



Blueprint for Maryland's Future Special Education Workgroup

Workgroup Meeting #2

September 20, 2023

Co-Chairs | Mohammed Choudhury, State Superintendent of Schools
Liz Zogby, Special Education Policy & Advocacy



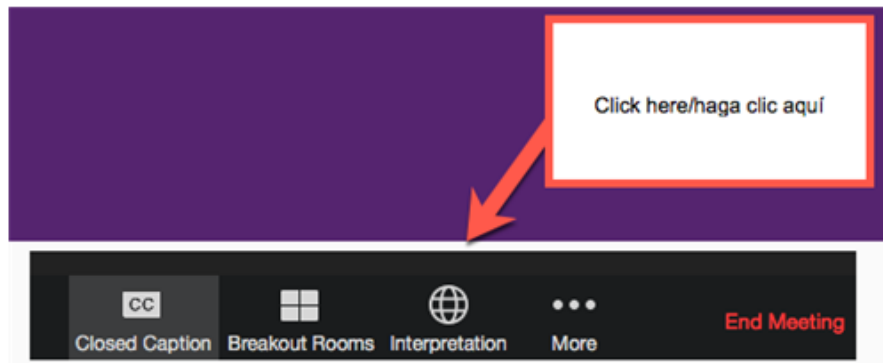
Note to Attendees

This meeting is being recorded and livestreamed via MSDE's YouTube channel:

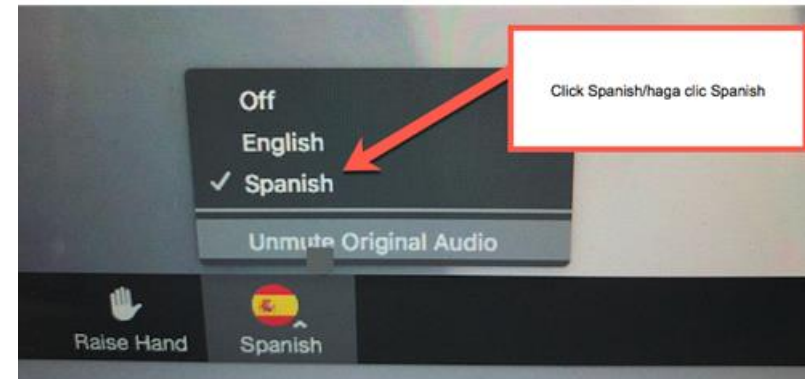
<https://youtube.com/live/vt23B783Oao?feature=share>

¿Español?

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Public Comment
3. Meeting #1 Recap and Guiding Questions
4. Meeting #2 Guiding Question
5. IEP Process and Student Performance Framework
6. Reading and Research
7. Developing Recommendations
8. Future Meetings and Next Steps



Public Comment

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. **Public Comment**
3. Meeting #1 Recap and Guiding Questions
4. Meeting #2 Guiding Question
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Hear from Registered Guests – Public Comment Period



Meeting #1 Recap and Guiding Questions

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Guiding Question #1: What is the state of students with disabilities in Maryland?

Guiding Question #2: How do we overcome persistent barriers to effective implementation?

Resources from Prior Workgroup and Taskforce Recommendations

- Visionary Panel for Better Schools, [Final Report: Achievement Matters Most \(2002\)](#).
- Maryland State Department of Education, K-16 Workgroup: [Ad Hoc Committee on Special Education Teacher Preparation Report \(2006\)](#).
- Commission on Special Education Access and Equity, [Report and Recommendations \(2014\)](#).
- Task Force to Study the Implementation of a Dyslexia Education Program, [Final Report \(2016\)](#).
- WestEd, [Study of the Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) Process and the Adequate Funding Level for Students with Disabilities in Maryland \(2019\)](#).

Summary of Recommendation from Prior Workgroups and Taskforces (1 of 2)

Instruction

- Use a **multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)** for struggling readers
- Engage in a **structured literacy approach** for reading instruction
- Ensure systemic use, with fidelity of **differentiated instruction, Ready to Learn, MTSS, Universal Design for Learning** to improve student learning
- Develop **strategies to bridge policy and practice to support broad and deep implementation of evidence-based-practices (EBPs)**

Teacher Quality

- **Transform curricula and instructional strategies currently utilized in teacher preparation programs** for reading at the undergraduate (pre-service), graduate levels of university preparation, as well as in professional development (in-service) training
- **Utilize performance assessments**, such as *A Resource for Elementary Education Teacher Educators*
- Develop and implement **guidelines** to be used during the accreditation and program approval processes to evaluate the extent to which **performance assessments of all teacher candidates include certain competencies**
- Ensure **preparation** and continuing **professional development** of general education teachers to incorporate special education pedagogical **knowledge, skills, and dispositions**

Summary of Recommendation from Prior Workgroups and Taskforces (2 of 2)

Accountability: Monitoring and Data Collection

- Institute **accountability for continuous improvement and gap closing** for every school district, school and classroom
- Develop policies and technical assistance and monitor for **standards-based, results-driven accountability**
- Review MSDE's processes and procedures for **fiscal monitoring to better evaluate resource allocation patterns**

Disproportionality


- Study the affect of **racial, ethnic, gender, economic, and disability disproportionality on students with disabilities**

Funding

- Consider **differentiated support to LEAs including differentiating funding amounts** based on results and progress data
- Make a series of **short-term investments in supplemental interventions** for students with disabilities that go beyond their special education services to close the achievement gap between students with disabilities and all students

Family Engagement

- Encourage a **greater emphasis on the role of parents** as a valued and integral part of the IEP team
- **Disseminate materials directly to families** in addition to through LEAs and refine the IEP tool to **simplify printout**
- Consider **specific training for staff and families**

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Meeting #2 Guiding Question

What are existing standards and expectations under IDEA for the progress students with disabilities should be able to achieve? How do we ensure that Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals are set that are appropriately ambitious?

