

SEPTEMBER 2007

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actionLine

MARYLAND STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION • NEA

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 1

BETTER SALARIES



IT'S NO GAME

Don't let budget cuts stop the progress

Join the campaign to protect public school funding!



More resources for students, classrooms and schools.

SMALL CLASS SIZES

THORNTON PASSES

2002



LAST YEAR OF THORNTON FUNDED
2007

STOP!
State budget cuts threaten student progress.
Go back 4 years.



PROBLEM

IS MY
FAMILY
PROTECTED?

WHAT CAN
I DO ABOUT
MY DEBT?

AM I SAVING
ENOUGH FOR
RETIREMENT?

SOLVED.

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8 Join the Great Public Schools campaign!

Funding public schools is serious business, not a political game. Join the Great Public Schools campaign to fight state budget cuts that could derail the Thornton promise!



11 Reach Up, Reach Out! MSTA Convention 2007

Get energized in the workplace and as an activist at MSTA's 140th Convention and Representative Assembly, October 19-20 in Ocean City!



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MSTA members are reaching up and reaching out in new ways



We must reach deeper into our communities and figure out how to draw on the energies of every group that depends on a strong public education system for our economy and state.

OUR THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S MSTA CONVENTION IS *Reach Up, Reach Out!*—a great theme considering everything the Association and its members are doing to take our activism to new levels and in new directions.

Your activism has resulted in important changes—a historic increase in school funding, collective bargaining for ESP, better salaries and pensions, electing pro-public education candidates to key offices—that have helped bring us a few steps closer to achieving great public schools for every child in Maryland.

To reach this goal, we must reach deeper into our communities and figure out how to draw on the energies of every group that depends on a strong public education system for our economy and state.

MSTA's Great Public Schools campaign, featured in this *ActionLine*, is doing just that. We're reaching out to members, fellow educators, parents, community leaders and the general public through ads, our website, greatschoolsmaryland.org, and Community Conversations held around the state. The input we're receiving about the successes, needs and priorities of local schools will help us make clear to the Maryland General Assembly that its commitment to funding public schools must continue.

At this year's Convention, you'll have more opportunities to hear about and get involved in this campaign, as well as set the direction of the Association as a delegate, or attend more than 57 professional development workshops.

Even if you can't make it to Ocean City, there are plenty of ways that you can be active in the Association throughout the year that will benefit you personally and professionally.

Be a "five-minute activist" by communicating to your legislators, local school officials and parents why funding public schools is so important. Serve as an Association representative in your school building. Participate in MSTA's professional development opportunities and training (visit mstanea.org/pro_dev/guide.php). Run for Association office at the local, state or national levels, or sign up for MSTA's training ground for new leaders, the Emerging Leaders Academy (see inside for more details).

Your activism means everything. However you choose to get involved, you are reaching up and reaching out in ways that not only benefit you and the Association, but also help your students and honor our profession as a whole.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Write Clara:

MSTA, 140 Main Street,
Annapolis, MD 21401
cfloyd@mstanea.org

Thornton funding has high return on investment!

Since 2003, Thornton funding has infused Maryland schools with the support students deserve. Five years later, there is plenty of good news to show the public the investment was a smart one.

Some examples of recent success:

Test scores Math and reading scores across the state have risen in all 24 Maryland school districts for the fourth straight year;

Advanced Placement Maryland is #1 in the country in improved Advanced Placement (AP) performance and #2 overall in percentage of AP course offerings;

SATs Our state ranks #4 nationwide in SAT participation and #4 in scores among all states with high SAT participation rates;

College degrees Maryland ranks #4 in the country in the population holding a college degree; and

National Board Certification Teachers earning National Board Certification increased fourfold, putting Maryland in the top third of all states.

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

What Teacher Inspired You and Why?



JOSEPH WARRICK-BELL
Teacher Algebra
Suitland HS
Member since 2006
Prince George's County

I want to be like him

I had a teacher who saw that even when I thought I'd done my best, I had the potential to do even better. His presence in the class was enough for me to look at him and say, I want to be like him one day. I actually went to the same college he did. He inspired me to follow in his footsteps, including teaching.

Always challenged

In Mr. Bosworth's fifth-grade class, learning was just ... it was an adventure, you were always challenged. And that's what I try to do with my kids, bring a subject to life. I'm a guide, not a giver of information. I tell my kids, like Mr. Bosworth did, "You can do it, just figure out how."



JOSEPH MCMAHAN
Teacher First grade
Dr. Gustavus Brown ES
Member since 1989
Charles County



STEPHANIE EARWOOD
Teacher First grade
Spring Ridge ES
Member since 1999
Frederick County

Made the country come alive

My World Studies teacher was the only high school teacher I ever saw use bulletin boards. She would also bring in food, clothing, art—anything she could to make the country come alive for us. She was wonderful.

Cared about my success

My first-grade teacher told me how to spell a word on a spelling test! She was the first person to actually care whether I succeeded or not. In seventh grade, Ms. Ritchie read Edgar Allen Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum* aloud to us. It got me past the preface to the story. Before that, I'd hardly ever read anything.



JOHN STANGE
Master electrician and stationary plant engineer
Calvert County Public Schools
Member since 1997
Calvert County



GERALDINE DUVAL
Office of Organizational Development
Montgomery County Public Schools
Member since 1997
Montgomery County

Nothing was impossible

Ms. McCurdy, my tenth-grade high school English teacher, taught me that there was no obstacle I couldn't surmount. She always told us that nothing was impossible as long as you made the effort.

StartingLine

NEWS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Anne Arundel school subject of new book about NCLB

Former *Washington Post* reporter Linda Perlstein spent a year in Anne Arundel's Tyler Heights ES, a successful Title I School with 70 percent free- and reduced-lunch students, to document how the mandates of *No Child Left Behind* play out with real students, real teachers and real administrators.

Washington Post education reporter Jay Mathews said that, in *Tested: One American School Struggles to Make the Grade*, Perlstein "records with astonishing clarity and insight just what NCLB is doing to and for those kids and teachers with none of the highs or lows, triumphs or failures, smart moves or idiotic pratfalls left out."

"The book details both the human resources and the strain on those resources that regularly occur with high-stakes testing," said Tim Mennuti, president of the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County. "We all work hard, and I hope this book will show the world exactly how much extraordinary effort goes into our 'normal' workday."

Hear Perlstein talk about her book at Convention 2007! Learn more, page 12.



Quote
"And as all before me, I have questioned, grateful for the privilege of being able to ask: What is my task? Why do we exist?"

PATTI SMITH

"THE MEANING OF LIFE," LIFE MAGAZINE ANTHOLOGY, 1992

Bush balks on SCHIP

Congress voted last month to expand the government-subsidized State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) that provides insurance for low-income families. More than six million children are currently insured by SCHIP, and Congress intends that millions more be insured. But new administrative roadblocks, including a requirement that children be uninsured one year before eligibility, would increase the number of uninsured. Most states have a much shorter waiting period; Maryland requires six months.

Maryland is one of 18 states already extending coverage to children of more moderate-income families. The Bush Administration is threatening to veto the bipartisan legislation, fearing such families will move their children from private health insurance to the SCHIP program. Meanwhile, states are concerned: "I am disappointed and dismayed by the Bush Administration's recent actions regarding SCHIP," said Vermont's Republican Gov. James Douglas. "And by the shortsightedness that seems to continually emanate from Washington."

There's work to do

Maryland is the wealthiest state per capita according to many studies. But, according to *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, released annually by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 11 percent of Maryland children live in poverty, infant mortality is up and higher than the national average, and nine percent of children under 17 have no health insurance.

