

**PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

**SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 – 3 PM VIA ZOOM**

**In Attendance:**

Mr. Jack Pumphrey, Committee Chair

Mr. Craig Ballew, Board Chair

Ms. Jill Eidelman

Rabbi Lauren Tuchman

Dr. Joanne Waeltermann

Mr. Rob Hair, MSB Superintendent

Mr. Josh Irzyk, MSB Education Director

Ms. Maureen Bisesi, MSB Director of Residential and Related Services

Ms. Diane “DC” Colburn, MSB Director of Statewide and Outreach Services

Ms. April Tucker, MSB HR Director

Ms. Valerie Johnson, MSB Executive Assistant

**Excused:** Dr. Lorraine Costella

 Mr. Bill McCubbin, MSB Director of Operations

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Jack Pumphrey called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm, confirmed all participants were present, and welcomed new committee member, Ms. Jill Eidelman. Ms. Eidelman introduced herself and noted her long history with MSB as head of the Speech Department prior to her retirement.

**APPROVAL OF MAY 29, 2025 MINUTES:** The minutes of the May meeting were approved without any objections or changes.

**POST GRADUATION/DISCHARGE SURVEY WORK GROUP UPDATE:** Mr. Pumphrey noted that the committee created a survey process last year to track graduates (6 months, 1 year, 3 years) and non-graduates (3 months, 1 year). The survey collects data on living situations, education, employment, health, and feedback on experiences at MSB. The group is finalizing the survey and calendar schedule, aiming to catch up on the past three graduating classes and recent discharges before moving to the regular schedule.

**STATEWIDE STUDENT SERVICES/OUTREACH REPORT:** Ms. Diane “DC” Colburn reported the following:

* For the 2024–2025 year (July 1 to June 30), 443 unique students were served through outreach programming.
* Contract students served through O&M and TVI services totaled 120, including assessments, professional development, and technical assistance for counties.
* 189 braille textbooks were produced for the state, impacting about 886 students statewide.
* The 2025 APH (American Printing House) census counted 1,144 students in Maryland who meet eligibility criteria for federal quota funding (some overlap with the 886 students served).
* The county-by-county breakdown, noted strong outreach in Washington and Montgomery counties, with only a few counties having zero students served.
* Outreach service models shifted throughout the year, with different focuses in each quarter (e.g., summer programming, classroom support, special events, parent education, the Braille Challenge, and summer camps).
* A new Parent Coordinator was hired, who is proactive and has increased parent engagement.

She reviewed admissions data—referrals, tours, visits, acceptances, enrollments, and reasons for non-acceptance or withdrawal.

Ms. Colburn ended Her presentation with photos and videos from Outreach summer programs: a YMCA sleepaway camp, two sports camps, family and literacy camps, and Camp Abilities, which featured beep baseball, cricket, yoga, dance, basketball, soccer, goalball, weightlifting, and frisbee golf with coaches and community partners. Programs were adapted for all needs, including a deaf-blind student who participated fully. The summer wrapped up with the “Splashdown Back to School Bash,” helping families connect, complete paperwork, and get ready for the year.

**STUDENT SERVICES REPORT:** **Dr. Joshua Irzyk reported the following:**

**Principals of Schools for the Blind (POSB) Award Winners:** Two teachers, Kathryn Whitelock and Amanda Williams, will be honored at the association’s national meeting held in Louisville, KY in October. They will be invited to the December Board meeting to be recognized by the Board.

**ESY (Extended School Year):** At year’s end, 154 of 209 students qualified for ESY; 121 attended. Most received services on campus, while some worked at home on specific goals like braille or O&M. Many families decline, often due to summer travel. ESY is recommended when a student risks losing skills over the summer break, but families may choose to decline.

**Student Demographic Updates:** 200 students currently enrolled (110 male, 90 female) with 48 being residential students plus four pending (total 52), with a breakdown by race/ethnicity and county of origin. A slightly lower overall enrollment than previous years was noted but expecting more referrals.