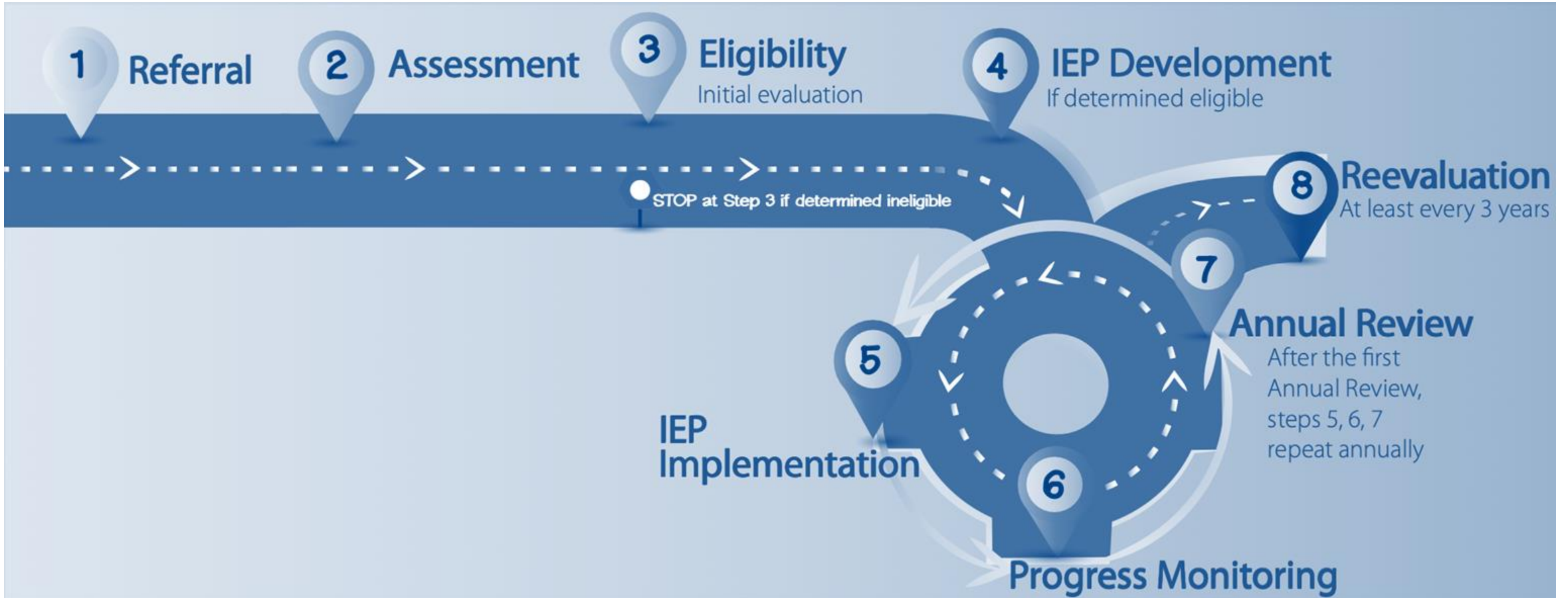


IEP Framework and Student Performance

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An overview of the IEP process, legal requirements for standards and expectations, federal/State guidance, State standards, MSDE – MOIEP and current monitoring and accountability practices, and Maryland data

Overview of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process



Legal and Regulatory Requirements

20 U.S.C. § 1414.

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that each IEP include, among other things, a statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals, designed to meet the student's needs that result from the student's disability and enable the student to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum.

34 C.F.R. 300.39(b)(3)(ii).

- Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under [the IDEA], the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction...[t]o ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.

COMAR 13A.05.01.09A(1)(b).

- The IEP for a student with a disability shall include... measurable academic and functional annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term instructional objectives related to meeting the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum, and meeting each of the student's other educational needs that result from the student's disability[.]

Guidance

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Dear Colleague Letter, November 16, 2015

- "In order to make FAPE available to each eligible child with a disability, the special education and related services, supplementary aids and services, and other supports in the child's IEP must be designed to enable the child to advance appropriately toward attaining his or her annual IEP goals and to be involved in, and make progress in, the general education curriculum based on the State's academic content standards for the grade in which the child is enrolled."

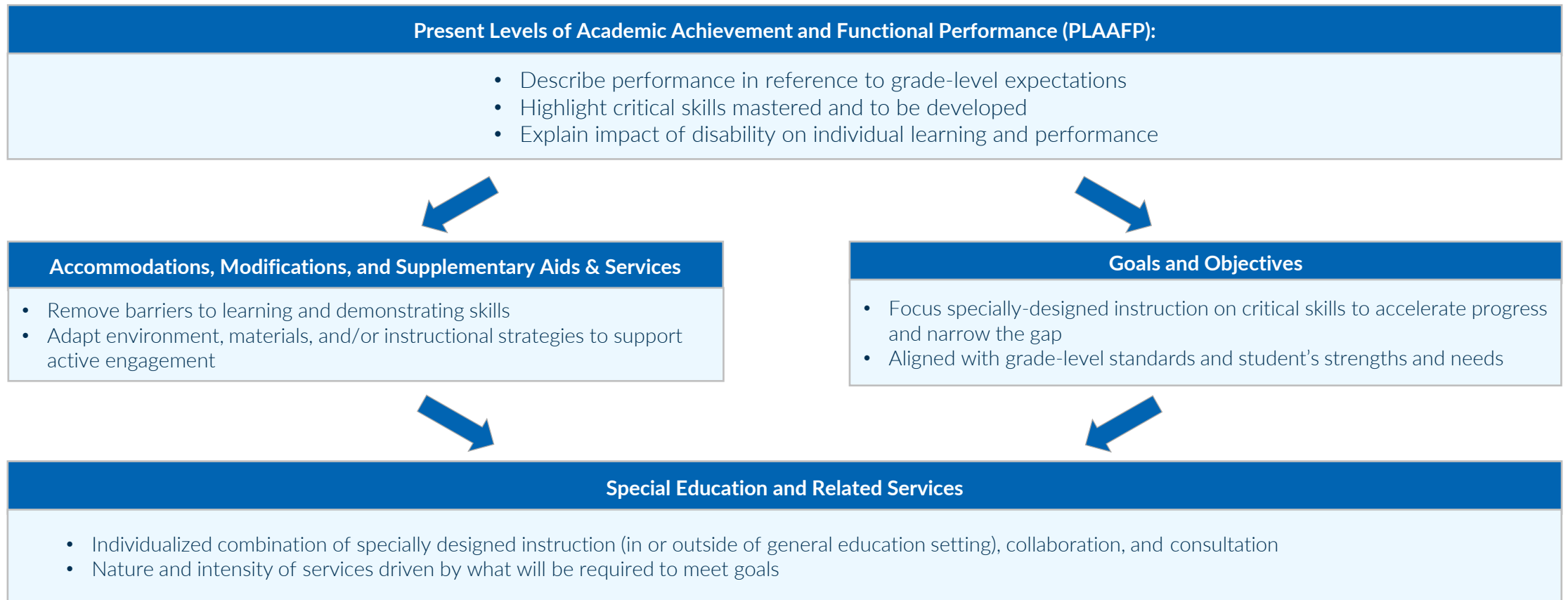
Technical Assistance Bulletin 19-01: Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- "Specially Designed Instruction should narrow the gap in the performance of students with disabilities compared to their same age peers."

