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actionLine

MARYLAND STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION • NEA

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 6



We've got you covered!

**How MSTA
provides the
support you
need so you
can focus on
transforming
our schools**

**INSIDE:
Making U.S.
history fun!**

**MSTA Election
2009 results!**



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How MSTA provides the support you need so you can focus on transforming our schools

It's up to us to lead the way towards intelligently transforming public education to fit the needs of the 21st century student in a 21st century world. MSTA is already in the mix, exploring and pursuing ways we can help modernize and improve our schools and instruction. Another way the Association helps is by providing a protective umbrella that allows you to focus on doing your job while paving the way to change that works.



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MSTA's leadership team is ready to take on the challenges facing Maryland educators and schools.



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Change is coming—and we should lead the way



We must not doubt that huge changes are coming—and that they are needed.

For years, we've heard one proposal after another for radically overhauling public schools from those who want to dismantle unions and undermine support for public education. But now calls for change are coming from public school advocates and supporters who want to transform how we prepare today's students for tomorrow's world.

In a speech laying out his education vision, President Obama highlighted Association priorities such as early childhood education and fixing the No Child Left Behind law, but he also mentioned alternative pay arrangements, charter schools and extended school calendars. Governor O'Malley recently urged our State Board of Education to measure Maryland students' performance on international exams, enhance career and technology education and improve the training and recruitment of teachers and principals.

Our own National Education Association and some state education associations are partnering with government officials, business leaders and private foundations to push 21st century school transformation. NEA just teamed up with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers to endorse a "Tough Choices" framework that calls for developing a set of common standards across states, revamping the traditional high school-to-college transition, and reexamining how public schools are funded and managed.

Maryland's educators have enjoyed much success of late. So when we hear it's time to do things differently, our ears perk up.

Yet we must not doubt that huge changes are coming—and that they are needed. We serve a more diverse student population in an obsolete education system designed to prepare students for agriculture or heavy industry—not the highly skilled jobs of our global and highly competitive world.

We can resist all changes, and eventually, have change come to us, without our input—as with NCLB. Or we can proactively engage in meaningful discussions of potential reforms and offer our own ideas, so that decisions are made with us and better reflect realities on the ground.

Should we support an extended day or year, at least for struggling students and for educators who opt to participate in return for extra compensation? Would national standards and assessments make more sense than the current state and local patchwork? Are there innovative ways to modernize teacher education and expand the pool of quality graduates, or restructure pay scales to encourage advancement and staying in the profession long term?

I don't have all the answers to these questions. But I do believe we need to talk with a variety of education stakeholders and entertain out-of-the-box ideas for strengthening our profession and schools to meet the challenges ahead.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Write Clara:

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

Tell us what you think!

If you could wave a magic wand and make any change to our public schools or the education profession, what would you do?

What do you need to be an effective agent for 21st century school transformation where you work? What are your ideas for how Maryland's educators and public schools can rise to the challenge? How can MSTa and its members best lead the way?

Start the dialogue today—send Clara your comments, suggestions and ideas to 21stcentury@mstanea.org. We'll put some of them in print, so make sure to include your name, occupation, school or worksite and county.

You're on the front lines—we need to hear from you!

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 adjustments have you made at home or school to cope with the economic downturn?



ELAINE HAMBLLY
Secretary I
Glendale ES
Member for 10 years
Anne Arundel County

Cutting back

Because everything is so uncertain now, I'm cutting back on luxuries. My husband runs his own business, and that's been a little slow, so I'm stepping in to help him. And I'm making sure I'm not overspending.

A rigorous budget

At home my husband and I have created a rigorous budget. We are now spending from envelopes. We have envelopes for gas, transportation, food, clothing, car repairs—everything. When the money is gone, it's gone. We are living within our means.



WINSOME YOUNG-FYE
Paraprofessional
Langley Park-McCormick ES
Member for 8 years
Prince George's County



ANN MARIE TURPIN
Business teacher
Annapolis HS
Member for 3 years
Anne Arundel County

Raising student awareness

Last summer I started carpooling with coworkers. That made a difference because there were three of us. Now, instead of buying gas once a week, it's every two weeks. That helps a lot. In the classroom, I started talking to students about saving, and at home, I'm saving more.

Carpooling

At school we're sending all of our copying jobs to the board of ed's print shop so the county pays for it, instead of our school. I'm carpooling with my fiancé, who is also a teacher. His school is just ten minutes away from mine.



KELLY RIVERS
U.S. history teacher
Long Reach HS
Member for 4 years
Howard County



NICOLE VENUTO
Language arts teacher
Stevensville MS
Member for 3 years
Queen Anne's County

A second job

I'm living with my parents while I pay off my graduate degree loans and that helps tremendously. If it weren't for my parents, I probably wouldn't be able to stay in the profession. I also work part-time for Doc's Riverside Grille in Centreville, Maryland.

StartingLine

NEWS YOU NEED TO KNOW



Prince George's County member and parent Monique Scott tapes her radio and internet ads for MSTAs new Great Public Schools ad campaign.

Minority parents are focus of MSTAs new ad campaign

Capitalizing on the state's well-publicized public school successes, MSTAs new Great Public Schools radio and internet campaign brings important messages to African American and Hispanic families and communities about progress in their local public schools and the importance of parental involvement.

With versions in both English and Spanish, the ads are the result of an NEA grant awarded MSTAs and based on surveys and focus groups with participants from several counties. The ads are running through mid-April in targeted markets in the Baltimore area and Washington, DC, suburbs, and on the Eastern Shore.

Prince George's County member Monique Scott is featured as both a teacher and a parent. "As an educator and proud parent of two children in the public schools," she says in her ad, "I'm passionate about the quality of their education, and I've seen the importance of caring teachers.



"We distinguish the excellent man from the common man by saying that the former is the one who makes great demands upon himself, and the latter who makes no demands on himself."

JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET
(1883 - 1955)

"But teachers can't do it alone ... I encourage you to come into your child's school and find out how you can help. Together we have an opportunity to ensure that all students get the support they need to reach their greatest potential."

Other members who provided testimonials include: Gorgette Y. Green-Hodnett, Charles County; Tamara Johnson and Ann Marie Turpin, Anne Arundel County; Kelly Rivers, Howard County; and Matilde Vallejos, Montgomery County.

