

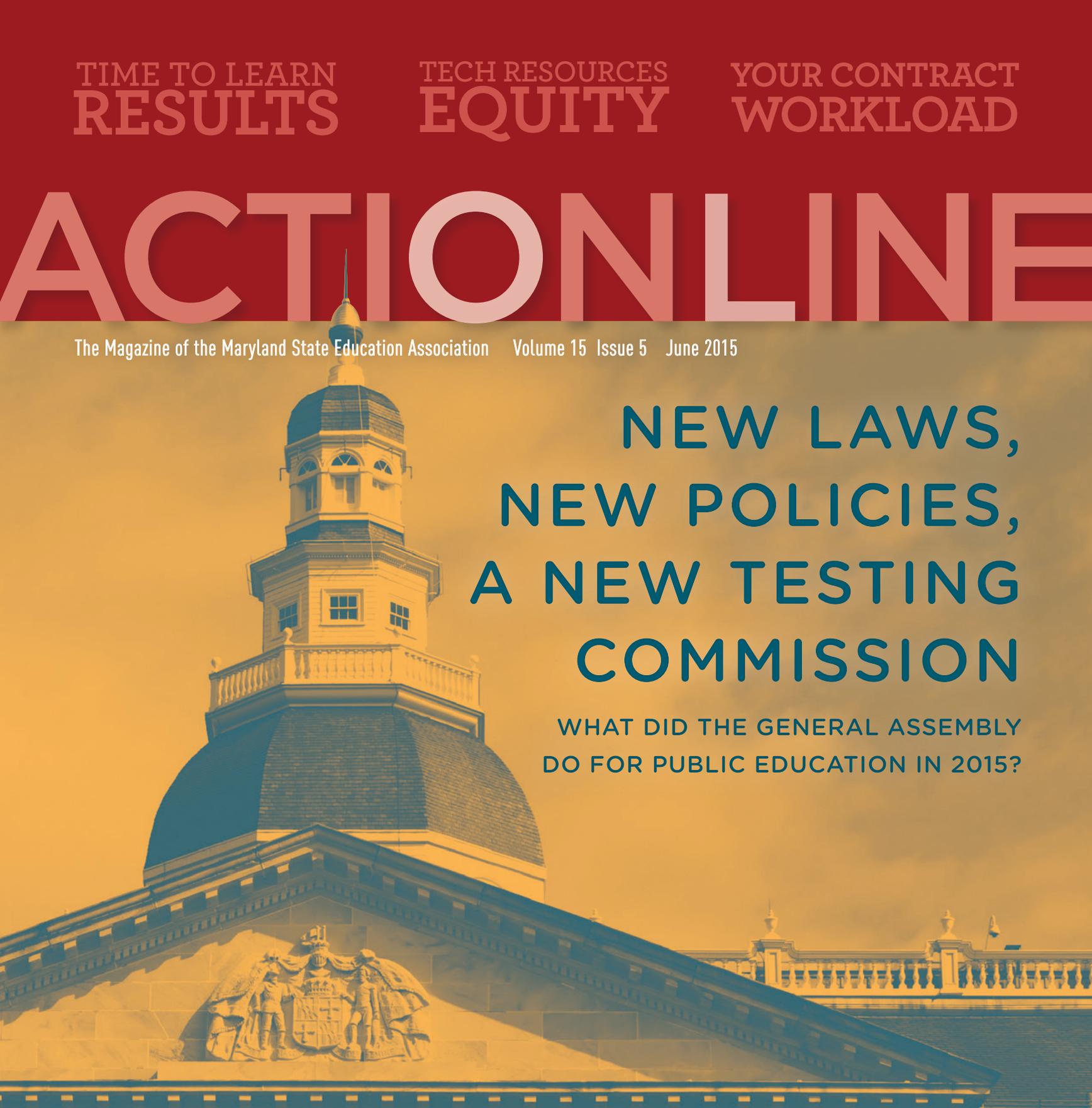
TIME TO LEARN
RESULTS

TECH RESOURCES
EQUITY

YOUR CONTRACT
WORKLOAD

ACTIONLINE

The Magazine of the Maryland State Education Association Volume 15 Issue 5 June 2015



NEW LAWS, NEW POLICIES, A NEW TESTING COMMISSION

WHAT DID THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
DO FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION IN 2015?

Pro-public education legislators tried to save GCEI funding this year, but in the end schools lost \$68 million.

Visit marylandeducators.org for MSEA's Board of Directors and local affiliates directory.



SOMETIMES THINGS GO WELL BEYOND POLITICS.

Governor Hogan's announcement on June 22 that he has cancer is one of those things. All of us at MSEA wish the governor the very best in his treatment and hope that he has a full, speedy recovery.

As public education advocates, we must always be candid, whether we agree or disagree with policies that affect schools, students, and educators. The contents of this issue, written and printed before Gov. Hogan's announcement, are just that—candid. Our charge is to support and protect those who have been, and will continue to be, affected by the political and policy decisions of Gov. Hogan's administration.

Please consider supporting Gov. Hogan and the thousands affected annually by blood cancers by donating to the Lymphoma Research Foundation, lymphoma.org, or the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, lls.org. Both organizations are dedicated to research, finding a cure, and ensuring access to treatment for blood cancer patients.

SPECIAL FEATURE ► WHAT HAPPENED IN ANNAPOLIS?

MSEA and legislators fought hard, but in the end, public education lost \$68 million in badly needed funding. Now students, schools, and educators are facing larger class sizes, program cuts, fewer resources for text books, and more.

12

CONT

4 UP FRONT

MSEA has taken the lead on testing all year; now a new survey backs us up. Find out how voters and parents feel about the culture of over-testing that's threatening school climates and learning.

