

**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
PERSONNEL APPROVALS FOR THE OCTOBER 29, 2026 BOARD MEETING**

**I. Appointments Grade 19 and above:**

| <b><u>NAME</u></b> | <b><u>POSITION</u></b>                                                      | <b><u>SALARY<br/>GRADE</u></b> | <b><u>DIVISION/OFFICE</u></b>                                                                           | <b><u>DATE OF<br/>APPOINTMENT</u></b> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Hodges, Dana       | Special Education Monitoring Specialist –<br>Education Program Specialist I | 21                             | Office of Teaching and Learning,<br>Division of Special Education                                       | TBD                                   |
| Newhouse, Nicole   | Psychologist II                                                             | 23                             | Office of Accountability, Division of<br>Rehabilitation Services - Disability<br>Determination Services | TBD                                   |
| Patel, Karan       | Deputy Director Finance Subsidies &<br>Payments – Program Manager IV        | 22                             | Office of Early Childhood                                                                               | TBD                                   |
| Rheams, Rudi       | Procurement Coordinator – Program<br>Manager I                              | 19                             | Office of Finance and Operations,<br>Division of Administration and<br>Operations                       | TBD                                   |

**II. Appointments Grade 18 and below**

| <b><u>NAME</u></b> | <b><u>POSITION</u></b>                  | <b><u>SALARY<br/>GRADE</u></b> | <b><u>DIVISION/OFFICE</u></b> | <b><u>DATE OF<br/>APPOINTMENT</u></b> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Chohan, Aymen      | Child Care Licensing Specialist Trainee | 15                             | Office of Early Childhood     | TBD                                   |

October 29, 2026  
BOARD LIST

The following professional appointment is submitted for approval by the State Board of Education:

**Name:** Dana Hodges

**Position:** Special Education Monitoring Specialist – Education Program Specialist I

**Division/Office** Office of Teaching and Learning, Division of Special Education

**Salary Grade:** State Salary Grade: 21  
Annual Salary Range: \$93,138 - \$146,883

**Effective Date:** TBD

**JOB REQUIREMENTS:**

**EDUCATION:**

A master's degree or equivalent 36 post baccalaureate credit hours of course work in Education, Special Education or a related field.

**EXPERIENCE:**

Four (4) years of professional administrative experience in or affiliated with special education or early intervention program.

**NOTES:**

1. Candidate may substitute a bachelor's degree and two additional years of the required experience for the required education.
2. Candidates may substitute the possession of a Doctorate degree at an accredited college or university in a field related to the position for one year of the required experience.
3. The required fields of education and experience are unique for each option and are established by MSDE in accordance with Education Article, Section 2-104 of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The specific education and experience qualifications for each position are on record in the Human Resource Management Branch of the Division of Business Services.

Dana Hodges

**DESCRIPTION:**

The primary purpose of this position is to implement the Birth – 21 Accountability to Improve Performance (AIP) system that is an integral part of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Special Education (DSE) general supervision responsibility under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The AIP process serves to monitor local public provider agencies (Statewide) serving infants, toddlers, young children, and youth with disabilities and their families in the implementation of the 20 USC § 1400, 34 CFR §§ 300 and 303, and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) as it pertains to the provision of early intervention and special education services. The process ensures emphasis is placed on those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational and functional outcomes for children with disabilities, Birth through 21, by verifying data, examining the implementation of evidence-based practices, documenting noncompliance with the IDEA regulatory requirements, and providing technical assistance for the timely correction of noncompliance.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

**Education**

Liberty University (Lynchburg, Virginia) 2018 – Master’s Degree in Special Education

Virginia State University (Petersburg, Virginia) 2012 – Bachelor’s Degree in Public Administration

**Experience:**

Office of the State Superintendent of Education (Washington, District of Columbia)

2022 - Present: Special Education Compliance Monitor

District of Columbia Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (Washington, District of Columbia)

2021 – 2022: Special Education Coordinator

2017 – 2021: Special Education Teacher

Craven County School District (New Bern, North Carolina)