Instruction and Assessment Aligned to Standards

- Curriculum and instruction for all students is based on the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, Next Gen Science Standards, other State standards, and local determination
- Approximately 90% of students in Maryland with disabilities are assessed according to the grade-level standards
- Approximately 10% of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are assessed according to Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (Dynamic Learning Map's Essential Elements)
 - Derived from the English Language Arts, Math, and Science Standards
 - Reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity

Creating Standards-Aligned IEPs: Promoting Access to and Progress in the Curriculum



Maryland's Online IEP: Alignment with Grade-Level Standards

- If the student's disability impacts an academic area, then at least one academic goal, aligned with a grade-level standard, must be developed.
- Additional academic goals may be aligned to grade-level or below-level standards.
- For students participating in the Alternate Assessment, goals are aligned to grade-level standards with performance targets informed by the Essential Elements.
- Students may also have functional goals, which are not necessarily aligned to academic standards but developed based on age-appropriate expectations.
- In the Maryland Online IEP (MOIEP) system, aligned standard(s) are selected for a goal.
- The MOIEP prevents the user from closing the IEP if there is no grade-level standard checked for an impact area.
- The MOIEP does not have the ability to identify if the drafted goal is aligned to the standard selected.

Accountability to Improve Performance (AIP)



A reflective process is completed by the local systems to analyze infrastructure, collaboration across the system, and analyze performance data.



Audits of current IFSP/IEPs to identify significant development and implementation trends in the LITP and LEA/PA.



A review of special education policies and procedures to ensure that the implementation guidance provided to staff is consistent with federal and State regulations.



A presentation highlighting the content and information developed through the Self-Assessment process.



Audits of records documenting the provision of services/related services, Alternate Education Framework decision-making, and restraint and seclusion incidents.



An analysis of whether the local accountability infrastructure improves child-level results and narrows the achievement gap between children with disabilities and their nondisabled peers.

Accountability to Improve Performance (AIP)

- Using the six components of monitoring, a comprehensive report is issued that outlines findings and areas of strengths and provides guidance on evidence-based practices.
- The report serves as notification of identified noncompliance and begins the required one-year timeline for correction of noncompliance (e.g., improvement plans).
- Improvement plans are assigned in instances when systemic noncompliance (75% or less compliance) is identified.
- A two-prong correction process is implemented, requiring individual child correction and compliance through audits of smaller samples.



The Potential of Students with Disabilities

Research around the academic potential of students with disabilities indicates that:



Up to 90% of students with disabilities can learn on grade level and achieve proficiency on grade-level standards

(Quenemoen & Thurlow, 2019)



90% of students with disabilities are capable of leaving high school college- and career-ready if supported appropriately along the way

(Butrymowicz & Mader, 2017)

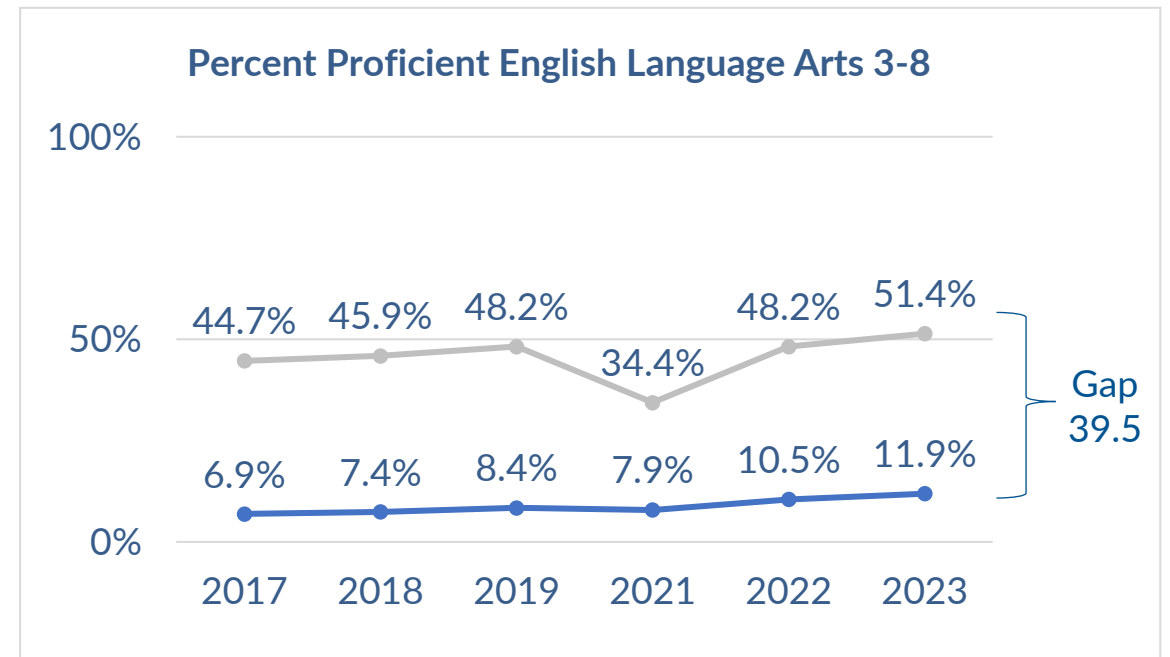
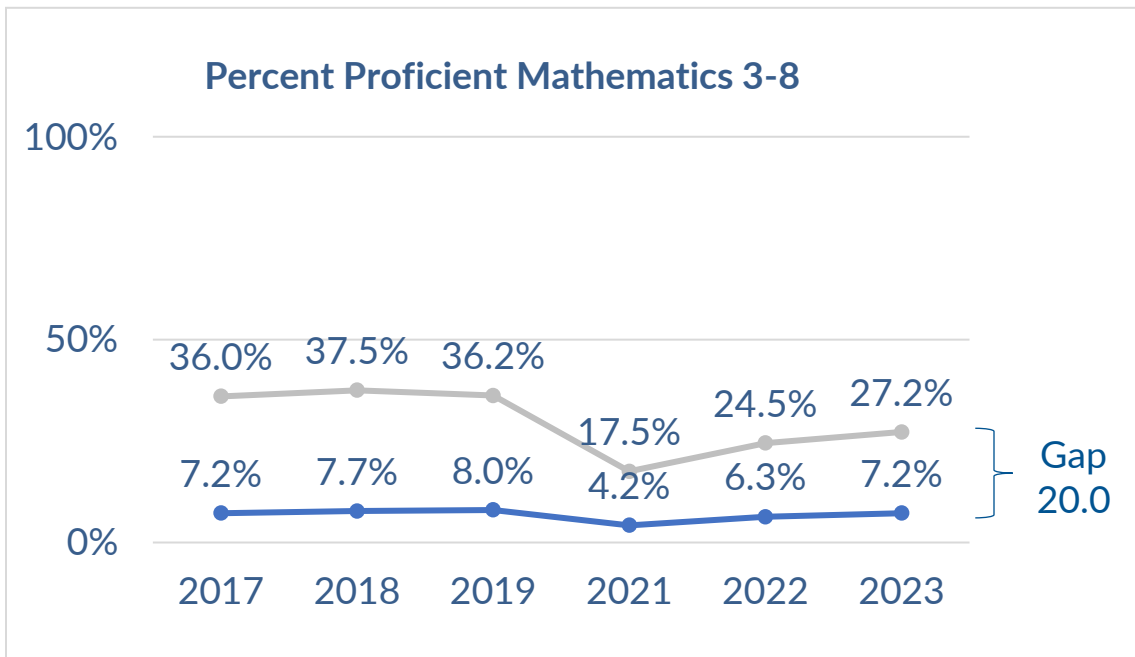


