

MEETING OF THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes of the July 28, 2026 Meeting
200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

The Maryland State Board of Education met on July 28, 2026, 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, Dr. Kim Lewis, Dr. Irma Johnson, Mr. Nick Greer, Ms. Marcy Leonard, Ms. Nicole Murray-Lewis, Mr. Kenny Clash, Mr. Chet Chesterfield, Dr. James Bell, Mr. Samir Paul, Ms. Xiomara Medina, Dr. Monica Goldson, and Dr. Peggy Carr were all present. Ms. Lorena Wu was not present.

State Superintendent Dr. Carey Wright, State Board Director Zach Hands, and Assistant Attorney General Allan Dunklow 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. Dunklow declared that a quorum was present.

Dr. Michael welcomed members to the first meeting of the 2026–27 Board term and highlighted the significance of reviewing Maryland’s statewide assessment results in July, a release date earlier than seen in recent years. He shared that this year marks the State’s fifth and final year of MCAP before transitioning to MSTAR. He noted encouraging gains in reading and mathematics and emphasized the value of examining the five-year body of assessment data, alongside the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, to identify areas of progress and opportunities for continued improvement.

PUBLIC COMMENT

In-Person participation:

- Ever Hanna, Trans Maryland - Transgender students participation in school spaces
- Lee Blinder, Trans Maryland - Supporting transgender students
- Jon Clark, Sanctuary Maryland - Keeping schools safe for trans spectrum children and teachers
- Ida Kenna – Inclusive Title IX policies for trans students
- Andy Gosson – Trans student inclusion in Title IX

Virtual participation:

- Trish Brennan-Gac – Maryland Reads
- Lizz Hammon – Federal Attacks on Trans Athletes
- Sharon Saroff – Special Education and Home and Hospital
- Leigh Higgins - Title IX Investigation Response

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of June 23, 2026 Meeting Minutes
- Personnel Actions
- Budget Adjustments, June 2026
- 2027 State Board Meeting Dates
- COMAR 13A.07.14 Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct History (Permission to Adopt)
- COMAR 13A.05.01.03 and .08 Alternate Assessment (Permission to Adopt)
- COMAR 13A.01.02.07 State Superintendent of Schools Removal of a County Superintendent (Permission to Adopt)
- COMAR 13A.02.01.05 County Board Removal of a County Superintendent (Permission to Adopt)

ACTION: Dr. Michael requested Board approval of the consent agenda. Ms. Medina motioned, Dr. Lewis seconded. (In Favor: 12, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 2)

STATE BOARD ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Michael called for a motion to adjourn to an Executive Session. Mr. Chesterfield motioned, Dr. Bell seconded. (In Favor: 12, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 2)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to § 3-305(b)(7) of the General Provisions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon motion of Chet Chesterfield and seconded by James Bell and with unanimous vote the State Board of Education met in closed session on July 28, 2026 in Conference Room #1, 8th Floor, at the Nancy S. Grasmick Building. All board members were present except for James Bell and Kenny Clash. Also in attendance were State Superintendent Carey Wright, Executive Director Zachary Hands, Deputy Director Hannah Oakley, and Assistant Attorneys General Alan Dunklow and Jackie LaFiandra.

ELECTION AND INTRODUCTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Paul called for a nomination for President. Ms. Leonard nominated Dr. Michael. It was approved unanimously. Mr. Paul called for a nomination for Vice President. Dr. Johnson nominated Dr. Bell. Dr. Michael and Dr. Bell were elected unanimously.

Dr. Michael expressed his appreciation to his colleagues and the public for entrusting the State Board and congratulated Dr. Bell on his election. He also recognized Dr. Goldson for her service as Vice President. Dr. Michael reflected on the Board's position as Maryland approaches the midpoint of Blueprint implementation, noting that instructional reforms are now taking hold in classrooms and positioning Maryland as a model for public education.

Dr. Bell thanked Dr. Goldson for her counsel and support as he considered pursuing the position and expressed his appreciation to Board members for their confidence in him. He reflected on the

significant impact education has had on his own life and shared his intention to help strengthen opportunities for Maryland students.

STATE SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Dr. Wright shared updates from her participation in the Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium, the Council of Chief State School Officers Summer Leadership Convening, and the Rising Generation Strategy Group at the Aspen Institute. Across these engagements, she discussed statewide mathematics and literacy initiatives, shifts in early childhood education, budget constraints, and the role and levers of state governance. As the new school year approaches, Dr. Wright also highlighted preparations for the upcoming year and plans for school visits.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) UPDATE - HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. Bill Barnes, Superintendent of Howard County Public Schools, provided an update on behalf of the 24 local superintendents and the Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM). He began by congratulating Ms. Leonard, a Howard County principal, for her appointment to the State Board. Reflecting on his tenure as Superintendent, Mr. Barnes highlighted the implementation of a robust Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and encouraging academic results, including gains in literacy and middle school mathematics. He also discussed a comprehensive redesign of special education programming in partnership with community stakeholders, which has reduced reliance on nonpublic placements and realigned staffing to expand specialized services. Additional priorities included strengthening College and Career Readiness (CCR), expanding Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming and achievement, and preparing for the transition to the new state assessment system. Mr. Barnes also highlighted investments in school and staff culture that have contributed to improved staff retention, as well as the addition of athletic trainers at every Howard County high school. He concluded by noting that the Howard County Strategic Plan aligns with the State Board's goals and serves as the foundation for the district's priorities.