KIDS COUNT is a national and state-by-state effort that tracks the status of children in the US, providing policy-makers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being to enrich local, state and national discussions. Based on the 121 indicators used by the Foundation, Maryland ranks 24th in the nation, down from 19th five years ago.

The NEA Academy! Professional development from NEA-online!

Check out the new NEA Academy, www.nea.org/academy, the Association's online resource devoted to supporting the professional development of NEA teachers and education support professionals through web-based lessons, classroom tips and more!

You'll find courses like "Effective Teaching in Diverse Classrooms" (available this fall), an intense classroom-focused, research-based program to help teachers transform their classroom into a welcoming learning environment for increasingly diverse student populations. Many of the Academy programs are ideal for school-based or district cohorts.

The Academy is also the new home of AOL@School. All the lesson plans and educational ideas that you have come to rely upon from AOL are now exclusively available through the NEA Academy.

Women and retirement

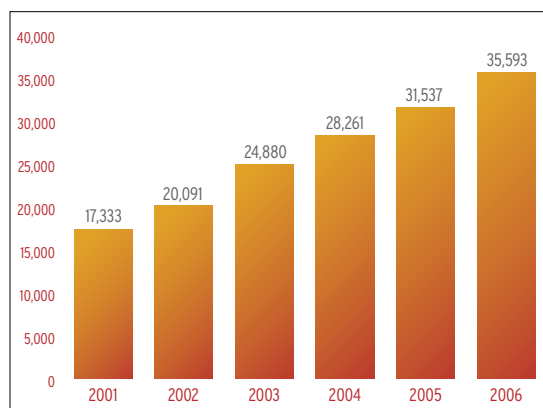
"We all know that women are the chaos managers of our society: juggling children, spouses and work in and out of the home. ... I hope that this book will provide you with the tools you need to make that juggling a little easier." So says Teresa Heinz Kerry in the forward to *What Women Need to Know About Retirement*, a comprehensive guide to financial planning put together by the Heinz Family Philanthropies and The Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement.

It's part primer, part cheerleader, part down-to-earth reminder of some serious issues of inequity. Heinz reminds us that, compared to men, today's woman earns 23 cents per dollar less and works 13 fewer years per lifetime, yet expects to live six years longer. Share this helpful resource with your family and friends. For an online version, or to order print copies, visit www.heinzfamily.org.

In the meantime, watch it all come together for you and your students at greatschoolsmaryland.org today!

by the numbers

Maryland Public School Advanced Placement: Student Participation by Year



Source: The College Board, Maryland Public Schools AP Report 2007.

To download the entire document, see [On the Web \(below\)](#).

on the web www.mstanea.org

➔ Accelerated Learning

The College Board

The College Board site especially for educators includes features, event listings, a special AP Central® section, and downloadable reports, including AP statistics for the nation and Maryland in 2007.

<http://www.collegeboard.com/prof/index.html>

US Dept of Education: Advanced Placement Incentive Program Grants:

Government program that provides grants to eligible entities to enable them to increase the participation of low-income students in both pre-AP and AP courses and tests, including teacher training, course development, and online courses.

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/apincent/index.html>

International Baccalaureate Organization

Website of the International Baccalaureate Organization, the nonprofit educational foundation that develops and offers IB programs.

<http://www.ibo.org/>

National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP)

Website of the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships, an organization for education professionals, administering or participating in Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships.

<http://www.nacep.org/>

Join the Great Public Schools campaign! Fight against state budget cuts that could derail the Thornton promise!

Funding public schools is serious business, not a political game.

BETTER SALARIES
AND PENSIONS



MORE STUDENTS
TAKING AP
CLASSES

IMPROVED MSA
SCORES

Since the historic Thornton funding legislation passed in 2002, the state has seen \$1.3 billion dollars in additional education funding, and it has paid off in better salaries for educators and rising test scores for students. But now, in the last year of Thornton, Maryland faces a \$1.5 billion deficit, and these gains are threatened by the potential for cutbacks as lawmakers look for ways to balance the state's budget.

“We’ve made progress, but we’re not there yet. Maryland needs to show the nation, as we did with Thornton, that we are serious about our children’s education and committed to their continued progress and success,” said Clara Floyd, MSTA president. “Convincing the General Assembly to provide adequate funds is a task we look forward to as we take our Great Public Schools campaign statewide.”

**Great public schools
for every child!**

It's serious business, not just a political game. The success of Maryland's students depends on legislators and local officials making funding public schools the state's highest budget priority. Thornton has provided some relief, but overcrowded classrooms, outdated texts and technology, inadequate healthcare and nutrition for students, inequitable resources, unsafe facilities, staffing shortages and more continue to hold back achievement gains at every level.

Even though education ranks at the top of every public opinion poll, and candidates for state and local office place it at the top of their list of campaign promises, securing adequate funding is still a battle. No matter how often public education advocates point out the obvious—that the future of the state depends on long-term investment in pre-K–12 education—it still ends up as a pawn in the budget game.

MSTA campaign asks Maryland to talk about Great Public Schools

No doubt, every teacher, ESP and administrator has felt the effect of Thornton funds, whether as a smaller class size, a boost in salary or more resources for schools, students and educators. But to build a stronger case for school funding, we need to share with our state and local representatives what we know is working.

That's the goal of the latest phase of MSTAs Great Public Schools campaign. Over the next few months, we are reaching out across the state to collect examples and stories of the specific successes of students and schools since Thornton went into effect. Whether educator, parent or member of the public, regardless of where they live or what they do for a living, we are asking Marylanders of all stripes to join the conversation about what it takes to ensure every child has access to great public schools.

In rural Allegany County, the resources made possible by Thornton are directly responsible for the many gains made by students at every level. In 2004, Westmar MS sixth graders scored just 1.8 percent advanced, with 40.9 proficient and 57.3 percent basic. In three years, proud students claim scores of 41 percent advanced, 56 percent proficient and 3 percent basic. (See graph, this page.) "Thornton fund-

DID YOU KNOW?
Statewide, 3rd-8th grade advanced and proficient student scores on MSA math and reading tests have steadily improved since Thornton funding became available in 2003.

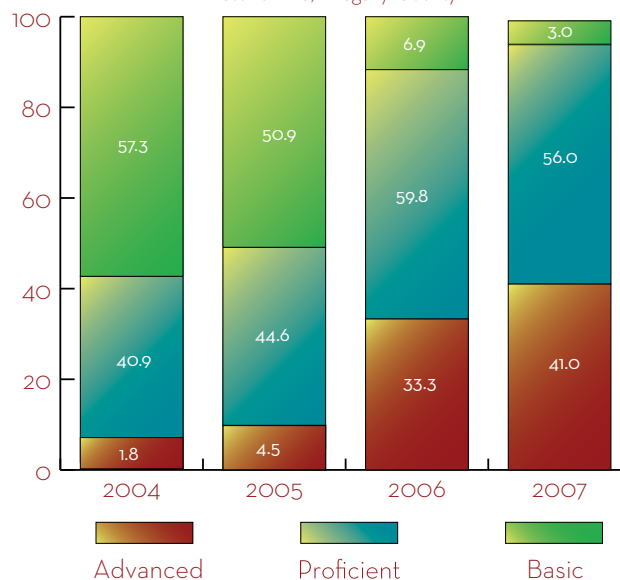
ing allowed Westmar Middle to provide reading and math specialists who were essential to the improvement of our test scores," said Martin Crump, former principal of Westmar. "The specialists provided school-based staff development and coaching, and they were able to track data, which allowed continual feedback to teachers on student progress.