6 SHORT TAKES

Allegany County mobilizes veteran educators • MSEA partners with the University of Maryland to find out how educators really use technology • How history set the stage for modern-era union victories

9 TEACHER'S TOOLKIT

Meet Rocco Aiello, St. Mary's County adaptive physical education coordinator. His toolkit includes adaptive equipment and a deep dedication to enhancing his students' lives.

10 500 WORDS

If you haven't heard about the trend towards restorative justice in student discipline, you soon will. The practice is all about building healthy and sustaining relationships throughout the school community.



EVENTS

11

MSEA DISPATCH

Inside MSEA with David Helfman and a word from the legal team about your workload.

17

MSEA 2015 ELECTION

The 2015 elections results are in! Meet your newest leaders, Jason Fahie, Russell Leone, and David Nicholson.

18

MY TURN

Anne Stoner, a Carroll County instructional assistant, is also an LGBTQ activist. Learn how she became an ally for students and an advocate for professional development and training for educators on LGBTQ issues.

ERNEST RUTHERFORD, THE

Nobel Prize-winning scientist known as the father of nuclear physics, was once congratulated for consistently being at the forefront of scientific innovation. “You’re always at the crest of the wave,” his colleague marveled. “Well, after all, I made the wave, didn’t I?” replied Rutherford.



As educators, too often we feel like we’re getting hit by wave after wave—the tsunami of education reform, as I’ve often called it. But we also have the power to make the wave, and we are, through good organizing and good advocacy work.

This session, we passed legislation, sponsored in the House by math teacher Del. Eric Ebersole, to create a commission to focus on reducing unnecessary standardized testing. Members are organizing Time to Learn committees that will take the lead by organizing and advocating locally for sensible testing policies. Across the state, we’re leading the change on testing, working to bring our classrooms back as centers of joyful and successful teaching and learning.

And while our leadership on testing will bring us two steps closer to great outcomes, Governor Hogan’s lack of leadership on school funding threatens to send us at least one step back. It was disappointing to see him walk away from releasing \$68 million in school funding and worse to see him invent false claims about our pensions as his rationale. That’s not the kind of leadership that serves Maryland well.

Finally, I want to take a moment to say thank you to the dedicated local leaders whose terms end this summer and thank them for their tremendous leadership, service, and passion. I also want to say thanks to the new local leaders who are stepping up and whose ideas and work will help us be better organizers, advocates, and educators. Collectively we’ll work to make sure that our voice—your voice—is strong, respected, and making waves on behalf of our students.

Betty H. Weller
MSEA PRESIDENT

Watch Betty’s video at marylandeducators.org/DigitalAL
Contact Betty at bweller@mseanea.org

THE PUBLIC JOINS MSEA BEHIND A TIME TO TEACH TIME TO LEARN EDUCATION AGENGA

Student testing made front page news across the state and country this year when students, educators, and parents took their organizing to the next level against the crushing volume of mandated assessments. Citing what we all know to be true—lost instructional time, a teach-to-the-test mentality, frequently redundant testing requirements from county, state, and federal governments, massive costs, and the often dubious usefulness of the results for improving instruction—MSEA members pushed back this year with the help of lawmakers in the 2015 General Assembly.

And it made a difference. Maryland educators met strong bipartisan support in both the Senate and House, with lawmakers from both parties serving as lead and co-sponsors on bills designed to reduce over-testing. Some lawmakers recognized the problem firsthand as they, like parents across the state, watched their children fret in response to the endless testing buzz and pressure that too often adversely affects the confidence and stress levels of students without producing actionable results for educators.

Thanks to students' testing fatigue, parental concern, and frequent media coverage, the public is on high alert about the number and impact of standardized tests. MSEA's May survey of the public and members on testing shows that the issue is the #1 or #2 most important public education issue for Marylanders—whether they are educators, parents, Democrats, Republicans, or Independents. See the infographic on the facing page for more results.

With this promising consensus in place, Maryland is nearing a tipping point. This year, the General Assembly passed legislation that sets up a 19-member commission to examine the use, purpose, amount, time, and cost of state and local assessments. The commission, made up of educators,

parents, and state legislators, will recommend to the General Assembly how to eliminate redundant testing and increase the amount of time students have to learn and teachers have to teach. (Read more about the legislation on pages 12–17.)

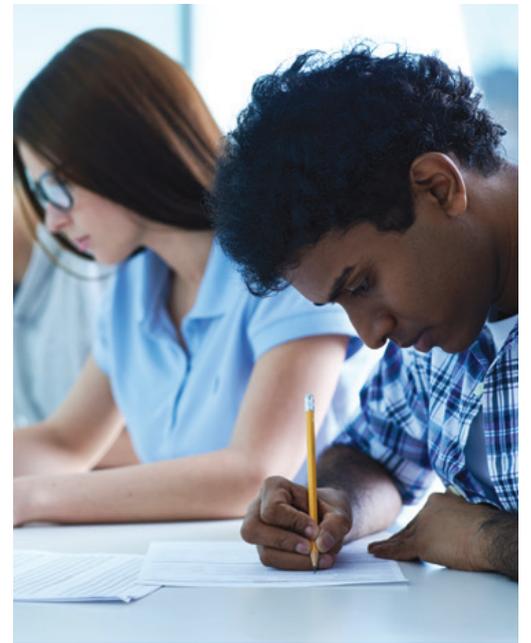
"In order to best educate our students, it will take stakeholders coming together to dig deep into the testing culture and collaborate on solutions," said MSEA Vice President Cheryl Bost, who will represent MSEA on the commission. "We need the input of school-based educators to determine which types of testing are critical to their instructional program and which are redundant or unnecessary.

"I hope the legislative testing commission will have these important conversations and offer students, educators, and schools real solutions to get Maryland's focus back on teaching and learning."

In May, with news that Maryland will clip 90 minutes from PARCC testing—and eliminate the March testing window in favor of just one sitting in May after students receive 75% of their instruction—it's clear that educators' concerns about over-testing are finally starting to gain real traction and momentum.