Ms. Medina thanked Mr. Barnes for highlighting both areas of improvement and persistent opportunity gaps, noting that Howard County is often viewed as a leader in the state. Mr. Greer shared that parent engagement through the Free State PTA has identified special education as an area for continued improvement. Mr. Barnes acknowledged Howard County's history of strong performance while recognizing that outcomes have not been as strong for all student groups and reaffirmed the district's commitment to improving outcomes for every student. Ms. Leonard noted Mr. Barnes' attention to student groups requiring additional services and asked about best practices that could be shared statewide, particularly for students with disabilities and multilingual learners. Mr. Barnes shared that, in his previous role in Baltimore County, he viewed Howard County's approach to supporting students with disabilities as a model. Since joining Howard County, he has focused on addressing nonpublic placements and working with staff and families to review data and ensure students receive services in the setting best suited to their needs. He also highlighted the district's investment in professional learning to strengthen staff

capacity to support the growing multilingual learner population and improve instruction for all students.

Dr. Lewis asked whether investments in services for students with disabilities have resulted in corresponding changes in student outcomes and data. Mr. Barnes highlighted early evidence of the impact of investments, noting that the additional funding has allowed the district to increase staffing and services, particularly for students with autism. He also noted that the district's theory of change includes longer-term measures such as discipline rates. Ms. Medina commended Howard County's range of professional learning opportunities and asked how access could be expanded to all staff. Mr. Barnes shared that educational equity training is now required for all staff and acknowledged feedback that some professional learning has been too one-size-fits-all. He noted that the district is continuing to expand and refine its professional learning offerings.

2025-2026 MCAP RESULTS (INFORMATION ONLY)

Mr. Geoff Sanderson, MSDE Chief of Accountability, shared the results of the 2025-2026 MCAP results and outlined student achievement data over the past five years. Ms. Sanderson said overall, ELA proficiency remained stable between SY 2024–2025 and SY 2025–2026. Beginning with the 3rd to 5th grade band, Mr. Sanderson said English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency increased 4.2 percentage points over five years, reaching 48.6% in SY 2025–26. Within the elementary grade span, Grade 3 ELA reached the highest proficiency at 50.4%. One of the greatest areas of growth is evidenced in grades 6 to 8 ELA proficiency, as data indicates proficiency increased 8.4 percentage points over five years, reaching 51.8% in SY 2025-2026. Within the middle school grade span, Grade 7 ELA reached the highest proficiency at 54.6%. While high school ELA proficiency increased 6.3 percentage points over five years, in SY 2025-2026, 59.7% of students taking the ELA 10 test were proficient.

Overall, ELA proficiency continues to trend upward since SY 2021–2022. ELA proficiency across all tests combined improved for nearly every student group in SY 2025–2026 compared to SY 2021–2022. While large proficiency gaps persist among student groups, Mr. Sanderson noted that proficiency rates among economically disadvantaged students grew by roughly 12 percentage points, while rates among Black/African American students grew by roughly 8 percentage points and among Hispanic/Latino students by roughly 5 percentage points over the same five-year period. Mr. Sanderson then presented ELA proficiency rates by local education agency (LEA) highlighting Baltimore City, Harford, and Calvert County for double digits gains since SY 2022.

Regarding math proficiency, the 3rd to 5th grade band increased 6.0 percentage points over five years, reaching 35.8% in SY 2025–26. Within the elementary grade span, Grade 3 math reached the highest proficiency at 42.6%. In the 6 to 8 grade band, proficiency increased by 4.8 percentage points over five years across all three grades combined, reaching 18.1% in SY 2025–26. Combined mathematics proficiency on high school-level assessments (Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry) increased by 7.9 percentage points over five years, reaching 24.6% in SY 2025–26. Mr. Sanderson

noted, Algebra and Geometry are in effect optional tests, leading to anomalies in the data. Due to changes in the course sequence, the geometry assessment had 40% fewer participants, contributing to the skewed data in SY2025-2026. Statewide math proficiency in SY 2025–2026 is relatively similar to SY 2024–2025.

Overall, math proficiency across all grades combined has increased 6.1 percentage points since SY 2021–2022. Similar to ELA, Mathematics proficiency across all tests combined improved for every student group in SY 2025–2026 compared to SY 2021–2022 while large proficiency gaps persist among student groups. Proficiency rates among Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students grew by roughly 5 percentage points over the five year period. Mr. Sanderson then presented math proficiency rates by LEA highlighting Worcester and Calvert County for double digits gains since SY 2022.

