal discipline, rather than requiring disciplinary action whenever an educator has been sanctioned by another state's licensing authority.

Dr. Lewis said the Education Policy Committee unanimously recommends permission to publish COMAR 13A.12.06.02 and 13A.12.06.03.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to publish COMAR 13A.12.06.02 and 13A.12.06.03. Mr. Chesterfield motioned, Mr. Barnes seconded. (In Favor: 14, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 0)

COMAR 13A.02.10 MARYLAND PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (PERMISSION TO ADOPT)

Dr. Michael introduced COMAR 13A.02.10 and began by thanking stakeholders who participated in the workgroup, submitted formal comments, and engaged in informal feedback throughout the process. He emphasized that the proposed charter school funding framework is a starting point and an iterative effort, noting that it represents a compromise in response to a complex and long-standing policy challenge. Dr. Michael acknowledged that continued delay over more than two decades has contributed to current tensions, and underscored the need to move forward with action.

Ms. Mary Gable, MSDE's Assistant State Superintendent of the Division of Student Support and Federal Programs, Ms. Carol Beck, MSDE's Director of School Innovations Branch, and Dr. Stefan Redding-Lallinger, MSDE's Chief Policy Officer, presented the regulations for permission to adopt. Ms. Gable provided an overview of the history of charter school regulations in Maryland and highlighted the guiding principles that have informed the development of the current regulatory process. Ms. Beck summarized stakeholder feedback on the proposed regulations, including comments related to withholdings and administrative fees, special education adjustments, common application requirements, enrollment processes, and the timelines for implementing regulations and guidance.

Dr. Goldson asked when the one application requirement for LEAs would be in effect. Ms. Beck said the lottery process is already underway for SY2026-2027 so it could not be implemented until the following year. Dr. Bell asked about the frequency of State Board review of implementation, and Dr. Michael said that while no specific review schedule is codified, a more formal review process could be established through future amendments. Dr. Johnson asked about specific timelines for implementation oversight. Dr. Redding-Lallinger stated that MSDE is committed to conducting annual reviews of implementation, and Ms. Gable affirmed that the Department will monitor implementation throughout the first year. Dr. Michael said it would be helpful to receive an update in fall 2026, noting that forthcoming guidance will be developed. Ms. Medina similarly emphasized the importance of regular review, stating that these regulations represent a significant shift for the State. Dr. Wright said the Department would put together a timeline and bring it back to the Board. Dr. Carr said it would be helpful to be able to continue providing feedback and observed that the public comments reflect that the issue remains unresolved. Dr. Johnson asked about the timing of the release of the guidance documents, and Dr. Wright said that they plan to release them within 30 days. Dr. Johnson elevated PSSAM's public comments and emphasized the importance of funding all students equitably, rather than reallocating resources from some students to support others.

Dr. Lewis said the Education Policy Committee unanimously recommends permission to adopt COMAR 13A.02.10 Maryland Public Charter School Program.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to adopt COMAR 13A.02.10 Maryland Public Charter School Program. Dr. Lewis motioned, Mr. Barnes seconded. (In Favor: 11, Opposed: 2, Abstained: 1, Absent: 0)

COMAR 13A.05.04 LIBRARY MEDIA SERVICES (PERMISSION TO ADOPT)

Dr. Chelsea Brewer, Executive Director of Literacy Programs and Initiatives Branch, presented COMAR 13A.05.04 for adoption. The proposed amendments to COMAR 13A.05.04 will align the current regulations with the requirements in the *Freedom to Read Act* while updating existing regulatory language to provide clarity and ensure consistency across the school systems. In addition to instruction on information literacy, these regulations ensure that students will receive instruction in digital and media literacy skills through their school library media programs.

Following a review of public comments, MSDE recommends no changes to the proposed regulations. However, Dr. Brewer outlined two non-substantive changes that are recommended to align the language of the regulation to the updated lettering in the draft. In addition, Dr. Brewer shared MSDE will develop a work group to draft interpretive guidance to assist LEAs with compliance with the regulation.

Dr. Michael noted that MSDE received significant public comment on the regulation and asked how the Department has navigated the feedback. Dr. Brewer said districts are looking for additional guidance, and MSDE will continue to monitor implementation to ensure alignment with the intent of the *Freedom to Read Act* and to address areas of misunderstanding. Dr. Wright added that the proposed regulations have generated both support and concern, and that MSDE will continue engaging with stakeholders throughout implementation. Ms. Leonard emphasized the importance of ensuring that every school has access to a library media specialist and asked about the timeline for guidance development, while also encouraging the inclusion of student voice in the process. Dr. Brewer said that MSDE will begin convening a workgroup of LEA staff and library specialists once the regulation is enacted.