"Another benefit of the funding was new textbooks, which were better aligned with our state curriculum. In addition, teachers were provided with sufficient funds to purchase classroom supplies necessary for instruction. Westmar Middle was fortunate to have a dedicated teaching staff, with nearly 100% of the teachers meeting highly qualified status." Crump is now the Supervisor of Professional Development at the Allegany County Board of Education.

Next door in Washington County, more resources from the state translated into a hard-won new contract that includes a vision benefit, an improved tuition reimbursement policy and a seven percent salary boost.

In one Title I school with a large population of non-native speakers in Prince George's County, parental involvement has really improved over the last several years. Tamara

MSA Proficiency Levels - Grade 6 - Mathematics
Westmar MS, Allegany County



Gaudreau, a second-grade teacher at Port Towns ES, said she and her colleagues have seen a real increase in the number of non-English speaking parents who have the confidence to become partners with their child's teachers, thanks in part to innovative ventures such as the bilingual DVD and book project they created.

Of course, challenges remain for Port Towns and schools with similar demographics. Although school funding has obviously benefited many students, serious needs remain unmet. "We have just one parent liaison to translate everything that needs to go home for more than 400 ESOL students," Gaudreau said. "If we had more liaisons, we could make even more progress with all of our students and families."

For Gaudreau and educators like her in every county, continued public investment would mean more professional development to support classroom management, additional supplements to ESOL and special education curricula, and more resources to enrich their practice and their students' learning.

MSTA's Great Public Schools campaign is focusing public attention on the gains students and schools have made, as well as the ongoing challenges they face, to support our lobbying effort. And, if you've seen the ads on cable TV, heard the radio spots or are attending one of the many Great Public Schools Community Conversations held in September, you know the campaign has already kicked off.

How does the campaign work?

The GPS website, www.greatschoolsmaryland.org, is the center of the campaign, with features including surveys, data about public schools, calls to action and more. In August, MSTA began reaching out to parents and the public through the website to gather specific examples and strategies of school successes and where the greatest gaps remain in achievement, resources and community support.

This month, MSTA and Local Associations are sponsoring Community Conversations in different regions of the state to hear in person from members, parents and others about the specific successes, needs and priorities of the public schools in their communities.

As MSTA gathers this information, we'll be sharing it with the public, members and our elected officials as we prepare for the next legislative session.

"As advocates for students, we must be engaged, active and aggressive with our message that every child in Maryland deserves a great public school. This new campaign gives us the voice and visibility to speak out publicly and very specifically that our 67,000 members support continued school funding at a level consistent with the Thornton commitment," said Clara Floyd.

No matter how often public education advocates point out the obvious—that the future of the state depends on long-term investment in K-12 education—it still ends up as a pawn in the budget game.

Join the GPS campaign!

Get the funding your school needs to get the job done! Your improved pension benefit is a direct result of MSTA member activism. Legislators understood the implications of a sub-par benefit because thousands of members lobbied them through visits to Annapolis, emails, letters and phone calls.

Now it's time to raise the volume on school funding for resources, salaries and smaller class sizes with legislators and the public. Here's how:

- ▶ Provide feedback and share your stories of school successes and needs on the Great Public Schools website, www.greatschoolsmaryland.org. Ask your colleagues and friends to do the same. We'll share them with the General Assembly.
- ▶ Use the GPS site to contact your legislators. It's easy and fast—you'll find optional prewritten messages.
- ▶ Respond to MSTA and your Local calls to action. We know you're busy, but a brief phone call or an email is fast and easy.
- ▶ Read *ActionLine*, subscribe to *FrontLine*, visit *MSTA Online*, www.mstanea.org, often and read your Local newsletter. You'll find information, calls to action and other ways to participate.

REACH UP REACH OUT MSTA Convention 2007

Everyone's invited!

You don't have to be a delegate to make a weekend trek to Ocean City! In fact, Convention 2007 is all about energizing you, as one of Maryland's front line educators, in the workplace and as an activist for your profession and student achievement. All members are invited to take advantage of MSTAs 140th celebration!

You'll be in the right place at just the right time to add your voice to the Great Public Schools campaign, designed to help shape the public conversation about the future funding of our schools. Throughout the weekend, the Convention Center will be buzzing with GPS activities, from presentations and discussions in the RA hall to the GPS Action Kiosk, and the TV, radio and online ads MSTAs is using to get the message out to the public.

This year, more than 57 workshops have been handpicked to help you raise student achievement, do your job better and keep your school running smoothly. And, of course, every workshop is FREE and comes with a certificate of completion to add to your portfolio!

At the Convention

Stop by the exhibit area to pick up freebies and discover some great deals on education tools, books and learning opportunities available only at Convention 2007! Don't miss the Health Fair and the Member Trade Show, where you can shop the special talents and interests of MSTAs multitalented members. Member shopkeepers will be behind the counter at Jo's So Soy Candles, the Neat Seat Student Organizer, Longaberger Baskets, Scrapped for You and other fun booths.

For delegates, it's a weekend full of caucuses and business meetings—all the things that keep MSTAs at the top of the advocacy game for more than 67,000 members. If it's anything like last year, MSTAs Friday night party at *Seacrets* (O.C.'s hottest nightclub) will make up for the serious business of the day's meetings!

Check out this year's full slate of professional development, a packed exhibit area, the Member Trade Show, great networking opportunities and much more at MSTAs 140th Convention & Representative Assembly!

FAST FACTS

MSTAs 140th Convention & Representative Assembly

October 19 & 20
Roland E. Powell Convention Center
Ocean City, MD

- ▶ Open to all
- ▶ 57 FREE workshops
- ▶ Action Kiosks to support MSTAs Great Public Schools campaign
- ▶ Convention Exhibits, Member Trade Show, Apple-a-Day Health Fair
- ▶ Registration: Delegates: 7:30-10 a.m. Friday 8-10 a.m. Saturday
- ▶ General Registration: Begins 7:30 a.m. Friday & Saturday

Visit MSTAs OnLine, www.mstanea.org, for more information, including hotel discounts.

See pages 14-15 for information and guidelines for Special Elections: Convention 2007 for MSTAs Board of Directors and Crisis Fund Trustee.

57 workshops for today's educators!

Great professional development for teachers and ESP

This year, MSTA's School Quality team brings new and exciting workshop topics and presenters to Ocean City!

The increasing number of students identified with some form of autism is the catalyst for "The Puzzle of Autism" workshop, which examines evidence-based techniques and strategies for reaching these interesting and complex students. "Children of Addiction" addresses the special needs of children of alcoholics and/or drug addicts.

More workshops on school issues, such as using data, teaching reading strategies, working with diverse student populations and closing the achievement gaps, cover contemporary issues that affect your job every day.

All of the workshops are open to teacher, ESP, student, retired and administrator members! For complete descriptions of each, plus information on presenters, visit *MSTA OnLine*, www.mstanea.org.

You may be eligible for Continuing Education Credit!

MSTA provides certificates of completion to participants for each two-hour workshop. Receive up to five certificates by attending four workshops on Friday and one on Saturday! You must: 1) Sign in with a Workshop Host within 10 minutes of the start of the workshop; 2) Attend the complete two-hour workshop. Check with your district's certification specialist to see if your MSTA workshop hours can be applied to a CEU!

Each workshop falls under one of the strands below (there are three or more workshops in each strand):

- ▶ Cultural Competency
- ▶ Managing the Classroom
- ▶ Reading & Writing
- ▶ The Way We Learn
- ▶ Teacher Leadership
- ▶ Education Support Professionals
- ▶ Technology
- ▶ Fun Learning
- ▶ It's Your Life
- ▶ Special Education
- ▶ Early Childhood

Meet author Linda Perlstein at the RA!