Lastly, Mr. Sanderson described the proficiency rates for the science assessment and the ELA and math alternate assessments. In Grade 5 science performance, Mr. Sanderson noted an upward trend since SY2023-2024 with 32.4% of students proficient in SY 2025–2026. Grade 8 science proficiency remained relatively flat at 30.9% in SY 2025–2026, slightly lower than last year but still higher than SY 2023–2024. In SY 2025-2026, Alternate ELA proficiency for all tests combined was 13.1%, consistent with last year but lower than SY 2023-2024. ELA proficiency on the alternate assessment at the high school level increased in SY 2025-2026 relative to SY 2024-2025. Alternate Math proficiency across all tests reached 14.5%, a slight increase from the prior year and consistent with the SY 2023–2024 rate. Math proficiency on the alternate assessment shows a modest upward trend at both the middle and high school level. There is a declining trend in Alternate Science Grade 5 proficiency with 7.1% of students proficient in 2026. Grade 8 Alternate Science proficiency in SY 2025–2026 was 16.6%, an increase from last year, though still below the proficiency rate in SY 2023–2024.

Dr. Tenette Smith, MSDE Chief Academic Officer, shared how MCAP data impacts instructional programs and described three priorities, MTSS, high quality instructional materials (HQIM), and professional learning and coaching to build educator capacity to implement MTSS and HQIM. Specific to literacy supports, MSDE is working to improve student outcomes in literacy through professional learning, state literacy coaching, monthly ELA supervisor collaboratives and supporting implementation of comprehensive literacy plans. Similarly, math supports include statewide mathematics professional learning, monthly math supervisor collaboratives, and resource development and support for the implementation of the revised mathematics standards.

Mr. Sanderson shared the recent results from the Education Scorecard and provided an overview of Maryland's chronic absenteeism rates. According to the Education Scorecard, Maryland's pandemic recovery ranks in the top five nationally in both reading and math with several LEAs recognized for exceptional progress. In regards to absenteeism, Mr. Sanderson shared that the percentage of K-12 Maryland public school students at risk for chronic absence is projected to be a 3-percentage point decrease from SY 2024-2025. Dr. Michael asked for additional context on

chronic absenteeism rates related to COVID-19. Mr. Sanderson noted that the statewide rate was approximately 19% before COVID-19 and increased to approximately 31% following the pandemic.

Dr. Michael thanked the presenters and noted that this was the Board's first review of the preliminary, high-level data. He said members' questions would be documented and addressed through a more comprehensive analysis at the August Board meeting. Mr. Greer said he was encouraged by the increases in proficiency rates, although he noted they were modest and not occurring at the pace the Board would like to see. He additionally emphasized that successful implementation remains the priority and highlighted that economically disadvantaged students experienced the largest gains in ELA proficiency among all student subgroups. Mr. Greer then requested data showing movement among students across and within the lower and upper achievement bands. Mr. Chesterfield asked what factors contributed to the growth in Worcester County Public Schools' MCAP scores over the past four years. Dr. Wright said the district's superintendent has maintained an intense focus on every student performing below proficiency, ensuring instructional programs are intentionally aligned to accelerate student achievement and improve proficiency rates. Mr. Chesterfield asked about the other Eastern Shore LEAs that lag in proficiency growth. Dr. Wright reiterated the importance of intentional data use and highlighted Caroline County as an Eastern Shore LEA that has experienced accelerated growth in student proficiency.

Dr. Carr asked about pre-pandemic data from 2019 to provide additional context for student performance before COVID-19 and whether MSDE staff could provide further analysis on how current performance compares to pre-pandemic levels. She acknowledged that Maryland used the PARCC assessment at the time, which differed from the current assessment, and asked whether a bridge study had been conducted to allow for comparisons across the two assessments. Dr. Carr additionally asked what principles will guide deeper analyses of the data for the August presentation, noting that proficiency data alone may not fully capture student performance across the distribution beyond the established cut point. Dr. Carr also asked whether lower-performing students are experiencing declines similar to those reflected in national NAEP data. Dr. Wright said NAEP results would be presented at the next Board meeting and noted that last year's data showed Maryland's lower-performing students were not experiencing declines in proficiency similar to those observed in other states. Mr. Sanderson said there is not currently a bridge study available to support comparisons between 2019 PARCC data and current MCAP data, which is why the 2019 data was not included in the analysis. He noted that the development of the new assessment will include a bridge study to support future comparisons. Mr. Sanderson affirmed Dr. Wright's comments and said that performance among the lowest 10 percent of students has improved, although not at the same rate as the highest-performing 10 percent of students. He added that at the August Board meeting, staff will present additional analyses, including proficiency data by percentile, proficiency rates for students attending high- and low-poverty schools, outcomes for community schools and schools targeted for intervention, cohort analyses, and additional breakdowns by student groups. Dr. Wright added that the new accountability

model being developed by the Technical Advisory Committee will be better positioned to capture the nuances within student performance data and better support efforts to address the needs of lower-performing students.