Mr. Barnes asked what MSDE has learned throughout the process, and Dr. Brewer said the Department identified a lack of formal guidance, noting that adoption of the regulations is only the first step and that MSDE must ensure the regulations are meaningfully implemented. Dr. Brewer also recognized the importance of communicating with stakeholders and families beyond the administrator and library specialist community. Dr. Bell asked for additional information about the biannual report, and Dr. Brewer explained that MSDE collects school-level, district-level, and staffing data, including vacancy information, and publishes the report on the MSDE website.

Mr. Greer expressed appreciation for the overview of public comments and suggested that, in addition to direct quotes, summaries of major public comment themes would be a helpful tool for Board members moving forward. Mr. Barnes asked which themes from public comment the Department will address in guidance. Dr. Brewer said the regulations help clarify expectations that every school must have a certified library media specialist while also protecting library media specialists' time for their core responsibilities. Dr. Michael said this process has shown that proactive, robust stakeholder engagement before a regulation comes to the Board for publishing is critical.

Dr. Lewis said the Education Policy Committee unanimously recommends permission to adopt COMAR 13A.05.04 Library Media Services.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to adopt 13A.05.04 Library Media Services. Mr. Barnes motioned, seconded Dr. Johnson. (In Favor: 14, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 0)

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS AND DUAL ENROLLMENT DATA

Mr. Tim Guy, MSDE's Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Assessment and Accountability, and Ms. Kellise Williamson, Post Secondary Credit and PTECH Specialist, provided an update on Maryland's College and Career Readiness and Dual Enrollment Data. Mr. Guy provided background on the development of the current College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard, noting that the State Board adopted a CCR standard incorporating grade point average and MCAP proficiency in 2024 and later adopted an expanded standard in March 2025. Mr. Guy explained that current data will reflect the previous standard, as LEAs will report on the most recent standard following the 2025–2026 school year.

The percentage of grade 10-12 students that met the 2024 CCR standard increased from SY2023-2024 to SY2024-2025 from 49.1% to 51.8%. In school year 2024-2025, 54.4% of high school completers met the 2024 CCR standard, reflecting that high school completers have additional time beyond grades 10–12 to meet the standard before graduation. This percentage varies across race/ethnicity groups as 70.8% of white students met the 2024 CCR standard by the end of high school compared to 39% of Black/African American students and 40.8% of Hispanic students. Similarly, the percentage of 2025 high school completers meeting the 2024 CCR standard varied by student group, with 37.1% of economically disadvantaged completers and 22.8% of students with disabilities meeting the CCR standard by the end of high school. Mr. Guy also presented data on the percentage of 2025 high school completers meeting the 2024 CCR standard by LEA, which ranged from 57.4% to 78.4%.

While data is not yet available, Mr. Guy outlined the new CCR standard adopted in March 2025, which expands the pathways available for students to demonstrate college and career readiness. The updated standard includes additional assessment options such as the SAT, ACT, PSAT as well the Alternate Assessment. For students who do not meet the 2025 CCR standard by 10th grade, readiness may also be demonstrated through Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways, college coursework, career aptitude assessments or advanced academic examinations, including Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) assessments.

Mr. Guy also provided an overview of dual enrollment in Maryland, noting that participation among high school completers increased by more than five percentage points from SY 2021–2022 to SY 2024–2025, rising from 23.1% to 28.3%. He shared that participation rates vary by race and ethnicity, with 37.2% of White students, 23.7% of Black/African American students, and 17% of Hispanic/Latino students participating in dual enrollment. Participation rates also vary significantly by LEA. However, Mr. Guy emphasized that dual enrollment is only one component of the Blueprint pathways, noting that districts are balancing CTE, AP, and dual enrollment opportunities, and that considering all pathways together provides a more complete picture of student access across districts.

Ms. Williamson provided additional information on dual enrollment options, including dual credits, articulated credits, and transcribed credits, as well as program models such as college in high school, middle college high schools, early college high schools, and concurrent enrollment.

Ms. Williamson also outlined the priorities of the Dual Enrollment Working Group, established in 2024 and led by an executive team representing MSDE, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), and the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) to address challenges and opportunities related to Joint Implementation Policy #1 – Dual Enrollment and Pillar Three of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. The group’s priorities include MOU logistics between high schools and colleges, courses and programs of study, access and quality, credit transfer, state-level data and accountability, and policy and regulatory alignment.

