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Blueprint for Maryland's Future Special Education Workgroup

Workgroup Meeting #15

**Division of Early Intervention and Special
Education Services**

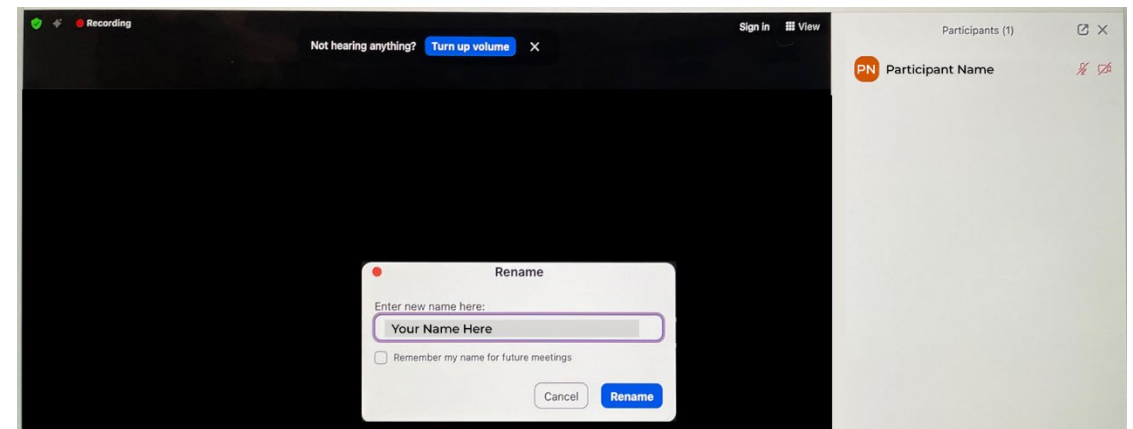
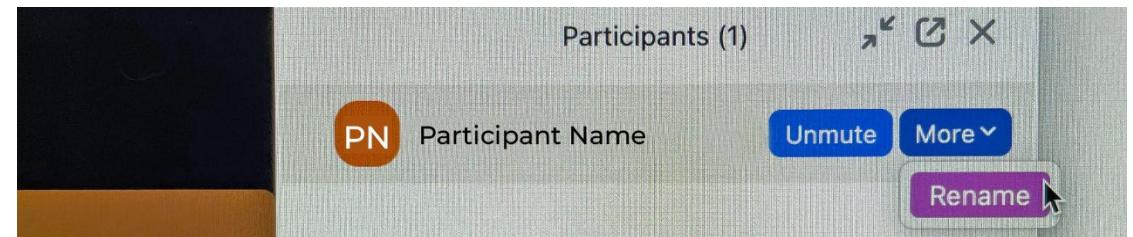
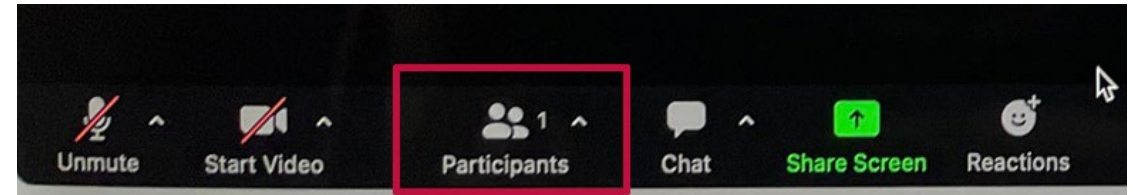
December 18, 2024

CO-CHAIRS

Dr. Carey Wright, Interim State Superintendent of Schools
Liz Zogby, Special Education Policy & Advocacy

Please Ensure Your Name Appears Correctly

1. Select Participants, located in the bottom toolbar of the meeting window
2. Hover over your name and select More (desktop) or tap your name (mobile)
3. Click or tap Rename
4. Enter your desired name and click Rename (desktop) or Done (mobile)