Ms. Medina said that while the gains may be modest, the overall trend of improvement is positive and emphasized the importance of sharing that message with school leaders and families. Dr. Lewis appreciated the inclusion of students taking the alternate assessment and requested additional data on student groups, including how identification across multiple student groups relates to proficiency rates and how those outcomes intersect with absenteeism. Dr. Johnson asked why ELA performance declines as students progress from third to fifth grade and requested additional data on student movement across MCAP performance levels. She asked whether students are progressing from one proficient level to another, such as moving from Level 3 to Level 4, rather than only examining movement from not proficient to proficient. Ms. Murray-Lewis asked about best practices that have enabled LEAs to reduce chronic absenteeism rates. Ms. Leonard expressed appreciation for the educators and families who have contributed to student growth and emphasized the importance of the instructional components discussed by Dr. Smith, including multi-tiered systems of support MTSS, HQIM, and professional learning, as key levers the State can use to improve student achievement.

Dr. Bell asked about the topics covered through the Maryland School Leadership Academy and how educators access the program. Dr. Smith said the program is currently accepting applicants and noted that the Leadership Academy is grounded in the three previously discussed priorities: MTSS, HQIM, and professional learning. Dr. Wright added that training is also tailored based on the needs of each cohort and participant feedback. Dr. Bell then asked whether superintendents are invited to share best practices. Dr. Smith said they are and noted that participants are also provided with mentors, with priority given to applicants who are seeking leadership positions.

Ms. Medina requested chronic absenteeism data alongside proficiency rates and noted the decline in mathematics proficiency rates after fifth grade. She also emphasized the importance of collaboration among LEAs and encouraged continued sharing of best practices. Dr. Wright said Maryland superintendents frequently work collaboratively to support one another and share effective practices. Dr. Johnson asked how MSDE communicates with the Maryland Higher Education Commission to ensure effective outreach to aspiring school leaders. Dr. Carr emphasized the importance of supporting students during the transition from elementary to middle school and noted that establishing appropriate proficiency levels on the next assessment will be an important consideration.

Dr. Michael concluded by highlighting improvements in the transparency and timeliness of MCAP data, noting that the data was released earlier this year than ever before. Dr. Wright also thanked Maryland educators for their efforts to support student achievement and emphasized that, while progress has been incremental, the State is moving in the right direction.

CTE JOINT VISION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (ACTION)

Mr. Richard Kincaid, Assistant State Superintendent for the Division of College and Career Pathways, presented the CTE Joint Vision Implementation Plan, outlining a roadmap for meeting the Blueprint for Maryland's Future goal that, by 2031, 45 percent of college- and career-ready graduates complete a high school level Registered Apprenticeship (HSLRA) or earn another industry-recognized credential (IRC). On July 7, 2026, the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) CTE Committee approved the Joint CTE Vision Implementation Plan.

Mr. Alex Reese, MSDE Chief of Staff, presented the plans three major objectives: increase employer engagement to grow HSLRA opportunities; expand student access to and awareness of HSLRAs and IRCs; and align partner agencies and data infrastructure around clear, shared goals. Mr. Reese explained that each objective is owned by various stakeholders, including the GWDB, the Department of Labor, and MSDE, addressing both the supply of employers and the necessary student participation.

Dr. Lewis and Mr. Greer emphasized the ambitious nature of the plan, expressing appreciation for its bold goals and collaborative approach.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to adopt the CTE Joint Vision Implementation Plan. Dr. Lewis motioned, Ms. Medina seconded. (In Favor: 12, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 2)

COMAR 13A.07.06.08 STATE PROGRAM APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS (PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)

Ms. Kelly Meadows, Assistant State Superintendent of Educator Effectiveness, explained that the proposed updates are primarily driven by statutory changes enacted during the legislative session. She highlighted changes to teacher certification under the Blueprint, which expand the ways candidates may demonstrate pedagogical knowledge. In addition to the existing EdTPA assessment and MSDE/AIB-approved induction programs for conditionally certified employees, the legislation now allows educator preparation programs to develop their own portfolio-based assessments and permits candidates in the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program to submit the certificate of completion in lieu of a separate portfolio-based assessment.

An additional change to this section of COMAR addresses legislation related to school psychologists and the State's participation in the Interstate School Psychologists Compact. The updates align Maryland's regulations with Compact requirements, including an internship in a school setting and completion of an approved examination. These requirements are not new, but are being newly codified in regulation.

Ms. Medina asked if there is a difference between internships and practicums. Ms. Meadows said they are used interchangeably.

COMAR 13A.12.02.03 PATHWAYS TO TEACHER LICENSURE (PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)

Ms. Meadows explained that these changes are being made in tandem with the previously discussed regulatory changes in COMAR 13A.07.06.08. She noted that legislation also expands

the ways out-of-state candidates may demonstrate pedagogical knowledge by allowing them to submit two years of effective or comparable teacher evaluations from a school or school system.

Ms. Leonard asked whether the two years of effective teacher evaluations must be the educator's most recent evaluations or could be from any point in their career. Ms. Meadows clarified that the two years may occur at any point in the educator's record. Ms. Medina asked what a comparable rating might mean in the context of teacher evaluations. Ms. Meadows explained that states use different terminology for evaluation ratings, such as "satisfactory," which may be considered comparable to an effective rating.