2015 – 2017: Special Education Teacher

2015 – 2015: Academic Support Specialist

Virginia Credit Union (Richmond, Virginia)

2012 – 2014: Member Service Representative

**EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

New Hire

October 29, 2026  
BOARD LIST

The following professional appointment is submitted for approval by the State Board of Education:

**Name:** Nicole Newhouse

**Position:** Psychologist II

**Division/Office** Office of Accountability, Division of Rehabilitation Services - Disability Determination Services

**Salary Grade:** State Salary Grade: 23  
Annual Salary Range: \$106,087 - \$167,304

**Effective Date:** TBD

**JOB REQUIREMENTS:**

**EDUCATION:**

Determined by the Maryland State Board of Examiners of Psychologists under the licensing requirements for Psychologists.

**EXPERIENCE:**

Two years of experience rendering psychological services or engaged in psychological research after receipt of the Psychologist license.

**NOTES:**

Candidates may substitute U.S. Armed Forces military service experience as a commissioned officer in Clinical Psychology classifications or Psychology specialty codes in the Psychology field of work on a year-for-year basis for the required experience.

Nicole Newhouse

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Psychologist with the Maryland Disability Determination Services provides leadership and direction to units of Disability Claims Examiners I & II, Disability Claims Examiner Technical Specialists and Administrative Specialist II's who develop and adjudicate Social Security and Supplemental Security Income electronic disability claims ensuring that these claims are processed in an accurate, timely, and cost-effective manner.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

**Education**

Loyola University Maryland (Baltimore, Maryland) 2006 – Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology; 2001 – Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology

West Virginia University (Morgantown, West Virginia) 1996 – Bachelor's Degree in Psychology Communications

**Experience:**

Maryland Department of Health (Baltimore, Maryland)

2021 – Present: Psychologist II

Consultation and Crisis Intervention Associates (Brocklandville, Maryland)

2018 – 2022: Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (Baltimore, Maryland)

2014 – 2021: Psychologist II

Nicole N. Zeitlin, Psy.D. (Chester, Maryland)

2010 – 2014: Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Psychological Assessment Solutions, LLC (Washington, District of Columbia)

2008 – 2013: Director of Pediatric Assessment

Assessments and Solutions (Bethesda, Maryland)

2006 – 2008: Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Atlantic Health Services (Rockville, Maryland)

2005 – 2006: Resident, Psychology

Martha Bridge Denckla, MD. (Bethesda, Maryland)

2001 – 2004: Psychometrist

Psychology Consultants Associated (Lutherville, Maryland)

2001 – 2002: Psychology Associate

Kennedy Krieger Institute (Baltimore, Maryland)

2001 – 2001: Psychometrist

Futtrell, Inc. (Meadowlands, Pennsylvania)

1999 – 1999: Therapeutic Staff Support

Nicole Newhouse

**Experience:**

Allegheny Valley School District (Coraopolis, Pennsylvania)

1998 – 1999: Program Instructor

1997 – 1998: Activity Specialist

REM-WV Inc. (Morgantown, West Virginia)

1996 – 1997: Program Coordinator

**EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

New Hire

October 29, 2026

BOARD LIST

The following professional appointment is submitted for approval by the State Board of Education:

**Name:** Karan Patel

**Position:** Deputy Director Finance Subsidies & Payments – Program Manager IV

**Division/Office** Office of Early Childhood

**Salary Grade:** State Salary Grade: 22  
Annual Salary Range: \$99,442 - \$156,822

**Effective Date:** TBD

**JOB REQUIREMENTS:**

**EDUCATION:**

A bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university.

**EXPERIENCE:**

Five (5) years of professional experience with managing, designing, developing, and auditing financial control systems for multiple programs.

**NOTES:**

1. Candidates may substitute the possession of a Master's degree or the equivalent of 36 credit hours of post-baccalaureate work in Education, Organizational Development, Nonprofit, Business, or related fields for two years of the required experience directly related to the position.
2. Candidates may substitute U.S. Armed Forces military service experience at a rank of Corporal/Petty Officer or higher as a commissioned officer in Education Program classifications or Education Program specialty codes in the Education field of work on a year-for-year basis for the required experience and education, one year of which must have been in an administrative supervisory or consultative capacity.