Visit GreatSchoolsMaryland.org to hear the ads and testimonials. Look for "Parents: Get Involved!" a new link for parents with tips and suggestions for successful parent-teacher relationships and parental involvement.

ESP: Professional development takes center stage

In Maryland ...

The debut of MSTAs new ESP video and a visit from Laura Vernon, NEAs 2008 ESP of the Year, were just two of the highlights of last month's Professional Development Day for Maryland's support professionals. Classes on closing the achievement gaps, stress and credit management, legal rights and responsibilities, advocacy, problem solving, and more filled the day.

Vernon, a school security specialist from Milwaukee, had a strong message for her colleagues. "We need more colleagues to unite with us; it's why we have to focus consistently on membership. Sure, the money collected from dues helps sustain the local, state, and national organizations. But, membership has a greater purpose—a healthy, growing membership moves agendas and causes change. Membership must be a component of everything we do."

The new video will become part of MSTAs membership recruitment efforts, focusing on the evolving roles and responsibilities of education support professionals.

Nationally ...

Just two weeks after MSTAs event, NEA hosted hundreds of ESP from across the country at the annual ESP Conference. MSTAs Maryland delegation included Local presidents and members eager to make professional connections, experience the leadership and professional development offerings and share with their colleagues.

Read Across America kicked off in Baltimore!

It was a big day for students at Baltimore County's Mars Estates and Church Lane elementary schools when that cr-a-a-a-zy CAT in the Hat stopped by to kick off NEA's Read Across America event. The Cat arrived in NEA's brand new Cat-a-Van, the whacky Seussed-up vehicle custom-designed for the Cat's literacy-promoting escapades!



Photo © 2009 Patrick G. Ryan/NEA. Courtesy: National Education Association.

"The event was a wonderful experience that our children will cherish for a lifetime!" said Kim Solomon, a second grade teacher at Mars Estates ES. MSTA President Clara Floyd and Teachers Association of Baltimore County

President Cheryl Bost were among the special guest readers who also helped distribute books to each of the 300 star-struck students.

In all, four Cat-a-Van tours hit the road to bring the gift of reading to thousands of children in 19 cities across the country to celebrate Read Across America.

NEA Member Benefits April 2009 Giveaway!

If you haven't taken the time to investigate NEA Member Benefits, now may be the time! With a new website debuting soon, and savings opportunities from Costco and Brooks Brothers to great deals on auto and homeowners insurance, you can't afford *not* to check it out!

Don't forget to register anytime now through April 30 for the NEA Member Benefits April Giveaway. You could win a **\$200 Staples gift card!** No purchase necessary to enter.

SAVE THE DATES!

MSTA's Summer Training Series

JULY 14-16 Emerging Leaders Academy Generation VI members meet for the first time. *Burkshire Marriott, Towson*

JULY 22-23 The Leadership and Organizational Development Institute focuses on building-level leadership and advocacy skills. *Harbourtowne Resort and Conference Center, St. Michaels*

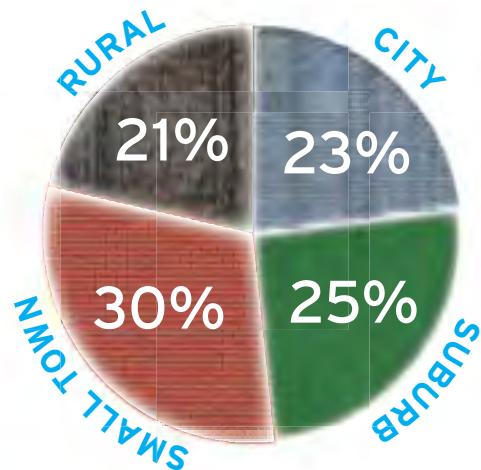
JULY 29-30 Use the Professional Development Institute to improve student achievement and job satisfaction. *Rocky Gap Resort, Cumberland*

Registration costs \$160 for each session, which covers meals, materials and lodging pursuant to MSTA policy. For more information, contact Debra Nixon, dnixon@mstanea.org, 800/448-MSTA, x 3658.

by the numbers

If you could live anywhere, would you prefer a city, suburban area, a small town or a rural area?

When asked their level of community satisfaction, residents of suburban communities were the most satisfied (42%) and residents of small towns, the least (37%). However, more Americans would rather live in a small town. Check it out:



Source: Pew Research Center Numbers, Facts and Trends Shaping Your World, February 2009

on the web www.mstanea.org

➔ Feeling frugal?

Check out **Instructables**, a fun project-sharing website with step-by-step instructions for making thousands of useful items focusing on recycling and repurposing. Categories include home, food, music, crafts, green, art, kids, life, pets, science and more! www.instructables.com

Tip Jar is Google's new collection of money-saving tips submitted and ranked by the web community. The site allows visitors to vote and rank them in order of usefulness. Google.com/tipjar

Woot is an online store and virtual community that sells one item per day, at drastically slashed prices. Lots of focus on computer accessories or electronics. www.woot.com

Frugal Julie's blog features money-saving tips, printable coupons and product giveaways and notifies users of sales and limited-time only online shopping deals! www.frugalshoppingwithjulie.com



We've got you covered!

How MSTA provides the support you need so you can focus on transforming our schools

Technology. The economy. The needs of our students. Every area of our home and work life is changing and evolving faster than ever before. It's hard to keep up. We are almost 10 years into the new century, and we can all feel the tectonic plates shifting under our feet. We need a new paradigm for education in this country to prepare students. "No Child Left Behind" was touted as the transformational model, but overly rigid mandates, ill-conceived implementation and funding issues have led to frustration for schools, teachers, paraeducators and students.

We can't afford to wait. Sure, Maryland's educators have a lot to be proud of, with our two #1 national rankings, rising reading and math scores in every school district, and large number of students going on to college. But more and more advocates for children and supporters of public schools are arguing that the entire structure of our education system must be revamped if we hope to adequately prepare students for the challenges ahead. And they are intent on pushing reforms—with our participation and input, or if judged necessary, without us.

It's up to us to lead the way towards intelligently transforming public education to fit the needs of the 21st century student in a 21st century world. MSTA is exploring and pursuing ways at the state level to help modernize and improve our schools and instruction, through forward-looking legislation and regulatory changes, innovative programs and exciting new partnerships. But the Association also provides a protective umbrella over our 71,000 members so you can focus on your job and provide input and ideas for change that works. On the following pages, learn more about the many ways MSTA supports you, your students and your profession.