COMAR 13A.12.04.09 SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST (PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)

Ms. Meadows explained that the proposed change in this section of COMAR similarly addresses requirements under the Interstate School Psychologists Compact. She noted that applicants coming from another Compact state will be eligible to receive a Maryland license under the Compact. Ms. Meadows also highlighted a portion of the regulation that will be removed, as it previously addressed interstate reciprocity.

COMAR 13A.12.01.05 MILITARY AND FOREIGN SERVICE (PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)

Ms. Meadows explained that the proposed change stems from legislation recognizing out-of-state educator licenses for members of the Foreign Service and their spouses. She noted that the recognition is tied to the individual's orders, and once the Foreign Service member's or spouse's orders expire, they would need to apply for a Maryland license.

COMAR 13A.07.15 CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECKS (PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)

Ms. Meadows shared that COMAR 13A.07.15 came in response to a recommendation from the Office of Legislative Audits to ensure background checks are conducted in a thorough and effective manner. She explained that the proposed regulation would strengthen MSDE's oversight by requiring the collection of LEA-developed policies and procedures and requiring LEAs to conduct internal audits.

Mr. Greer asked whether volunteers are required to undergo background checks, noting that the regulation states they "may" be subject to such checks. Ms. Meadows clarified that, under current law, background checks for volunteers are optional.

Dr. Lewis said the Education Policy Committee unanimously recommends permission to publish COMAR 13A.07.06.08 State Program Approval Requirements, COMAR 13A.12.02.03 Pathways to Teacher Licensure, COMAR 13A.12.04.09 School Psychologist, COMAR 13A.12.01.05 Military and Foreign Service, and COMAR 13A.07.15 Criminal History Records Checks.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to publish COMAR 13A.07.15 Criminal History Records Checks. Dr. Johnson motioned, Mr. Chesterfield seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

Dr. Carr asked how MSDE generally tracks implementation of new regulations. Ms. Meadows explained that the Division of Educator Effectiveness routinely monitors implementation, and Dr. Michael added that MSDE staff across departments similarly monitor implementation progress. He also noted that the State Board is working to strengthen its oversight of implementation through the Strategy and Operations Committee.

STATE BOARD ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Michael called for a motion to adjourn to an Executive Session. Dr. Bell motioned, Ms. Murray Lewis seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to § 3-305(b)(7) and (b)(13) of the General Provisions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon motion of James Bell, Jr. and seconded by Nicole Murray-Lewis and with unanimous vote the State Board of Education met in closed session on July 28, 2026 in Conference Room #1, 8th Floor, at the Nancy S. Grasmick Building. All board members were present except Lorena Wu. Also in attendance were State Superintendent Carey Wright, Executive Director Zachary Hands, Deputy Executive Director Hannah Oakley, and Assistant Attorneys General Alan Dunklow and Jackie LaFiandra. Chief of Staff Alex Reese, Chief Academic Officer Tenette Smith, Chief Operating Officer Krishnanda Tallur, and Chief Financial Officer Donna Gunning were also present for the budget portion of the meeting. The Executive Session commenced at 1:13 p.m. and ended at 2:28 p.m. The State Board reviewed and approved two Opinions and eight Orders.

- *Girl's Charter, Inc. v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners* – Opinion No. 26-27. The Board affirmed the local board decision.
- *Andrew Seff v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-28. The Board affirmed the local board's decision.
- *AutoFlex Fleet, Inc. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-20. The Board denied the request for reconsideration.
- *Baltimore Collegiate School for Boys v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners* – Order No. OR26-21. The Board granted the Request for Leave to Amend Appeal.
- *Christopher K., Jose R., N.B. and Z.E.D. and W.J. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-22. The Board lifted the stay.
- *Stephanie P. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-23. The Board lifted the stay.
- *C.M. v. Frederick County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-24. The Board dismissed the appeal for untimeliness.
- *M.O. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-25. The Board dismissed the appeal as moot.
- *S.D. and J.A. v. Baltimore County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-26. The Board granted the local board's Motion to Dismiss and dismissed the appeal.

- *T.J. and D.J. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-27. The Board denied the request for reconsideration and remanded the appeal back to the local board.

In addition, Mr. Dunklow provided an update on pending legal matters, Ms. Gunning reviewed FY28 budget estimates and requests, and President Michael provided a leadership update.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SESSION: OUT OF SCHOOL TIME (OST) AND SUMMER PROGRAMMING

Ms. Kim Eisenreich, Board Member of the Maryland Out of School Time Network and Administrator for Howard County's Office of the Local Children's Board, shared the common principles guiding the Network's work, including youth leadership, inclusive engagement, and positive interactions with peers and adults. She highlighted research demonstrating the benefits of afterschool programming, including stronger academic outcomes, higher lifetime earnings, and increased leadership skills. Despite these benefits, Ms. Eisenreich noted that Maryland ranks among the bottom 10 states for afterschool access, with demand continuing to exceed available programming. She also discussed funding constraints, while highlighting data showing a \$3.36 return for every \$1 invested in afterschool programming. Ms. Eisenreich further described the role of OST programs in reinforcing literacy and mathematics instruction, emphasizing that OST's goals align closely with the State Board's priorities.