"We're very pleased that the long-standing concerns of educators and parents about the amount of instructional time lost due to standardized testing are beginning to be addressed here in Maryland by the testing commission and by the PARCC consortium," MSEA President Betty Weller said.

"These are significant first steps, but there is still much that needs to be done, including work on timing, resources, and implementation issues, as well as accommodating ELL students and those with IEPs, getting and using the data to inform instruction, and the continuing technology infrastructure challenges that exist throughout the state."



In May, with news that Maryland will clip 90 minutes from PARCC testing—and eliminate one of two testing windows—educators' concerns about over-testing are gaining momentum.

VOTERS, PARENTS, AND MSEA MEMBERS AGREE: IT'S TIME TO STOP OVER-TESTING

Policymakers in Maryland should pay heed to the results of MSEA's latest survey that shows Republican, Democratic, and Independent voters, parents, and educators all on the same page—Maryland needs to take a tougher stand pushing back on the culture of over-testing in public schools.

In fact, over-testing is voters' #1 concern facing public schools. They agree that testing is simply taking too much time away from the classroom and they're ready for change that will help students

develop a love of learning and cultivate the creativity and critical thinking skills they'll need—not just prep them for the next test.

"The united message Marylanders are sending to local school boards, superintendents, and lawmakers in Annapolis is irrefutable—it's time for an intervention," said Betty Weller. "Good education nurtures the curiosity and imagination that every student brings with them on their very first day of school. We're ready to help bring joy and passion back to the classroom."

Consensus! Testing is the #1 concern facing K-12 education in Maryland.

1. Too much focus on standardized testing
2. Lack of parental involvement
3. Cuts to school funding
4. Class size
5. Poverty/hunger affecting student learning

We all agree, then. Too much time is spent on testing.

	Too much time	Not enough time	About the right amount of time
DEMOCRATS	63	11	19
INDEPENDENTS	73	7	14
REPUBLICANS	62	7	14
PARENTS	67	9	20
MSEA MEMBERS	95	1	4

It's simple. Is there too much testing? Yes. Is all of it helpful? No.

	Too much emphasis on standardized testing takes away precious teaching time.	Testing is an important tool to measure how well schools are doing.
ALL VOTERS	69% AGREE	27% AGREE

Is it time to focus on a love of learning rather than an obsession with testing? Yes!

Should we limit the time students prepare for standardized tests?

	Yes	No
ALL VOTERS	68	24

Should we lower the number of locally required standardized tests?

	Yes	No
ALL VOTERS	61	29

Should we limit the time schools take to administer standardized tests?

	Yes	No
ALL VOTERS	70	25

Survey of 600 registered voters and 300 MSEA members, conducted May 12-17, 2015

“We want our veteran teachers to stay in the fold so we can harness some of their experience and energy. Our new teachers need them and the community needs them.”

ALLEGANY LOCAL BUILDS MOMENTUM TARGETING TO ORGANIZE

In every organization, it's the diversity of opinion, culture, and interests that give it strength and energy. It's no different for the Allegany County Teachers Association (ACTA) where, with a \$3,000 MSEA Innovative Engagement and Organizing (IEO) Grant, leaders are organizing the county's veteran and retired educators. It's not the first time ACTA has reached out to a specific demographic.

The local takes a targeted approach to organizing and with good results, says John Reuschlein, the local president. “We have a strong SPARKS* program that introduces newly hired teachers to the association and what we do to promote the teaching profession and their success.”

They went a step further to connect with millennials by easing some concerns about managing the work/life balance when starting a family. “We realized these early-career teachers had a wide range of questions—from insurance and leave to family

sick days—that we could answer for them. We are thrilled to support young professionals.” ACTA has also worked with the 25-40 demographic to build a stronger online presence.

Now ACTA is building on the experience of veteran and retired members, who may have time to give back to the union that provided years of advocacy, support, and service. “We need to build our presence politically and in the community,” Reuschlein said. “The IEO grant is helping us reach out to newly retired and veteran teachers making their first steps toward retirement.

“We want them to stay in the fold and harness some of their experience and energy. Our new teachers need them and the community needs them.”

The plan ACTA implemented is twofold: 1) organize and mobilize the two groups through a number of events and hold informal focus groups to discover what they need and want to know about retiring, and 2) using feedback from the events, create

a retirement FAQs package that positions ACTA as the go-to association for educator retirement.

“We've finalized our new ‘Should I Retire?’ package and we'll be distributing it this fall at our first annual meeting especially for veteran teachers,” Reuschlein said. “We'll also be meeting with a group of retired members to create a plan on how we can partner together to protect our mutual interests.” Reuschlein is counting on success for ACTA's targeted member engagement approach.

“We've created a culture here positioning ACTA as the driving force whenever teachers of any demographic are talking about their profession and their careers. We can turn those discussions into action on education issues better when the connection is strong.”

**For more on the SPARKS program for educators in the first five years of their careers, contact your local association.*

CALENDAR

NEA Annual Convention
June 26–July 6 More than 300 MSEA members will join nearly 9,000 colleagues from across the country when the world's largest deliberative body meets in Orlando. They'll adopt the strategic plan and budget, resolutions, the legislative program, and other policies governing NEA. Track the 2015 Representative Assembly at nea.org.



Dorothy Lloyd Women's Rights Award Do you know a strong leader on women's and girls' issues? Nominate them for MSEA's Dorothy Lloyd Women's Rights Award. Dot Lloyd paved the way for women at MSEA and her legacy continues with this annual award. Nominations are due September 4. Visit marylandeducators.org/DotLloydAward



MSEA AND UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EQUITY SURVEY

How do YOU use technology? Survey results will educate lawmakers on classroom tech

Technology infrastructure and access have played a huge role in recent months as PARCC testing challenged the capacity of school systems across the state. But it's not only the capacity of school systems to administer a huge test like PARCC that's vexing educators, it's also understanding if and how the confident and practical use of new tech tools is helping teachers make academic connections with their students.