Tested: One American School Struggles to Make the Grade

Author talk and book signing, Saturday, October 20

Former *Washington Post* education reporter Linda Perlstein took her skills to the field to report on the effects of the federal *No Child Left Behind* law. Positive reviews call her book *Tested: One American School Struggles to Make the Grade* "...alternately heartbreaking and enraging as it offers up important observations about the unintended and undesirable consequences of our current testing obsession." (*Newsday*, August 12)

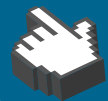
Think about your favorite teachers from your youth; the ones who changed your life. The ones who taught you lessons you carry with you years later. Chances are, these were the teachers with a gift for improvisation, artists of the classroom who brought a spark of life to the most mundane subjects. Chances are, they didn't teach from a script.

—Tested: One American School Struggles to Make the Grade



Call for Convention 2007 Online Bloggers!

Share your Convention experience with an online blog at *MSTA OnLine*! Editors are looking for four members to dedicate some time during the busy weekend to share their impressions and experiences. If you're willing to check in at the blogger station 2-3 times each on Friday and Saturday, we'll post your comments online. For more information or to sign on, contact Casey Newton, cnewton@mstanea.org; 800/448-MSTA, ext. 131.



Amendments to the MSTA Bylaws

The following bylaw amendments, initiated by members of MSTA, will be voted on by the Representative Assembly at Convention 2007. To read the full text of Proposed Bylaw Amendment 3, and to learn more about Convention 2007, visit *MSTA OnLine*, www.mstanea.org, *MembersOnly*. *MSTA OnLine* and *ActionLine* will publish the results of RA action.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 1:

To require no fewer than two active members on the Board of Directors with eight or fewer years of educational experience.

ARTICLE X – Board of Directors

Section 2. Composition

The Board of Directors shall be composed of three elected officers, the NEA Director(s) and eight (8) members-at-large elected from the Active membership of the Association.

- a. In the event that the ethnic minority representation on the Board of Directors is not equal to the percentage of the ethnic minority membership within the Association, the Board of Directors shall be expanded by additional members-at-large to meet that percentage.
- b. There shall be no less fewer than one Active ESP member on the Board of Directors. In the event that there is no Active member in educational support work on the Board of Directors, the Board of Directors shall be expanded by one additional member-at-large to meet this requirement.
- c. There shall be no fewer than two Active members on the Board of Directors with eight or fewer years of educational experience at the time of their election. In the event that this requirement is not met, the Board of Directors shall be expanded by up to 2 additional members-at-large to meet this requirement.
- d. If additional members-at-large are required under subsections ~~a and b~~ a, b and c above, such members shall be elected by the Representative Assembly at the next fall Representative Assembly.

Submitted by: More than the required ten MSTA members. Contact person: Eric Luedtke, Montgomery County Education Association

Rationale: MSTA has a vested interest in developing new leadership and in giving voice to the concerns of the large number of newer educators that are entering the Association. This amendment is intended to provide an additional avenue of leadership development for newer members, and to ensure that newer members have a voice in the leadership of MSTA.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 2:

To lengthen the terms of office for the board of directors and to lengthen the period for eligibility for re-election after two full terms in office.

ARTICLE X – Board of Directors

Section 3. Terms of Office

- a. Terms of the members-at-large shall be ~~two (2)~~ three (3) years each beginning August 1 following the election. After two full terms in office, a member-at-large shall not be eligible for the

office of member-at-large again until a period of time equivalent to two full terms of office has passed ~~immediately succeed him/herself after two (2) consecutive terms in office.~~

Submitted by: More than the required ten MSTA members. Contact person: Amy Watkins, Montgomery County Education Association

Transition: This proposed change is intended to apply only to elections that occur after its passage.

Rationale: This amendment increases the break that a term-limited member of the Board of Directors must take before they are allowed to run again for an at-large seat on the Board, creating the opportunity for more members to run for and participate in elected office in MSTA. Under the current bylaws, the break can be extremely short—a term-limited member of the Board of Directors who leaves office in August may run in the next election. This amendment also brings the terms of MSTA offices in line with those of NEA offices.

Proposed Bylaw Amendment 3:

To change the name of the organization from the Maryland State Teachers Association (MSTA) to the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA).

Because of the length of the proposed amendment, *ActionLine* cannot print it in its entirety. To read the full text, visit *MSTA OnLine*, www.mstanea.org, *MembersOnly*.

The proposed amendment changes any reference to the Maryland State Teachers Association, and MSTA, to the Maryland State Education Association, and MSEA, in the following Articles of MSTAs Bylaws:

Article I; Article IV, Section 3c; Article VI, Section 1a, Section 1b, Section 3; Article VIII, Section 3a, Section 3c, Section 3d, Section 3e; Article X, Section 1g; Article XII, Section 2; Article XIV, Section 3a; Article XVI, Section 2b, Section 3d, Section 4, Section 5, Section 6; Article XVII, Section 1b, Section 1c; Article XIX title; Article XIX, Section 1, Section 3, Section 3a, Section 3c, Section 4 title, Section 4a, Section 4b, Section 5 title, Section 5a, Section 5b, Section 5c, Section 5d, Section 5e, Section 6a; Article XXI; Article XXII, Section 1a

Submitted by: More than the required ten MSTA members. Contact person: Donna Schulze, Howard County Education Association

Transition: We believe this change can be phased in over the next two years. Money can be placed into our two-year budget in order to cover the costs.

Rationale: We support changing the name of our State association so that ALL members of this Association are portrayed and recognized. The current name of Maryland State Teachers Association does not accurately and fairly represent ALL dues-paying members. The name MSEA (Maryland State Education Association) recognizes ALL members of this great Association. As members of one MSEA, we feel the Association can successfully move forward and continue to improve all areas in education.

Are you ready to run?

Election 2008 seeks candidates for Treasurer, MSTA Board, NEA Director, and Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly

In MSTA's 2008 Election, members will elect a treasurer, four members to MSTA's Board of Directors, one MSTA member to the NEA and MSTA Board of Directors, and delegates to NEA's 2008 Representative Assembly held annually in July. Candidates must complete a Nomination & Intent Form indicating the office, and/or delegate position, for which they intend to run.

Terms of office

- ▶ **Treasurer 9/1/08 – 8/31/11** The MSTA treasurer receives and keeps an accurate account of all Association funds and performs other functions as set forth in the MSTA bylaws.
- ▶ **MSTA Board of Directors 8/1/08 – 7/31/10** The MSTA BOD is responsible for the fiscal affairs and general management of MSTA and interprets and implements Association policies.
- ▶ **NEA Director 9/1/08 – 8/31/11** Serves on NEA's national Board of Directors as well as MSTA's Board of Directors..
- ▶ **Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly** Elected members attend the 2008 NEA RA in Washington, DC.

Deadline: November 19, 2007

Members: Follow the procedures on these pages and submit Nomination & Intent and Biography Forms by November 19.

Reach Up! Reach Out! Special MSTA Elections Convention 2007

Delegates to elect additional MSTA Director and Trustee to the Crisis Fund*

Delegates to the 2007 Representative Assembly, October 19 & 20, will vote for the following offices:

- ▶ **MSTA Board of Directors** One-year term. MSTA Bylaws call for ethnic minority representation on the MSTA Board of Directors not currently met by the 15 seated members. Minority categories include: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic.
- ▶ **Trustee to the MSTA Crisis Fund** Three-year term. The MSTA Crisis Fund was created to assist MSTA, Local Associations and its members in extraordinary circumstances. Trustees administer the fund, and make loans or grants according to Crisis Fund policies.

Candidates do not need to be delegates to the MSTA Representative Assembly (RA). Candidates must submit a Nomination & Intent Form to MSTA by mail or fax* by October 16, 2007, 5 p.m., or be nominated from the floor at the RA. Candidates are invited, but not required, to make a brief presentation to the Convention 2007 RA.