Only 10% of students with disabilities may benefit from alternate standards and assessments

(Quenemoen & Mader, 2017)

Outcome Data: Elementary and Middle School Proficiency, 2017-2023

Maryland students have returned to pre-pandemic performance in English Language Arts in SY 2022-2023. Students improved in mathematics in SY 2022-2023 as compared to SY 2021-2022 results.



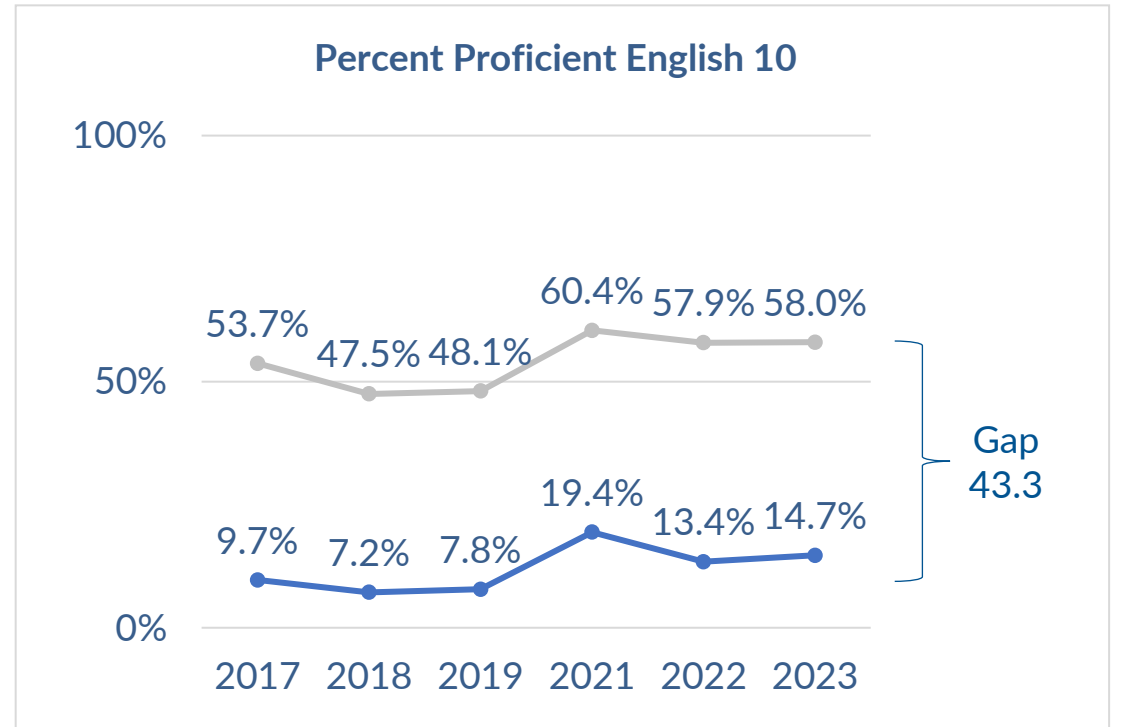
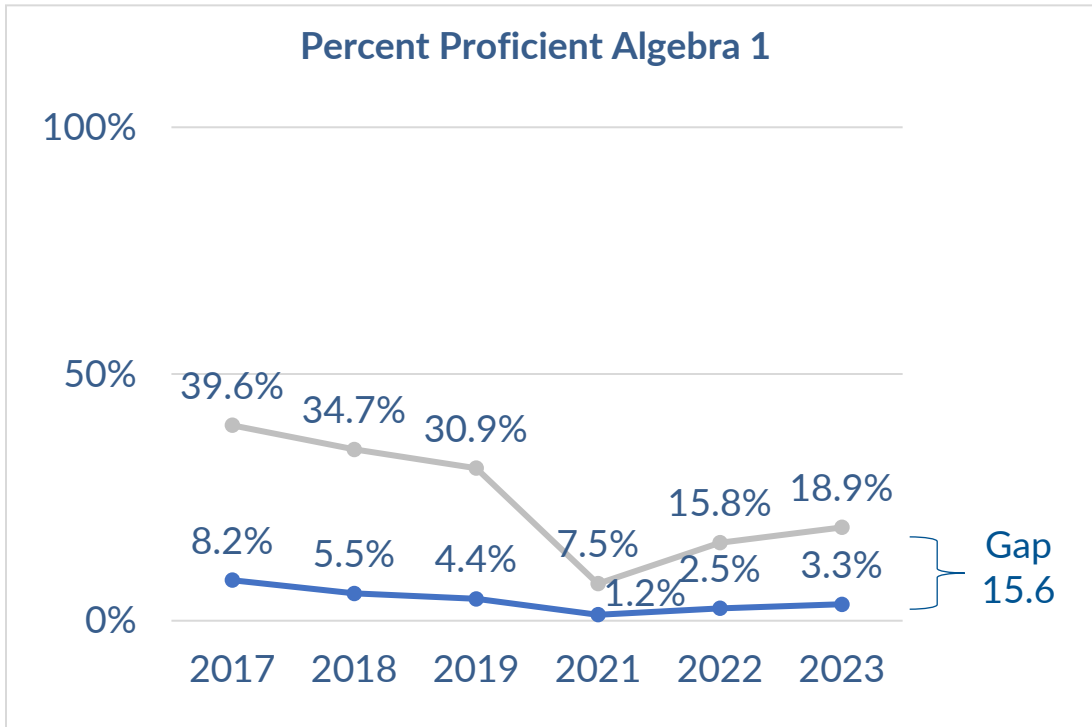
— Students with Disabilities