To dig deeper into educators' relationship with using technology as a professional tool, MSEA partnered this spring with the Baltimore Teachers Union and the University of Maryland's Maryland Equity Project (MEP), which conducts research and policy analysis on education and the related social and economic challenges that impact Maryland schools. "We see often that research is not used in decision-

making," said MEP Director Dr. Gail Sunderman. "Our goal is to provide policymakers with the data and research they need to make informed decisions.

"Much of the recent focus about technology in Maryland public schools has been on supporting infrastructure," Sunderman added. "We've found that there simply isn't much information on how educators actually use technology."

The Teachers' Voice: Using Technology survey is anonymous and politically neutral—it's information from educators on the front line that will be analyzed, shared with the press and public in the fall, and used to help guide MSEA and other pro-public education advocates.

"MSEA's commitment to equity must obviously extend to the issues of access to technology and maximizing the promise of it as a powerful teaching tool," said President Betty Weller. "As we address the serious concerns around technology resources,

PARCC testing, and achievement gaps, we believe the results of this survey will be invaluable. You can be sure that we'll be educating legislators with survey results well in advance of the General Assembly."

"We're asking educators to tell us who is driving technology usage in their classrooms—is it students, or is it educators?" said Sunderman. "Do they have the training and professional development they need to be effective tech users? Is it improving their practice?"

"From the use of email and research, to laptops and whiteboards, to student data dashboards, simulations, and visualizations, we're gathering the information to support the next steps for technology equity for educators and students in the state."

To take the survey, visit bit.ly/MDTechSurvey by June 30. Look for MSEA's coverage of the survey results later this year.

DATA INFORMS DECISIONS

Do you have access? Training? Support?

The UMD Equity Project *Teacher's Voice Survey* looks at the promises, challenges, and reality of technology in the classroom.

How do you use:

- ◆ E-books
- ◆ Image Editing
- ◆ Video Conferencing
- ◆ Presentation Software
- ◆ Content Specific Apps
- ◆ Creating or Accessing
- ◆ Podcasts
- ◆ Spreadsheets
- ◆ Simulations
- ◆ Student Data
- ◆ Dashboards
- ◆ Tablets
- ◆ Video Streaming
- ◆ Web Portals

Take the survey at bit.ly/MDTechSurvey

More content, videos, and resources at marylandeducators.org/DigitalAL

Summer Leadership Retreat

July 19–22 MSEA's annual event offers training to help members make a difference. If you've signed up, you're already on track to boost the advocacy skills you need to build a strong local association and improved professional practice. See the line-up at marylandeducators.org/SLR2015

Meet Up and Eat Up

Kids who usually get meals at school don't need to go hungry this summer. Maryland Summer Meals is a federal child nutrition program funded by the USDA and designed to provide healthy meals to children and teens ages 18 and under during the months of June, July, and August when school is out. Meals are served in communities

based on the free and reduced-price meal rates of local students. Learn more and find sites for your students at mdsummermeals.org, or call the Hunger Hotline, 866/348-6479, or text SummerMD to 877-877.

MEET UP AND EAT UP!
For youth 18 years old and under

FRIENDS, FREE MEALS AND FUN!





If you've participated in MSEA's recent campaigns for fair evaluations, electing pro-public education candidates, or adequate and equitable school funding, you've experienced what the modern day MSEA does best—organize educators and advocate for public schools. The association had been active in education policy-making since its start in 1865, but it wasn't until 1944 that talk of organizing the then-MSTA membership to create a stronger, more effective union kicked

into higher gear.

MSTA was already the largest group of public employees in the state and as numbers grew so did opposition groups, who responded with pressure. MSTA's response? "There are times when it's necessary to show 'the iron hand in the velvet glove,'" leaders said, "because there are people who only respond to strong-arm methods."

MSTA's official publication of the time argued that with growing pushback, the association needed to position itself as

HISTORY SETS THE STAGE FOR MODERN ERA VICTORIES

a player in Annapolis—ensuring that a strong, unified voice was being heard where it would make a difference.

Soon after the emergence of MSTA as a political force, teachers were coming together to discuss equity and education policy, making their mark socially and politically. One of the hallmarks of those early years of activism was the 1951 merger of the African American Maryland Educational Association and MSTA.

MSTA continued to organize members around policies that helped public schools, teachers, and students and in 1968, one year after successfully lobbying for the duty-free lunch, MSTA spearheaded the teacher collective bargaining legislation that firmly established the right of teachers to negotiate salaries and benefits.

Despite efforts by the State Board of Education to weaken the bill, MSTA members' advocacy convinced lawmakers to pass the legislation intact and Republican Governor Spiro Agnew signed it into law. This victory is considered the association's greatest accomplishment of the modern era and set the stage for real improvements in the professional lives of Maryland's educators.

In 2002, MSTA saw big wins for teachers and education support professionals. ESP from around the state mobilized in support of their colleagues on the Eastern Shore who had long worked without the right to organize—a right their peers

in other parts of the state had benefitted from for 25 years.

The same legislation included historic collective bargaining legislation for teachers that for the first time opened doors for educators and school boards to discuss a broader scope of negotiable topics at the bargaining table—including teacher-student ratios, curriculum, and student discipline. The law also gave ESP the right to bargain the process of discipline and dismissal so that their jobs would be protected from the whims of hearsay or disgruntled supervisors.

And, of course, 2002 was the year MSTA led the historic passage of the Bridge to Excellence Act, also known as Thornton, which ensured levels of funding for students and schools not seen before. The *New York Times* called it "a visionary school plan" that wouldn't have had a chance if not for public support, which MSTA organized from the school and community level all the way to Annapolis.

