

actionLine

NOVEMBER 2009

MARYLAND STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION • NEA

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 2



**MSEA's exclusive
interview with
Governor
Martin O'Malley**

Convention 2009 | You and your Facebook | New literacy program



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It was a blustery few days, but that didn't affect the whirlwind of activity at MSEA's Convention 2009. For both delegates and attendees, the weekend was filled with nearly 60 professional development workshops, a health fair, 150 member-sponsored and education-related exhibits, contests and more.



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Building strong partnerships is the route to transforming public schools



At the state level, MSEA has spent the last several years building strong relationships with policymakers and coalition partners.

Thanks to the efforts of everyone in MSEA, and the support of our parents, communities and leaders across the state, public education in Maryland has reached new heights. Yet, while we are making progress, we have more work to do, and we can't do it alone.

It is not enough to be good teachers, good school employees, and active members of a unified association. We must nurture our existing partnerships and create new ones. We need strong, long-lasting, effective partnerships to create the paradigm shift necessary to transform our schools and prepare our students with 21st century skills, such as how to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and globally competent.

We're seeing real movement in this direction at the national level, where NEA is a key player in a number of partnerships in support of public education. As a result of NEA's lobbying, President Obama and Congress dedicated billions of dollars to public education through federal stimulus money, saving thousands of educator jobs in Maryland and 250,000 across the country.

At the state level, MSEA has spent the last several years building strong relationships with policymakers and coalition partners. Our first-ever GAPS Summit this fall was an excellent first step towards tackling this challenge county by county and school by school.

Many of you have built outside partnerships at the county, school and community level in support of public education. Some are collaborative efforts with local businesses or parent, community or religious groups to support public schools. Others involve a closer working relationship with your local superintendent or school board to address shared concerns. And others are joint lobbying or political campaigns to protect education funding or elect pro-public education candidates.

Working closely with MSEA, Governor O'Malley has made protecting preK-12 funding his top priority—a tough decision amid severe budget cutbacks. O'Malley's strong record on education (see pp. 8-11) prompted our Representative Assembly to support him overwhelmingly for another term as governor. But the economic challenges are not over, and we will continue working with the governor and General Assembly to protect the needs of students and educators.

Now is the time to prepare all of our students to compete with the world. President Obama has challenged this country to lead the world in student achievement, and Governor O'Malley has issued the same challenge to us. MSEA will continue doing whatever we must do at the state level, but we need your help to find and work with partners who share our vision.

MSEA and the 2010 election

Why an early endorsement?

In 2010, Marylanders will elect more than 500 local and statewide leaders plus representatives to the U.S. House and Senate. It's a big—and very important—year.

To make sure the Association endorses the best advocates for public education, MSEA and NEA have a fair, open and thorough screening process for recommending candidates to its members and the general public.

This year, the Association stepped out to make early endorsements for Governor Martin O'Malley and Frank Kratovil, representative for the 1st U.S. Congressional District. If you attended last month's MSEA Convention 2009, you heard both lawmakers speak about their commitment to, and impressive records supporting public education.

With MSEA's early endorsement of Gov. O'Malley and Rep. Kratovil, we show the public that Maryland educators—one of most influential advocacy groups in the state—stand by friends of public education.

To learn how the endorsement process works, visit www.marylandeducators.org.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? Write Clara: MSEA, 140 Main St, Annapolis, MD 21401 • cfloyd@mseanea.org

Look for **MemberVoices** in each issue of **ActionLine**! We'll be asking questions of MSEA members all over the state and sharing their answers with you!

Why are some of your colleagues not members of your Local Association and MSEA?



MELISSA RICHARDS
Academic intervention teacher
Springbrook HS
Member for 9 years
Montgomery County

Non-members don't know enough about benefits

I think that we have such good membership in our county because people see the value in what we do for them. We do have some who are not full members, but I think most people understand the difference—that for a few more dollars, they get invaluable services and support.

They don't understand our positions on political issues

One reason that teachers don't join is our political stance and how we endorse candidates. Some think that we support candidates with dues money, which we don't. They think we don't take into consideration how candidates stand on all the issues and that we only focus on education.



KRISTY LYNCH
Second grade teacher
Bakerfield ES
Member for 5 years
Harford County



MICHAEL BARTON
School counselor
Chesapeake Terrace ES
Member for 18 years
Baltimore County

Fee payers take advantage of full dues-paying members

In my opinion, some of my colleagues aren't members because they know they can get all the benefits and protections whether they pay the fees or not. Bottom line? From a dues-paying member and someone who is actively involved—if you want the benefits you need to be a full-fledged member of the club.

We need more proactive membership recruitment

I think that we really have to be proactive in going out and making sure we communicate the benefits of representation and belonging to the Association. We have to have advocacy. We have to have informed leaders in order to move our profession forward and to move education in the state forward.



PATRICIA DINGLE
Art teacher
Kenmoor MS
Member for 2 years
Prince George's County



REBECCA HESSLER
Student member
University of Maryland
College Park
Member for 1 month

Students think it may add more to a demanding course load

I think it's just that our academic program is a lot of work already. My good friend told me that she was going to the convention and there were a lot of fun things associated with it—it wouldn't just be about work. So now I'm a member! I went to a grammar session at the convention and the presenter had such cool ideas about how to make kids excited about grammar. It was amazing.

StartingLine

NEWS YOU NEED TO KNOW

NEA launches \$6 million "Turn-Around Initiative" to improve schools

NEA's new "Turn Around for Great Public Schools Initiative" includes an investment of \$1 million per year for six years to develop comprehensive strategies and policies to increase teacher effectiveness in high-needs schools.

"If we expect to transform our public schools we must take action now," said NEA President Dennis Van Roekel. "Great teachers, with the right policy supports, are the ideal agents of meaningful and sustainable change in our most challenged schools."