Karan Patel

**DESCRIPTION:**

This position is responsible for the Bureau of Finance's preparation for State and Federal Compliance in all regulations and processes working with staff in multiple bureaus to ensure that all fiscal and compliance measures are satisfied and understood by auditors from a number of agencies. The incumbent will develop processes and systems that will make a more efficient bureau through the development of Standard Operating Procedures that are clear and accurate to eliminate the duplication of effort resulting from failure to satisfy required standards. Working with the Child Care Scholarship Fiscal team the incumbent will ensure that payments are both processed and delivered in a timely manner and that payments are accurate in order to alleviate unnecessary recoupment efforts.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

**Education**

Towson University (Towson, Maryland) 2009 – Bachelor's Degree in Accounting

**Experience:**

Maryland State Department of Education (Baltimore, Maryland)

2024 – Present: Deputy Chief, General Accounting Section - Accountant Manager II

2023 – 2024: Accountant Supervisor II

2012 – 2023: Senior Accountant – Advanced Accountant

Vinay Marvania Inc. (Reisterstown, Maryland)

2014 – 2019: Staff Accountant

Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Baltimore, Maryland)

2011 – 2012: Accountant I/Grant Manager

Raman R Desai, P.C., C.P.A. (Germantown, Maryland)

2010 – 2011: Staff Accountant

PNC Bank (Westminster, Maryland)

2007 – 2011: Bank Teller

**EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

Promotion

October 29, 2026  
BOARD LIST

The following professional appointment is submitted for approval by the State Board of Education:

**Name:** Rudi Rheams

**Position:** Procurement Coordinator – Program Manager I

**Division/Office** Office of Finance and Operations, Division of Administration and Operations

**Salary Grade:** State Salary Grade: 19  
Annual Salary Range: \$81,750 - \$128,924

**Effective Date:** TBD

**JOB REQUIREMENTS:**

**EDUCATION:**

A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

**EXPERIENCE:**

Three years of experience in contract management or procurement involving duties such as: soliciting, evaluating, negotiating and awarding contracts or ensuring compliance with procurement laws, regulations and conditions.

**NOTES:**

1. Candidates may substitute additional professional or paraprofessional contract management or procurement experience on a year-for-year basis for up to four years of the required education.
2. Candidates may substitute additional graduate education at an accredited college or university at the rate of thirty credit hours for each year of the required experience.
3. Candidates may substitute the following written certifications obtained through passing an examination for the required education: Certified Professional Contracts Manager from the National Contract Management Association; Certified Purchasing Manager from the National Association of Purchasing Management; Certified Public Purchasing Officer or Certified Professional Public Buyer from the Universal Public Purchasing Certification Council (National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, Inc. or National Association of State Purchasing Officers).

Rudi Rheams

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Procurement Coordinator will facilitate all essential procurement and contract management workflow processes and documentation to effectively meet the procurement and contract management goals of all divisions to support MSDE's multiyear strategic plan and Blueprint for Maryland's Future initiatives. The Procurement Coordinator will ensure the execution of high-quality services covering all Procurement and Contract Management Division functional areas including, but not limited to, facilitating all procurement processes and stages (i.e., planning, defining requirements and needs, sourcing and solicitation, evaluation and selection, award, contract negotiations and execution, tracking and record keeping, etc.). Reporting to the Procurement Business Services Partner in the Procurement and Contract Management Division, the Procurement Coordinator will serve as the primary procurement and contract management support provider and workflow manager to assigned Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) division leaders, offices, and units.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

**Education**

Grand Canyon University (Phoenix, Arizona) 2026 – Master's Degree in Instructional Design

Morgan State University (Baltimore, Maryland) 2017 – Bachelor's Degree in Applied Liberal Studies

**Experience:**

Maryland State Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Baltimore, Maryland)

