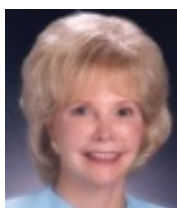


MARYLAND

# Education Bulletin

*News from the Maryland State Department of Education*

October 29, 2010

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**A few words  
from State  
Superintendent  
of Schools  
Nancy S.  
Grasmick**

October has been Family Involvement Month in Maryland. We know our schools are number one in the nation thanks in large part to the support that parents and other family members provide our educators and students.

Maryland remains the only State in the nation that honors parent involvement in public schools through the Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award. This year's winner was Jeffrey Macris, an Anne Arundel County parent and a professor at the U.S. Naval Academy.



Jeffrey Macris

Jeffrey was honored for his work helping to turn around two Annapolis middle schools, beginning his project long before his children were middle school age. He came before the State Board this week to describe his work, and provide for us some thoughts about how to further improve schools, from sharing more data to developing new ways to get the best teachers into the schools that need them the most.

Energetic parents and family members like Jeffrey Macris are working every day to make Maryland schools a better place for children.

## TEACHER SHORTAGES EASE IN MARYLAND

The Maryland State Board of Education this week declared teacher shortages in a number of key subject areas, ranging from special education to secondary school math and science. At the same, new statewide data found that teacher shortages have declined significantly over the past two years.



Dr. Louise Tanney and Assistant State Superintendent Jean Satterfield explain the trends in teacher staffing before the State Board.

Maryland remains an import state for classroom teachers, with colleges and universities in the State not preparing enough educators for the classroom

openings posted each year. But Maryland colleges this year are expected to produce the highest number of education graduates in at least 15 years, and non-traditional teacher certification pathways continue to grow.

Alternative preparation programs produced 674 new teachers in 2009-2010 and another 560 this fall, a combined total larger than any single traditional higher

\* \* \*

Maryland's graduation rate continues to improve. That's the good news. The great news is that improvement is across all racial subgroups!

Our State's high school graduation rate jumped by more than a percentage point for the Class of 2010, while the dropout rate for the senior class fell to 2.3 percent. The dropout rate now stands at its lowest level in 11 years.

The 2009-2010 senior class was the second one for whom passing the High School Assessments (HSAs) in algebra/data analysis, biology, English, and government was a graduation requirement. We have found that the strengthened graduation requirement on its own was not a significant roadblock to a diploma, and that held true for this year.

Nearly 60,000 Maryland students received diplomas this past spring, with nearly 85 percent of them meeting the HSA through examination. Only eight percent—5012 students—met the requirement through the alternative Bridge Plan for Academic Validation. The Bridge Plan is the project-based alternative to the HSA exams.

Only 33 students statewide failed to graduate solely because of the HSAs, the new data found.

Graduation rates improved for all racial subgroups. Hispanic graduates led the way, jumping more than two points, followed by the rate by African American students, which increased just under two points.

Students, their families, and educators are taking the graduation requirements seriously, and that's a good thing for our entire State.

\* \* \*

**Follow MSDE on Facebook!**



The Maryland State Department of Education has launched a Facebook page, providing users with real-time information about MSDE initiatives and links to important

education program. Teach for America and New Teacher Programs in both Baltimore City and Prince George's County are among those non-traditional avenues making a difference.

"The data remind us that that teacher preparation involves a variety of both university- based programs and alternative programs," said State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick. "Our alternative programs this year provided Maryland school systems with 15 percent of our newly hired classroom teachers."

School systems in Maryland this year hired an estimated 3,690 new teachers, compared to 4,143 last year and 8,046 in 2005-2006. Improved retention strategies, combined with a soft economy, have dramatically reduced the number of teacher openings.

There remain some shortage—in addition to special education and upper-level math and science, there are shortages in computer science, Chinese, Spanish, English for Speakers of Other Languages, and career and technology areas. Shortages were reported in 19 of the 24 school systems. Only Baltimore, Caroline, Garrett, Kent, and Somerset Counties did not report shortages of certified teachers in certain areas.

The State Board also continued to declare shortages of male teachers and teachers who are members of minority groups. Seventy-seven percent of the new teachers hired last year were female. Moreover, the percentage of minority teachers in Maryland schools has declined over the past five years, from 30.5 percent in 2005-2006 to 24.3 percent in 2009-2010.

