



### **For Immediate Release**

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## **Easton High School Culinary Department Hosts Quarterly Joint Meeting for Talbot County Board of Education and County Council**

Easton High School's Culinary Arts Program hosted the Talbot County Board of Education and County Council at their quarterly joint meeting on Tuesday, May 16, 2023.

The Culinary Arts Program, led by Mrs. Linda Brown and Mr. Joseph Candel, allows students to learn basic and advanced culinary skills that puts them in a prime position to pursue internships, careers, and post-secondary education in the culinary field. The program was recently identified as "Exemplary" by the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation Accrediting Commission.

In their classroom space called "The Garden Bowl," students serve guests in a restaurant-like setting. After a delicious meal, the Board and Council convened their meeting.

### **Chapel District Elementary School Renovation**

Kevin Shafer, Director of Operations for Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS), provided an update on the renovation of Chapel District Elementary School located in Cordova, Maryland. Currently, TCPS is evaluating contract options for engineering and construction of the new facility, with the Board aiming to approve a contract in their May 17, 2023 meeting. Construction is anticipated to begin in June 2024, with completion in Summer of 2026.

*More information about the renovation project can be found here: [tcps.k12.md.us](https://tcps.k12.md.us)*

### **Test Scores and Addressing Achievement Gaps**

Helga Einhorn, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction at TCPS provided an update on Test Scores and Achievement Gap. The school system uses a variety of assessments to identify areas of success and needed improvements across all grade levels.

The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) tests students' skills across four areas: language and literacy, mathematics, social foundation, physical well-being and motor development. 45% of TCPS students demonstrated readiness this school year, 3% higher than the state average, and 4% higher than last year. There continues to be a large gap in readiness when data is disaggregated by race.

Einhorn discussed several initiatives that can address these gaps. Specifically, during the meeting, she discussed the need for continued support for Universal PreK, Language Essentials for Teachers of

Reading and Spelling (eLETRS) professional learning, use of early learning assessments, Judy Center Programming, and participation in the *Raising a Reader* program.

The Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) tests school and student progress toward Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards based on Common Core standards. 43% of tested students in grades 3-8 and grade 10 were proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) in 2022, which shows progress to pre-pandemic performance. The data also shows a discrepancy between all students and traditionally underserved students.

Einhorn discussed several strategies to address ELA. Specifically, she discussed the need for professional training for all elementary teachers and administrators aligned with the science of reading (Lexia LETRS), development and implementation of a Comprehensive Literacy Plan, Purchase and implementation of Tier 2 intervention, and additional Tier 3 Reading Teachers.

15% of students tested in grades 3-8, Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry were proficient in mathematics in 2022. This is an improvement from the Early Fall assessment, but is still below pre-pandemic averages. The Board of Education asked for a plan to improve student outcomes in this area. Dr. Pepukayi will be presenting a 2023-2024 interim plan at the Board's May 2023 meeting.

Finally, the Maryland School Report Card is an outcome of Every Student Succeeds Act. The accountability system allows schools to see how they rank among other schools in the state. All Talbot Schools received at least 3 stars on a 5-star ranking. Chapel District Elementary received a 5-star rating.

*For more information specific to TCPS student achievement data, please see the Board of Education meeting archives here: [https://talbotschools-md.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view\\_id=1](https://talbotschools-md.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=1)*

### **Blueprint for Maryland's Future**

Finally, Kristen Tilghman, TCPS Blueprint Implementation Coordinator, provided an update on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

TCPS submitted their State-required local implementation plan on March 15, 2023. They also provided an update on their work on Pillar 3 of the Blueprint, College and Career Readiness (CCR).

In accordance with the Blueprint, the school system is working to provide continued access to Dual Enrollment at Chesapeake College and to cover costs for tuition, books, and fees for dually-enrolled students during the 23-24 school year. They meet monthly to discuss course articulations and pathways for students to receive college credit and/or industry recognized credentials, and are in the process of finalizing a new Dual Enrollment Agreement with the College.

TCPS would also like to provide improved career counseling for students. They are currently hiring for two full-time career counseling positions which will focus on delivering career exploration and developmental activities and explore program components to include guidance-led education and career planning, career exploration trips, and community events. TCPS is working to develop a MOU with Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board and Chesapeake College to assist with this initiative.

*For more information about TCPS specific goals for the Blueprint: [Blueprint for Maryland's Future | Talbot County Public Schools \(tcps.k12.md.us\)](#)*

*The Talbot County Council meets quarterly with the Board of Education. These meetings are open to the public.*

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*Dr. Pepukayi, Superintendent for Talbot County Public Schools, shares a story with Council President Chuck Callahan during the dinner portion of the meeting. Students of the Culinary Arts Program were in charge of serving and preparing the meals in their lab kitchen space at Easton High School.*