— Students without Disabilities

*Assessments for 2021 (SY 2020-2021) were shortened tests and were administered in Fall 2021. Preliminary SY 2021-2022 data as of January 3, 2022.

Outcome Data: Algebra I and English 10 Proficiency, 2017-2023

Maryland students have returned to pre-pandemic performance in English 10 in SY 2022-2023 with smaller gains seen in mathematics.

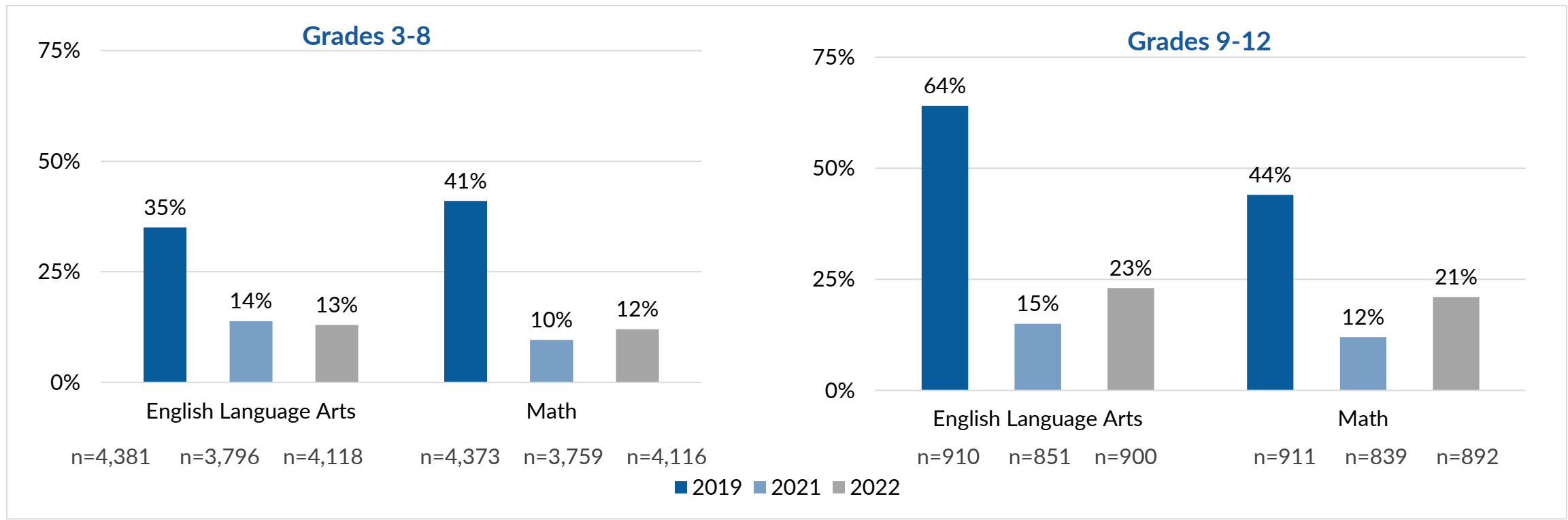


— Students with Disabilities — Students without Disabilities

*Assessments for 2021 (SY 2020-2021) were shortened tests and were administered in Fall 2021. Preliminary SY 2021-2022 data as of January 3, 2022.