Our member-led advocacy began 150 years ago with a small group of ambitious teachers and continues today with more than 71,000 members from across the state. We've developed a rich history and tradition of organizing, mobilizing, and activism that has helped educators and students increase their success in the classroom. It's also set the stage for future years of strong, successful advocacy—whether on funding, working conditions, or any other issue critical to the future of Maryland's schools.

Restorative Practices

If you haven't heard the term "restorative practices," you soon will. Restorative practices in education are based on an approach to building healthy school relationships and a strong sense of community—a community that allows students and educators to make positive connections in a safe and supportive environment.

Restorative practices aren't intended to replace current initiatives and evidence-based programs like Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) or social and emotional learning models that assist in building a foundation and culture of caring. Programs and initiatives like PBIS complement restorative practices.

In one Baltimore City school where restorative practices have been in place since September, one simple practice—talking circles—was used after the unrest following Freddie Gray's funeral to help ease tensions for both school staff and students. Before the school day started, staff "circled up," then each homeroom did, too. Already comfortable with the process, both adults and children used their safe circle time to find common ground and set the stage for moving forward.

Schools using restorative practices are making news across the country as districts choose relationship-building, problem-solving, positive confrontation, and discussion to address student behavior. Instead of suspension and expulsion, restorative practices encourage students to repair harm, restore



relationships, and strengthen their community.

The Pennsylvania-based International Institute for Restorative Practices, which supports The Restorative Works Learning Network programs used in Baltimore City Schools, says that the fundamental premise of restorative practices is that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority

do things with them, rather than to them or for them.

What are restorative practices?

- Restorative justice focuses on righting a wrong committed and repairing harm done. The goal is to place value on relationships and focus on repairing relationships that have been injured.

- Community conferencing involves the participation of each person affected by the behavior and allows all stakeholders to contribute to the conflict resolution process.

- Community service allows for individuals to restore a harm they may have committed to the school community.

- Peer juries allow students who have broken a school rule and trained student jurors to collectively discuss why the rule was

broken, who was affected, and how the referred student can repair the harm caused.

- A circle is a versatile restorative practice that can be used proactively, to develop relationships, and build community; or reactively, to respond to wrongdoings, conflicts, and problems.
- Conflict resolution programs teach young people how to manage potential conflict, defuse situations, assuage hurt feelings, and reduce any inclination to retaliate after a conflict.

- Peer mediation has been shown to reduce discipline referrals, violence rates, and suspension rates.

- Informal restorative practices include the use of affective statements, which communicate people's feelings, and affective questions, which cause people to reflect on how their behavior affects others.

- Social-emotional learning teaches skills that allow children and adults to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make ethical and safe choices.

Learn more by reading NEA's guide at otcampaign.org/restorative-practices, and visiting restorativeworks.net for news, free webinars, and resources.

Rocco Aiello

Coordinator for Adapted Physical Education and Corollary Sports
St. Mary's County Public Schools

1 LITE GAIT TRAINER

We use this trainer with non-ambulatory students to assist with balance, walking, and trunk support which allows more freedom for arm and leg movements. This way, they can practice catching, throwing, or swinging a bat or tennis racquet, and other locomotor skills.

2 THREE-WHEEL TRICYCLE

We customize the standard three-wheelers for many of our students. Hand-pedaled recumbent tricycles are available for those without the use of their legs. Individuals with cerebral palsy and similar disorders can select tricycles specially designed to increase strength and coordination.

3 GOALBALL

Created to help blinded World War II veterans, Goalball is now integrated into physical education classes for visually impaired students. It's highly competitive and played inside with teams of three. Goalball can be a truly inclusive game, too. Sighted players wear eye shades and rely, like our visually impaired players, entirely on other senses.

4 INVACARE TOP END HAND CYCLE

This hand cycle is a great way for all children with disabilities to exercise, or just have fun. It provides a great sense of freedom for our students, offering independence, challenge, and fun with peers.

5 BEEP BASEBALL

We use the regulation softball with a beeping electronic insert and 5' electronic beep bases that signal players with auditory cues—when to swing at the ball, where the ball is on the field, and base location.



INSIDE MSEA

WITH DAVID HELFMAN



Calling all Republicans!

Are you surprised that the bulk of MSEA's political endorsements for statewide and General Assembly elections go to Democrats? Probably not.

Historically, they've been strong advocates for full school funding, expansion of Pre-K programs, and protection of collective bargaining rights.

They've also insisted that charter school educators be certified, and have defended against programs that would divert public school funds to private and parochial school vouchers.

Significantly, many Republicans haven't sought our endorsement or completed the candidate questionnaires we require.

What may surprise you is that compared to Marylanders overall, MSEA membership is more Republican. Nearly 27% of registered MSEA voters are Republicans (slightly higher than the state's 26%).

Elections matter, whether in red, blue, or purple parts of the state. In moderate Frederick County, our member-led political activism paid off in November when two educators were elected to the county council. Their votes made it possible for schools to be funded above the legal minimum maintenance of effort level for the first time in years.

In conservative Carroll County, our members elected Republican county commissioner candidates—including a veteran teacher—who are working to halt a dangerous trend of disinvestment in local schools.

But positive momentum in both counties has been largely wiped out by Governor Hogan's refusal to release \$68 million in education funding. Frederick lost \$3.3 million and Carroll lost \$1.3 million. Clearly elections matter at the state level, too.

Cuts of this magnitude are felt across party lines. When Gov. Hogan pushes to eliminate important educational standards for charter schools or divert funds from public to private school programs, it is felt by all of our members—and their students.

Are you a Republican who supported Larry Hogan but disagrees with his recent decisions on public education? Do you want to see pro-public education Republicans elected in your county? MSEA needs your voice. Email mseagr@mseane.org and tell us your ideas for how we can make sure that all elected officials—regardless of party—stand strong for public schools.

A WORD FROM MSEA'S LEGAL TEAM

In today's schools, there are many demands on a teacher's time—not all of them related to instruction. Do piles of paperwork and meetings unrelated to your students or your content area sound familiar? Many ESP and other school staff are constantly pulled from their classrooms or offices to serve as substitutes or to attend meetings.