Children of Poverty Deserve Great Teachers: One Union's Commitment to Changing the Status Quo, a new NEA report, prepared in partnership with the Center for Teaching Quality, supports the initiative by presenting solid, proven strategies and policy recommendations that can make a difference for students. NEA advocates for credible and consistent evaluation processes that could transcend current debates about the role of tenure in teacher development, and offers ways to recruit, prepare, support and compensate teachers for high-needs schools.

To learn more about the initiative and the report, visit the NEA website, www.nea.org/teacherquality.

Navigate the growing trend of undocumented student enrollment

As the number of undocumented students in public K-12 schools continues to rise, districts are facing new challenges to ensure that every child receives a quality education. NEA and the National School Boards Association have released a new guide, *Legal Issues for School Districts Related to the Education of Undocumented Children*, designed to help educators address the issue and meet the needs of these students.

Download the guide and learn more about this critical issue. Visit www.nea.org and enter "undocumented students" in the search box for easy access to the guide.



"Now, look, baby,
'union' is spelled with
5 letters. It is not a
four-letter word."

DOROTHY PARKER (1893-1967)
AMERICAN AUTHOR, POET AND WIT



Maryland's 2009 National Blue Ribbon Schools

Southern HS Anne Arundel County
Western HS Baltimore City
Seventh District ES Baltimore County
Hammond MS Howard County
Highland ES Montgomery County
Stephen Decatur MS Worcester County

Congrats to Blue Ribbon schools!

This year's Blue Ribbon awardees highlight some of the top achievements in the state by students, educators and schools. "As we strive to ensure great public schools for all children, the many successes attained by the students and staff of these Blue Ribbon schools provide us with examples of what is possible," said MSEA President Clara Floyd. "I congratulate each teacher, support professional, parent and administrator whose contributions made a difference in the lives of their students. It is always rewarding when educators are recognized for excellence."

2010 National C.L.E.A.N.™ Awards It's nominations time!

We all know the invaluable contributions school custodians make to public health in their schools and communities. The second annual C.L.E.A.N.™ Award proudly recognizes the outstanding leadership of custodians and the important role custodial staff play in keeping students healthy and safe.



You can nominate yourself or someone in your school, district, or state/local affiliate! Download the 2010 National C.L.E.A.N.™ Awards application package at www.neahin.org/cleanaward. Up to five awards, which recognize a single custodian or a team of custodians, are presented to the top recipient(s) and four runners-up. *Deadline for nominations: December 7.*

*The Custodial Leaders for Environmental Advocacy Nationwide

Tips for teaching with new media

Edutopia's* free *Ten Top Tips for Teaching with New Media* guide is full of easy-to-use, practical ways to prepare students for 21st century success. From "Breaking the Digital Ice" to "Working Better, Together," each tip provides ways to transform classrooms and includes websites and

additional resources to help deliver relevant and meaningful content. Visit edutopia.org/ten-top-tips to view, download and print the guide.

While you're on the Edutopia website, check out the dropdown menu at the top of the page. You'll find articles, blogs and resources on subjects like the multiple intelligences, the vital role of the arts in education, integrated studies, social and emotional learning and much more.

**Edutopia is the nonprofit education-focused foundation created by filmmaker George Lucas.*

Win a \$100 Barnes and Noble gift card at NEA Member Benefits!

Every month NEA Member Benefits offers members two chances to win prizes such as one of 10 \$150 L.L. Bean gift cards or \$200 Shell gas cards, lunch for 25 friends at Subway and many more. Visit the website, www.neamb.com, for giveaway rules and to register for the November drawing and your chance to win one of 15 \$100 Barnes & Noble gift cards!



Save on heating oil this winter!

As a member of NEA/MSEA, you're eligible for substantial discounts and a free service contract through HEAT USA, the country's largest heating oil buying group. HEAT USA uses its purchasing power to negotiate lower prices from carefully screened local heating oil companies.

Service is available in some or all of these Maryland counties—Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Harford, Howard and Prince George's. Visit www.heatusa.com or call 888/NEA4-OIL to get started.

SAVE THE DATES!

NEA Human & Civil Rights Awards program honors member-nominated individuals, organizations, and affiliates whose leadership and example ensure human and civil rights for future generations. NEA will celebrate the 2010 award winners at its 2010 Representative Assembly in New Orleans. Visit www.nea.org/hcraawards for award categories, nomination forms, tips and more. **Deadline: December 10.**

MSEA's Dorothy Lloyd Award, named after the longtime Association director of publications, honors persons, groups or programs for their accomplishments in the field of girls' and women's rights. Visit www.marylandeducators.org for award rules, guidelines and nomination forms. Sponsored by the MSEA Women's Concerns Committee. **Deadline: January 7.**

MSEA Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast Observance and 2009 Minority Achievement Awards, Martin's Crosswinds, Greenbelt. **January 16.**

by the numbers

Walk your dog! Take a hike! Go to Curves!

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines suggest that adults need at least 150 minutes of aerobic exercise plus strength training each week. But according to a 2009 Gallup poll, only 27% of Americans make that claim. Where do you fit in? For more information from the CDC, visit www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity.

Less than 3 days per week
(less than 90 minutes)

49%

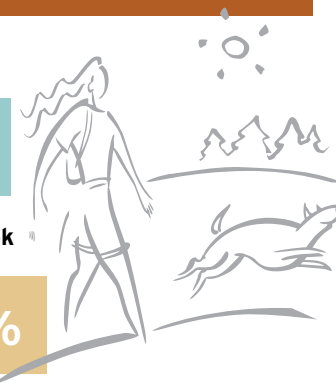
3-4 days per week
(90-120 minutes)

24%

5 days or more per week
(150 minutes or more)

27%

Source: Gallup Poll, May 2009



on the web

➔ Mountains, rivers, seashore, and farmland ... it's the great outdoors!