Dr. Lewis remarked on the variability among districts in students meeting the CCR standard and expressed interest in seeing additional LEA-level data, as well as how MSDE is examining best practices from the most successful districts. Ms. Williamson responded that MSDE has been working with districts to identify and leverage effective practices.

Dr. Carr thanked MSDE for the presentation and similarly requested a deeper dive into student group performance, noting that the gaps between groups were sobering. She also asked about trends over time as well as access to Algebra I. Dr. Carr asked if 8th grade students are included in the CCR data and whether access to Algebra I varies by LEA. Mr. Guy explained that the CCR standard does include students who complete Algebra I in 8th grade. Mr. Guy added that middle school math assessments used for accountability purposes cannot also be used to demonstrate CCR readiness, and noted a broader transition toward an integrated Algebra I and Algebra II model, as outlined in the Math Policy, intended to improve consistency across LEAs. Dr. Carr further asked about concordance across different assessments used to measure college and career readiness. Dr. Michael said that the Board will have an opportunity to review the data more deeply through the Strategy and Operations Committee.

Dr. Bell asked for clarification on whether Algebra I taken in 8th grade counts toward the CCR standard, and Mr. Guy confirmed that it does, while noting that high school accountability ratings are based only on assessments administered during high school. Dr. Bell said access to dual enrollment may vary by geographic location and proximity to higher education institutions, particularly for students on the Eastern Shore. Dr. Wright said that MSDE can develop a graphic to clarify the differences among accountability standards, graduation requirements, and CCR standards, and outlined the additional considerations that would be required if 8th grade Algebra were incorporated into accountability metrics.

Ms. Medina asked about partnerships with higher education to support dual enrollment, and Ms. Williamson said that the Work Group is addressing a range of challenges and that both community colleges and four-year institutions are actively engaged with LEAs to increase student access. Ms. Leonard asked whether high school completers include students earning a certificate of completion in addition to those earning a diploma. Mr. Guy said he would review the data to confirm, noting students earning a certificate of completion were not included under the previous CCR standard but the updated standard now provides a pathway for students receiving a certificate of completion to meet the standard.

Ms. Leonard added that, given the number of measures schools are working with, including accountability and CCR standards, there is a need for greater alignment so schools have clarity on where to focus their resources. Mr. Barnes asked for additional data to further understand where LEAs are strongest in supporting students, whether earlier in 9th and 10th grade or in post-CCR pathways, noting that some districts have high rates of students meeting the CCR standard but lower rates of dual enrollment participation. Dr. Michael asked how the data may look next year given the addition to the CCR standard and whether MSDE has modeled how those changes could affect advising or CCR readiness percentages. Mr. Guy responded that MSDE has conducted some modeling, but that it is difficult to fully capture all added benchmarks, while noting an expectation of relative concordance between the two standards.

STATE BOARD ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Michael called for a motion to adjourn to an Executive Session. Dr. Bell motioned, Ms. Medina 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 Dr. Bell and seconded by Ms. Medina and with unanimous vote convened at the Anne Arundel County Board of Education Building. All board members were present. Also in attendance were State Superintendent Carey Wright and Assistant Attorneys General Elliott Schoen and Jackie La Fiandra. The Executive Session commenced at 12:20 p.m. and ended at 2:00 p.m. The State Board reviewed and approved five Opinions and three Orders.

- *C.H. v. Harford County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-15. The Board remanded the case back to the local board based on new evidence submitted by Appellant in the appeal to the State Board.
- *F.B. v. Prince George's County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-16. The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *K.R. v. Charles County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-17. The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *Delphonzo Sellers v. Harford County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-18. The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *Eugene Spellman v. Prince George's County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-19. The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *G.B. v. Charles County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-08. The Board dismissed the appeal as untimely and moot.
- In the Matter of MBEF College and Career Academies, Inc. – Order No. OR26-09. The Board dismissed the petition.
- *Baltimore County Parent and Student Coalition, Inc. v. Baltimore County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-10. The Board dismissed the appeal for lack of standing.

Board Leadership Update: Dr. Michael shared the following information:

- Board retreat date will be forthcoming.
- Board leadership elections are in July.
- Various communications he has had with stakeholders around the state.

Personnel Matter

- The Board discussed the State Superintendent's annual evaluation.