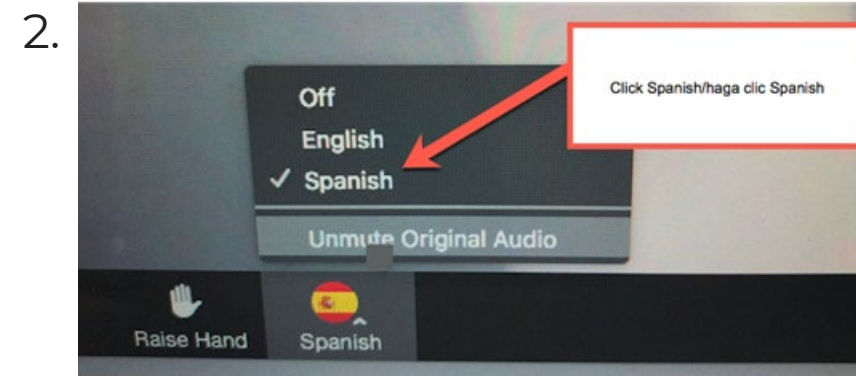
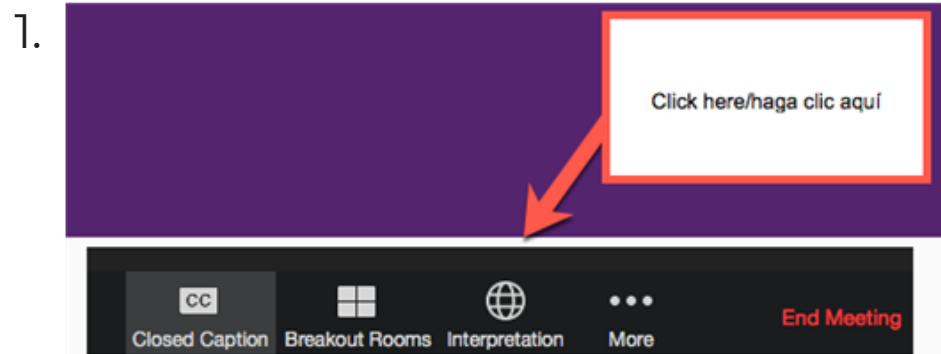


Note to Attendees

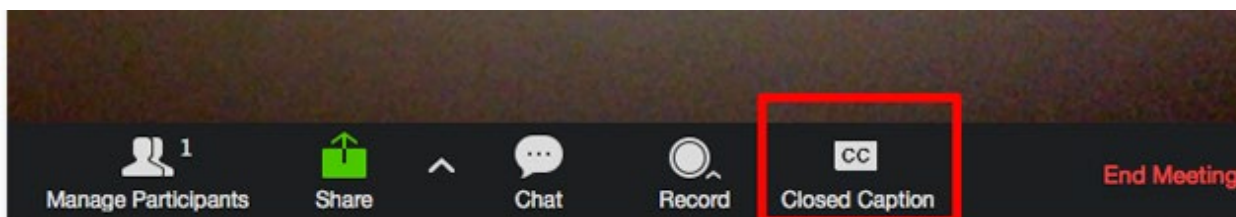
<https://www.youtube.com/live/nreLuv7-Vcc>

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

¿Español?



Closed Captioning





Presentation Outline

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Public Comment
3. Review of November Feedback
4. Secondary Transition Recommendations
5. Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities
6. Group Discussions
7. Report Updates
8. Wrap Up/Closing

Blueprint Special Education Workgroup

Meeting #15

Guiding Question(s)

What statewide policies, standards, and guidance should MSDE establish and provide for the appropriate identification of students eligible to take the alternate assessment and to improve the educational experiences and long-term outcomes for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?