Ms. Sasha Batts, Senior Executive Director of Youth Development at the Y in Central Maryland, provided an overview of the organization's OST programming and its collaboration with Baltimore City Public Schools. She noted that the Y serves as a lead partner for 28 Baltimore City Community Schools, reaching more than 17,000 youth. Ms. Batts highlighted programming focused on academic intervention, enrichment activities, and character development. She also described the organization's data-driven approach to continuous improvement, including collaboration with school leaders to monitor attendance and academic progress.

Ms. Justine Freimanis, Teacher Specialist for School Improvement at Frederick County Public Schools, provided an overview of the Fun Academics in the Summertime (FAST) program, which serves Frederick County students in grades 1–8. The five-week summer enrichment program provides academic intervention, health and wellness activities, and arts programming. Ms. Freimanis highlighted positive academic outcomes based on pre- and post-program assessments, noting the program's role in mitigating summer learning loss. She also outlined the five funding sources that support summer programming: 21st Century Community Learning Center grants, Title I funding, community school funding, local funding, and community partnerships.

Dr. Michael thanked the panelists for sharing their work and affirmed that the OST community is a critical partner in supporting student success. Mr. Greer expressed appreciation for the panelists' discussion of funding streams and highlighted the gap between demand for programming and available capacity. He asked the panelists whether data presents a barrier to their work. Ms. Batts explained that the Y works closely with school leadership to collect data, while noting that the

timeliness of data remains a significant challenge. Mr. Greer also asked how community partners build relationships with LEAs. Ms. Batts emphasized the importance of having school leaders who are receptive to engaging with community partners, and Ms. Eisenreich said that relationships vary across LEAs and that Baltimore City is well integrated with the OST community, in part due to its high number of community schools. Drawing on her role with the Local Management Board, she also described efforts to broker relationships between districts and schools, while noting that Howard County's reliance on aggregate public data can make it difficult to understand and tell individual student stories.

Dr. Bell asked about OST's vision for a more aligned afterschool system. Ms. Eisenreich emphasized that services should not be provided in isolation and noted the lack of a standardized process for coordinating resources. She cited funding through the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission (CHRC) and the ENOUGH Act as examples of resources that are not consistently integrated across community partners. Dr. Bell said resource mapping and best practice guidance could better support OST partners.

Ms. Leonard emphasized the importance of MSDE removing barriers for OST partners and asked the panelists to raise any bureaucratic processes that are limiting their ability to scale programming. Dr. Carr emphasized the need for additional research to better understand programmatic gaps. Ms. Murray-Lewis asked what additional support OST partners may need. Panelists identified funding as a primary limitation. Ms. Freimanis noted that some schools are unable to access available funding due to restrictions based on student populations, while Ms. Eisenreich emphasized the need for more equitable allocation of concentration of poverty funds.

COMAR 13A.11.01 VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES (REGULATIONS .01-.10, .12-.17) (PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)

Dr. Erikk Bonner, Assistant State Superintendent for Rehabilitation Services, introduced proposed amendments to COMAR 13A.11.01 to align the regulations with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), related federal regulations, and current agency operations and policies outlined in the DORS Rehabilitation Services Manual (RSM). Dr. Bonner emphasized that the proposed regulations are primarily intended to improve internal processes and modernize language in state regulations. Updates include requiring the DORS fee schedule, including Medicare fees, to be updated annually, removing financial participation requirements for certain services, including GED training, and clarifying purchase limitations to specify that medical cannabis is not an allowable purchase.

Dr. Lewis said the Education Policy Committee unanimously recommends permission to publish COMAR 13A.11.01 Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to publish COMAR 13A.11.01 Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Mr. Greer motioned, Mr. Chesterfield seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

COMAR 13A.02.11 ACCESS TO SCHOOL PROPERTY (PERMISSION TO PUBLISH)

Dr. Stefan Redding-Lallinger, MSDE's Chief Policy Officer, introduced the proposed COMAR 13A.02.11, Access to School Property, to address ambiguity surrounding school security and clarify the circumstances under which individuals may access school property. The proposed regulatory framework brings together requirements from multiple statutes, including the Maryland Values Act of 2026 and Education Article § 26-102. The Maryland Values Act of 2026 establishes consistent procedures for how state and local public entities coordinate with federal immigration authorities, particularly within designated sensitive locations, which include nonpublic areas of public schools. The Act also requires the Maryland Attorney General to issue and annually update statewide guidance that local school boards must use when developing their local policies. In addition, it prohibits school personnel from participating in immigration enforcement on school grounds or sharing student or employee information for immigration enforcement purposes. The proposed regulations also incorporate Education Article § 26-102, which affirms the legal authority of school administrators to deny access to school property to individuals who are unauthorized, disruptive, or suspended or expelled.