Why I'm a member

Last month, when Anne Arundel teacher **KATHY PIET** received an email from Greg Ryan, the MSTA school representative, informing her that representatives from MSTA were in the library at Old Mill North MS, the 30-year veteran knew something was up.

And it was. Contract negotiations were going poorly, she learned, and MSTA was stepping in to assist the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County in spreading the word and alerting the membership about a school board meeting and possible work-to-rule action in response to serious threats against the union.

"When I received the email, I thought: What's going on? What are they taking away? What would MSTA and TAAAC be doing here? I don't recall this ever going on."

For Piet, the fact that MSTA and her Local are always looking out for her best interests has tremendous value. "I'd read about the county's budget problems and during tough economic times you know money is going to be an issue. But for TAAAC and MSTA to come, something else had to be going on. I wanted to know what it was and what I needed to do to help.

"This was a case where we needed factual information and we got it from our union. The board knew we were ready to take action, and it worked." See page 17 for more about TAAAC's recent activities.

Kathy Piet with veteran UniServ representative Marius Ambrose.



Tools and Resources

MSTA has always been about getting members the tools and resources they need to get the job done. It's a mission of the Association that leaders and staff take very seriously. "MSTA devotes a huge portion of our resources to providing the programs and skilled personnel to support public education employees in all aspects of their working life so they, in turn, can devote all their resources and attention to making sure Maryland students are prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century," said MSTA Executive Director David Helfman.

"We work through each of our departments locally and statewide to address the important education issues of the day. Whether it's supporting quality teaching, promoting safe and modern school buildings, improving working conditions, or securing competitive salaries and benefits, members' interests are at the heart of every action we take," Helfman added.

Thanks to MSTA President Clara Floyd's membership on the Maryland Teacher and Professional Development Advisory Council, the Association's voice was heard on the critical issue of professional development standards. "In 2004, the State Board of Education adopted a clear set of standards that define the conditions under which professional development is most effective," Floyd explained. "The standards support educators' need for professional development that is data-driven, embedded in the work they do, tailored to their position and specific to their needs."

At this time of year, MSTA's member activists and staff lobbyists are in the offices of senators and delegates pushing legislation that will serve educators and students. Bills affecting funding, class size, curriculum, student discipline, vouchers and other concerns that affect educators and students make perennial appearances in House and Senate committees, and MSTA's impact on their success or failure is widely acknowledged.

Our history of success in campaigns like those to improve collective bargaining rights for ESP on the Eastern Shore and educators' pensions has done much to enhance MSTA's position. Thanks to MSTA's aggressive efforts, longtime member-activist Bill Brown continues to serve on the State Retirement and Pension System Board of Trustees as vice-chair of the investment committee, keeping a keen, experienced eye on pension funds.

This year, as we face layoffs and furloughs, MSTA's clout in Annapolis, and NEA's clout in Washington DC., has helped protect education funding. For right now, President Obama's stimulus package will ease the pain of the drastic cuts necessary to balance the state's budget. MSTA's strong voice in the State House will help keep the pensions at the state level, prevent furloughs at the local level, ensure that the money is distributed

Why I'm a member

according to the Thornton formula and maintain the counties' contribution to education.

Thanks to MSTA partnerships with like-minded advocates, this year the Association is also having an impact on efforts to expand health care for all children, provide universal pre-K, and accommodate incoming students of military families arriving due to the Base Realignment and Closure process (due to states' differing curricula, some students may need assistance) and other pro-children initiatives.

MSTA has also been waging a multi-year Great Public Schools (GPS) campaign focused on the public and policymakers, including ads, videos, a GPS website, media outreach, on-the-ground community conversations, and a common pro-public education message for local leaders and members to use. Most of the campaign has focused on protecting education funding during tough budgetary times.

And last month, MSTA began reaching out to African American and Hispanic parents and communities to build support for public schools and educators where it is most needed. Radio and online ads in English and Spanish and on the GPS website, www.GreatSchoolsMaryland.org, tout Maryland's recent #1 rankings and offer ways for parents to strengthen their relationship with their child's teachers and schools.

Professional Development

If you haven't been to an MSTA training or workshop lately, you're missing some important opportunities to expand the connections you make with your 21st century students. Closing the achievements gaps and preparing members for the changes already going on in the classroom and school building are the focus of C.A.R.E.: Culture, Abilities, Resilience, and Effort and I Can Do It!—two of the Association's most popular trainings.

"Both of these programs are designed to assist teachers and education support professionals in meeting the very different challenges of the 21st century classroom," said Pat Alexander of MSTA's School Quality program. "No longer is a school a homogeneous collection of students with the same background and values.

"If they haven't yet," Alexander added, "every school employee will be faced with a student, parent, colleague, supervisor or administrator whose cultural history is quite different from their own. As educators, we must value and embrace those differences and we can only do that if we understand them."

In C.A.R.E., which is approved for three Continuing Professional Development credits by the Maryland State Department of Education, participants examine the research-based, classroom-proven strategies that improve teaching and

When **MICHELE BENNETT** started working in Allegany County, the school system wasn't doing any full-time hiring. She worked five years as a temporary employee when, thanks to the Allegany County Educational Services Council (ACESC) and MSTA, which negotiated a process for moving temporary employees into full-time status, she finally became a permanent employee four years ago.

"That was wonderful. I had always hoped to become a member because I knew what the union could do for me. Since I've joined, I've worked to get the word out to others about improvements in our wages and pension, and member benefits from NEA and ACCESS."

Bennett, who is now also the ACESSC treasurer, jumped in to Association life with both feet. "After being hired as a full-time employee, I immediately went to MSTA's Emerging Leaders training and have just completed C.A.R.E. training," she said. "Getting to share some of that wonderful training, incorporating it in the classroom and emulating the values to students is wonderful. As ESP, we need that kind of training. I think that's key to our union."

Michelle Bennett was in Annapolis last month supporting the Fairness in Negotiations Act.



Want to learn more about MSTA's training schedule?

Visit *MSTA OnLine*, www.mstanea.org, to download MSTA's Professional Development and Organizational Training Guide.

Why I'm a member

"Being a member of my Local and MSTA means I can make a difference for myself, my colleagues and ultimately our students," said **BARBARA ALLEN**, a reading recovery teacher at Mary Burgess Neal ES in Charles County.