Outcome Data: Alternate Assessment Proficiency, 2019-2022

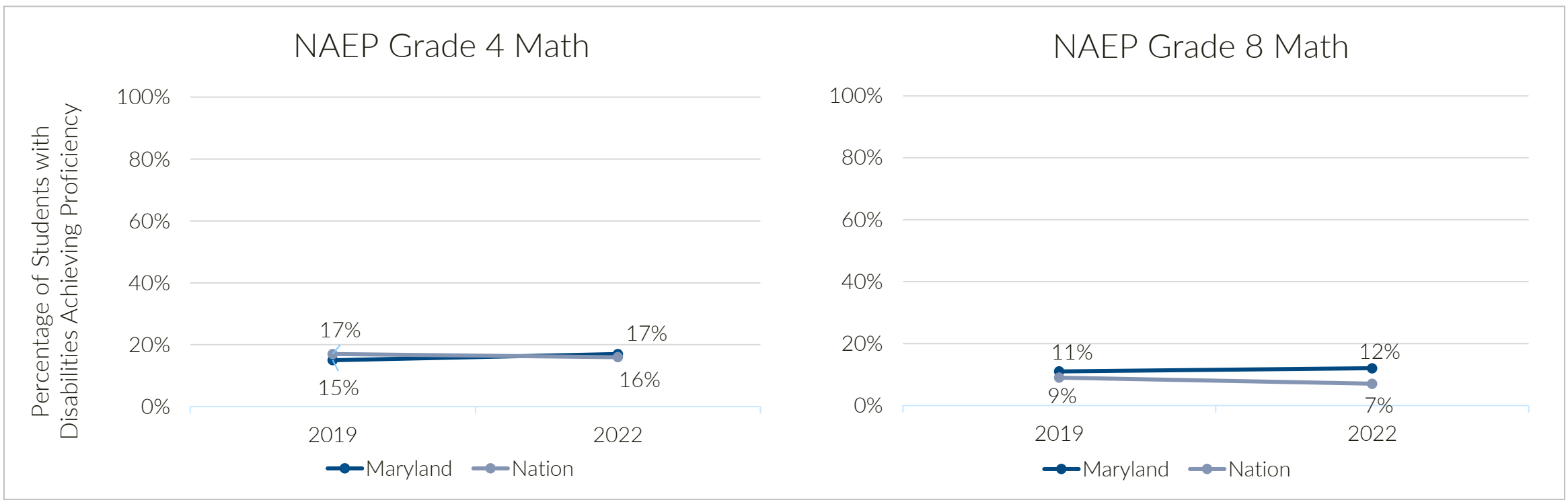
The percentage of students demonstrating proficiency on the alternate assessment has not returned to outcomes from SY 2018-2019.



*Alternate Assessment administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Outcome Data: NAEP Performance, Mathematics

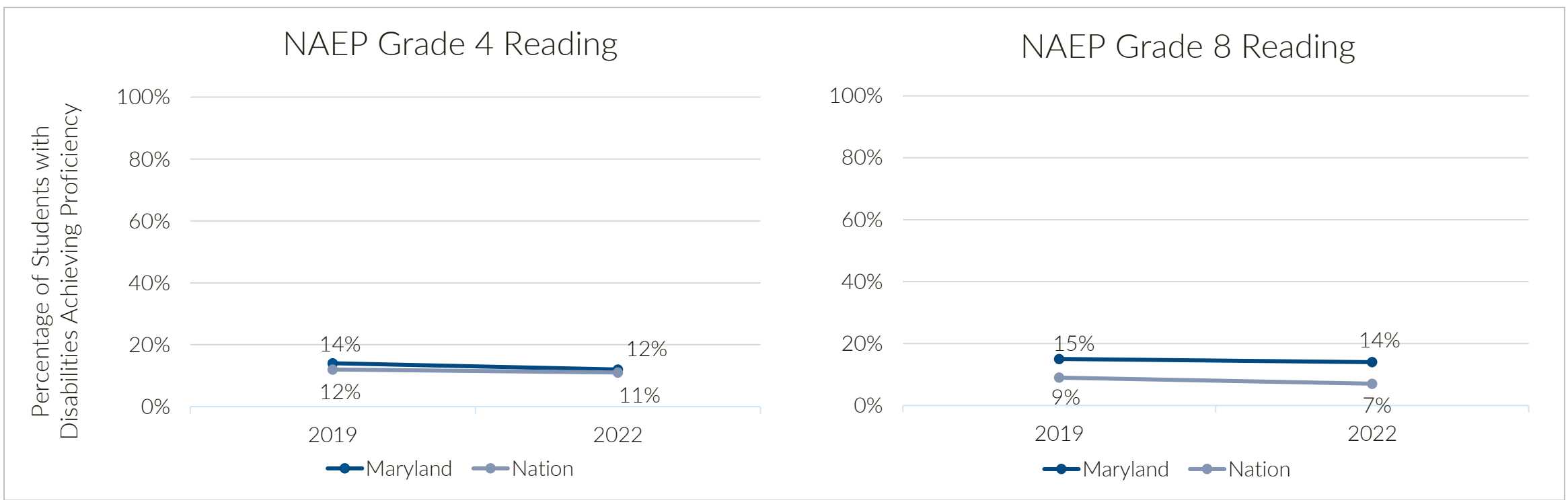
Math proficiency rates for Maryland’s students with disabilities on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) were consistent from 2019 to 2022 and similar to national rates in most years and grades.



Data Source: The Nation's Report Card, NAEP Data Explorer. Differences in Maryland's proficiency rates from 2019 to 2022 are not statistically significant.

Outcome Data: NAEP Performance, Reading

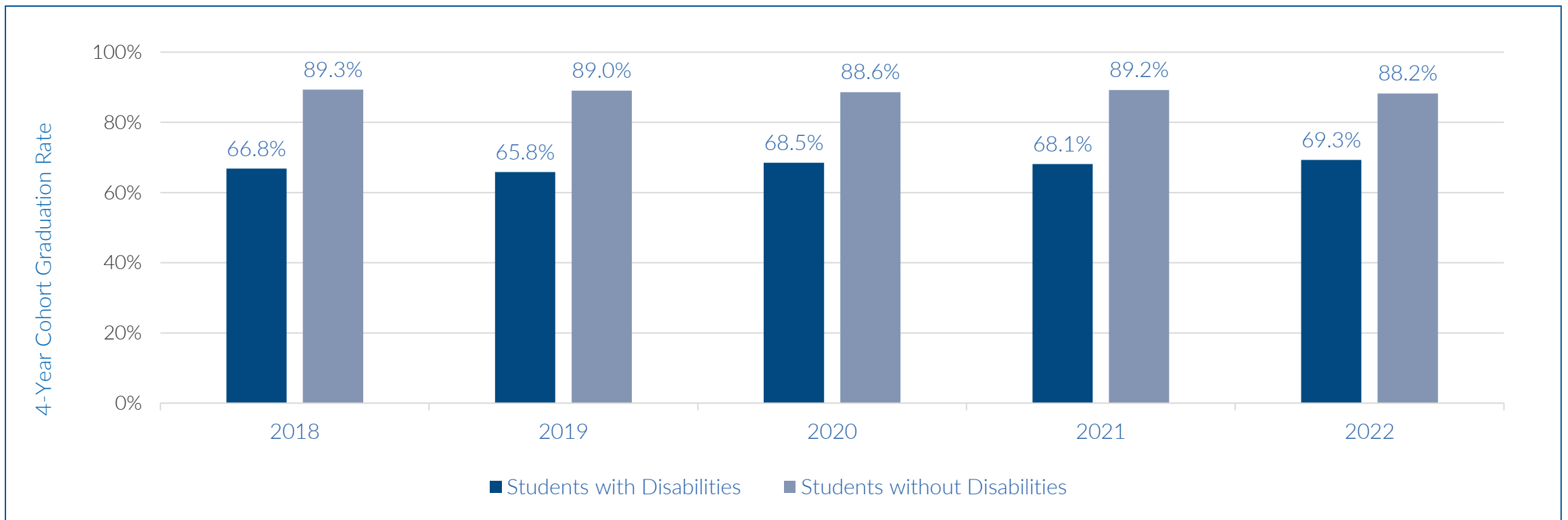
Reading proficiency rates for Maryland’s students with disabilities on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) were consistent from 2019 to 2022 and higher than national rates in most years and grades.