Dr. Redding-Lallinger explained the regulation establishes procedures for controlling access to school property and maintaining a safe and secure educational environment. Administrators may deny access to individuals who do not have "lawful business to pursue at the school" or who act in a manner that "disrupts or disturbs the normal educational functions of the school." Administrators must also require and document identification and evidence of qualification from individuals seeking to enter school property in an official capacity.

Ms. Murray-Lewis asked what guidance MSDE is providing for educators if they encounter immigration enforcement on school grounds. Dr. Redding-Lallinger said additional guidance will be forthcoming from the Maryland Office of the Attorney General while the current law states school personnel "should not block or impede their access." Ms. Medina emphasized the importance of clearly distinguishing the two-part requirement in which individuals entering school property must have "lawful business" to pursue at the school and must provide proof that they have "lawful business." She also raised concern that the regulations could be read as permitting enforcement activities as long as an individual states their intentions. While Dr. Redding-Lallinger described the regulations as being focused on safety, Ms. Medina noted that the regulatory language does not clearly frame the provisions within a safety context. Dr. Redding-Lallinger reaffirmed the need to wait for additional guidance from the Maryland Office of the Attorney General. Dr. Michael emphasized that the regulatory language is already established in statute and currently in place.

Dr. Lewis said the Education Policy Committee unanimously recommends permission to publish COMAR 13A.02.11 Access to School Property.

ACTION: Dr. Michael called for a motion to publish COMAR 13A.02.11 Access to School Property. Dr. Bell motioned, Ms. Murray-Lewis seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1)

AFTERNOON PUBLIC COMMENT

Virtual participation:

- Patrick Paschall – Protecting Trans Kids
- Laura Usher – Supporting trans and gender diverse students across Maryland
- Jessica Hunt – Middle School Math Requirement
- Brett Killian – Support of gender diversity and trans rights for students and staff

DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION: COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING OVERVIEW (INFORMATION ONLY)

Dr. Jennifer Masoodi, Assistant State Superintendent of Special Education, provided an overview of MSDE's work to provide general supervision of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) services. As required by IDEA, the State must maintain oversight structures designed to improve educational results, including monitoring, fiscal monitoring, dispute resolution, data analysis, technical assistance, professional development, corrective actions, and state performance plans.

Dr. Masoodi highlighted the state complaint process, through which the State agency receives complaints directly and is responsible for investigations and corrective action, as well as remediation when appropriate. Dr. Masoodi then described how the State Performance Plan and indicator data drives MSDE's oversight work. The federal government requires the annual collection of indicator data, which is disseminated to LEAs through an annual report card and helps determine MSDE's monitoring frequency and level of technical assistance. Maryland's requirements are more rigorous than federal requirements, with all LEAs receiving monitoring and data analysis every four years, compared to the federal requirement of every six years.

MSDE's monitoring activities include a review of compliance indicators, including Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting timelines, evaluation and reevaluation timelines, the content of IEPs and IFSPs, early childhood and secondary transition, and LEA and early intervention services (EIS) fiscal policies, procedures, and practices. Monitoring also includes case studies, which are unique to Maryland and involve a deeper, qualitative review of student-specific records over several years. In addition, MSDE conducts interviews with parents, teachers, related service providers, and administrators and reviews the dispute resolution system, including State complaints and due process complaints. Dr. Masoodi noted that while MSDE is focused on results and improving outcomes, there are also federal requirements that require a compliance-oriented approach. Federal law requires states to identify and correct any noncompliance with IDEA as soon as possible, and in no case later than one year from the date the State issues written notification of the findings.

Dr. Masoodi concluded by sharing that, as a new member of the team, she has focused on understanding where Maryland is innovative, where things are going well, and where there are opportunities for improvement, including through meetings with her staff and advocates. She

identified the State complaint process as her greatest challenge, noting a 118% increase in complaints over the past year. She framed the increase as a national crisis, noting that states across the country are experiencing similar increases, and shared that a majority of her work has been dedicated to addressing this issue. She is working to resolve complaints earlier at the local level, with the goal of reducing the burden on the State and allowing staff time to be used more effectively.

Dr. Lewis asked how many State investigators are within the Division of Special Education. Dr. Masoodi said there are five staff members working on State complaints and two staff members working on corrective action plans. Dr. Lewis noted that this is the same level of staffing MSDE had when it was receiving half the number of complaints it currently receives, highlighting the Division's lack of staff capacity. Dr. Lewis additionally said that state complaints are required to be completed within 60 days by federal law. Dr. Lewis asked when guidance on Alternate Assessments would be released to support LEAs with implementation. Dr. Masoodi said the guidance is currently under review and that MSDE intends to offer three learning sessions.