*To download or request a nomination form, visit MSTA OnLine, www.mstanea.org

To receive a form by mail, contact Charlene Conrad, 800/448-MSTA, ext. 168; cconrad@mstanea.org. Submit nomination form to: Susan Russell, Center for Legal Affairs, 140 Main St., Annapolis, MD 21401; FAX: 410/263-5730.

MSTA Election 2008: Deadlines

January 28

Deadline for ballots to arrive in schools

February 25

Deadline for receipt of ballots

March 14

Results validated at MSTA

Teacher, ESP, administrator, retired, or student members

Be an MSTA delegate to NEA's annual RA!

MSTA holds one election for MSTA delegates to the 2008 NEA Representative Assembly. If you are an active teacher, ESP, administrator, retired or student member, you are eligible to run and be a part of the policymaking body of NEA.

Candidates must follow the MSTA Election Guidelines on these pages.

Note: Retired and student delegates to the NEA RA are elected in separate elections, but must use the forms on the facing page.

MSTA debuts online voting in 2008!

Beginning in 2008, MSTA members in some Locals will be voting for MSTA leaders online! Locals have the choice of determining which voting method they will use—online or traditional paper balloting.

See the *Special Edition: MSTA Election 2008 of ActionLine* in January to find out if your Local is taking part in online voting next year.

MSTA Election 2008 Guidelines

Nominations

Nominations may be made by any member using the official MSTANomination & Intent Form. Nominees must meet the qualifications for office as specified in the MSTABylaws*, be willing to run for office and serve if elected. Administrators are ineligible for nomination for the MSTABoard of Directors or MSTA-elected NEA Director positions, but can be nominated as a delegate to the NEA RA.

Biography Forms

Submit one MSTAElection Biography Form for **each office** sought. Do not send a résumé. Submit original or digital photos only. MSTA staff cannot amend any submissions. Biographies will appear in *ActionLine*, January 2008, and *MSTANOnLine*, alphabetically and by office in the following order: 1) Biography and photo; 2) Photo; 3) Biography only; and 4) Nomination form only.

Deadline for MSTANomination & Intent & Biography Forms

5 p.m., November 19, 2007. Send to: Trish Bendler/Tyrone Holmes/Susan W. Russell, Attn: Nominations and Credentials Committee, MSTA, 140 Main St., Annapolis, MD 21401.

**For more information about MSTA election bylaws, policies and procedures, see the 2007 MSTA Handbook, available at your Local Association office or visit MSTANOnLine, MembersOnly, www.mstanea.org.*

MSTA Election 2008/Biography Form

Deadline for receipt: November 19, 2007, 5 p.m.

NAME (As you wish it to appear on the election ballot)

SCHOOL (Name of school and county) LOCAL ASSOCIATION

POSITION (Teacher, Education Support Professional, Administrator, Retired or Student)

MSTA MEMBER FOR ___ YEARS. NEA MEMBER FOR ___ YEARS.

ASSOCIATION POSITIONS HELD (List no more than three in each category):

LOCAL

MSTA

NEA

YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Candidates may attach a personal statement to their completed form. **Note: word limits as follows:** (1) NEA Director and MSTABoard of Directors: 150 words; (2) MSTA Delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly: 25 words.

Statements exceeding the word limit noted above will be cut off at the last complete sentence that is at or under the limit. For the purposes of this rule, any phrase ending with a period will be viewed as a complete sentence. If the first sentence exceeds the word limit, no personal statement will be published.

Send separate biography for each position sought; one photo only required. Nominees will receive confirmation of receipt of forms, biography and photos. NOTE: Original or digital photos only.

MSTA Election 2008/Nomination & Intent Form

NEA Director, MSTABoard of Directors, MSTA Treasurer,
MSTA Delegate to NEA Representative Assembly

Deadline for receipt: November 19, 2007, 5 p.m.

To be nominated to run for MSTA office in the 2008 MSTAElection, **check only one box next to the appropriate MSTA office for which you plan to run.**

- MSTA TREASURER** 9/1/08-8/31/11
 MSTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 8/1/08-7/31/10
 NEA DIRECTOR 9/1/08-8/31/11

Members may run for one position and/or a delegate seat.

MSTA DELEGATE TO THE 2008 NEA CONVENTION & REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

- Active Member Administrator-Active Member
 Retired Member Student Member

NAME (As you wish it to appear on the election ballot)

ADDRESS

CITY

ZIP

HOME PHONE

SCHOOL PHONE

EDUCATOR POSITION

(Teacher, Education Support Professional, Administrator, Retired or Student)

LOCAL ASSOCIATION

ETHNIC GROUP

LETTER OF INTENT

I hereby state my willingness to run as a candidate for MSTA office and/or for NEA State Delegate in the 2008 MSTA/NEA Election. I agree to abide by the MSTA/NEA policies and bylaws and to adhere to the Code of Ethics, as adopted by the Association.

DATE

SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE

Mail or deliver to: Trish Bendler/Tyrone Holmes/Susan W. Russell, Attn: Nominations and Credentials Committee, MSTA, 140 Main St., Annapolis, MD 21401.

Must be received by 5 p.m., November 19, 2007. To ensure receipt by deadline, use registered or certified mail, Return Receipt Requested.

LocalLine

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MSTA LOCALS

Anne Arundel

Anne Arundel's ESP unit takes off!

Thanks to an inspiring conference and NEA's Department of Affiliate Learning and Effectiveness, the Secretaries and Assistants Association of Anne Arundel County (SAAAAC) received a \$5,000 Building Strong Affiliates Grant this year to help recruit members and increase its presence in schools and communities. With some rough organizational bumps well behind them, the affiliate has taken off in the past few years with energetic leadership and strong efforts to build membership.

President Debbie Schaefer and SAAAAC member Dawn Smith attended NEA's 2006 Building Strong Affiliates Conference last year and immediately put into use what they learned there. "We came back and started to listen more and communicate better with our members. Now, each of our board members is responsible for a 'feeder system' of schools, with which they communicate at least once a month," Schaefer said.

"Better communication helped during negotiations. We were known for being the last to settle, and sometimes employees didn't see their raises until the following year. This year, we settled a four-year contract in record time with a significant increase of at least 5.59% each year," Schaefer added.

With success as their calling card, SAAAAC took action to build membership. The NEA grant funded member appreciation gifts of SAAAAC lanyards for the school system's mandatory identification tags and materials for the SAAAAC presentation at new employee

orientation. And, for the first time, SAAAAC is giving members a welcoming back-to-school gift—a paper clip holder with the Local's new logo.

Future plans for the grant money include printing and mailing of new local membership materials, and continued efforts to build membership and strength through communication and successful outreach.

Cecil

Cecil County B-T-S activities a big success

Thanks to the work of experienced teachers, and generous grants from local businesses, Cecil County's 145 new teachers won't be spending their first paychecks on supplies to create inviting classrooms for their students.

With more than \$2,000 in community support, the Cecil County Classroom Teachers Association (CCCTA) purchased resource books, bulletin board decorations, posters, file folders, pens, pencils, paper and other supplies for a New Teacher Store (items free for attendees) created for the county's new employee reception. "We were completely cleaned out of the new supplies and the gently used items donated by members who were retiring or moving their classrooms," said CCCTA President Linda Elwood.

CCCTA also added to their community presence by posting impressive new member recruitment numbers after Association presentations at teacher orientation events and a successful "I Can Do It" program attended by 70 new teachers. "We're excited to report that 88 percent of our county's

new teachers chose to join us," Elwood said. "Every new member is a new voice for the success of Cecil County schools.