Public Comment

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Feedback from November Meeting



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Secondary Transition Recommendations

Secondary Transition Recommendations for Discussion (1 of 2)

MSDE should ensure the programs and policies of Pillar 3 of the Blueprint explicitly include students with disabilities in their design and measurable outcomes by taking the following steps:

- a. Revisit the College and Career Readiness (CCR Standard) considering endorsements, multiple indicators to demonstrate mastery, and a broader frame of college, career, and community readiness.
- b. Utilize partnerships (with businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies) to create more employment pathways, inclusive apprenticeships, and an ongoing workgroup to advise and support blueprint implementation around CCR for students with disabilities.
- c. Explore the development of another diploma option/multiple pathways to high school diplomas
- d. Develop micro- and nano-credentials in Career and Technology (CTE) programs and gain industry recognition as credentials for them
- e. Revise the Local Education Agency (LEA) Blueprint Implementation Plan template to ask LEAs to explicitly report on how they are planning for students with disabilities in their work implementing Pillar 3

Secondary Transition Recommendations for Discussion (2 of 2)

MSDE should develop a plan for a plan within 60 days with specific tasks and timelines to improve secondary transition and ensure that predictors of post- school success are embedded earlier in students' academic careers. The plan should address:

- Earlier and more meaningful inclusion of parents/guardians (with particular attention to support needed by non-English speaking families)
- Earlier and more meaningful inclusion of students
- Additional training for parents, general educators, and IEP chairs
- More opportunities for work experience, addressing current barriers (e.g., support, staffing, transportation, scheduling)
- Standards and guidance about transition plan requirements as a coordinated set of activities with meaningful, age-appropriate goals and objectives; LEA staffing of secondary transition; utilization of related service providers to support transition services and work experiences; and work-/site-based learning (including specific barriers like workers' comp coverage)
- Increased access to CTE programs, addressing capacity and other barriers
- Improving the Career Research Development (CRD) program with standard competencies across LEAs and industry support to make it an industry-recognized credential (IRC) through collaboration with DORS and other stakeholders
- Post-school follow-up process



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Overview

Background: What Does the Law Say?

Every Student Succeeds Act allows states to:

- “adopt alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities...”
- “provide for alternate assessments aligned with the challenging State academic standards and alternate academic achievement standards...for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities...”

On the condition that:

- The total number of students tested for each state does not exceed 1%; if 1% is exceeded, a request for a waiver with an action plan is required.
- Parents are clearly informed of the impact of participation in the alternate assessments may “delay or otherwise affect the student from completing the requirements for a diploma.”
- Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who take the alternate assessments are not precluded from attempting to complete the requirements for a diploma.

Background: What Does the Law Say?

The Code of Maryland Regulations:

- Requires parental consent for instruction aligned to the Alternative Academic Achievement Standards (AAAS) and to participate in the Alternative Assessment based on Alternative Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS). These are separate discussions.
- Notes that a student with a significant cognitive disability may not meet the requirements for graduation if they are taking the AA-AAAS or receiving instruction on the AAAS.
- IEP teams may not make final decisions about a diploma vs certificate of programs completion until after the start of a student's senior year

Determining Eligibility in Maryland



Appendix A: Participation Criteria and Checklist

Statement to be Read to Parents Before Starting Appendix A

“The purpose of the next portion of this meeting is to discuss (or determine) whether [redacted] is eligible for participation in the Alternate Academic Framework, which includes an Alternate Assessment and instruction aligned with Alternate Academic Achievement Standards. The Alternate Assessment is aligned to alternate academic achievement standards, which are reduced in breadth, depth, and complexity from the standards that most students are expected to master. The Alternate Academic Framework is designed for a very small number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot demonstrate learning on the standard assessments, even with accommodations and support. Participation in instruction and testing aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards may not prepare your child to meet all of the requirements to earn a High School Diploma. If [redacted] leaves high school without earning a diploma, their access to post-secondary education, training, and work options may be limited.”