Allen was one of the many Education Association of Charles County members who worked for years to change the face of the county's board of education. "It's a whole new world because of our board. I get tremendous support from the superintendent and his staff. They know who I am and are appreciative I've helped give them a school board they can work with."

Since the change in the board's makeup, EACC has negotiated fair share and increased time for teacher planning and staff development. For the 2007-2008 school year, every school met AYP, and the achievement of high school Advanced Placement scholars increased.

It helps, Allen said, to be an active member of the Association. "I find that people look up to you because you're working so hard for them. Members need someone in the building to talk to about job concerns and who can answer questions about their contract."

Barbara Allen with Delegate Murray Levy at EACC's annual Lobby Night.



learning and find ways to close the achievement gaps in culturally diverse schools.

C.A.R.E. is based on understanding culturally and linguistically diverse students through each of four components. Effective educators:

- Find ways to connect school to their students' lives every day;
- Discover ways to connect to students and recognize that intelligence can be changed by learning experiences;
- Understand they must help their students become academically and personally resilient; and
- Understand that building on student experience and knowledge will help motivate and engage them.

I Can Do It! (ICDI) is another MSTA program specifically designed to help teachers cope with the changing environment of today's classroom by focusing on issues, techniques, and strategies for effective classroom management. "I Can Do It! is very interactive," said Alexander. "It allows teachers to examine successful practices and theories about classroom management and share practical strategies."

Created to help new teachers cope with the often unexpected difficulties of classroom management, the list of ICDI graduates include many veteran educators eager for new strategies and techniques to build meaningful, constructive and productive relationships with students and parents.

The 21st century classroom-focused C.A.R.E. and ICDI workshops are just two examples of the kind of professional development MSTA offers members. MSTA boasts a strong support system for National Board Certification and an expansive data-based school improvement program. "The NEA 2.0 Keys Survey and Data Analysis provides schools an opportunity to look at their strengths and weaknesses," said Alexander, "and begin a process of continuous improvement by encouraging every stakeholder to take part." Experienced MSTA staff guide the process from initial planning and supporting training, to customized and targeted staff development.

Member Support

You may have never met your Local Association UniServ representative—they're the experienced MSTA field staff assigned to every Local and almost always permanently based in their assigned county. Field staff representation is at the heart of local employee representation with boards of education,

Why I'm a member

county councils and the community. They assist in contract negotiations and after settlement, ensure that boards of education live up to the letter and spirit of the contract. Your MSTA UniServ also works closely with MSTA's staff of attorneys as advocates for members threatened with lawsuits or unjust administrative actions.

Although no one wants to be in a position to need legal counsel, MSTA's experienced attorneys provide just that to hundreds of education employees every year. The Center for Legal Affairs provides legal representation in grievances before arbitrators, boards of education and the courts, as well as advice and assistance to members on civil and criminal matters arising out of employment-related activities.

MSTA also offers members the Attorney Referral Program, a list of attorneys from across the state who offer members consultations at no cost and discounts on their fees. For more information about the program and a list of participating attorneys near you, contact Marilyn Kurtz, 800/448-MSTA, x3668.

Member Benefits

You probably know about MSTA's \$1,000,000 liability insurance policy, but do you know about the excellent personal services MSTA and NEA provide? Your membership gives you access to a wide range of information, tools and discounts designed to help make many of your important financial decisions easier.

Thanks to the buying power of 3.2 million members, you can save with members-only NEA Insurance Programs, Financial Services and Member Discounts designed to meet your ever-changing needs.

Did you know:

- The NEA-sponsored CD and Money Market Accounts consistently offer some of the highest yields in the nation?
- NEA's RateSmart Credit Card offers one of the lowest variable APRs in the nation (and no annual fee)?
- Members can save an average of \$400 per year on auto insurance through NEA's A+ Auto and Homeowners Insurance?
- NEA Home Financing Program® offers home loans, refinancing and home equity programs?

MSTA and NEA know that making ends meet is challenging right now. MSTA's ACCESS Savings and NEA Member Benefits Click&Save programs offer great ways to save on clothing, books, auto services, dining, hotels, health and beauty products and services and much more. Log on to *MSTA OnLine*,

"If we don't know our rights, a lot of things can happen," said Calvert County's **BRENDA SAVOY**. "We need the support of our union, we need to know who to contact, and we need to know what we can do to make our work environment better for us. With help from CAESS and MSTA, we have somebody to back us up—whatever we need."

Savoy, a custodian, is grateful for the amount of information she receives from her Local, the Calvert Association of Educational Support Staff, about events like the MSTA Lobby Night she attended this year. "My president told me about the Fairness in Negotiations Act. We went to Annapolis to learn more and hear our legislators' views," she added. "We already have a strong union in place and this legislation will give us the tools we need to ensure justice for our members."

Brenda Savoy (left) with Calvert County colleague, Louvenia Banks



www.mstanea.org, and look for the ACCESS logo; for Click&Save, visit www.neamb.org.

For well over 100 years, MSTA and NEA have made it their job to support and protect the educators who selflessly serve the students and public schools of our state and country. The services offered by the Association are always evolving to serve your changing needs.

Questions?

Contact your Local president or UniServ representative. Visit *MSTA OnLine*, www.mstanea.org, for a directory of Local Associations and staff contacts.

RESULTS: MSTA

Joining MSTA President Clara Floyd and Vice President Betty Weller for their second three-year terms, are experienced leaders Wanda Twigg, Bill Fisher, Phyllis A. Parks Robinson and Jane Stern, and newcomer Amy Watkins. Twigg, a current at-large MSTA board member, was chosen to serve as one of MSTA's four representatives on the NEA Board of Directors starting September 1. Fisher, Robinson, Stern and Watkins will serve as at-large board members beginning August 1.

MSTA President Unopposed Clara Floyd, Montgomery County

I'm focused on transforming Maryland's education system to meeting the needs of a global economy. Providing our students with high-level 21st century skills is critical to our continued status as the #1 school system in the country. MSTA needs to take a leading role in creating, promoting and supporting the teaching and learning environment needed to provide a great public school for every child.

MSTA Vice President Betty Weller, Kent County

There is much work to be done in the coming months and years to prepare our students for the 21st century. We need to ensure that every class has highly qualified teachers, and that our support professionals earn a living wage. We need the resources to guarantee that every child receives the individualized attention that he or she deserves. I look forward to continuing our work towards achieving great public schools for every child.