"Our collaboration with the county's School Leadership Team this year worked well. They printed the workshop notebooks and provided a \$90 stipend to teachers to attend." CCCTA members Lori Hrinko and Susan Higley, and MSTA School Quality's Vera Loyd presented "I Can Do It" to elementary, middle and high school teachers.

For more information about "I Can Do It," or to schedule a workshop in your county, contact MSTA School Quality, 800/448-MSTA, ext. 110.

Garrett

Garrett County president makes MSTA history



Ann Ellis, Garrett County

Veteran support professional, former member of MSTA's Board of Directors and Garrett County member Ann Ellis made MSTA history this year when she was named the first ESP president of the Garrett County Education Association.

"I learned a lot from being on the MSTA board and applying those insights to local activities is very exciting," Ellis said. "My biggest challenge is to build more teacher and ESP activism in our Local. I'll be recruiting more members to our Governing Board as soon as I can, and I'm targeting schools

and job categories where we need to build membership.”

Support is strong for Ellis from both teacher and ESP members, says Roz Wiseman, GCEA secretary. “Ann is definitely our most experienced leader. Support for her is universal.”

“I’m very excited,” said Ellis. “I definitely feel like I’ve left my mark in MSTAs history books.”

Howard

Surveys and scores align in Howard County

There’s compelling evidence in Howard County that job satisfaction and great test scores really do go hand-in-hand.

In the 2007 Howard County Education Association (HCEA) Job Satisfaction Survey, Hammond, Thunder Hill and Worthington elementary schools reported high levels of job satisfaction. Respondents at the three schools said they enjoyed open communication, working conditions conducive to success, fair evaluations, and an administrator who respected the negotiated agreement and the employee’s planning time.

The same schools were the only elementary schools in Howard County with 100% scores on MSAs this year. Thunder Hill fourth graders scored 100% in both reading and math, and Hammond and Worthington fourth graders both scored 100% in reading (and 99% in math).

At Hammond, where 100% of teacher and ESP staff said they felt successful, received fair evaluations, and their principal respected their contract and planning time, all fourth grade students scored in either the advanced (49%) or proficient (51%) range. The new scores reflect an increase of 12% in advanced

and moved all children out of the basic level.

“We have an outstanding working relationship in these three schools,” said Ann DeLacy, HCEA’s president. “When morale and staff retention are good, students will achieve.”

Administrators [in these schools] have a sense of humanity and a real ability to collaborate, and it’s obvious in our survey and the test scores.”

HCEA uses the annual survey to determine the climate in every school building. “We survey everyone in our bargaining unit, irrespective of membership status. Then, we send copies of the results to our members, and hold a press conference to share our findings with the public. It’s a valuable barometer for our work as advocates for our members and students and helps us gain support in our communities.”

Across the State

Confused? New IRS regulation not in effect this year

The new IRS regulations requiring 10-month employees with the option of receiving their pay over 12 months to sign a form authorizing the deferral of income into the summer is not in effect until 2008-2009.

Look for additional information from your employer if you work for a school system that provides you with the choice of pay periods. *Employees who receive the deferred income without a signed authorization form will be subject to severe penalties.*

For more information, visit the IRS website, www.irs.gov, and enter “Sec. 409A and deferred compensation” in the Search box.

datebook

SEPTEMBER 2007

Labor Day 3 *Office closed*

Rosh Hashanah 12
Begins at sunset

Ramadan 12 *Begins at sunset*

Yom Kippur 21
Begins at sunset

7-8 MSTAs Board of Directors Meeting

10 MSTAs West Coordinated Bargaining Council

11 MSTAs East Coordinated Bargaining Council

13 MSTAs Urban Coordinated Bargaining Council

18 MSTAs Joint Governance Staff Meeting

25-26 Maryland State Board of Education Meeting

26 Local Officers’ Network Series 1

28-29 NEAs Board of Directors Meeting

29 MSTAs East Bargaining Training

OCTOBER 2007

Columbus Day (*observed*) 8

5-6 MSTAs Board of Directors Meeting

9 MSTAs East Coordinated Bargaining Council

11 MSTAs West Coordinated Bargaining Council

12-13 New Officers Advance Part 2

13 MSTAs Committee Chairs Workshop

19-20 140th MSTAs Representative Assembly and Convention

Education Support Professionals!

NEA's Foundation awards 110-140 grants a year to ESP and teachers. Visit neafoundation.org for more information. The next deadline is October 15.

Innovative? Timesaving? Unique? Develop your best practice with an NEA Grant!

Now, many Local Associations host ESP professional development days to focus on serious job-related issues such as safety, student discipline, using technology and closing the achievement gap.

Professional development for education support professionals used to be hard to come by. But as MSTA continues to open doors for ESP through improved contracts and a stronger community presence, more ESP members are coming forward with exciting best practices that contribute to student and school success.

For ESP members who want to develop their ideas to reach more students or colleagues, NEA offers two generous grants: Learning & Leadership Grants, specifically for professional development for individuals or groups, and the new Student Achievement Grants, which support initiatives to improve student performance. The grants range from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

Wanda Newman, a member of Prince George's County's ACE-AFSCME Local 2250, has used NEA grants for two career-boosting initiatives. The first grant paid for Newman to take a linguistics course—important for her work as a sign language interpreter. “It was very helpful when I took the tests to become a nationally certified interpreter,” said Newman, who is certified through the National Interpreter Certification program and the National Association for the Deaf.

Two years later, Newman, and colleagues Torre Torrence and Joyce Williams, applied for a grant to help Maryland paraprofessionals struggling with the issues of the *No Child Left Behind Act* and its highly qualified mandate for paraprofessionals.

Frustrated by the time it was taking the state to approve an assessment tool, the three members took control of the situation with the help of the \$3,000 grant.

“We only had five years to meet the NCLB qualifications and secure our jobs,” said Newman. “We needed something to help our paraprofessionals meet the required standards by the end of last year, particularly those who had no post-secondary education.

“Our grant allowed us to develop prototypes of job portfolios to model how paraprofessionals could document their

skills, knowledge and abilities to become highly qualified paraprofessionals. They needed to think differently about their experience and how that contributed to their job expertise,” Newman added. The team made presentations, encouraging ESP members to start thinking in new ways about their contributions to their school and workplace.

“I try to use my Member Benefits. The grant application process wasn't that hard. In my case, I described how my idea related to student achievement and how my own professional growth makes a difference in closing the achievement gap. I got my grant the first try.”

Looking for ideas?

See what ESP members across the country are doing with their NEA Foundation grants!

With her NEA Foundation Grant, Melissa Fipps, an elementary instructional assistant in Swayzee, Indiana, attended a seminar to learn the latest techniques for diagnosing dyslexic reading differences. Now she's contributing new ideas and techniques with other paraprofessionals, teachers and parents.

Custodian Charles Smith of Kingston, Rhode Island, and his partners introduced students to multiple perspectives, traditions, beliefs and values of the Pokanoket/Wampanoag tribe with his grant. Led by Smith and members of the tribe, students got a hands-on look at tribal culture and history.

East Petersburg, Pennsylvania, health care assistants Brenda Chow and Susan Bryce used their grant to collaborate with the American Heart Association to prepare students with learning and emotional disabilities for first-aid certification. They're introducing students to career opportunities and building self-confidence using math and problem-solving skills.

Emerging Leaders Academy boosts members' MSTA IQ!

Concerned you don't know enough about theories of labor organizing? Don't know how to run meetings? MSTA's Emerging Leaders Academy (ELA) offers plenty to boost your Association IQ! ELA is MSTA's exciting one-year training ground for members interested in learning more about the Association and becoming active Association leaders.