ASSESSMENT ACCOUNTABILITY UPDATE

Dr. Wright announced that the State's new assessment system will be called MSTAR, the Maryland System of Testing Academic Readiness and shared the new logo. Dr. Wright said that school year (SY) 2025–2026 will be the final year the MCAP assessment is administered for grades 3 through 8, with MSTAR set to launch for those grades in SY 2026–2027. Dr. Wright added that the MCAP assessment will continue for one additional year at the high school level.

DEPARTMENT OF SERVICE AND CIVIC INNOVATION – SERVICE YEAR OPTION AND MARYLAND CORPS

Mr. Jonny Dorsey, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Service and Civic Innovation, and Ms. Sarah Flammang, Deputy Secretary of the Department, shared an update on the Maryland Corps/Service Year Option. They highlighted the program's core priorities, which include addressing urgent community needs and equipping members with pathways to meaningful careers. The Department of Service and Civic Innovation has identified education as a high-impact service area where there is both significant need across the state and strong potential for members to make a meaningful difference.

Mr. Dorsey also noted that the funding model has evolved, emphasizing the State now covers approximately two-thirds of the cost for all participating members, regardless of employer size. While education remains a key priority, the Maryland Corps/Service Year Option also supports service opportunities in climate, community health, public service, information technology, public safety, and apprenticeships and trades. Mr. Dorsey noted that more than two-thirds of members earn a registered apprenticeship credential through the program. With more than 700 alumni and four years of demonstrated success, Mr. Dorsey stated that the program has established itself as a serious workforce development solution.

Ms. Flammang additionally outlined how the Maryland Corps/Service Year Option helps address several challenges identified in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. In the early childhood space, Blueprint Pillar 1, the program supports aides working toward their Child Development Associate certification. In the area of college and career readiness, Blueprint Pillar 3, members provide high-impact tutoring and other student support. The program also strengthens student success and community wellness, addressing Blueprint Pillar 4, by connecting students and families with broader community resources and services. Ms. Flammang further emphasized that, at approximately \$10,000 per member, the Maryland Corps/Service Year Option provides a highly cost-effective way to increase capacity while also serving as an additional talent pipeline for

participating organizations and communities. Lastly, Mr. Dorsey shared several potential areas for collaboration with the education community, noting that the program would benefit from support in identifying additional partner organizations, recruiting more young people to serve, and connecting with new funding opportunities.

Dr. Bell asked about the program's eligible age range and noted that there had previously been an exception allowing 17-year-olds to participate with permission from a parent or guardian and said the removal of that exception may represent an oversight or gap in participation opportunities, particularly given that some 17-year-olds are already high school graduates. Mr. Dorsey said he would be happy to talk to the Board about opportunities to address the gap. Mr. Chesterfield asked whether the Maryland Corps/Service Year Option has representation across all regions of the state, including the Eastern Shore, and Mr. Dorsey said yes. Dr. Carr asked about partnerships with institutions of higher education. Mr. Dorsey responded that expanding those partnerships remains an area of growth for the program, while highlighting several partnerships that are already in place.

Mr. Greer asked whether the MSDE is appropriately sharing information with the Maryland Department of Service and Civic Innovation regarding apprenticeship placements. Mr. Dorsey responded that there are continued opportunities for data sharing and collaboration between agencies across the state. Mr. Barnes asked about the program's capacity, and Mr. Dorsey explained that there are currently more prospective members than available host-site partnerships. As a result, the program is focused on recruiting additional host organizations, with a goal of supporting 1,200 members next year. Dr. Michael concluded by expressing appreciation for the discussion and reaffirming a strong interest in continuing and expanding collaboration with school districts.

ORAL ARGUMENT - CHARANN WHITE V. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Elliot Schoen explained that this case is an exceptions hearing requested by the local board regarding the administrative law judge's (ALJ) proposed decision and is being conducted consistent with COMAR 13A.01.05.07(F). Mr. Craig Meuser, on behalf of the Montgomery County Board of Education, outlined the district's objections to the ALJ's conclusion that a letter of reprimand constituted an appropriate form of discipline for the appellant's violation of the reasonable expectations for classroom teachers. Mr. Meuser argued the original recommendation of a suspension is reasonable and appropriate. He also stated the record reflects the appellant was put on notice on three separate occasions.

Ms. Diana Savit, on behalf of the appellant, began by stating that the State Board is tasked with conducting a de novo review of the County Board's decision. She emphasized that the ALJ had conducted a thorough review of the case and had rejected much of the evidence presented by the County. According to Ms. Savit, the ALJ concluded that the appellant's actions did not render her unfit to teach. Ms. Savit further argued that the ALJ's recommended discipline was appropriate under the circumstances.