RESULTS

Betty Weller • Kent 7256

Terry Borneman • Carroll 5507

NEA Director Wanda Twigg, St. Mary's County

Thanks to everyone who supported me. I am forever grateful for the confidence you have placed in me and I pledge to represent the membership to the best of my abilities on both the NEA and MSTA boards. I believe that my experience as a Local president and member of the MSTA Board will allow me to better represent you all. Please contact me with questions or concerns.

RESULTS

Wanda Twigg • St. Mary's 6323

Yvonne N. Baicich • Prince George's 5471

MSTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jane Stern, Montgomery County

I am honored to help lead the Association at this time of unprecedented challenges. Public officials cannot be allowed to solve the revenue crisis on the backs of our members or at the expense of students who depend on schools to make their dreams reality. While improving student achievement, we must relieve the workload burden caused by the ever-increasing demands, insist upon fair compensation, and ensure that we are treated with professional respect.

Bill Fisher, Charles County

The future of MSTA rests solely on its members. We as educators need to continue our role as models for our students, leaders in our schools and community, as well as champions for our profession. My re-election to the MSTA (MSEA) Board of Directors gives me the opportunity to do just that. I will continue to represent ALL of our members so that we can remain a strong voice for education. Thank you!

Phyllis A. Parks Robinson, Montgomery County

Thank you for supporting me—your confidence makes me want to work that much harder to address the challenges we face in these tough economic times. We will continue to work as a team to address workload issues, close the student academic achievement gap and continue to elect friends of education. Please know that I am ready to listen to your concerns and ideas. I look forward to representing you in a way that will make you proud.

Amy Watkins, Montgomery County

The campaign was a great opportunity to meet members around the state. I look forward to working with everyone around the state as your representative. I will listen to your needs to make MSTA even stronger. I'm looking forward to working with Emerging Leaders and SPARKS to get more involved and explore opportunities that MSTA has to offer. Thank you again for your support.

RESULTS

Jane Stern • Montgomery 5420

Bill Fisher • Charles 5017

Phyllis A. Parks Robinson • Montgomery 4427

Amy Watkins • Montgomery 4423

Steven Brooks • Calvert 4347

Shirley May Little • Anne Arundel 4007

Theresa Mitchell Dudley • Prince George's 3942

Abby Beytin • Baltimore 3843

Joseph Webb • Prince George's 3688

Veronica Henderson • Baltimore 3547

Election 2009

NEA 2009 Representative Assembly Delegates

MSTA is entitled to send approximately 50 state delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly (RA) in San Diego, July 1-6, 2009. Although the first 50 delegates elected are now slated to attend the RA, there are often cancellations, and replacements will be selected in the order of the number of votes received.

Delegates are listed below by number of votes received.

Jane Stern <i>Montgomery</i>	Veronica Henderson <i>Baltimore</i>
Theresa Mitchell Dudley <i>Prince George's</i>	Karl Kirby Pence <i>St. Mary's</i>
Wanda Newman <i>Prince George's</i>	Deborah Pappas <i>Allegany</i>
Wanda Twigg <i>St. Mary's</i>	Alana Turner <i>Talbot</i>
Amy Watkins <i>Montgomery</i>	Charlene Haynie <i>Charles</i>
Fran J. Green <i>Prince George's</i>	Evelyn Joray <i>Montgomery</i>
A. Gregory Beard <i>Prince George's</i>	Joe McMahan <i>Charles</i>
Bryan L. Bucklin, Jr. <i>Prince George's</i>	Pamela Mackall <i>Calvert</i>
Charles Barkley <i>Montgomery</i>	Carlton Cartwright <i>Worcester</i>
Phyllis A. Parks Robinson <i>Montgomery</i>	Valeria Arch <i>Allegany</i>
Ann Ellis <i>Garrett</i>	Christina Abrams <i>Somerset</i>
Carol Kilby <i>Prince George's</i>	Debra Loewentritt Voiner <i>Montgomery</i>
Sandy Raymond <i>Montgomery</i>	MeMe Wells-Suznavick <i>Worcester</i>
Martha George Boxley <i>Prince George's</i>	Matilde Vallejos <i>Montgomery</i>
Dave Russell <i>Montgomery</i>	The next 10 candidates in order of votes received
Kihara Dorsey <i>Montgomery</i>	Rita Cross <i>Allegany</i>
Stanley Holcomb <i>Montgomery</i>	Linda Elwood <i>Cecil</i>
Carol E. Stewart <i>Montgomery</i>	Michele E. Bennett <i>Allegany</i>
Kimberly Papandrea <i>Montgomery</i>	Gary L. Kaetzel <i>Frederick</i>
Joan C. Sabree <i>Prince George's</i>	Elizabeth Barnes Brown <i>Charles</i>
Jacquelyn Shropshire <i>Montgomery</i>	Jeannette Young <i>Baltimore</i>
Laura Jeanette Brown <i>Montgomery</i>	Terry Borneman <i>Carroll</i>
Kimberly Margo <i>Montgomery</i>	Deanna Kuhn <i>Charles</i>
Jim Politis <i>Montgomery</i>	Judith A. Conly <i>Cecil</i>
Patrick Damon <i>Garrett</i>	John P. Reuschlein <i>Allegany</i>
Dawn E. White <i>Somerset</i>	Administrator
Vallie B. Dean <i>Prince George's</i>	Joshua Fradel <i>Worcester</i>
Mavis Ellis <i>Montgomery</i>	Retired
Betty Smith <i>Montgomery</i>	John David Helmick Sr. <i>Allegany</i>
John Haddad <i>Montgomery</i>	Susie C. Jablinske <i>Anne Arundel</i>
Colette Sabbagh <i>Montgomery</i>	Rosalind Lucille Yee <i>Prince George's</i>
Erin Swift <i>Montgomery</i>	
Eric Luedtke <i>Montgomery</i>	
Barry Cross <i>Allegany</i>	
Peter H. Singleton <i>Dorchester</i>	
Sylvia Barrios <i>Worcester</i>	

For the entire list of delegate candidates, visit MSTA OnLine, www.mstanea.org.

Teachers! Did you vote?

Top 5 counties by teacher participation:

Charles County	45%
Allegany County	41%
Worcester County	38%
Talbot County	35%
Dorchester County	34%

ESP! Did you vote?