Visit **Trails.com** for a free two-week membership and check out the site's top rated destinations for day trips, hikes, sightseeing and more in Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Washington D.C.

Grab your bike! Discover the spectacular beauty of river gorges, mountain vistas, rocks, trestles and tunnels on the Great Allegheny Passage that passes through the Allegheny Mountains to meet the C&O Canal Towpath at Cumberland. **www.atatrail.org**

Join the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, a volunteer trails organization founded in 1927, dedicated to the upkeep and improvement of 1,200 miles of trails in the Mid-Atlantic region, along with cabins, shelters and hundreds of acres of conserved land. **www.potomacappalachian.org/**

Visit Glen Echo Park for nature walks, art classes, film screenings, dance lessons and more. **www.glenechopark.org/calindex.aspx**

Check out user reviews on parks, museums and more, before you travel. **www.yelp.com**

Governor O'Malley's record, positions, vision

MSEA AND GOVERNOR O'MALLEY SIT DOWN FOR A ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW



Governor O'Malley visited Running Brook ES in Howard County to kick off the first Read Across Maryland celebration, a partnership with MSEA.

Despite the devastating economic downturn in the state, and the fact that almost every other program in the state's budget has experienced significant cuts, Governor Martin O'Malley has very publicly carried out his commitment to maintain funding for public education. In each of the last three years, Maryland has made record investments in education. That's why MSEA's Representative Assembly voted overwhelmingly to endorse Gov. O'Malley for a second term.

Just as candidate O'Malley promised, Gov. O'Malley worked with MSEA and other education groups to implement TELL Maryland, the statewide survey of Maryland educators that saw a nationally unprecedented response rate of 62 percent. MSEA expects the results, now being shared with school systems and individual schools, will lead to groundbreaking conversations about the ever-growing workload problem and other conditions that affect teaching and learning in our public schools.

Gov. O'Malley has frequently stated, and has proven through his actions, that supporting educators in the quest to build on Maryland's #1 ranking and create great 21st century public schools for every child will continue to be his top priority. MSEA President Clara Floyd recently sat down with the governor to talk about his record and his plans for the next four years.



Governor O'Malley celebrates Maryland's #1 public school ranking with MSEA President Clara Floyd as MSEA Board member Sidney Hankerson and MSEA Executive Director David Helfman look on.

President Clara Floyd

On behalf of our 71,000 members, I'd like to ask you some questions about the issues that affect students and public schools. What will be your major education priorities in the next four years?

Governor Martin O'Malley

My priority will be to continue the progress in public education. We're #1 in the nation because of the relationships, the cooperation and the investments that we've been able to secure—even though many of those investments have required us to make a lot of very difficult choices in the General Assembly. ... We need to make the investment if we are going to have the highly skilled workforce we need.

Our kids, our parents, our teachers have not disappointed us. We've seen student test scores going up, up, up. Now that we've been recognized by *Education Week* as having the #1 school system in the country, I'd like to see us continue that work by establishing ourselves as the best public school system in the world. Sometimes people get self-conscious and laugh at that notion, but we shouldn't be shy about it.

The following is excerpted from the interview. You can see the entire videotaped interview on www.marylandeducators.org.



The governor visited with football coaches and players at Friendly HS in Prince George's County after a school assembly this fall.

President Floyd

We are indeed challenged to look at international benchmarks. I'm pleased to hear you address the issue and especially pleased that you'll continue to push us in that direction.

Governor O'Malley

None of us want to reduce the school year to a series of never-ending tests, but in order to become the best in the world—in order to have that as something that distinguishes Maryland, and makes us more attractive to more businesses—we have to have the courage to stand up and say: Compare our kids. Compare our teaching to the teaching that goes on anywhere in the world. You'll see that we are, in fact, one of the best school systems in the world.

President Floyd

We know that you and the General Assembly have had a tough time funding the state's budget. How do we make sure all levels of government are doing their part to help us become the best school system in the world?

Governor O'Malley

We have an administration in Washington, D.C. that not only believes in high standards, but believes in making the investments necessary to reach them. ... Unfortunately, this national recession has made it very, very challenging. Thanks to President Obama's help, and even though we had to cut huge amounts from virtually every other part of state government, we were able to hold K-12 education harmless in terms of the state formulas. In fact, we were able to fully fund the Geographic Cost of Education Index[†] for the first time.

President Floyd

In some quarters we hear about shifting pension costs back to the counties. What's your view?

Governor O'Malley

This is an issue that comes up all the time in Annapolis. There are some in Annapolis who were here in the old days before the state took over this important responsibility, who say it should be shared equally.

I have taken the position that we should not be shifting this cost. That's simply going backward on Thornton and the thrust of what we are trying to do. So far we've been successful. These latest rounds of budget contractions and revenue shortfalls have made our work even more challenging. We should, even in tough times, defend the importance of investing in education.

I'm going to continue to do everything in my power to keep your pension system solvent and funded at the state level, knowing there will be a lot of pressure to reexamine it. I hope to be able to work with you and your leadership so that we can make the case.

President Floyd

I'm very pleased to hear that. We get concerned when we hear elected leaders say the counties need to make up for cuts in state funding.

Governor O'Malley

In fairness, the counties picked up a lot of costs in the recent rounds of Board of Public Works cuts. I hated to make those cuts. Nobody runs for office saying vote for me, I'll cut your police aid or your highway funds. Those have all been painful, but we'll get through it together. And when we do get through it, we need to be sure we're holding on to our most valued asset, and that's the best public school system in America.