Mr. Meuser refutes the opposing counsel's claim that the ALJ was the only non-biased individual that has reviewed the case, stating the County Board hired an independent hearing examiner who found that a suspension was warranted. Mr. Meuser also noted that opposing counsel did not file an exception to the ALJ's ultimate finding that misconduct had occurred.

Dr. Bell asked whether progressive discipline had been considered prior to the incident, and Mr. Meuser confirmed that the appellant had previously received one letter of reprimand and at least three cautionary memoranda. Ms. Savit said the ALJ had discounted some of the prior disciplinary instances because they were not related to similar conduct or comparable matters. Dr. Michael asked if the event that occurred in Spring of 2023 is considered similar to the event that occurred in September of 2023 and Ms. Savit said yes, on a superficial level, the event was similar. Dr. Michael then asked whether the ALJ's proposed decision would be considered progressive discipline in relation to the Spring 2023 incident specifically. Ms. Savit responded that a reprimand can still constitute progressive discipline and that there is no requirement that the next step following a reprimand must be suspension.

DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES (DORS) UPDATE

Dr. Erik Bonner, Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of Rehabilitation Services, provided an overview of the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and its progress to strengthen outcomes for students and adults with disabilities. Dr. Bonner explained that DORS administers multiple disability programs with a budget of over \$160 million and more than 640 employees, making it the largest division in the department. DORS operates several key programs, including Disability Determination Services, the Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program, and the Workforce Technology Center, which offers multiple training programs and rehabilitation technology services to support employment. It also runs specialized initiatives such as the Business Enterprise Program for the Blind, Independent Living programs (including services for older adults who are blind), Supported Employment programs for both adults and youth, and the Client Assistance Program.

Dr. Bonner noted that DORS has experienced a staffing reduction of more than 20% since 2008, which has had an impact on service delivery across its programs. Additional challenges include significant workload pressures driven by high caseloads. These pressures are further compounded by a federal hiring freeze, a documented need for additional staff, Vocational Rehabilitation counselor caseloads that are twice the national average, and a vocational rehabilitation waitlist that is the second largest in the nation.

While many Marylanders are still facing significant wait times, Dr. Bonner highlighted meaningful improvements since 2024, moving from a national ranking in Disability Determination Services of 52 in 2024 to 11 in 2026. Over the same period, the case backlog was reduced from approximately 15,000 cases to fewer than 500, and the mean processing time decreased substantially from 346 days to 102 days. The Office of Field Services has similarly improved, moving from a national ranking of 40 in 2024 to 7 in 2026. Dr. Bonner concluded by sharing

highlights from Community-Based and Workforce Service, including a video showcasing the CVS Pharmacy Technician pathway.

Dr. Lewis thanked Dr. Bonner for his work improving services for the disability community and asked about the program's next priorities. Dr. Bonner acknowledged his team's efforts and shared that DORS is focused on expanding and replicating successful programs from Baltimore City Public Schools, while also strengthening partnerships with the Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Maryland Department of Disabilities. Dr. Carr asked how DORS improved its services, and Dr. Bonner explained that stronger data tracking was key, along with adopting and replicating a successful model from Tennessee to help reduce and manage case backlogs.

LICENSURE ASSESSMENTS: NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (PERMISSION TO ADOPT)

Ms. Kelly Meadows introduced the licensure assessment, edTPA Essentials. Ms. Meadows noted that edTPA Essentials serves as the mechanism for demonstrating pedagogical knowledge and is the only nationally recognized, portfolio-based assessment of teaching ability. Ms. Meadows further explained that in 2024, the State Board adopted a phase-in plan to establish passing scores for edTPA based on Maryland test-taker data, with recommendations and final adoption expected by September 2026. However, in February 2026, Pearson announced a redesigned version of the assessment, edTPA Essentials, meaning new administration and scoring data will be needed before final passing score recommendations can be updated and approved.

MSDE is requesting that the State Board of Education approve updates to the previously adopted edTPA phase-in plan to account for the transition to edTPA Essentials and ensure candidates are not negatively impacted during implementation. The proposal extends the current passing policy through August 2027, allows a pilot of edTPA Essentials from 2026–2027 while maintaining flexibility for preparation programs, and establishes a “norming year” from 2027–2028 before final passing scores are developed and adopted in fall 2028.