Dr. Carr asked how interagency agreements at the federal level may impact State implementation. Dr. Masoodi said many of the functions of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will be housed within the Department of Health and Human Services, although there is not yet a well-defined timeline. She noted that LEAs are particularly concerned about the timeliness of funding and shared that the Office of Civil Rights has been moved to the Department of Justice and will primarily address Section 504 complaints. Mr. Greer highlighted the differentiated monitoring framework and asked where the Division of Special Education team may need additional support. Dr. Masoodi said the monitoring framework has been in place for many years, but the Division needs to be more intentional about providing technical assistance. Dr. Michael thanked Dr. Masoodi for her work and said that her decision-making has demonstrated intentionality and will support building trust with the public.

CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE (INFORMATION ONLY)

Ms. Sarah Neville-Morgan, Assistant State Superintendent of the Division of Early Childhood, provided an update on the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program, including changes to prioritization for families on the CCS waitlist. Ann Stock, Chief of Staff of the Division of Early Childhood, provided additional details on House Bills 849 and 1321 and their changes to CCS. The new legislation prioritizes scholarships for families with the greatest financial need and introduces a sliding-scale copayment structure. Ms. Stock noted the copayment structure is currently under development and will be discussed at the August Board meeting. Ms. Stock then explained that families receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), as well as siblings of children with existing scholarships, have been exempt from the CCS waitlist during the partial enrollment freeze. Since the waitlist was established, nearly 3,000 children have been offered scholarships through these exemptions. HB849 creates an additional waitlist exemption for families experiencing homelessness. Communication about this exemption began July 1, with eligible families given 30 days to submit documentation following notification. HB 849 also

establishes criteria for determining which families on the CCS waitlist have the greatest need and the order in which they should be prioritized for scholarships as new resources become available. The Division of Early Childhood has developed an approach to implement these prioritization criteria in alignment with the requirements of the legislation.

Shavon Williams, MSDE Director of Child Care Scholarships, further described the updated CCS waitlist prioritization process: First priority is given to applicants with the greatest financial need, based on annual household income. Second priority is given to applicants who work at least 20 hours per week in child care or an eligible public pre-K program that accepts children enrolled in CCS. Third priority is given to applicants enrolling a child under 3 years of age. Fourth priority is given to applicants who have been on the waitlist the longest.

Ms. Medina asked if the language during the presentation defining students experiencing homelessness is tied to statute. Ms. Williams said the definition is derived from the McKinney-Vento Act. Dr. Bell asked what happens if a student experiencing homelessness is no longer experiencing homelessness during the scholarship period. Ms. Williams said eligibility lasts for two years. Dr. Johnson asked how many children are currently on the waitlist and the amount of time families are typically on the waitlist. Ms. Stock said there are roughly 8,000 families on the waitlist and MSDE does not track the average time on the waitlist for families. Dr. Johnson additionally asked how the waitlist may change given the federal changes to eligibility and work requirements for certain programs. Ms. Neville-Morgan said MSDE expects the waitlist to grow. Mr. Chesterfield asked if families that may live with another family qualify as homelessness and Ms. Stock said yes, that is captured under the McKinney-Vento definition.

Dr. Michael noted that the public perception of the CCS waitlist is that there has been little movement and asked presenters to illustrate how the waitlist may move going forward. Ms. Neville-Morgan said that approximately 3,000 families have been moved off the waitlist over the past year. She noted that the new waitlist exemption for families experiencing homelessness provides families with 30 days to submit the required documentation, after which additional processing time will be needed to ensure families receive their scholarships in accordance with the legislation. Dr. Michael concluded by emphasizing that the CCS received \$20 million in additional funding during the most recent legislative session and asked Ms. Neville-Morgan to contextualize the impact of that funding. Ms. Neville-Morgan said the new funding will support approximately 600 additional scholarships for families to be moved off the waitlist, while noting that approximately \$100 million annually would be needed to address the entire waitlist.

LEGAL OPINIONS AND ORDERS

Mr. Dunklow, MSDE Assistant Attorney General, announced the following opinions and orders:

- *Girl's Charter, Inc. v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners* – Opinion No. 26-27. The Board affirmed the local board decision.
- *Andrew Seff v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Opinion No. 26-28. The Board affirmed the local board's decision.

- *AutoFlex Fleet, Inc. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-20. The Board denied the request for reconsideration.
- *Baltimore Collegiate School for Boys v. Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners* – Order No. OR26-21. The Board granted the Request for Leave to Amend Appeal.
- *Christopher K., Jose R., N.B. and Z.E.D. and W.J. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-22. The Board lifted the stay.
- *Stephanie P. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-23. The Board lifted the stay.
- *C.M. v. Frederick County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-24. The Board dismissed the appeal for untimeliness.
- *M.O. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-25. The Board dismissed the appeal as moot.
- *S.D. and J.A. v. Baltimore County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-26. The Board granted the local board’s Motion to Dismiss and dismissed the appeal.
- *T.J. and D.J. v. Montgomery County Board of Education* – Order No. OR26-27. The Board denied the request for reconsideration and remanded the appeal back to the local board.

STATE BOARD ADJOURN

Dr. Michael called for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Bell motioned, Mr. Clash seconded. (In Favor: 13, Opposed: 0, Abstained: 0, Absent: 1).

Respectfully submitted,

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

Date: July 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 **Tuesday, August 25, 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.