Data Source: The Nation’s Report Card, NAEP Data Explorer. Differences from 2019 to 2022 are not statistically significant.

Maryland's Students with Disabilities: Graduation

The 4-year cohort graduation rate for students with disabilities has consistently been less than 70% and substantially lower than their peers without disabilities but has increased 3.5 percentage points since 2019.



Data Source: Maryland Report Card



Students with Disabilities in Educational Policy, Practice, and Professional Judgment: What Should We Expect?

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Recommendations for action based on thoughtful, informed professional judgment of appropriate educational opportunities for students with disabilities

Source: Quenemoen, R.F., & Thurlow, M. L. (2019) Students with disabilities in educational policy, practice and professional judgment: What should we expect? (NCEO Report 413)

Students with Disabilities in Educational Policy, Practice, and Professional Judgment: What Should We Expect? (1 of 3)

Impact of low expectations on student achievement

- Low expectations of students with disabilities do real damage. A large body of research shows that “**what we expect** a student to learn prior to teaching the student **affects what they actually do learn.**”
- Impact on individual students: “The **implications** for individuals affected by low expectations **are life-changing**. In addition, the **effect of expectations accumulates** over time. Year after year of lower (or higher) expectations for some students adds up to significant differences in outcomes.”
- Impact on groups: Group-based **stereotypes shift expectations** for students with intellectual disabilities, and the **whole subgroup of students with disabilities are affected by low expectations.**

Source: Quenemoen, R.F., & Thurlow, M. L. (2019) Students with disabilities in educational policy, practice and professional judgment: What should we expect? (NCEO Report 413)

Students with Disabilities in Educational Policy, Practice, and Professional Judgment: What Should We Expect? (2 of 3)

Criteria, incidence and performance data

- “... the **criteria used to determine disability status is highly subjective** (Harry & Klingner, 2007), and varies considerably from state to state (GAO, 2019; Muller & Markowitz, 2004; US Dept of Ed, 2018a). **How state criteria are implemented** at the local educational agency (LEA) and school level within a state is **also highly subjective and variable.**”
- **Making assumptions** about what students can learn based on the student having a disability **is unwarranted.**


Source: Quenemoen, R.F., & Thurlow, M. L. (2019) Students with disabilities in educational policy, practice and professional judgment: What should we expect? (NCEO Report 413)

Students with Disabilities in Educational Policy, Practice, and Professional Judgment: What Should We Expect? (3 of 3)

ESEA & IDEA: Articulating Expectations

- Content standards vs. achievement standards
- The **same content standards and achievement standards** set for nondisabled peers are applicable to **85-90%** of students with disabilities.
- For fewer than **1%** of all students, or about 10% of students with disabilities, “**alternate achievement standards** are defined as **what to expect after appropriate access to and progress in the general curriculum** based on state-defined content standards.”
- “The small group of students defined in federal law as appropriately benefiting from state-set alternate achievement standards aligned to the state academic content standards are the **one exception** in all states **to the requirement of the “same” standards for all students.**”

Source: Quenemoen, R.F., & Thurlow, M. L. (2019) Students with disabilities in educational policy, practice and professional judgment: What should we expect? (NCEO Report 413)

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Developing Recommendations

How can the IEP process be improved to ensure that students are enabled to narrow the achievement gap and achieve grade level standards?

Recommendations

- How can the IEP process be improved to **ensure that students are enabled to narrow the achievement gap and achieve grade level standards?**
 - Including **accurate and detailed PLAAFP**, appropriate **accommodations and modifications**, **grade level aligned goals**, and **reasonably calculated services**.
- Examples of barriers
 - **Low expectations** for student achievement
 - **Siloing** of general and special education
 - **Inconsistency** in processes, procedures, and practices **resulting in ineffective implementation**
- Consider **what supports are necessary** and/or recommendations that can be made for the **IEP team, school, Public Agency, and State levels**.

Recommendations

Use the areas below to help generate ideas/thoughts:

Elevating Expectations for Students with Disabilities	Collecting and Analyzing Student Data	Developing Staff Capacity and Processes for Writing IEPs with High Expectations	Rethinking Systems of Accountability and Monitoring	Breaking Down Silos between General and Special Education	Other
<p>Provide local staff with training to self-reflect on inherent bias and internalized messages about the ability of students with disabilities to achieve at grade level.</p>			<p>Review State monitoring tools and compliance protocols to ensure that IEP goals narrow or close the gap between present levels of achievement and grade-level standards, and that, based upon research and professional judgment, services are reasonably calculated to enable the goals to be achieved.</p>		

Instructions

Take time to reflect independently. Then, use the Padlet to post recommendations under each topic, as appropriate.