Dr. Carr asked whether Pearson plans to conduct a bridge or alignment study, and Ms. Meadows responded that she would follow up with additional information on that question. Dr. Michael asked about other states requiring a national assessment, and Ms. Meadows responded that she would provide additional information, noting that Maryland is currently one of three states moving forward with this transition, though more states are expected to join over time.

Dr. Lewis said the Education Policy Committee unanimously recommends permission to adopt Nationally Recognized Performance Assessment.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to adopt the licensure assessment. Mr. Paul motioned, Dr. Carr seconded. (In Favor: 14, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 0)

AFTERNOON PUBLIC COMMENT

Virtual participation:

- Nellie Chick – School Refusal and School Avoidance
- Erin Alistar - Library Media Program Regulations

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE (INFORMATION ONLY)

Dr. Redding-Lallinger, Ms. Laurel Cratsley, Executive Director of Government Affairs, Ms. Maddie Houck, Policy Analyst, and Ms. Yvonne Harper, Legislative Liaison provided an overview of the 2026 legislative session. Dr. Redding-Lallinger thanked the team and the Education Policy Committee for their collaboration throughout the session. Ms. Harper shared key session metrics, including 379 bills tracked by the Department, 218 fiscal notes requested by Department of Legislative Services, and 174 letters of testimony submitted, representing significant increases from the prior year.

Ms. Houck highlighted key Department legislation, including House Bill 1582 (COMPASS Act), the Superintendent Emergency Authority Act, and legislation consolidating the Specialized Intervention Services report. Ms. Cratsley reviewed additional Department priorities, including SB311 that made revisions to the Blueprint and HB1321 and HB849, which strengthened the child care scholarship program. Dr. Redding-Lallinger concluded with key funding updates for the Academic Excellence Program, Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Program, and Child Care Scholarship Program, noting that additional bill summaries would be shared at the next Board meeting.

Dr. Lewis offered additional thanks to the Government Affairs team, highlighting the contributions of Dr. Redding-Lallinger as well as Mr. Hands and Ms. Oakley. Dr. Michael similarly expressed appreciation, noting that strong relationships were key to the success of the Department's legislative priorities, particularly the Departmental bills. Dr. Wright concluded by expressing appreciation for the team's work and contributions.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION II

Pursuant to § 3-305(b)(1) and (7) of the General Provisions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon motion of Mr. Greer and seconded by Mr. Clash and with unanimous vote convened at the Anne Arundel County Board of Education Building. All board members were present. Also in attendance were State Superintendent Carey Wright, Deputy Executive Director Hannah Oakley and Assistant Attorneys General Elliott Schoen and Jackie La Fiandra. The Executive Session commenced at 3:53 p.m. and ended at 4:10 p.m. The State Board reviewed and approved one Final Opinion

- *Charann White v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-20. The Board reversed the administrative law judge's penalty and affirmed the local board's penalty.

STATE BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Mr. Barnes announced he will attend Harvard College in Fall of 2026. Mr. Greer said the Strategy and Operations Committee will meet May 13, 2026, and Dr. Lewis said the Education Policy

Committee will meet May 14, 2026. Dr. Bell shared that the Prince George's County Public School Superintendent Search Committee is currently screening applicants and intends to present three candidates to the County Executive by May 8, 2026.

LEGAL OPINIONS AND ORDERS

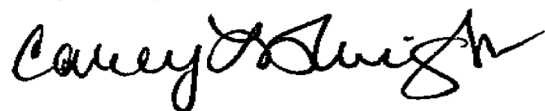
Mr. Elliott Schoen, MSDE Assistant Attorney General, announced the following opinions:

- *C.H. v. Harford County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-15. The Board remanded the case back to the local board based on new evidence submitted by Appellant in the appeal to the State Board.
- *F.B. v. Prince George's County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-16. The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *K.R. v. Charles County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-17. The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *Delphonzo Sellers v. Harford County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-18. The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *Eugene Spellman v. Prince George's County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-19. The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *G.B. v. Charles County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-08. The Board dismissed the appeal as untimely and moot.
- In the Matter of MBEF College and Career Academies, Inc. – Order No. OR26-09. The Board dismissed the petition.
- *Baltimore County Parent and Student Coalition, Inc. v. Baltimore County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-10. The Board dismissed the appeal for lack of standing.

STATE BOARD ADJOURN

Dr. Michael called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Clash motioned, Dr. Bell seconded. (In Favor: 12, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent:

Respectfully submitted,



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

Date: May 28, 2026

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-2026.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 **Thursday, May 28, 2026**.

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.