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Maryland State Board of Education Appoints New Executive Director

Zachary Hands Selected as Maryland State Board of Education Executive Director Following a Competitive and Deliberative Process

BALTIMORE, MD (December 6, 2022) – Following a thorough, deliberative, and competitive recruitment and hiring process, the Maryland State Board of Education announced the selection of Zachary Hands as the State Board’s Executive Director. Zachary Hands will begin in his new role on December 14, 2022. The Executive Director supports the independent functioning of the State Board. Mr. Hands also serves as the de facto Chief Operating Officer for the State Board President and Vice President and works with the MSDE executive leadership; collaborates and communicates closely with the State Superintendent, the executive leadership, and the MSDE Assistant Attorney General to ensure that the State Board’s expectations and concerns are considered and resolved.

“We are delighted to welcome Mr. Hands as a member of the State Board’s leadership team as we transform Maryland education. This is a pivotal time as we complete the development and begin implementation of the State’s new education strategic plan, which will anchor the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future and the promise of a world-class education for every student,” said Board President Clarence Crawford. “Among the candidates, Mr. Hands distinguished himself with his outstanding and in-depth knowledge of the Blueprint legislation, state policy, law and processes, as well as his proven ability to collaborate effectively with a wide-range of stakeholders including partner organizations, legislators, educators, parents, and students.”

Previously Mr. Hands served as the Maryland State Department of Education’s Director of the Office of Education Policy and Government Relations, as well as Special Assistant to the State Superintendent. During that time, he notably served as a liaison during the meeting of the Kirwan Commission and the development of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, assisted in drafting and promulgating the State’s education equity regulation, and helped lead the Department during its response to the initial Covid-19 pandemic emergency and recovery process.

As the Executive Director, Mr. Hands will work proactively with the State Superintendent and the MSDE executive leadership team to carry out the policies, goals, and initiatives of the State Board. He will also provide executive leadership over the administrative functions of the Office of the State Board of Education including the preparation and publication of all State education regulations issued by the State Board, as well as the fulfillment of the State Board’s statutory, policy making, regulatory, and administrative responsibilities.

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