<https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Special-Ed/IEP/Appendix-A-Participation-Criteria-and-Checklist-A.pdf>

Maryland's Participation Rates

School Year	Reading/Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
2017-2018	1.08	1.07	1.15
2018-2019	1.09	1.08	1.20
2019-2020	**	**	**
2020-2021 (administered Fall 2021)	1.03	1.04	1.16
2021-2022	1.17	1.19	1.49
2022-2023	1.08	1.10	1.13
2023-2024	1.08	1.08	1.02

Identification of Young Children (Alternate Assessments)

Grade:	Total:	Grade:	Total:
Pre-K	55	7	728
1	472	8	699
2	354	9	1,000
3	436	10	785
4	591	11	1,146
5	619	12	1,1816
6	573	Total:	10,232

*The above data is from the 2021-2022 school year and represents 22 of 24 LEAs (except for Anne Arundel and Wicomico Counties).

Significant Disproportionality

Group:	Total Number Assessed in Grades 3-8 & HS	Number Taking Alternate Assessments in Grades 3-8 & High School	Percent Taking Alternate Assessments in Grades 3-8 & High School
All Students	450,446	4,871	1.08
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,080	8	0.74
Asian	31,757	410	1.29
Black/African American	145,529	2,029	1.39
Hispanic/Latino of Any	100,247	930	0.93
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	585	3	0.51
White	147,282	1,256	0.85
Two or More Races	23,845	235	0.99

Placement Rates

	80% or more of day in Regular Classroom (LRE A)	40–79% of day in Regular Classroom (LRE B)	Less than 40% of day in Regular Classroom (LRE C)	Separate Public Day	Separate Private Day
Statewide	3.2	12.7	62.4	11.8	8.6
Range of LEA rates:	1.1 – 23.2	1.7 – 72.7	9.1 – 81.8	*-39.3	*-21.9

Achievement and Outcomes

Subject	Group Name	FFY 2020*	FFY 2021	FFY 2022
Reading	Grade 4	15.57%	6.40%	5.33%
Reading	Grade 8	16.55%	14.87%	15.14%
Reading	Grade HS	47.55%	24.50%	36.58%
Math	Grade 4	10.68%	20.10%	21.45%
Math	Grade 8	11.23%	6.83%	7.78%
Math	Grade HS	52.78%	23.28%	39.37%

Evidence Based Practices: MTSS/Inclusion/Instruction

Table 2: MTSS Framework: Further Details for an Academic and Behavioral/Social Emotional System Inclusive of All Students

Tiers	For All Students/ School-wide Focus	Aligned Supplementary Strategies for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities
Academic		
Tier 1 – Standards-based Curriculum and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority learning targets identified and taught Effective teaching practices in place Universal Design for Learning implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on the high priority learning targets Differentiate how students express what they learn Integrate concepts and vocabulary with Augmentative Communication system
Tier 2 – Targeted Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of flexible grouping within class focused on priority learning targets School-wide supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-teach to build prior knowledge Reteach to reinforce priority learning
Tier 3 – Individualized Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensive instruction to eliminate/ minimize gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on skill gaps related to priority learning targets and additional academic IEP goals (e.g., reading skills)
Behavior and Social Emotional Growth		
Tier 1 – School-wide Positive Behavior and Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School and classroom positive expectations, behaviors and routines are articulated, displayed and specifically taught Positive school culture developed and supported School-family partnerships developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simpler language of same content used, visuals added, steps chunked into smaller steps Self-regulation skill building taught Concepts and vocabulary for the school-wide system integrated with Augmentative Communication system
Tier 2 – Targeted Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports for self-regulation and social skill development increased School-wide services and supports available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-teach Reteach Provide sensory breaks and tools
Tier 3 – Individualized Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional behavioral assessment completed Wrap-around supports added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior Intervention Plan developed as part of IEP

- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Inclusion in the General Education Classrooms
- Instructional Best Practices

Additional Considerations:

1. Content Standards vs Achievement Standards: An “alternate curriculum” should not be required or expected for participation in any part of the Alternate Frame.
2. Do Not Preclude: “Diploma Track” and “Certificate Track”: graduation outcomes should never be assumed based on Alternate Framework participation, particularly in early grades.
3. Young Students: Caution, WIDA, and Use of Appendix A
4. Are Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities Part of “All Students”?