The Maryland Teacher Staffing Report, which MSDE started publishing in 1986 as the Maryland Teacher Supply and Demand Study, uses information from local school systems and Maryland higher education institutions with teacher preparation programs.

education news.

Facebook users can go to the MSDE page and click that they "like" the page. This will provide users with a consistent flow of information to their Facebook desktop.

Facebook, a social networking website, reached more 500 million active users in July, making it the most popular site of its kind. MSDE has joined the network to provide the public with easy access to information on a platform that has gained wide acceptance.

Check out the page and let us know what you think! To go to MSDE's Facebook page, click [here](#).

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## Calendar

Nov. 1 - 30 – National American Indian Heritage Month

Nov. 4 - 6 – National Middle School Association Conference, Baltimore

Nov. 12 - 13 – Maryland PTA Convention, Linthicum

Nov. 14 - 20 – American Education Week

Dec. 14 – State Board Meeting, Baltimore

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## VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

### Graduation Rate Rises Again

October 6, 2010

Maryland's graduation rate rises yet again, and the dropout rate falls. State Schools Superintendent Nancy Grasmick, and Assistant Superintendent Leslie Wilson outline the good news.

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## In the News

## FREDERICK COUNTY EDUCATOR NAMED TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Michelle M. Shearer, a chemistry teacher at Urbana High School in Frederick County, this month was named the 2011 Maryland Teacher of the Year. Maryland State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick made the surprise announcement during an elegant gala at Martin's West in Baltimore.



Michelle Shearer (third from left) was named Maryland's new Teacher of the Year. With her are Dr. Darla Strouse, director of the State's Teacher of the Year Program, former U.S. Sen. Paul Sarbanes, and State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick.

Ms. Shearer, a graduate of Princeton University and McDaniel College, also attended Gallaudet and Walden Universities. She holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry, a master's degree in Deaf

Education, and dual certification in chemistry and general special education. Ms. Shearer is passionate when it comes to teaching Maryland's "scientists of the future" and she believes chemistry is everywhere, and thus chemistry is for everyone. Her rewards come from seeing students of all backgrounds and abilities - including those with special needs - connect with science in a personal way.

Ms. Shearer has served as mentor to new chemistry teachers, collaborated in developing materials of instruction in the International Baccalaureate Chemistry Program, as well as Content Area Leader in the science department at the Maryland School for the Deaf. Also, she is the recipient of a variety of awards and

Maryland Graduation Rate Climbs

*Baltimore Sun*, October 6

Maryland Receives \$1Million to Strengthen Early Childhood Services

*Examiner.com*, October 7

Frederick County Educator Named Teacher of the Year

*Baltimore Sun*, October 8

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recognitions that include the Siemens' Award for AP Teaching; an Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher nominee; and the AP students' Award of Awesomeness: in recognition of outstanding achievement in the field of being the best teacher ever.

"There are numerous reasons to become a teacher - but one in particular that speaks volumes is the fact that teachers affect the future and help to mold the lives of their students every day," said Dr. Grasmick. "Teachers have the eyes to see students' true potential and to nurture and cultivate it."

## NATIONAL CHARTER EXPERTS CALL FOR CHANGES IN LAW

Three national charter school advocates came before the Maryland State Board of Education this week to suggest changes in Maryland's charter school law.



Charter school advocates Todd Ziebarth, Katie Kelly, and Jeanne Allen make their case in front of the State Board.

Todd Ziebarth, vice president for state advocacy and support for the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools; Jeanne Allen,

founder and president of the Center for Education Reform; and Katie Kelly, chief of staff for the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, praised current Maryland charter schools for their overall excellence. But all three said Maryland's current Charter School Law has stymied creativity and kept a lid on the number of new schools in the State.

Maryland's charter school law, signed in 2003, launched

a movement that has brought more than 40 new public schools to the State. But several national organizations have criticized the law for failing to provide for independent authorizers - the current law allows only local school systems to authorize new schools. Others have called for charter schools to have flexibility when responding to local teacher contracts and have improved access to facilities.

Maryland's law "is deeply broken," according to Allen. She suggested that the State Board support the creation of independent authorizers and improved funding for charter schools. While the current law requires equitable funding for charters, it is too easily "ignored or violated," Allen said.

Ziebarth said that the best charter school laws provide broad autonomy for school leaders to manage teachers, set schedules and "define a unique school culture."

The State Board has spent several months reviewing Maryland's existing charter school law.



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