2023 - Present: Procurement Officer

Baltimore City Public Schools (Baltimore, Maryland)

2018 – 2023: Classroom Teacher

Baltimore County Public Schools (Towson, Maryland)

2017 – 2018: Classroom Teacher

New York City Department of Corrections (Queens, New York)

2013 – 2016: Human Resources Assistant Intern

**EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

New Hire

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|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Tsigounis, Sherry  | Director of Child Care Health and Safety<br>– Program Manager Senior II | 24                             | Office of Early Childhood     | TBD                                   |

**II. Appointments Grade 18 and below**

| <b><u>NAME</u></b>  | <b><u>POSITION</u></b>                                                           | <b><u>SALARY<br/>GRADE</u></b> | <b><u>DIVISION/OFFICE</u></b>                                    | <b><u>DATE OF<br/>APPOINTMENT</u></b> |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Perry, Lolita       | Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor –<br>Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist II | 15                             | Office of Accountability, Division of<br>Rehabilitation Services | 11/11/2026                            |
| Rowles-Nalle, Nadia | Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor –<br>Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist II | 15                             | Office of Accountability, Division of<br>Rehabilitation Services | 12/09/2026                            |

October 29, 2026  
BOARD LIST

The following professional appointment is submitted for approval by the State Board of Education:

**Name:** Sherry Tsigounis

**Position:** Director of Child Care Health and Safety – Program Manager Senior II

**Division/Office** Office of Early Childhood

**Salary Grade:** State Salary Grade: 24  
Annual Salary Range: \$113,157 - \$178,453

**Effective Date:** TBD

**JOB REQUIREMENTS:**

**EDUCATION:**

A bachelor's degree or equivalent 36-post baccalaureate credit hours of course work in Public Administration, Education, Administration/Supervision, Early Childhood, Social Work or a closely related field.

**EXPERIENCE:**

Five years of professional administrative experience in management, administration, supervision, and/or policy development of Child Care - Early Learning Programs, one year of the required experience must have been managing the regulatory aspects of a Child Care program.

**NOTES:**

Possession of a master's degree may be substituted for two years of the required administrative experience.

Sherry Tsigounis

**DESCRIPTION:**

This position provides statewide leadership, regulatory oversight, and expert guidance to ensure that all Maryland children—birth through age five, and school-age children through 13—have access to safe, healthy, and high-quality early childhood and school-age programs. Reporting to the Executive Director for Child Care Operations, the Director leads Maryland’s childcare licensing system, including standards development, investigations, monitoring, enforcement, technical assistance, and operational quality assurance for public, private, and in-home childcare programs and nursery schools. Additionally, this position is responsible for leading the ongoing review and modernization of Maryland’s childcare licensing regulatory (COMAR) framework and efforts to improve the efficiency of Maryland’s childcare licensing system, using continuous quality improvement approaches. This position also ensures alignment of childcare licensing functions across Maryland’s early childhood mixed delivery system, including the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) program.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

**Education**

Towson University (Towson, Maryland) 2016 – Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Education;  
1996 – Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood Education

**Experience:**

Maryland State Department of Education (Baltimore, Maryland)

|                 |                                                                              |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2023 – Present: | Early Childhood Operations, Policy, & Strategy Director – Program Manager IV |
| 2020 – 2023:    | Child Care Licensing Deputy Branch Chief – Program Manager II                |
| 2017 – 2020:    | Child Care Licensing Regional Manager                                        |
| 2014 – 2017:    | Child Care Licensing Supervisor                                              |
| 2005 – 2014:    | Child Care Licensing Specialist                                              |
| 2001 – 2003:    | Child Care Licensing Specialist                                              |

Kiddie Academy International, Inc. (Bel Air, Maryland)

|              |                              |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| 2004 – 2005: | Education Specialist         |
| 2003 – 2004: | Corporate Operations Manager |

Baltimore City Public Schools (Baltimore, Maryland)

|              |                     |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 1996 – 2001: | Child Care Director |
|--------------|---------------------|

**EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

Promotion