"One of the most important responsibilities we have as experienced teachers and support professionals is to leave our public schools, students and jobs in better shape than when we started," said Clara Floyd, MSTA president. "Nurturing leadership skills among our newest members is an important part of our work as a professional association. We take it very seriously."

Since 2002, more than 60 members have graduated from the program, which begins as a three-day workshop during MSTA's annual Summer Training Series, followed by another session in the spring. Participants range from early-career teachers and support professionals to mid-life career changers looking for ways to make an impact on their professional lives and student achievement.

This year's program, ELA Generation IV, includes 24 members from 17 counties. Last year's group, Generation III, will graduate 17 new leaders at a special luncheon ceremony at MSTA's 2007 Convention and Representative Assembly in October.

You can find the names of 25 ELA graduates on MSTA's roster of committees for 2007, such as human and civil rights, legislation, women's concerns, bylaws and rules, and MSTA's leadership training and review committee.

"Since I completed ELA Generation II," said Marlena Colleton-Pearsell of Anne Arundel County, "I've used it as a springboard to tap into other areas of the union. Now, I serve on one MSTA and two Local committees and ran for my Local's board of directors last year. When I recruit people, I tell them that, yes, we get the traditional benefits of the union, but there are other ways the union can work for you, and leadership and professional development opportunities can be a big part of the experience."

Lions and tigers and ... parliamentary procedure, oh my!

Because ELA is a leadership program specifically oriented to NEA, MSTA and Local, the program covers a lot of ground. The purpose is to demystify the Association's structure and clarify the mission and goals.

"In the first ELA session in July, we learned how MSTA works as a formal democratic body. I'll be a better informed delegate at the RA this year because I understand the process," said Sherry Leatherbury, a member of this year's ELA from Wicomico County.

Throughout the year, as ELA members complete a series of leadership activities designed to build confidence and polish communication, political organizing and interpersonal skills, they report to ELA staff in Annapolis or their Local leaders for input and further direction. When participants discover the scope of Association interests and needs, they soon realize that finding a niche for individual skills and style isn't hard.

"I can sit back in my office and complain or pontificate, and neither one gets anything done," reflected Jeffrey Farr, a Washington County Generation IV Emerging leader. "The only way I can have any influence in making things better is to become involved in the Association."

"Year after year, we pass the torch to be sure our newest colleagues understand what it takes to maintain our status as a powerful force for professional respect and the quality of our schools," said Floyd. "The ELA is our way of preserving our position as a respected presence in Annapolis and in each of our school districts."

For more information about the Emerging Leaders Academy, contact Debra Nixon, MSTA Affiliates and Advocacy, 800/448-MSTA, ext. 158.

It's time to counter claims about school funding



Maryland's investment in education is paying off, but even the state's own projections acknowledge that Thornton falls short of providing all school systems adequate funding.

MSTA IS ALL ABOUT BEING A STRONG ADVOCATE for our members and public education. And nothing is more directly related to our mission than funding for schools.

Under the Thornton plan, state aid for schools increased from \$2.5 billion in Fiscal Year 2003 to a historic \$3.8 billion in Fiscal Year 2007.

Now, with Maryland facing a \$1.5 billion structural budget deficit, schools are in the line of fire. Some lawmakers say Thornton funding should be cut or the cost of the employer's portion of retirement should be shifted to the counties.

Others go so far to say school systems wouldn't need more resources *if* they had used Thornton funds to modernize facilities, update curriculum, reduce class sizes, provide full-day kindergarten and offer after-school programs—*instead of wasting the money on teacher pay raises.*

We need to hold those who make such claims accountable—they're trying to duck their responsibility to fund schools.

In fact, many school systems have taken precisely those steps to improve student learning. Teacher salaries have improved in most counties, but they have grown at just a fraction of the rate of state aid growth. This is partly because school systems have recruited thousands more starting teachers needed to serve more students, lower class sizes, and implement these critical programs.

Not coincidentally, student performance on state assessments has increased for four straight years, and our schools are making strong progress on a host of other measures.

But if the General Assembly saddles counties with pension costs, the very programs producing achievement gains—not to mention our hard-fought salary gains—will be jeopardized.

Maryland's investment in education is paying off, but even the state's own projections acknowledge that Thornton falls short of providing all school systems adequate funding.

That's why we each have a responsibility to tell our story. How have our schools improved? What remains to be accomplished? What tools and resources are needed to get the job done?

MSTA's Great Public Schools campaign is gathering input from members and the public to share with state legislators so they understand the importance of continued school funding. Visit our website, greatschoolsmaryland.org, to provide feedback, and encourage your colleagues, family and neighbors to do the same.

We need to be the leading advocates for funding public education, because if not us, who?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Write David:
MSTA, 140 Main Street,
Annapolis, MD 21401
dhelfman@mstane.org



The Fund for Children and Public Education helps MSTA stand up for public education. Voluntary contributions allow the Association to assist the campaigns of lawmakers who support our schools, and to challenge those who do not.

Just a dollar or two a week from each Association member makes a huge difference at election time. The law doesn't allow your dues to go to candidates or campaigns, which is why this special fund is so important.

When your Local Association president asks you to give, please say "Yes." It's the most effective way we can make a difference for our students and ourselves.

For more information about MSTA's Fund, contact your school or work site Association representative, Local president or Jan Ziska, MSTA, 800/448-MSTA, ext. 140.

No more quick fixes— “Doomsday” budget looms large in Annapolis

If you followed the news over the summer, you probably heard discouraging reports of Maryland’s “doomsday” budget, presented to the Maryland General Assembly by the nonpartisan Department of Legislative Services, which proposes a debilitating \$500 million cut in education funding.

MSTA’s multimedia Great Public Schools campaign (pages 8-10) is the Association’s effort to sway legislators, and the public, to fight the cuts for the sake of student achievement and the progress made since Thornton funding infused schools with resources and support.

In Annapolis, it’s all about the numbers. Where will the needed revenue come from? Taxes? Slots? How will the cuts be dispersed? What programs and services will be affected?

The facts

State spending, mainly driven by increases in education and health care, is expected to outpace revenue in the coming year. Short-term budget fixes used to balance the state’s budget in previous years have been exhausted.

Should the proposal be enacted, three areas are certain to be affected by spending cuts: the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers; class size reduction; and the security of the Teachers’ Pension and Retirement System.

Let’s take a look at the facts: If the total cuts proposed were enacted, approximately 10,000 teachers could be laid off. Laying off that many teachers would likely increase average statewide class size from 24 students per teacher to 27.

Research demonstrates that students attending smaller classes in the early grades make more rapid educational progress than students in larger classes, and that these achievement gains persist well after the students move on to larger classes in later grades.

Teachers in smaller classes state that they are able to provide students with more individualized attention, and spend more time actively teaching and less time dealing with discipline and classroom behavior issues.

Of particular concern to MSTA is talk of shifting the responsibility for funding educators’ pensions to individual counties. The state has the capacity to raise revenue sufficient to fund the pension system.

But, without the state’s contribution, the system will begin to break down, setting off a domino effect. Many counties lack the tax base to meet the funding challenge

and local school board budgets will have to take on a large part of the burden. As they attempt to absorb the additional costs, the ability of local boards to fund salaries, locally offered benefits and health care will be severely curtailed.

MSTA has long advocated for a long-term strategic plan that modernizes and enhances the state’s revenue structure as the necessary forward-looking solution to the doomsday scenario. The structural deficit offers Maryland legislators the opportunity to make the tax structure fairer and maintain the state’s investment in education funding.

Thanks to MSTA’s Great Public Schools campaign, 67,000 educators and the public have a platform and a voice to urge state leaders to continue historic investment in education.