Top 5 counties by ESP participation:

Garrett County	39%
Allegany County	38%
Carroll County	38%
Dorchester County	32%
Calvert County	29%

What does an MSTA delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly do? Visit MSTA OnLine, www.mstanea.org, Members Only, to find out!

Visit MSTA OnLine, www.mstanea.org, Members Only, for complete MSTA Election 2009 vote totals.

LocalLine

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MSTA LOCALS

MSTA, Local Associations and Governor O'Malley celebrate Read Across Maryland Month!

Brightly colored flags dotted the streets and schools of Annapolis in honor of the new month-long literacy initiative, Read Across Maryland Month, jointly sponsored by MSTA and Governor Martin O'Malley.

"With two #1 rankings for our schools, Maryland is in a unique position to serve as a national model for quality public education," said Governor O'Malley. "Working together with educators and families across Maryland, we can instill a thirst for knowledge in our children that will help them achieve their dreams."

With the focus on the importance of early literacy skills, the governor visited a school each Thursday in March reading to students, sharing with them his favorite childhood books, handing out parent tips and recommended reading lists and, occasionally, getting lessons in reading pedagogy from member teachers.

At Carney ES in Baltimore, the governor even learned the fine points



Baltimore County teacher Rachel Single teaches a lesson to her fourth grade class and Governor O'Malley.

of a brief constructed response from fourth grade teacher Rachel Single and her students. After the reading event, the governor held a press conference focusing on education and literacy.

"As teachers, one of the most important things that we can do for our children is to believe in their success," Single said. "This experience was one that will motivate my students now and in the future because they were told by Governor O'Malley that they would succeed if they continued to read. Later, they told me how proud and important they felt when he spoke about their classroom success during the press conference."



Governor O'Malley talks with student reporters at Suitland ES in Prince George's County.



The governor reads with Sheridan Stapleton, a student in Cheryl Nilles' 2nd grade class at Running Brook ES in Howard County.

"Maryland's public schools are number one in the nation because of wonderful partnerships among people and organizations who understand great public schools are possible with real commitment and support," said President Clara Floyd. "The collaboration between MSTA, Local Associations and Governor O'Malley has made this first year of Read Across Maryland a wonderful and exciting event for educators, students and parents."

TAAAC members: We've got your back!

When news hit MSTA last month that contract negotiations between the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County (TAAAC) and the county's superintendent had run into trouble, MSTA Executive Director David Helfman issued a statewide call to action to assist TAAAC.

Soon after, MSTA staff from across the state were mobilized and inside school buildings, working with TAAAC to brief members on the situation and urging them to picket outside the board's monthly meeting.

The problem? The superintendent was threatening TAAAC members with an assault on basic rights and privileges of collective bargaining as a reprisal for their negotiating team's refusal to concede to deep concessions on economic issues as well as non-economic issues relating to planning time and workload.

The all-points bulletin seemed to work. At a bargaining session a few days before the scheduled meeting, the superintendent's team took all the union-busting items off the table for good and suspended talks on economic items until May.

Teachers are relieved. Tom Keating, a physical education teacher at Crofton MS was among the thousands of teachers TAAAC and MSTA connected with on the issue. "Teachers understand that times are tight, but we are part of the local community and deserve respect. I'm a pretty con-

servative guy, but it's not a negotiation to say, 'take it or leave it.'"

Follow-up: Talbot County ESP contract settled

On the heels of a streamlined one-day settlement with the county's teachers, Talbot County education support professionals settled a new four-year contract that leaders and staff say is a win-win for both sides.

"Every single item negotiated benefits our hardworking staff," said Tonya Hayman, a member of the negotiations team and long-time paraeducator. "There are no secrets to success; it was the result of preparation and hard work from the negotiations team and all of the ESP members of the Talbot County Education Association. The school system went out of its way to treat ESP as well as it did certified staff."

The four-year agreement included:

- A salary increase of 3.5% per year (plus step increase)—the highest raise in the state for ESP;
- An increase in the board's share of health care cost-sharing from the current 85% to a maximum of 98%, if the county does not fully fund the salary increases; and
- Quality-of-life items such as: education scholarships for ESP; "uniform-optional" first day of school; increased leave for religious holidays; an increase (nearly double) in graduate credit reimbursement plus an inflation rider; and the creation of an employee-paid, board-implemented disability insurance program.

datebook

APRIL 2009

- 1 April Fools Day
- 6 MSTA Lobby Night *Annapolis*
MSTA Retired Advisory Council
- 7 Local Officers' Network
Series II *Annapolis*
- 7-9 NEA-Retired East Regional
Conference *Savannah, GA*
- 8 Passover *Begins at sunset*
- 9 MSTA Urban Coordinated
Bargaining Council (CBC)
- 10 Good Friday *Office closed*
- 12 Easter
- 13 *Sine Die* General Assembly
adjourns *Office closed*
- 14 MSTA East CBC
- 15 Passover *Ends at sunset*
- 17-18 Emerging Leaders Academy
Part II *St. Michaels*
- 21 MSTA Southern CBC
- 24-25 MSTA Board of Directors meeting

MAY 2009

- 1-2 NEA Board of Directors meeting
- 3-9 Teacher Appreciation Week
- 4 National Teacher Day
- 6 National School Nurses Day
- 12 MSTA West CBC
- 14 MSTA Urban CBC
- 15-16 MSTA Board of Directors meeting
- 22 Naval Academy Commencement
Annapolis
- 25 Memorial Day *Office closed*
- 28 Shavuot *Begins at sunset*
- 30 Shavuot *Ends*



Crofton MS teacher Tom Keating listens as MSTA staffer Christian Rhodes alerts him to trouble in negotiations between the Local Association and the school board.



When mental illness strikes

Like diabetes, cancer, stroke or heart attack, the causes of mental illness are many and varied. The mind's response to a chemical imbalance, addiction, deep distress over life-changing events, or the slow brew of a childhood trauma are not at all unlike the way the body responds to the damages of illness or age.

Why then, when one would be hard pressed to find a family untouched by mental illness, is there such discrimination, stigma and prejudice? Historically, families sent children and adults with mental illness to hospitals or sanitariums, either too ashamed, embarrassed, frightened or inconvenienced to have their loved ones seen in public. But it's the 21st century, and thankfully, treatment and medicines have both grown by leaps and bounds since the days of lobotomies and the first, primitive electroshock therapies.