President Floyd

You've heard us talk about the labor bill and how to settle disputes between school boards, Local Associations and school employees in the counties. We managed to get a bill out of the Senate this past year—the very last night of the session—but time ran out for the House version. Do you support this initiative?

Governor O'Malley

I do, and I part company with the state school superintendent and even most of the county superintendents on this issue. I've never found anything to fear from workers being organized and having their grievances fairly heard and resolved.

Governor O'Malley greets Local Association presidents from western Maryland at MSEA's Convention 2009.



Things in Annapolis can take their own time. It's rare that big changes like this occur the first time around. I think we need to consolidate the voices that were with us last time and reach out to those we need to persuade so we can get it done this time.

President Floyd

How will you respond to legislators and other groups who tell you it's time for education to take a funding cut?

Governor O'Malley

My response would be that we can't give up on education, even as rough as these times are. ... We've come too far and we have too far to go. For some of our historically underperforming schools, we're seeing progress to the point where a majority of students are proficient in reading and math for the first time in modern memory. Now is not the time to go backwards.

We have to support our president and do everything that we can to get the economy moving again. At the same time, we have to remind Marylanders that the reason we have a stronger economy than most other states is because we invested in education.

President Floyd

President Obama's speech to students was fantastic. If you were to talk to our students, what would you say?

Governor O'Malley

I talk to students all the time. Some of the best days I have are days when my first appointment is at a school. I tell kids that I need them, that I am proud of them, that I love them and that all of us need them.

President Floyd

What is your position on the B.O.A.S.T.* bill? The General Assembly seems to consider it annually.

Governor O'Malley

I'm old-fashioned, and I think for the taxes we pay, our public institutions should actually work. The B.O.A.S.T. bill continues to be debated in Annapolis, but I am opposed to anything that would divert dollars that would otherwise go to the schools. ... We have to concern ourselves first and foremost with meeting our ambitious goals, and we can't allow anything to distract us.

President Floyd

We've been celebrating our name change from MSTA to MSEA, which better reflects our diverse membership. What role do you believe support professionals play in providing great public schools for every child in Maryland?

Governor O'Malley

When it comes to the people who actually take care of our cafeterias and our offices and keep our schools clean, I shake their hands when I visit schools—I want those hard-working men and women to know how important they are to our shared future and the education mission.

President Floyd

As we close, what would you like to say to MSEA's 71,000 members regarding your greatest accomplishments as governor?

Governor O'Malley

The greatest accomplishments are not mine alone—they're the accomplishments of our teachers, support professionals, administrators, parents and students of Maryland. Seeing test scores go up every year, being recognized as the #1 education system in the entire United States, and going four years with zero percent increase in college tuition make me proud to govern such a forward-looking and forward-thinking people.

The fact that we've done this in the toughest of economic times is nothing short of heroic. I really thank the educators of our state for being heroes, not only to our kids, but to all of us who depend on our children to bring us a better future.



The Severna Park MS string ensemble performed for Governor Martin O'Malley during a visit last year.

* Look for a story about the TELL Maryland survey results in next month's *ActionLine*.

† The Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) provides additional funds to reflect regional differences in the cost of providing educational services.

‡ Building Opportunities for All Students and Teachers (B.O.A.S.T.) is a tuition tax credit scheme similar to a school voucher program. B.O.A.S.T. offers tax breaks to large businesses that subsidize student tuition at private and religious schools.

Stormy weather fails to slow the action at MSEA Convention

It was a blustery few days, but that didn't affect the whirlwind of activity at MSEA's Convention 2009. For both delegates and attendees, the weekend was filled with nearly 60 professional development workshops, a health fair, 150 member-sponsored and education-related exhibits and contests. There were even yoga classes, massage therapists and an MSEA tattoo parlor!

At the Representative Assembly (RA), delegates debated and voted on new business items, bylaw amendments and resolutions, and listened as Association leaders shared the past year's achievements and the issues of the coming year. Special guests included Governor Martin O'Malley, Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown, U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski, U.S. Rep. Frank Kratovil and 2010 Teacher of the Year Jennifer Rankin.

"Our challenge is to continue the momentum"

"We have much to celebrate this year," said MSEA President Clara Floyd in her remarks to the 694 delegates. "Public schools in Maryland were ranked #1 by *Education Week*, *Newsweek* and the College Board. And I don't need to tell you that this didn't happen by accident."

With a worrisome recession looming large in the minds of citizens and lawmakers, public education in Maryland has still managed to make progress and headlines. Indeed, the #1 ranking, Governor O'Malley's efforts to sustain record school funding, and the Association's partnerships with stakeholders committed to making real improvements to NCLB, confirm that public education remains a top priority.

"Our challenge," President Floyd continued, "is to continue the momentum because there is more to be accomplished. Simply put, we cannot rest—we must not rest—until all students are achieving, all students are finishing high school and all students are prepared to enter the world of work or higher education upon graduation from high school."

"Shelter from the storm"

Executive Director David Helfman also lauded members' hard work and the public education budget maintained by Governor O'Malley and the General Assembly. He coupled his message with a grounded discussion of MSEA's fiscal health as the Association crafts and

presents a two-year budget to the 2010 Spring RA during a period of slow membership growth, increasing operating costs and decreasing NEA resources.

Membership organizing, Helfman said, is the one sure way to reinforce MSEA's position as a sound and effective advocacy organization. "In the next two to five years, [recruiting new members] is critical if we want to have the leverage necessary to protect public school funding and our member interests. These current non-members can provide us shelter from the storm."

Helfman closed his remarks with a challenge to delegates: "Last year, you changed our name to be more inclusive. A year from now, will our membership numbers reflect that we indeed are, or will the change be in name only? The answer to this question will drive our success for many years to come."