Virtual Participants

Click on Padlet link in zoom chat; click the “+” button below the column that you would like to add to and type your comment; when finished, click “publish”

-OR-

Post your comment in the zoom chat-noting the bucket it fits in and we will post to the Padlet

In-Person Participants

Click on Padlet link in zoom chat; click the “+” button below the column that you would like to add to and type your comment; when finished, click “publish”

-OR-

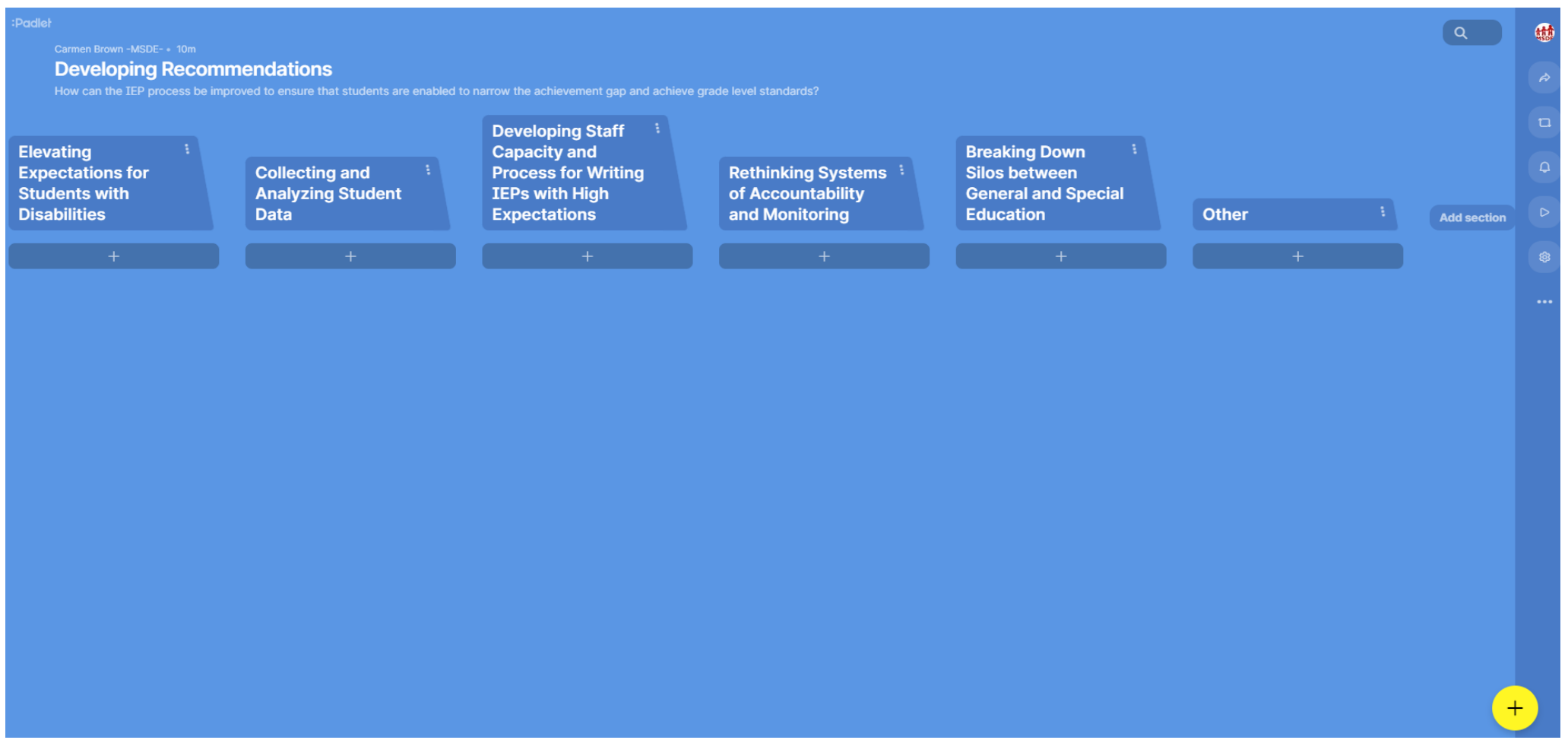
Use the sticky notes on the table to document the bucket and your recommendation and share with Carmen, Brian, or Molly

-OR-

Post your comment in the zoom chat, noting the bucket it fits in and we will post to the Padlet

How can the IEP process be improved to ensure that students are enabled to narrow the achievement gap and achieve grade level standards?


Padlet Exercise



The screenshot shows a Padlet board interface with a blue background. At the top, it says ':Padlet' and 'Carmen Brown -MSDE- • 10m'. The main title is 'Developing Recommendations' with the subtitle 'How can the IEP process be improved to ensure that students are enabled to narrow the achievement gap and achieve grade level standards?'. Below the title are six topic cards, each with a plus sign underneath:

- Elevating Expectations for Students with Disabilities
- Collecting and Analyzing Student Data
- Developing Staff Capacity and Process for Writing IEPs with High Expectations
- Rethinking Systems of Accountability and Monitoring
- Breaking Down Silos between General and Special Education
- Other

On the right side, there is a vertical toolbar with icons for search, share, zoom, and other functions. At the bottom right, there is a yellow plus sign icon.

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Future Meetings and Next Steps

Moving the work forward

Next Steps and Resources

Next Meeting:

- **November 1, 2023** from 4pm to 6pm at MSDE's Board Room in Baltimore, with a virtual option.
- **Guiding Questions:** How can general and special education be more effectively integrated so that the instruction and built-in supports in general education can better meet the needs of students, resulting in fewer referrals and identification?

Forthcoming:

- Takeaways
- Reading recommendations
- Requested data and supporting analysis

MSDE Blueprint Special Education Workgroup Webpage:

Blueprint.MarylandPublicSchools.org/Special-Education-Workgroup

Future Meeting Topics

Topics
Instruction
Integration of General and Special Education
Accountability: Monitoring and Data Collection
Teacher Quality/Inservice and Teacher Preparation
Special Education – Delivery of Services – Instruction and Related Services
Funding
Significant Disproportionality
Parent and Family Partnerships
Early Intervention/Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (MITP)
Diplomas and Graduation Requirements

Future Meeting Dates

Date	Time
Wednesday, November 1, 2023	4:00 - 6:00 pm
Wednesday, November 29, 2023	4:00 - 6:00 pm
Tuesday, January 30, 2024	4:00 - 6:00 pm
February 28, 2024	4:00 - 6:00 pm
March 20, 2024	4:00 - 6:00 pm
April 24, 2023	4:00 - 6:00 pm
May 29, 2024	4:00 - 6:00 pm

Location - Meetings will be held at the Maryland State Department of Education located at 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201 in the 7th floor Board Room, with a virtual option for attendance.

BLUEPRINT

FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

More information can be found on MSDE's Blueprint webpage:

Blueprint.MarylandPublicSchools.org