Nonetheless, in terms of health care coverage—and yes, public perception—understanding mental illness remains sketchy at best. At last year's MSTA Representative Assembly, Allegany County delegate Evan West, a longtime Association activist and former member of MSTA's Board of Directors, sponsored a successful New Business Item addressing the issue of mental health parity.

West, who has witnessed for himself the failure and fall-out of the current health care system, welcomes the new Wellstone-Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Act, which takes effect January 2010. The new law requires an insurance plan to cover mental health and illness at the same level it covers physical health and illness; discrimination against a person suffering from mental illness will be illegal.

When a physical illness struck West's wife, a chemical imbalance resulted in a debilitating series of depression and anxiety-related conditions, wreaking havoc on both her and the entire family. As he struggled through the labyrinth of diagnoses and treatments in support of his wife, and juggled his job, raising his children and keeping up his home, West, too, began to feel the symptoms of depression weighing on him.

"Even after seeing my wife's plight, it was still hard for me to admit that I needed help. It was even harder to overcome the shame I felt initially at being prescribed a psychiatric medication," he said. "After having been an advocate for my wife for so long, I still felt the shame that goes with the stigma of mental illness."

The new law requires health insurance plans to cover mental health care, plus fixes loopholes in an earlier law by requiring plans to issue the same deductibles, copayments, frequency of treatment and days of coverage for mental health care as they do for the treatment of physical ailments.

Thanks to a proper diagnosis, West's wife—and his entire family—is in the process of recovery, but it took years of dealing with ill-informed doctors, financial stress and the public perception that mental illness is really a mental weakness.

But the new law can't mandate social acceptance of mental illness, nor does it adequately protect employees from the prejudice and discrimination of employers or coworkers. West's wife experienced both.

"Most people just don't understand that most mental health problems have a physically uncontrollable cause," West said. "They instantly assume that all a person has to do is exercise enough willpower and stop feeling sorry for themselves, especially when it comes to depression. I want people to know that they don't need to be ashamed to seek help," West said.

Also thanks to West's efforts, an exhibit booth at MSTA Convention 2009 will focus on mental health care, resources and information about the Mental Health Parity Act.

For more information and free guides to mental health care and solutions, visit the Mental Health Association of Maryland, www.mhamd.org, or call 800/572-6426.

St. Mary's teacher creates fun new board game that takes U.S. history seriously

When St. Mary's Chopticon HS social studies teacher Jim McGrath had an idea to create a board game designed specifically to help his students prepare for the High School Assessments, his wife thought he was crazy.

McGrath is passionate about American history—it compelled him to become a teacher—and sharing it became the motivation behind his search for a new learning tool for his students. “If you don't understand American history, how can you ever be proud to be an American?” McGrath said. “From George Washington's leadership, to the wars we have fought in the name of democracy and the soldiers who have given their lives, ours is an incredible story. So many Americans just don't know how we got to this point in history.”

From idea to reality, creating *We the People* was a complicated, expensive and difficult process, but with the support of his wife Laurie, a St. Mary's instructional resource teacher, McGrath pressed on. With a concept on paper, he approached two talented students who created the game's prototype as a project at the county's Career and Technical Center.

Then came the test runs with students, after which McGrath refined and tweaked, using a formula based on Trivial Pursuit with a Candyland-inspired game board. An online search for game manufacturers led McGrath to Chatham Hill Games and their product development division. The result? A handsomely packaged product perfect for classroom instruction. *We the People* works like this:

game cards feature questions from eight categories—Geography, Economics, Foreign Policy, Citizen-



Social studies teacher Jim McGrath's Chopticon HS students get their U.S. history facts straight playing his American history game, *We the People*.

ship, the Legal System, Government, Who Am I? and Significant Events. Players pick a card and challenge another with a question. The right answer moves the game piece along the path to the winning spot. “The categories and questions cover topics on the HSAs but also include important facts about the 50 states. It's very, very helpful in reinforcing the concepts and vocabulary I teach in the classroom.”

It took a full five years to turn *We the People* into a market-ready product, and now the McGraths spend much of their free time shopping the game to educational stores and museum shops. The couple picked up the first batch of games from the manufacturer in June and in nine months met their first-year goal by selling more than 1,000 to stores and online customers from Pennsylvania to Illinois and Texas.

McGrath says it's hard to tell what impact the game has had on his students' HSA scores. “My scores have always been pretty high. But to me learning should be fun, and when we play *We the People* my students are having fun and learning at the same time. That's key.”

“To me, learning should be fun, and when we play We the People, my students are having fun and learning the same time. That's key.”

—Jim McGrath

For more information and an educator discount, visit www.mcgrathgames.com.

Rainy day blues: You just can't make this stuff up!



If you think Maryland's schools are going through some tough budgetary times, look west to California, where more than 26,500 provisional layoff notices, or "pink slips" were issued to teachers last month.

It's April, so it must be the silly (or rainy) season. That's the only way I can figure out why some folks are saying and doing things that make no sense and only serve to bring grey skies to educators and public education. So, with apologies to Andy Rooney for stealing his style, here are some questions to consider this month:

- The Montgomery County Education Association, our largest local affiliate, recently gave up the 5 percent salary increases they had negotiated in order to safeguard great education programs and avoid layoffs and larger class sizes. Yet last month, opponents of our Fairness in Negotiations Act argued in their testimony that we will encourage arbitrators to issue decisions that are harmful to children. What happened to giving credit where credit is due?
- Why do many people who call for merit or performance pay systems insist that teachers be accountable, but then refuse to hold any new pay system accountable? We've all seen how incentive pay systems have created havoc on Wall Street. Don't we owe it to members, students, and taxpayers to insist on defining the new plan's expected impact on students (such as attendance and graduation rates, test scores) and employees (such as quality of applicant, turnover rates, employee morale), as well as a plan to assess its effectiveness?
- And speaking of worker incentives and morale, who in Anne Arundel County Public Schools management thought that attacking the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County (TAAAC) members' working conditions and rights to collective bargaining while seeking economic concessions would promote school improvement? TAAAC called for help, and MSTANEA responded by sending staff from across the state to spread the word among members about the offensive proposals. Thanks to this effort, the school system withdrew its 11 union-busting proposals, providing an opportunity for constructive negotiations on outstanding issues of both parties.
- If you think Maryland's schools are going through some tough budgetary times, look west to California, where more than 26,500 provisional layoff notices, or "pink slips" were issued to teachers last month. We don't know yet how many of these jobs will actually be eliminated, but what kind of message does this send to children about their value? How can public schools be held accountable without the personnel and other resources needed to achieve results?