Governor O'Malley endorsed for reelection

Citing his commitment to keeping Maryland's schools first in the nation with record funding, delegates voted overwhelmingly to endorse Governor O'Malley for reelection. During his speech to delegates, the governor took questions, including one from a member concerned by county funding struggles and frozen salaries.

"We should resist feeling personally dismissed by what is a global depression and a severe economic downturn," the governor urged the crowd. "Don't take it personally—I know it's hard, but what you are doing is important work."



Governor O'Malley answered questions from delegates after his speech to the RA.



Student members from McDaniel College attended a workshop focused on using technology in the classroom.

Student members gain new representation

Delegates passed eight New Business Items (NBI), including those supporting: the safety of modular classrooms; improved professional development; an attendance requirement for graduation; and a better, more statistically sound model for determining Adequate Yearly Progress under NCLB.

Also passed were two bylaw amendments supporting MSEA's Student Program by establishing a Student Advisory Council and a student delegate category for future RAs.



U.S. Representative Frank Kratovil thanked delegates for the early endorsement of his 2010 candidacy.

Notable guests

Jennifer Rankin, *Maryland Teacher of the Year, Garrett County*
 Governor Martin O'Malley
 Lt. Governor Anthony Brown
 U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski
 U.S. Representative Frank Kratovil
 Ocean City Mayor Rick Meehan

Visit

www.marylandeducators.org

Learn more about RA business, including complete bylaw amendments, NBIs, resolutions, and photo galleries, plus YouTube videos of RA speeches by President Clara Floyd, Executive Director David Helfman, Governor O'Malley, Lt. Governor Anthony Brown, U.S. Rep. Frank Kratovil, and 2010 Teacher of the Year Jennifer Rankin.



Convention 2009 At-a-Glance

Professional Development

Representative Assembly

Number of delegates attending	694
Number of New Business Items proposed*	14
Number of New Business Items passed	8
Number of bylaw amendments proposed	4
Number of bylaw amendments passed	2

*Learn more about the business of the Representative Assembly at www.marylandeducators.org.

Professional Development

Number of workshops presented	57
Most popular workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom Management and the ADD/ADHD Child
Most cutting edge workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HELP: Hip Hop to Literacy-Effective School Practices I Want to Teach Like My Hair's on Fire
Largest number of workshops in a single strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEM-Science, Technology, Engineering and Math

Exhibits

Total number of exhibit booths	150
Most unusual exhibit	Tattoo artist

Legislative action

Number of emails sent to legislators supporting school funding	512
Number of postcards sent to legislators supporting the labor bill	1,227

MSEA Fund for Children and Public Education

Amount collected from delegates, Local Associations and the MSTA Silent Auction **\$22,507.50**

Winners of the annual Fund raffle

- Marilyn Pula, *Prince George's* **\$500**
- Jeannette Young, *Baltimore County* **\$1,000**

Awards

2008-09 Recruitment and Retention Membership Award
 • Howard County

"We Are MSEA" Jingle Contest

- Winner:** Teachers Association of Baltimore County and Baltimore County Instructional Assistants and Clerical Employees
- Runners up:** Education Association of Charles County and Howard County Education Association

Twitter at MSEA Convention

Number of Convention Twitter reporters	11
Number of Convention Twitter updates	103

Follow MSEA on Twitter! @MSEAEducators

We are MSEA RA 2009



Voting on new business items, bylaw amendments and resolutions is all in a day's work at the RA.



MSEA President Clara Floyd shared her passion for 21st century schools with the 694 gathered delegates.



Executive Director David Helfman (projected on the big screen) spoke frankly with delegates about the need for the Association's continued focus on membership building.

Right: Lt. Governor Anthony Brown was the special guest at the President's Reception. Lt. Gov. Brown also thanked delegates for their hard work and dedication at the start of the RA.



Saxophonist William "Hank" Bruce blows a mean horn as a member of MSEA Connection. The all-member band played at the President's Reception and helped open the RA.





The Women's Concerns Committee presided over their annual Apple-a-Day Health Fair.



Maryland's new Teacher of the Year, Jennifer Rankin, Garrett County, shared her joy of teaching.



Delegates came from every county in the state to debate and discuss Association business.



The RA floor is always busy. Countless volunteer members from across the state help to make sure the convention runs smoothly.



More than 50 professional development workshops focused on best practices for members in every job category.



It was another night of music and dancing at MSEA's annual Friday night Secrets party!

LocalLine

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MSEA LOCALS



Harford County teachers Brian Rheinhardt and Melinda Welsh rallied in support of Harford County's impact fee before a county council meeting. The council is considering repealing the dedicated fee, which supports school construction.

Harford Locals rally at county council meeting

In fast-growing Harford County, impact fees for new home construction have gone directly into the school construction fund since the fees were enacted in 2004. Now, in a year in which public education received no increase in funding, county leaders are considering repealing the fee.

With the country still in the throes of a deep recession, Harford County Education Association (HCEA) President Randy Cervený says repealing the impact fee is a cut public education simply can't take.

"Any cut, whether it's in school construction or salaries has a negative impact on students," Cervený said. "Costs have gone up for everything and we've added additional staff to our schools—the money has to come from somewhere. Our members are upset."

At a hearing last month in Bel Air, educators from HCEA and the Harford County Educational Services Council, including high school reading

specialist Brian Rheinhardt, told the council how cost shifts have already affected teachers and students. "Our English curriculum budget was cut by 40 percent this year, which means we don't have enough people to work on curriculum projects to keep our curriculum up-to-date," Rheinhardt said. "That means we aren't advancing our curriculum and students suffer."

The council had not voted on the issue at press time.