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Breakout Groups

Small Group Breakout Sessions

- The breakout groups will be assigned using Random Grouping to ensure everyone has an equal chance to participate, **ensure like-sized groups with diverse perspectives**, and to save time by automating the grouping process.
 - You will **automatically be assigned a group to move to (Except Room 1 – which will not move)**
 - When you receive a notification asking if you would like to move to a breakout group – please click **“move to breakout.”**
- Please **use the chat** if you have additional comments so that your feedback can be recorded.
- Breakout Group #1 will be livestreamed, and all will be recorded and posted on the MSDE website.
 - NOTE: Sign language** interpreters will remain in **breakout room #1** and will be live streamed.
- Each breakout group is assigned an **MSDE staff** as a **notetaker**.
- Each breakout group is asked to please **identify** a:
 - Facilitator - to ensure equal opportunity to respond and keep group on task
 - Timekeeper - to track use of time and ensure group remains on track
 - Reporter - to share out 2 – 3-minute highlights of the discussion
- As there is limited time, do not feel you need to respond to the questions in order.

Small Group Breakout Sessions: Group Norms

- Speak with care:
 - Speak from your own experience and be mindful of how your comments may impact others.
 - Use “I” statements and avoid speaking for/or generalizing whole groups.
- Listen respectfully:
 - Avoid interrupting the person speaking and talk that evaluates/judges their comments.
 - Limit your comments to 1 – 2 minutes.
 - Understand that there are no right or wrong answers.
- Lean in/Lean back:
 - Give your input and make space for others to do the same.
 - Be aware of your talk time and try to stay on topic.

Small Group Breakout Questions

1. What statewide policies or guidance could MSDE implement to ensure that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are being determined eligible for participation in the alternate assessments?
2. What recommendations do you have for adjustments to existing Maryland policies, practices, and procedures to ensure that students eligible to participate in the alternate assessment :
 - A. Are receiving instruction aligned to the State challenging academic content standards,
 - B. Are not precluded from attempting to complete the requirements of a high school diploma,
 - C. Are not determined eligible for the alternate assessment at a very young age (especially prior to 3rd grade)?
3. What statewide standards and guidance based on evidence-based practices could MSDE establish and disseminate to improve the educational experiences and long-term outcomes of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?
4. What recommendations are suggested to ensure that areas of focus, initiatives, and policies of the Blueprint and MSDE include consideration of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?

Large Group Report Out

1. What statewide policies or guidance could MSDE implement to ensure that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are being determined eligible for participation in the alternate assessments?
2. What recommendations do you have for adjustments to existing Maryland policies, practices, and procedures to ensure that students eligible to participate in the alternate assessment :
 - A. Are receiving instruction aligned to the State challenging academic content standards,
 - B. Are not precluded from attempting to complete the requirements of a high school diploma,
 - C. Are not determined eligible for the alternate assessment at a very young age (especially prior to 3rd grade)?
3. What statewide standards and guidance based on evidence-based practices could MSDE establish and disseminate to improve the educational experiences and long-term outcomes of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?
4. What recommendations are suggested to ensure that areas of focus, initiatives, and policies of the Blueprint and MSDE include consideration of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?

Report Updates

Blueprint Special Education Report	Date
Submitted to AIB	December 1, 2024
Posted on the Blueprint Webpage	December 11, 2024

Future Meeting Dates

Date	Time
Wednesday, January 29, 2025	4:00 – 6:00 pm

BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

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

Blueprint.MarylandPublicSchools.org

MSDE Blueprint Special Education Workgroup Webpage

Blueprint.MarylandPublicSchools.org/Special-Education-Workgroup

Blueprint Special Education Workgroup Contact

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