Your negotiated agreement is your lifeline. Your contracts are negotiated to protect you and your ability to effectively help your students, and that's why every teacher and ESP agreement in Maryland defines the workday.

My workload is overwhelming. What do I do?

First, consult your association rep or UniServ Director and your local association's negotiated agreement with the board of education, which defines and limits your work year and workday.

Every contract provides for individual planning time. You can protect your time by asserting your rights, including a grievance when necessary. Planning time is reserved explicitly for professional use during your workday and no administrators or colleagues should be allowed to interrupt.

If a teacher is required to work outside of the negotiated work hours, it should be limited to preparing for instruction, not filling out paperwork. ESPs should never be asked to work outside of the negotiated work hours unless compensation is being provided.

In Anne Arundel County, teachers have successfully curtailed workload and limited the amount of work performed beyond the workday by using the grievance process. With the help of their UniServ Directors, members were able to prove that: 1) the school system didn't provide the time negotiated for completion of student grades; 2) negotiated planning time was used for non-planning requests and instructional preparation, normally done during planning time, had to be performed outside of the workday; and 3) the administration required the completion of paperwork unrelated to instruction, which could only be done beyond the negotiated workday. In each instance, educators cited their negotiated agreement and received compensation for work performed outside of the agreed upon workday.

Make sure you know your contract and what protections and powers you have. And know that your contract is there to ensure you're able to do the work you care about most: helping your students succeed.

What is

In the end, Governor Hogan packed up \$68 million in school funds and walked away.



he thinking?



With just one backward glance, the governor would have seen what he left behind. School construction projects totaling \$2.9 million in Baltimore County, \$1.2 million lost in Carroll County, where commissioners cut 50 teacher positions and proposed a \$5 increase to the \$95/student sports fee. High school freshman with no sports programs and students with fewer summer school classes in Frederick County. The prospect of 380 layoffs and cuts in programs to narrow achievement gaps in Montgomery County.

He would have seen the obvious opportunity to help Baltimore City and the students who so badly need his support. His investment could have helped address many of the underlying causes of the unrest in April and May. The city has lost \$11 million and cut nearly 200 positions—many of them in schools. What is he thinking?

It wasn't a great start, most educators agree. Yet MSEA, with an aggressive pro-public education agenda focused on teaching and learning success made a mark by standing up for school funding, making progress on reducing over-testing, and scoring victories on other fronts.

We entered the General Assembly session with four goals: protecting education funding, ensuring the promise that students have time to learn and not just test, rejecting vouchers and taxpayer dollars for private schools, and defending Maryland's strong charter school law.

"We've set the stage for important discussions. We can't stand by any longer while our profession and our students are stunted by this culture of over-testing," said MSEA President

Betty Weller. "Nor can we stand by quietly while funding decisions that deeply affect our students are made without a firm understanding of legislative processes and how they will impact our classrooms.

"We'll continue to collaborate with our partners and work towards a true consensus about the future of education in Maryland—one that truly respects our students and their needs."

Here's a recap of the 2015 General Assembly session

Yes, Gov. Hogan walked away with \$68 million, but legislators showed their support by making sure it won't happen again—and by restoring \$64 million of the governor's \$144 million in cuts. Here are the highlights:

- The passage of the Geographic Cost of Index (GCEI) Requirement mandates full funding of the index, which helps the 80% of Maryland students who live in areas where the cost of education is higher. MSEA has long been an advocate for this legislation that equitably funds students across the state.
- Thanks to the General Assembly's reversal of Gov. Hogan's cuts, we won full per-pupil funding in the Thornton formula, including the elimination of caps proposed by Gov. Hogan in fiscal years 2017-2020, which would have prevented funding from keeping up with inflation.
- A new provision could add up to \$50 million to the pension system in any given fiscal year through fiscal year 2020. The General Assembly also ended the use of the "corridor" funding method—which had allowed the state to consistently underfund its pension contribution—and shifted to fully funding its contribution at the actuarial-recommended contribution rate.

- \$300 million for public school construction in the Capital Budget.

MSEA's time to teach, time to learn campaign worked. Well-organized members and MSEA lobbyists talked to every legislator in Annapolis about the serious and far-reaching issues related to over-testing, PARCC testing, and the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). We passed legislation that we hope will bring renewed creativity, enthusiasm, and joy to the classroom for both students and educators.

Hope lies in the Commission to Review Maryland's Use of Assessments and Testing in Public Schools, which empanels a 19-member commission to study and advise the state and local school districts on efforts to reduce the culture of over-testing.

MSEA Vice President Cheryl Bost will represent MSEA, working with fellow educators, legislators, and parents. The commission must make recommendations on: (1) how local school systems and the state can improve the process in which local, state, and federally mandated assessments are administered and used to inform instruction; (2) the most efficient and effective methods to ensure that adequate time is allotted to both administering assessments and instruction if the commission finds that administering assessments results in reduced instruction time; and (3) any other relevant issues identified by the commission.

In a survey last year, members told the truth about the difficult implementation of the KRA. Members, MSEA leaders, and a bi-partisan group of pro-public education legislators worked hard to stop the test with a bill that called for a moratorium on all testing in grades PreK-2.

continued on page 16

A BRIEF HISTORY OF The Governor v Public Education



Larry Hogan sworn in in Annapolis and ... BOOM! His budget shortchanges students by \$144 million. \$68 million is lost in GCEI* funds that support school systems where education costs more.

The General Assembly passes a bipartisan budget that restores \$132 million in school funding, including all \$68 million in GCEI cuts. The governor showed support. But ...

Gov. Hogan holds closed-door meetings with legislators and demands that his full legislative agenda pass or he will refuse to release the \$68 million.

Gov. Hogan announces he will not release the \$68 million in GCEI funding, claiming he will redirect it to the pension system.