Baltimore County welcomes elementary nurses to membership ranks

In addition to welcoming more than 400 new teachers this year, the Teachers Association of Baltimore County (TABCO) extended a warm welcome to more than 80 elementary school member-nurses who worked hard last year to meet the threshold required to join the TABCO/MSEA/NEA family. They join fellow secondary school nurses already eligible for TABCO membership.

"TABCO welcomes these professionals to our Association. As we move forward, TABCO leaders will be working with Baltimore County Public School leaders to transition the elementary nurses' previous contract into our negotiated contract," said TABCO President Cheryl Bost.

Cecil's joint training focuses on advocacy skills for school reps

School Association representatives (ARs) from both the Cecil County Classroom Teachers Association (CCCTA) and the Cecil Education Support Personnel Association (CESPA) gathered recently for a joint training presented by MSEA.

The training, Advocacy and Problem-Solving Skills, is especially designed for ARs and other Association leaders and activists who want to become even more effective member advocates.

"We want our ARs to understand the negotiated agreement, feel comfortable with it and be able to support members when issues arise," said Lori Hrinko, CCCTA president. "This type of training from MSEA provides members the skills and confidence to make that happen."

CESPA President Linda Bowsbey agrees. "The training provides the nuts and bolts of how to effectively represent members with administration. I want our ARs to understand that they can work with administrators and colleagues on a variety of issues with confidence," Bowsbey said.

The two presidents are working together to build Association membership in Cecil County, so joint training makes sense. "Having MSEA staff travel and give their time once, not twice, for the same training is practical," Bowsbey added. "Our members work in the same buildings and are facing the same issues."

Washington County teachers boost membership

Washington County Teachers Association (WCTA) President Denise Fry says the impressive 15 percent gain in membership posted by WCTA so far this year is a product of interaction between member and staff recruiters at the annual new teacher orientation sponsored by the county's board of education.

"We didn't have just one or two Association representatives at the weeklong event—we had six or seven

NOVEMBER 2009

- 15-21** American Education Week
- 18** National Education Support Professionals Day
- 19** MSEA Southern Coordinated Bargaining Council (CBC)
- 20-21** Local Officers Advance! Part 2 Towson
- 23** Deadline for receipt of nominations for MSEA elections
- 26** Thanksgiving Day
MSEA Office closed
- 27** MSEA Office closed

DECEMBER 2009

- 2** MSEA School Quality Series, Session 1 Location TBD
- 4-5** Personal Assessment Leadership Skills (PALS) Cambridge
Minority Leadership Training Program Cambridge
- 10** MSEA Urban CBC
- 11** Hanukkah Begins at sunset
- 11-12** NEA Board of Directors Meeting
- 14** MSEA West CBC
- 19** Hanukkah Ends
- 24** Christmas Eve
- 24-1** MSEA offices closed for holidays
- 25** Christmas Day
- 26** Kwanzaa Begins
- 31** New Year's Eve

JANUARY 2010

- 1** New Year's Day
Kwanzaa Ends
Office closed
- 2** MSEA Office reopens
- 12** MSEA East CBC
- 12-13** MSEA Board of Directors Meeting
- 13** MSEA General Assembly Open House
- 14** MSEA Urban CBC
- 16** MSEA's MLK, Jr. Breakfast and Minority Achievement Awards
Martin's Crossroads, Greenbelt



Member Denita Blake-Dale and President Nikki Jackson of the Worcester County Education Support Personnel Association bargaining team attended the recent MSEA training to prepare Eastern Shore Locals for upcoming negotiations.

all week long! We were out front and visible," Fry explains. "We fed them. We talked with them. We had young, middle-career and veteran members all sharing their experiences with WCTA and MSEA.

"It wasn't about being aggressive or pushy," Fry added. "It was about showing new teachers that we believe enough in the value of our organization to commit our own time to be there for them the entire week."

Prep time for MSEA East bargaining teams

The economic forecast continues to be grim and that means added pressure on the Local Association bargaining teams that fight for members' salaries, wages, benefits and working conditions. At a recent training for team members from the Eastern Shore, MSEA staffers focused on maintaining long-term goals.

With a pointed list of dos and don'ts, trainers urged teams to educate members early on issues and prepare them to act when the time arises.

"Each year we try to give the negotiators on the Eastern Shore the ability to deal with the specific issues and problems we think they're going

to face this year at the bargaining table," said JC. Parker, MSEA UniServ director for Worcester and Somerset counties.

"Probably the most difficult issue to deal with will be the loss of revenue due to the economy and the potential attack on our members' benefits," Parker added.

MSEA staffers contributing to the training also included Mark Mench, Virginia Riggs, Jackie Harris and Dale Templeton.

School nurses at the forefront in H1N1 prevention

Irene Campbell, RN, AFSCME Local 2250, joined U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, and Amy Garcia, RN, executive director, National Association of School Nurses, at a recent press conference supporting the H1N1 flu vaccination program in Prince George's County schools.

"Having the vaccination available in our schools is a great service to our families," Campbell said.

"Parents have the responsibility to keep their children safe from H1N1 by making the right decision to have their children vaccinated against H1N1," she added.



Irene Campbell (left), RN, AFSCME, is joined by U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, and Amy Garcia, RN, to promote the school-based vaccination program in Prince George's County schools.



You and your Facebook: Take precautions—your job may be at stake

Connect with old friends! Share photos! Keep in touch! Kind of like a 21st century global water cooler, right? But Facebook and other social networking websites can be a real hazard for educators, whose positions as quasi-public figures put them in a position unlike any others in their community.

Now, take the first sentence of this story and change it to what's really getting posted on Facebook pages, especially on those of many young professionals and high school and college students.

It's not hard to imagine how things can get a little tricky for young, early-career educators. Revered by the third graders, labeled cool (or not) by seventh graders and not far from being a peer to twelfth graders, new educators put their reputations with both students and the community at risk when their private lives are exposed through social networking sites like Facebook.