News from DC: NCLB overhaul in the future

“I can tell you that there are no votes in the US House of Representatives for continuing the No Child Left Behind Act without making serious changes to it,” said Rep. George Miller (D-CA) in a July speech to the National Press Club. The chair of the House Education and Labor Committee, and co-author of the original legislation, is expected to unveil the new version of NCLB by the end of this month.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) told the National Conference of State Legislatures summit she was optimistic about the bipartisan reauthorization bill. “The bill will be fair and flexible, responding to legitimate concerns raised by you and others ... So different will this bill be that we are thinking about changing its name,” Pelosi said. “And it will be paid for.”

Miller and Pelosi raised the eyebrows and curiosity of education advocates when they noted that the bill will include some type of “pay for performance” language. NEA and MSTA are monitoring the legislation carefully. Read *Front-Line* (see back for details) for updates and more information.

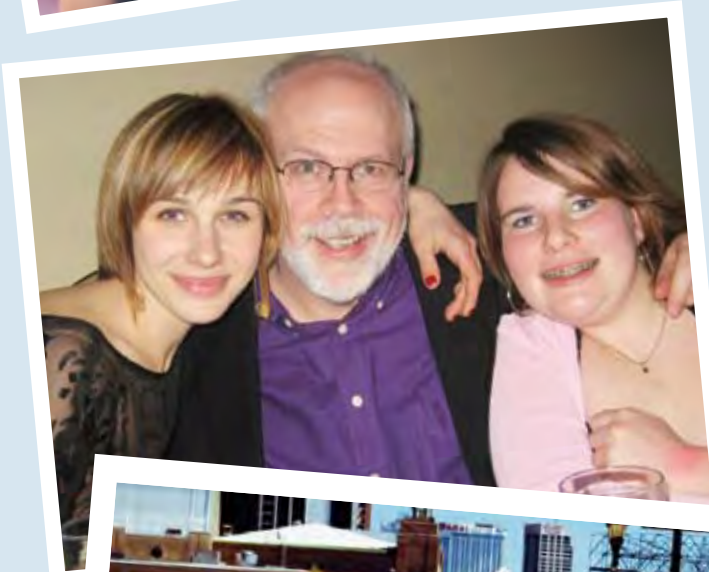


Tell us more!

Maybe you sing in a rock'n'roll band on the weekends? Or coach your child's soccer team? Did you celebrate a special occasion recently? Are you renovating your house? Do you rock climb? Are you a world traveler?

Your colleagues and students may see just one side of your multifaceted life. *ActionLine* wants more! We're expanding "My Day" to "My Life!" so we can learn more about the "other" you.

- 1 Carry your digital camera around with you for a week or two.
- 2 Make a photo documentary of your life, snapping photos of the fun and interesting people, places and things that make up your days and nights. Be sure at least two of your photos have something to do with your job!
- 3 Pick out 7-9 of the best photos and write a short caption for each.
- 4 Include your name, contact information, your county, school, Local Association and job title, plus a brief line or two about yourself.
- 5 Send photos, info and captions to *ActionLine*, My Life!, Attn: Casey Newton, 140 Main St., Annapolis, MD 21401; or email to, cnewton@mstanea.org. To mail photos, send originals or save to a CD. To email photos, attach in jpeg (.JPG) format. For more information, contact Casey Newton, *ActionLine*, 800/448-MSTA, ext. 131.



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

MSTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Clara Floyd, Montgomery
(O) 410/263-6600 (H) 800/448-MSTA

Vice President

Betty H. Weller, Kent
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Phyllis A. Parks Robinson, Montgomery
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John Riley, Allegany
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Steve Yeash, Allegany
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NEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Marsha Smith, Montgomery

NEA DIRECTORS AT-LARGE FROM MARYLAND

Veronica Henderson, Baltimore County

MSTA STUDENT PROGRAM

Katie Saris, McDaniel College, President

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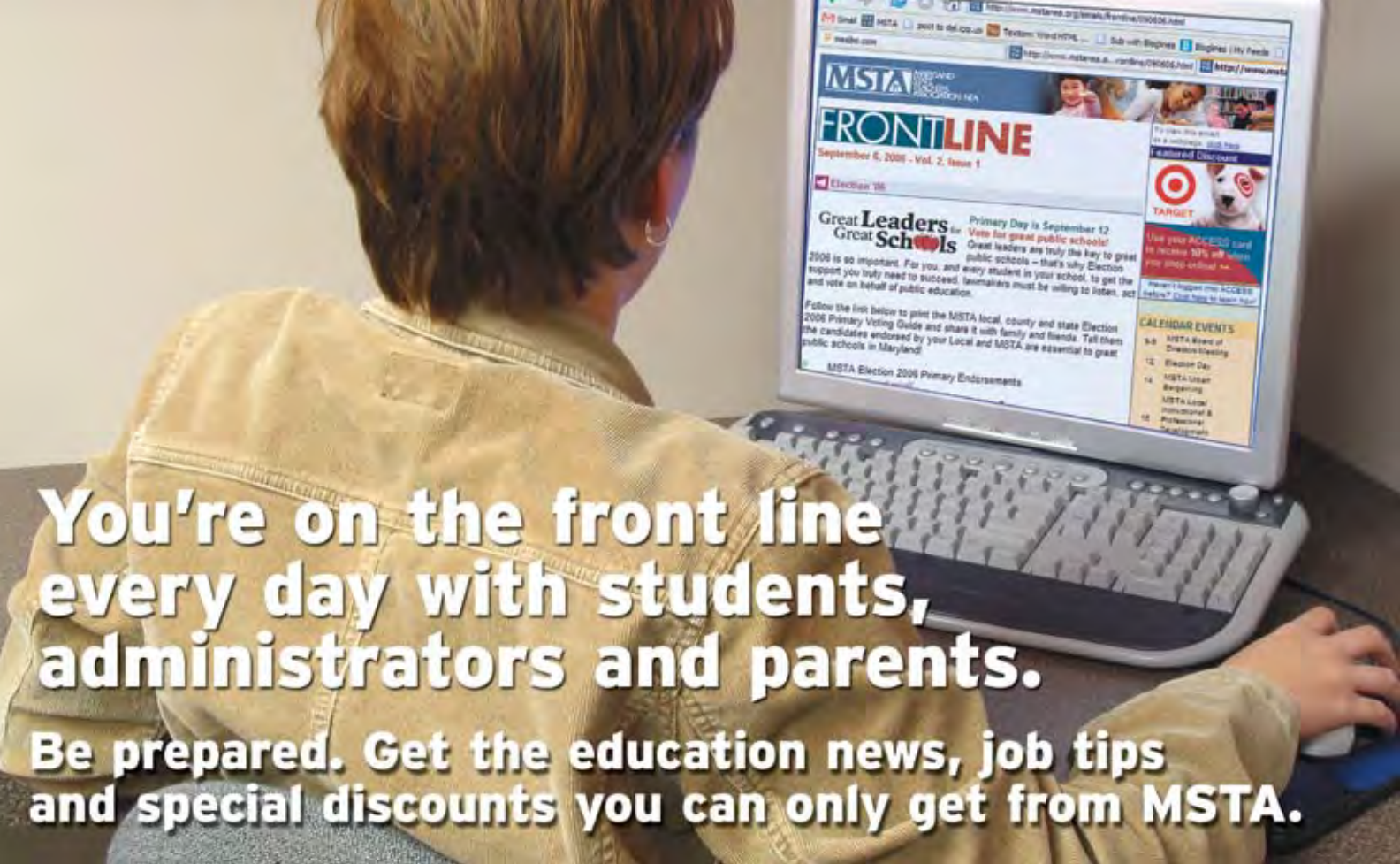
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