Press conferences across the state featuring MSEA, education leaders, parents, legislators, and advocates urge Gov. Hogan to release the \$68 million directly.

The General Assembly adjourns, passing much but not all of Gov. Hogan's legislative agenda. A bill to redirect public funds to private schools are among the failed proposals.

STOP!
He can't do that! The governor does not have the power to implement his plan. The budget passed by the General Assembly specifies that the \$68 million can be spent only on education.

Hogan's budget secretary admits that the governor over-reached and that state law forbids the move of the \$68 million to pensions.

So what's happened to that \$68 million? Schools don't have it. It's definitely not in the pension fund. Gov. Hogan has carted it off, where it will sit—unusable for any purpose but education—until a year from now, when it is freed up and he can spend it on anything he pleases.

THIS WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

Concerned legislators passed a bill just minutes before the gavel came down on the last day of the 2015 General Assembly eliminating the prospect of any future governor's refusal to fund the visionary intention of the Thornton commission—to provide equitable funding for students in areas where it simply costs more to get an education.

**Fully funding
GCEI is
now the law.**

*Geographic Cost of Education Index

TRACK YOUR LEGISLATORS' VOTES

Did your legislators vote for the Commission to Review Maryland's Use of Assessments and Testing in Public Schools? Did they support the mandate to provide the additional geographic cost of education index (GCEI) funds for areas where education costs more?

Visit marylandeducators.org/2015Scorecard for a regional guide to your legislators' education votes. What score did they get?

LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES - BILLS MSEA HELPED PASS

Human Trafficking—Safe Harbor Workgroup

House Bill 456/Senate Bill 521 • In response to action taken by delegates at the 2014 MSEA Representative Assembly, MSEA successfully lobbied for legislation to create a workgroup to study a Safe Harbor Policy for Youth Victims of Human Trafficking. This workgroup will include an educator nominated by MSEA. Its charge is to study the legal protections and the provision of services for youth victims of human trafficking. See sidebar, next page, for more.

Hunger-Free School Act

House Bill 965/Senate Bill 334 • The Hunger-Free Schools Act of 2015 alters the enrollment count used to calculate compensatory aid by allowing high-poverty schools to offer school meals to all students at no charge. This bill will increase access to healthy school meals, improve learning conditions for students, and reduce food insecurity.

Additional School Construction Funds for Districts with Increased Enrollment

House Bill 923/Senate Bill 490 • Demands on school districts with increased enrollment are never-ending on the operating and capital budgets. MSEA supported legislation to increase the capital budget by \$20 million to be shared by districts that have enrollment increases of 150% of the state average or a growing number of

portable classrooms. The construction grants are supplemental and not intended to take the place of funding otherwise appropriated in the capital budget.

LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES—BILLS MSEA HELPED DEFEAT

Mandating a Post Labor Day Start

House Bill 389/Senate Bill 455 • Efforts to mandate the school start date to after Labor Day earned plenty of press attention, but little legislative consideration. MSEA and other education partners helped defeat and guarantee that certain issues, like school start dates and start times, not be mandated by the General Assembly. Neither bill made it out of their respective House or Senate committee.

Shifting the “Burden of Proof”

House Bill 344/Senate Bill 390 • This legislation would have shifted the “burden of proof” in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) due process case to the school board, unless a parent is seeking a unilateral placement in a nonpublic school. Neither bill moved out of committee this year. This issue is always difficult, because it is important to balance the impact on resources and staffing needs that such a shift would have on schools.

Right to Work

House Bill 249 • A staple of the anti-union legislative agenda, the “right to work” should be known as the “right to earn less.” This union-busting bill is introduced almost every year and was defeated in committee again this year.

Wicomico County Board of Education

House Bill 1040/Senate Bill 730 • A late attempt by the Wicomico County Council to change the make-up of the board of education to be a hybrid board failed to pass either the House or Senate. MSEA worked with the Wicomico County Education Association to defeat it and force local elected officials to work together with community members on a process that best meets the needs of the county and students.

MSEA is dedicated to protecting educator pensions.



We worked with legislators to find a budget solution that fully funded education and still made the state's full pension payment of \$1.52 billion for next fiscal year. Your benefits are protected and will not change.



Next fiscal year, a new, more reliable funding structure will take effect that has long been advocated for by MSEA.



We will become the only state in the country with a AAA bond rating that will make the full payment recommended by pension experts—for the first time since 2002—while also making a \$75 million supplemental payment.



MSEA HCR Committee Initiative Leads to New Human Trafficking Legislation

When MSEA's Human and Civil Rights Committee (HCR) hosted a forum on human trafficking in 2014, they discovered a weakness in Maryland's existing human trafficking law—victims of trafficking are often left to heal on their own because of limited funding to the agencies that provide the rehabilitative and therapeutic services they badly need.

“Human trafficking is a problem that’s reaching our schools,” said Mona Long, a Calvert County pupil personnel worker whose interest in the issue was the catalyst for MSEA’s initiative. “As educators we know that certain teens are targeted by traffickers. We are uniquely positioned to intervene. Pursuing helpful legislation is one way we can.”

The HCR committee won approval from delegates at the 2014 Representative Assembly to support legislation to improve existing law and increase funding for services for survivors. MSEA worked with legislators in the General Assembly to create a policy workgroup to combat human trafficking and specifically require that assets seized from traffickers be directed to victims’ services.

end, the work of the General Assembly and MSEA made a bad bill much better, with multiple provisions that further strengthen our already strong law.

At a time when MSEA and other education advocates need strong partners to protect and improve our public schools, we found them in this year’s General Assembly leaders. Unfortunately, we are still waiting on Gov. Hogan. Efforts to meet directly have been rebuffed and his “my way or the highway” approach during his first legislative session is a dangerous indication that this might not be the last time he turns his back and walks away from students, educators, and our public schools.