Many new educators find their high-visibility roles in the community a challenging adjustment. At a recent SPARKS event, Frederick County educators shared their stories and concerns about being a searchable, easily accessible presence online with MSEA attorney Saurabh Gupta.



"Friends of mine have needed to delete photos because of 'inappropriate' actions like drinking or their clothing choices," said Jonathan Araujo. "Some were meant to be silly, like Halloween costumes, but others were things that the teachers just didn't realize were a problem."

"Use social networking sites with great care. I recommend educators put their content through 'the

mom filter.' If your mom won't like it, neither will parents, administrators or community," Gupta cautioned. "A good way to check what other people are seeing on your Facebook is by using a friend's account to view your page, then making the necessary adjustments to your privacy settings."

Member-to-Member Tips for Using Facebook

Twenty-something educators from Frederick County helped create this list of don't-miss tips.

- Make sure only your friends can view your search listing and profile. Under "Settings" lock all options in "Privacy" to accept "Only Friends."
- Remove yourself from Google search listings. Facebook profiles now show up in Google search listings, but you can opt out of search entirely to prevent your students from knowing you're on Facebook. In "Privacy," review the "Search Result Content" to limit the information people can see about you.
- Be vigilant about what others post about you. "Untag" photos of yourself that you don't want students or parents to see.
- Choose an obscure username that students won't think of, recognize or search on Google.
- Don't accept friend requests from current or potential students or their family members. Be careful about accepting requests from former students.
- Before posting something, ask yourself, "Would I want my [principal, students, parents] to see this?"
- Be careful about linking your Facebook with other social networking sites. If you update your status on a linked Twitter account, it will publish to Facebook where others might see it.
- Monitor what is being published about you. If you're concerned that old friends or contacts could include you in online postings without your knowledge, try setting up a Google alert with your name, just to be safe. A Google alert will send you an email anytime your name is published.
- Sort your friends by lists. If you're friends with your fellow educators and principals, you may want to add them to a school list with restricted viewing abilities. Once you've created your list, go to "Settings," and navigate to the Profile section. From there, you can select "Edit Custom Settings," which will open a field for "Except These People."

New MSEA program focuses on increasing literacy for high-risk students

2010 MSEA READ ACROSS MARYLAND Literacy Program



Literacy. It's a constantly evolving notion. It used to mean basic reading and writing skills. But a little more than 10 years ago, Congress provided an important update to the definition of literacy in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Section 203. Lawmakers acknowledged that being able to read and write just weren't enough anymore and provided a new definition for a new era of resources, technology and expectations. Literacy, they agreed, was "an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society."

Introducing MSEA's new Literacy Awards Program

This year, MSEA introduced a new Read Across America Literacy Awards Program as part of the Association's annual Read Across America activities. The program is focused on increasing the literacy of high-risk students starting with the creative ideas of front line educators. "We know that top-down policy so often dictates how we reach



our students," said Debra Garner, state coordinator of Read Across America. "These awards are focused on the best practices of hands-on educators who know what works and what doesn't for their students."

Here's how it works:

MSEA's Read Across America Literacy Awards Program provides funding ranging between \$1,000 and \$5,000 to Local Associations and their members to establish a program or service activity with measurable results targeted to improve literacy among minority and/or high-risk students. The funding amounts will be distributed based on available funds, scope of the project, and how well the proposal meets the following criteria:

- Programs must directly target minority and/or at-risk preK-12 public school students in Maryland with a measurable component that will demonstrate improved reading ability and/or test scores.
- Proposals must include a detailed description of the program that outlines the target audience, the nature of the program, how it will be facilitated and the primary contact person.
- All activities must be organized and coordinated with the support and assistance of the local affiliate.
- Funds provided must not be used for one-time promotional events such as mall activities, read-a-thons, green eggs and ham breakfasts or Dr. Seuss birthday parties.

LOOKING FOR IDEAS?

Read the final report, hear podcasts and watch videos from the Carnegie Corporation of New York's Council for Advancing Adolescent Literacy at www.carnegie.org/literacy/tta/.

Check out the *Education Week* website, www.edweek.org, to get the latest news on literacy programs and their effectiveness. You can access archived articles for \$2.95. Don't miss the *Spotlight on Reading Instruction* link.

Visit the National Institute for Literacy, www.nifl.gov, for research, reports and publications about early childhood, childhood and adolescent literacy.

Proposals must be submitted through a Local Association with a supporting letter from the Local president by **January 31, 2010**.

EMAIL OR MAIL PROPOSALS:

dgarner@mseanea.org or

Debra Garner, state coordinator
of Read Across America
140 Main Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Awardees will be notified no later than February 15, 2010.

MSEA at a crossroads



Our dues level suggests we're already running a lean operation, but we're still finding ways to cut back. We're mindful, however, that cutting in the wrong places will hurt us.

In my last column, I reviewed our Association accomplishments over the last four years and predicted more progress in years to come. But let's get real, folks: is progress possible when we're all being battered by the worst recession in 70 years?

Yes, we're feeling the impact. Operating surpluses have been diminished by market losses, this year's group of 470 new members is our smallest in more than a decade, and school employment is down as economic pressures continue to mount across our state.

Between now and the 2010 Spring RA, MSEA leaders will be crafting and passing a budget and establishing dues and spending levels for the next two years. When membership is flat and operating costs increase, we have three choices: raising dues, cutting spending, or growing our membership.

Let's start with dues. MSEA dues are already \$90 a year below the average of all NEA affiliates and \$23 below the cap in our bylaws. But our members feel the impact of the recession, too. If we rely on a significant dues increase to balance our budget, we risk losing them, which only worsens our financial situation.