Let's hope that May not only brings flowers, but also a renewed focus on what really matters—working together to create brighter days for students and schools.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Write David:

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

Express yourself! Win great prizes.

After 140 years, MSTA is changing its name to MSEA

Enter the "We are MSEA" Member Contest and express yourself! What does the MSTANEA/MSEA name change mean to you? Almost anything goes! Painting, drawing, sculpture, photos, video, songs, essays, poetry, cake baking—use your imagination and be sure your creation relates to students, schools and/or your profession!

The top three finalists will receive cash or gift prizes valued up to \$500. The work of the winners and honorable mentions will be on display in the "We are MSEA" Gallery at the Annapolis headquarters, beginning September 1 at our MSEA kickoff event, and at October's Convention 2009 in Ocean City.

Email your entry to contest@mstanea.org or mail by June 30 to: "We are MSEA" Contest, MSTANEA, 140 Main Street, Annapolis, MD 21401. If your project is "bigger than a bread box," email or mail a visual (.jpg format) and written description instead. Winners will be notified by July 31.

MSTA Testifies! Local Presidents and MSTA bring the Association's voice to legislators on bills of interest and concern to MSTA

This year, MSTA made its mark on legislation addressing funding, your pension, class size, student discipline, curriculum, vouchers, school safety, parental involvement, and more. Here's a sampling of legislation and testimony MSTA leaders and staff delivered to House and Senate committees to promote public education.

The Fairness in Negotiations Act, Senate Bill 673/House Bill 1243

Supporting: Clara Floyd *MSTA President*

"The bill before you today would complement our ongoing efforts to improve the teaching and learning environment in our schools, which in turn will help recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. HB 1243 establishes a process with clear timelines that will eliminate lengthy disputes over labor issues. It is rare that any issues in any local around the state move the parties to impasse, but when they do, the dispute needs to be resolved quickly. Neither the students nor the parties at the table gain when negotiations extend over long periods of time."

Class size: Reporting requirement, Senate Bill 990/House Bill 379

Supporting: Diana Saquella *MSTA Chief lobbyist*

"MSDE currently publishes a pupil-teacher ratio that compares the total number of teachers to total number of students in a county, which provides no information about the range of class sizes and often includes up to 10 non-classroom employees. This bill would require data collected to show the actual class size, which is the number of students who regularly appear in a classroom teacher's class and for whom the teacher is primarily responsible and accountable."

The Fair Share Act, Senate Bill 264/House Bill 298

Supporting: Diana Saquella *MSTA Chief lobbyist*

"Members who pay dues and nonmembers who do not, both benefit from the same services provided by the union. Benefits go beyond bargaining contracts ... The imbalance that cur-



MSTA leaders and Local presidents gather for the Fairness in Negotiations Act House hearing. Left to right: Betty Weller, MSTA vice president, Donald Briscoe, Prince George's County, Clara Floyd, MSTA president, Karen Blackwood and Gary Brennan, Frederick County, Cheryl Bost, Baltimore County, Debbie Pappas, Allegany County, and Janice Tucker, Washington County.

rently exists is that only a portion of those who benefit from these services pay for them. Non-members gladly accept what the Association secures for them, but by not paying their fair share, they penalize those who do pay their share. We strongly support SB 264 and urge a favorable report."

Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, House Bill 306/Senate Bill 257

Supporting: Randal Mickens *MSTA lobbyist*

"The provisions of this compact serve to facilitate the timely transfer of educational records between schools, the continuation of instruction in the same grade level and in similar courses and programs, inclusion in extracurricular activities, provision of special education services, and on-time graduation. By attempting to minimize the barriers faced by these students when transferring between schools, this compact may also help students adjust to their new school and integrate more seamlessly into their new school environments."

Employee Leave: Parent-Teacher Conference, House Bill 633

Supporting: Randal Mickens *MSTA lobbyist*

"MSTA strongly believes in the importance of parental involvement in the education of a student. An essential component of this involvement is the time for parents and teachers to meet to confer about a student's behavior or performance in the classroom. Too often, the ability for a parent to meet with the teacher is impeded by the inability of the parent to leave work to meet with the teacher"

Meet *Kari Brown*



My husband Rande and I celebrated our 10th anniversary running the Grand Canyon from rim-to-rim-to-rim. Forty-six miles of sheer beauty.



I'm the "green teacher" at school. The kids are so excited to help me recycle during recess that I actually have a sign-up sheet!



Jenna, seven, at work in our garden. This year, our family tried living off the land for two days. It was hard but we stuck with it! Living organically is important to us.

Kari Brown
Second grade teacher
Cresaptown Elementary
Allegany County

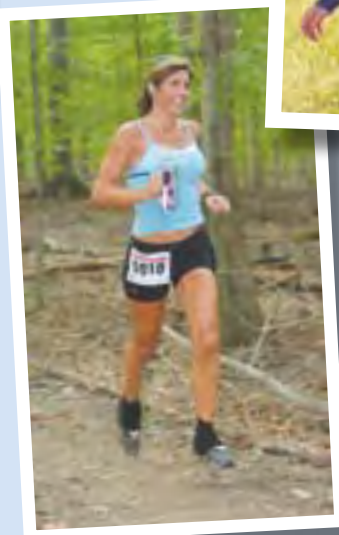
As a student, I needed to move! In high school, I played a sport every season and never missed a game or practice. I still need that outlet. For eight years, my sport has been distance running. Running rejuvenates me and makes me a fresher, more focused person.

My proudest running achievements are earning a spot on the Brooks Running Team and completing the Massanutten Mountain Trails 100 Mile Run. It's all about staying focused—moving forward one step at a time.

Through running, I've learned that we're capable of great things and that the only limits are those we place on ourselves. I try to bring this mindset into the classroom and share it with my students. They're fascinated by my running—many of them compete in local 5Ks!



Jordan, five, is all smiles at the one-mile finish line! Living a healthy lifestyle is a quality I am instilling in my girls!



Here I am running a women's half-marathon trail run in Virginia. I do this event with my mom, my sister and my two best friends!

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

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