MSEA President Betty Weller with (left to right) House Speaker Michael Busch (D-Anne Arundel), Sen. Richard Madaleno (D-Montgomery), and Maryland PTA President Ray Leone at an Annapolis press conference kicking off the final leg of MSEA’s Don’t Shortchange Maryland campaign for education funding.

continued from page 13

The bill didn’t make it, but we did force the Maryland State Department of Education to include kindergarten teachers in their KRA review and recommendation process moving forward. And, our friends in the General Assembly added a charge to the new testing commission to determine what an appropriate assessment for kindergarten students looks like, if there is one at all.

Legislators rejected vouchers and the use of state dollars for private schools. MSEA, along with other public education advocates, blocked Gov. Hogan’s proposed program that would have created a tax credit or a direct grant to support vouchers and other direct assistance to students attending private or religious schools—schools with limited accountability and student or educator protections. The governor’s wayward program, inserted stealthily into the supplemental state budget at the 11th hour, fooled no one. MSEA lobbied legislators already on alert and for the 10th year in a row, rejected

the BOAST/Maryland Education Credit program.

We defended Maryland’s charter school law. MSEA supports Maryland’s public charter schools and charter school educators. The law we fought hard to pass in 2003 strikes the right balance between local control, accountability, and innovative instruction and deserves to be protected. Unfortunately, Gov. Hogan made weakening the charter law his top public education issue. His proposal included exempting charter school employees from union membership, allowing for the hiring of uncertified teachers, and funding charters at a higher level than traditional public schools.

The Senate not only renamed the governor’s bill, but largely rewrote it. Noting the dangers of a dual public education system, Sen. Joan Carter Conway (D-Baltimore City) told the *Baltimore Sun* that legislators have been trying to abolish the sort of segregation in schools the governor’s proposal could create since *Brown v Board of Education*. In the

MSEA 2015 ELECTION RESULTS

THREE CANDIDATES JOIN MSEA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MSEA members this spring elected three additional members to the governing board of directors.

Russell Leone, Anne Arundel County, won in a run-off election against Paul Lemle, Howard County, for NEA director. On August 1, Leone will join NEA directors Gary Brennan, Frederick County, Mavis Ellis, Montgomery County, and Doug Lea, Howard County. MSEA's NEA directors serve on both the NEA and MSEA boards.

MSEA requires that minority representation on MSEA's board is in proportion to our membership. In a special election, members elected Anne Arundel educator Jason Fahie for a term on the board of directors beginning August 1. At MSEA's Representative Assembly in October, delegates will hold a special election for an additional minority representation seat. Visit marylandeducators.org/Convention2015SpecialElection beginning in September for more information.

David Nicholson, Montgomery County, was elected to fill a vacant seat on the board of directors. Nicholson's term, May 26–July 31, 2017, completes that of former director Blair Todd, Prince George's County, who resigned in December.

RUSSELL LEONE
Anne Arundel County
NEA Board of Directors



Thank you for the support you have given me during this past year. Now it's my turn to show that I am ready to work for you.

I believe in the NEA's initiative to support less federally mandated high-stakes testing and more time to teach. I understand that the amount of time spent testing our students affects us all. Support professionals are often taken from their roles in order to assist, leaving huge gaps in the services our students receive. We also need to remember that assessments should inform our instruction and not be the final measure of an educator's success. Time to learn equals more time for joy in the classroom.

I will work for you to ensure the love of learning continues.

JASON FAHIE
Anne Arundel County
MSEA Board of Directors



I am so humbled to have been elected to the MSEA Board of Directors during this special election.

I truly believe that minority membership and leadership will continue to grow as minority members are highlighted and accept opportunities to further the mission of MSEA and educators across the state.

Looking ahead I plan to continue to inform and engage members to take a more active role in our association. We have seen firsthand the priorities of Governor Hogan; he is setting a precedent now that we must not forget during the next election. Now more than ever we need to apply pressure to local and state officials to fund our schools more than maintenance of effort; our students deserve much more than the minimum.

DAVID NICHOLSON
Montgomery County
MSEA Board of Directors



Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to represent you at a very critical time for all Maryland educators. The two most recent appointees to the Maryland State Board of Education reinforce the fact that MSEA is more important than ever.

Thomas Jefferson said, "Educate and inform the whole mass of the people They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty." We must never forget that our public education system is the bedrock of democracy.

As professionals, ESPs and teachers, we know what it takes to make things better for our students, and yet we are too often shut out of the conversation. We must not let what we do for children be compromised by those with a contrary agenda.

Anne Stoner

Instructional Assistant

Hampstead Elementary School
Carroll County

Higher dropout rates, lower GPAs, less chance of going to college, and higher suicide rates are just some of the challenges for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students.

We try to protect our LGBTQ students with anti-bullying and harassment policies, but they often avoid reporting incidents. Why? They don't want to tattle, they assume no one cares, or they may not be out at home.

When my child came out, I studied LGBTQ student issues. I learned quickly that few adults, no matter their personal views, know how to react when they hear someone using “gay” as an insult. I've seen this happen as early as 3rd grade, to devastating effect.

I don't blame my colleagues. I blame the system for failing to provide the training and language that responds to our increasingly diverse and accepting society. As public educators in Maryland, we have an obligation to create schools that accept and support all students.

As a member of the advocacy group PFLAG (originally, Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), I've shared my concerns about our students. We've advertised our community events in schools, we speak at board of education meetings, and we use social media to keep our mission alive in the community.

We have made important progress, but we have far to go. Educators need LGBTQ-centered training and they need to feel empowered and confident that their jobs aren't in jeopardy when they speak up as LGBTQ or as caring adults.

The longer we wait to protect our students through education and awareness, the longer their academic and personal success is jeopardized.



“When my child came out, I studied LGBTQ student issues. I learned quickly that few adults, no matter their personal views, know how to react when they hear someone using ‘gay’ as an insult.”

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