

September 1, 2011

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**A few words  
from Interim  
State  
Superintendent  
of Schools  
Bernard J.  
Sadusky**

The opening of school is always such an enjoyable experience, but the disruptions caused by the earthquake and the hurricane added some unease to our celebratory week..

As it stands today, we still have a number of schools without power, thanks to our visit from Hurricane Irene. More difficult is the damage caused by the earthquake last week. Prince George's County, for example experienced significant damage to some of its schools. I know staff members have been working long hours to repair the damage and get those schools back on line. It has not been easy, but it has been so important.

I am amazed at the work that has been done to get classrooms open to begin the new school year. Your efforts have been noticed and appreciated by many across our State.

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One of our favorite programs here at MSDE is the Maryland Teacher of Year program. This year's gifted finalists exhibit a steadfast commitment to classroom excellence, and are helping to ensure that Maryland public schools continue to prepare world-class students.

## MARYLAND SCHOOLS FIGHT EARTHQUAKE, HURRICANE TO OPEN FOR NEW YEAR

It has not exactly been business as usual this fall for Maryland's 1,450 public schools.



Interim State Superintendent Bernard Sadusky, back left, joined Lt. Governor Anthony Brown and Prince George's Superintendent William Hite last week to help open several schools for the new year, including James H. Harrison Elementary in Laurel (pictured).

Last week's unprecedented earthquake, followed by this past weekend's unwelcome visit from Hurricane Irene, created havoc during the traditional opening days of school for the majority of Maryland school systems.

As of yesterday, Calvert and St. Mary's County school systems were still closed in the aftermath of the hurricane, which caused power outages throughout much of the State. Many other systems reported individual school closings due to a lack of electricity.

Despite the rocky start, there is optimism in classrooms across Maryland, as more than one million students are

They deserve our recognition and appreciation, as do all local teachers of the year.

The finalists are: Laura Groo, **Anne Arundel County**; Joshua Parker, **Baltimore County**; Aaron Geiman, **Carroll County**; Rhonda Parsons, **Cecil County**; Christian Slattery, **Harford County**; Brian Freiss, **Montgomery County**; and Chad Pavlekovich, **Wicomico County**.

The finalists were selected by a panel of judges from key Maryland education organizations representing principals, teachers, school boards, teacher unions, parents and higher education. Finalists were measured against a rigorous set of national criteria that include teaching philosophy, community involvement, knowledge of general education issues, and suggestions for professional and instructional improvement. Oral interviews with the seven finalists will be conducted on September 24.

The 2011-2012 Maryland Teacher of the Year will be announced during a gala reception and dinner at Martin's West in Baltimore on October 14.

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## Calendar

September 9 – Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Week Statewide Kick-off Celebration, Benjamin Banneker Elementary School, Loveville, MD

September 19 – Maryland-Delaware Summit on Climate Change Education, Adelphi, MD

beginning class. More than 850,000 K-12 students were scheduled to enter classrooms, along with another 250,000 children involved in some form of pre-K, Head Start, or licensed childcare program.

Maryland's highly regarded public school system, ranking first in the nation for the third straight year by the leading education newspaper, is continuing to move forward under the direction of Interim State Superintendent Bernard Sadusky. The State's system is implementing the \$250 million Race to the Top program that strengthens educational standards, builds a new technology infrastructure, improves teacher and principal preparation and evaluation, and provides support to low-performing schools.

"Our state continues to invest in its future by providing cutting edge educational programs for our students," Dr. Sadusky said. "The new school year is exciting for students and educators alike. We look forward to another safe, productive year in Maryland classrooms."

Among the schools opening this fall are seven new public charter schools, bringing the total number of charters in Maryland to 50, enrolling close to 20,000 students. Four of the new schools are in Baltimore City; the remaining three in Prince George's County.

It was a busy summer for Maryland public education. Nearly 7,000 teachers and administrators were involved in the Educator Effectiveness Academies, the State's largest-ever professional development program, which gathered teachers from each Maryland school to work on implementation of the Common Core State Curriculum Standards and Frameworks.

Also taking place this summer was the approval by Maryland's Educator Effectiveness Council of the initial recommendations for a Statewide Educator Evaluation System. The system, which will include student growth as 50 percent of an educator's evaluation, will be piloted in seven systems this school year and in all 24

September 27 – State Board Meeting, Baltimore



## VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

### First Day of School - Anne Arundel

August 23, 2011

Sixth graders head back to class at Bates Middle School in Annapolis. Hear from the children, the principal, and new interim Superintendent Bernie Sadusky about this Arts Magnet and its recent success.

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## Race to the Top

Race to the Top Monthly Update

August 2011 Issue, [Click Here](#).

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## In the News

First Day of School Delayed for 300,000+ Students

*WBAL-TV*

Montgomery, Loudon Schools Back After Irene Power Outages

*Washington Post*

New School Names Bring Sense of Pride

*Baltimore Sun/Howard County Times*

Public Schools Offer Students Head Start in Life

*Frederick News Post*

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school systems in 2012-2013.

While the commitment to strong education in Maryland hasn't changed, there is something new across most school systems: a lack of teacher shortages. Maryland hired 8,000 new teachers for the 2005-2006 school year, for example, and more than a thousand vacancies could be found in the State just a few weeks before the start of class. This year, only a handful of vacancies were reported as the school year approached.

## MARYLAND CONSORTIUM DEVELOPING STRONGER ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Maryland, through its involvement in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), is well on its way to developing the next generation of statewide exams.

Dr. Leslie Wilson, Assistant State Superintendent for Accountability and Assessment, and Dr. Nancy Shapiro, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs with the University of Maryland System, met this week with the Maryland State Board of Education to provide a progress report on PARCC. The Partnership has ambitious goals for the new assessment program.

"More than 1,000 educators have already been engaged in the process," Dr. Wilson said. "The whole point of the enterprise is to make sure that students are ready for college and career."

PARCC, one of two national consortia that received federal funding for assessment development, is not only focused on providing a path for college and career preparation, but also on creating high-quality assessments that support classroom educators. The states involved with PARCC are committed to developing technology-based assessments that advance accountability at all levels.

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The assessments under development will incorporate the Common Core State Standards in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. MSDE was involved in the development of the Common Core from the outset.

Dr. Shapiro said the new exams may not replace others currently used by colleges and universities to determine proper placement for incoming students, but they could help more students begin their college careers in credit-bearing courses.

The new assessments will include more writing than the current Maryland School Assessments. The assessments will be ready for implementation in 2014-15 school year.

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