Our dues level suggests we're already running a lean operation, but we're still finding ways to cut back. We're mindful, however, that cutting in the wrong places will hurt us. For example, the new website we're developing will bring our member communications into the 21st century and allow Local Associations to maintain their own websites at no additional cost. Our television and radio ads generate pride among members, respect for public school employees among taxpayers and support for protecting school funding in the General Assembly. These major short-term expenses are in our long-term interests.

Each day, it appears less likely that our schools will escape significant cuts in state and local funding. Will this force MSEA to cut programs and services?

We're at a crossroads. We can pull through the recession by raising dues and cutting spending. Or we can reduce the reliance on those strategies by focusing on increasing membership growth.

Some 20,000 teachers and education support professionals working in our Locals haven't joined our Association. Reach out to them. Let them know public education is on the chopping block and sitting on the sidelines isn't an option. Every school employee has an obligation to do their fair share by supporting MSEA—the strongest organization advocating for their interests.

INPUT, PLEASE!

You can help plan MSEA's 2-year budget

MSEA's FY 2011 & FY 2012 budget is the Association's blueprint for determining how your dues dollars will be spent. You can participate in this important process in one of three ways:

1. Share your questions, comments and suggestions with your Local president.
2. Download and complete the budget input card from the MSEA website, www.marylandeducators.org, then mail to: Mark Dabkowski, MSEA, 140 Main Street, Annapolis, MD 21401.
3. Save a copy of your completed online budget input card and email as an attachment to Mark Dabkowski, mdabkowski@mseanea.org.

DEADLINE for receipt of your questions, comments, suggestions: **January 4, 2010.**

MSEA's Budget Committee and Board of Directors review all member input before sending the budget to the May 22, 2010, Spring Representative Assembly for deliberation and approval.

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WHAT DO YOU THINK? Write David: MSEA, 140 Main St, Annapolis, MD 21401 • dhelfman@mseanea.org

MSEA pushes for speedy settlements in 2010 labor legislation

“The faith of our members in the current process is completely broken,” Frederick County Teachers Association (FCTA) President Gary Brennan told Speaker of the House of Delegates Mike Busch and Del. Sheila Hixson (D-20) last month. Passage of the 2010 labor negotiations bill could help restore that faith.

Brennan, and fellow Local Association leaders and staff representing more than 40,000 MSEA members, met with Speaker Busch and bill co-sponsor Del. Sheila Hixson (D-20) last month to make an early appeal for House passage in 2010. (The legislation passed in the Senate this year, but didn’t reach a vote in the House.)

New labor negotiations legislation would add badly needed protection for educators when local boards of education like the one in Frederick County drag their feet in settling employee contracts. “FCTA went to impasse with our board of education over planning time issues. We accepted the mediator’s decision in June, but the board refused,” Brennan added. A contract was finally signed in December.

The proposed legislation would impose a time limit on contract negotiations, which in some cases has taken up to two years. Del. Hixson agrees it’s an untenable situation.



In Maryland, teachers can grow old waiting for their local board of education to settle their contract.

“I come at this legislation from a fairness and timeliness standpoint,” she said. “This has to be cleared up.”

Brennan and other Association leaders think a new labor law would encourage both sides to accept a mediator’s decision and help avoid the loss of time and good will that often comes with arbitration. “Our board went through the motions of mediation and did what they were going to do anyway. Members felt the process simply wasn’t fair to them.”

Brennan’s story is echoed in counties across the state, where the waiting game never benefits employees. But Hixson is encouraged. “It’s important that we continue to see you and hear your stories. I was impressed at how many MSEA members were represented at the October meeting. And if that’s a sign of the support within MSEA, I would say it’s very indicative of what’s to come.”



MSEA and Local leaders meet with Speaker Busch and Del. Hixson. Left to right: Ann Delacy, Randy Cerveny, Debbie Russ, Ted Payne, Doug Prouty, Tim Mennuti, Speaker Busch, Gary Brennan, MSEA Vice President Betty Weller, Del. Hixson, Steven Brooks, Wanda Ruffo Twigg, Cheryl Bost, Debbie Pappas, John Stange.

Meet *Nic Petersen*



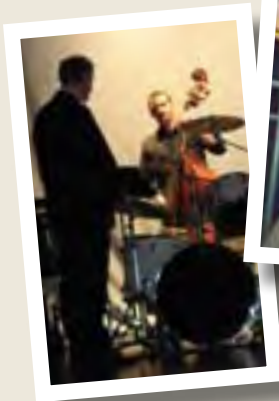
Kayaking on the Banana River in Florida.

Nic Petersen
Director of Choirs
Northern Middle School
Calvert County

I don't believe the old saying "Those who can't, teach." As a performing arts teacher, I believe that I should be involved in performances myself. My students can see that music isn't something you only do in school—it's something you can do your entire life.

My primary performance outlet is the Cathedral Choral Society, but I've also sung with the Washington Bach Consort, and my wife, Shannyn, and I perform with 2nd Star Productions. She plays flute in the pit orchestra and I perform on stage. My other creative outlet is photography—I have a portrait and wedding photography business from home.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention my love of the New England Patriots. I always remind my students when the Patriots win and the Redskins lose! One of my favorite memories is when my father visited from Maine to see our first NFL game in Baltimore. And yes, the Patriots won!



That's me in the shadows talking with the bass player before our school's Musical Revue last March.



My dad and I at the 2007 Ravens v. Patriots game in single digit temperatures. Good times ...



Shannyn and I at dinner for Valentine's Day 2009. I'd be absolutely lost without her!



Shannyn and I at the Hall at Patriots Place in Foxborough, MA—chillin' with "Mike Vrabel."



Playing the role of Freddie in 2nd Star's production of "My Fair Lady."

When you need help or have a suggestion, contact your Association Representative at school or:

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