**SY2025-2026 Graduates:** There will be 16 graduates for the Class of 2026, with five receiving high school diplomas and some of them planning to attend college.

**Behavior Data:** No restraints occurred this year, showing the success of the Intensive Needs program and compliance with the state seclusion ban.

Dr. Irzyk outlined specialized programs for students with significant behavior needs, led by a board-certified behavior analyst, with ongoing data collection to guide progress and reintegration into less restrictive settings.

**IEP Goal Attainment:** There has been significant progress in IEP goal attainment: 64% of all student IEP goals were met, up from 53% the previous year, attributed to professional development and improved planning.

**Ms. Maureen Bisesi reported the following:**

**Residential Program Data Tracking:**  Tracking of independent living and ADL (Activities of Daily Living) skills shows steady gains since 2016–17, rising from 40% to 88% mastery/generalization. Gains stem from more robust staff training and schedule adjustments that improved instruction.

Ms. Bisesi clarified “mastered” (independent) vs. “generalized” (across people/settings), and plans to collect data quarterly and report both separately. She stressed these skills’ importance for independence, even if not directly tied to IEP goals.

**Secondary Transition Committee Update:** Ms. Bisesi reported that the team is planning parent education sessions, with Ms. Sharon Peer (MSB social worker) and Mr. Jamen King (MSB Parent Coordinator) scheduling transition-age trainings. They are also identifying community activities to connect families and developing content for the school’s secondary transition webpage. A draft guidance document is out for feedback.

Plans include a Parent Town Hall or virtual meeting to explain recent changes, with secondary transition remaining a key part of the strategic plan.

**Strand Training:** The first strand training of the year was held last week.

Topics for this year’s strand trainings include:

* **Accessible environments:** Continuing from last year, with a second cohort for a higher level of accessibility.
* **Vision**: With three levels: Vision 1, Vision 2, and Vision 3, to increase knowledge for all staff.
* **Activities of daily living (ADLs):** Focused on paraeducators and strategies for supporting students in the morning.
* **Behavior**
* **Communication partners**
* **Learning Braille**: High quality instruction (Level 2, for teachers who participated in Level 1 last year).
* **New Hire Academy**: Required for all newly hired staff who did not participate in strands last year. This after-school program will cover key points and concepts from previous strand trainings to ensure all staff are on the same page.

**HR Updates:** Ms. Tucker reported Q4 FY25 staff turnover at 3%, an improvement from last year. She detailed turnover by department and reasons for departure, noting all classroom teacher positions are filled, though Outreach and Finance vacancies remain.

Recruitment is active, with recent hires including a Health Center Manager and four interns. Efforts focus on retention through professional development, onboarding, and outreach.

A staff morale survey is planned for this school year, with results to be shared.

**DASH Report:** Mr. Hair reported on the $65M athletics facility project ($62.4M state, $3.1M MSB), with $3.8M spent on early site work and soft costs. The project is on budget, with completed work including erosion controls, fencing, and utility relocations.

A city permitting delay, tied to a bank letter of credit, is the main challenge. The team is working with the contractor and bank to resolve it.

The pool and gym are expected to be completed by October 2027, with the front entrance and track changing room to follow a year later. Mr. Hair also noted the need to revisit the campus master plan and review the agricultural design for the next phase.

**IT Modernization Project Update:** Mr. Hair reported the IT modernization project is on time and under budget, with $1.45M spent. The Wi-Fi upgrade is nearly complete, with minor disruptions during installation.

Dr. Waeltermann asked about student data migration; Mr. Hair said it is underway, and staff training has begun.

The next phase is upgrading the phone and PA systems, with accessibility features for deaf and hard of hearing staff and students. Completion is planned for summer 2026 to avoid school-year disruption.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Pumphrey adjourned the meeting at 4:17 PM.

**NEXT MEETING: Schedule before the December 12, 2025 Board meeting.**