



January 31, 2012

| MSDE Home | Newsroom | MDReportcard.org | School Improvement |



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

Maryland has cause to celebrate once again. As noted in the article to the right, Maryland was named the nation's top state system by *Education Week* for the fourth consecutive year.

This is an accomplishment in which we all share equally. Our teachers and administrators work each and every day to provide outstanding instruction to students. Our parents provide critical support to their children and our schools. Governor O'Malley and the rest of our elected leaders continue to put Maryland public schools at the forefront of the State's priorities, and Maryland citizens have long placed public education at the top of their list. And, finally, our students continue to improve.

We have a long way to go in public education. The achievement gap between student subgroups has shrunk, but it has not gone away. We know that some of our schools are struggling more than others.

This is why we applied for the federal Race to the Top program, and why we continue on our third wave of school reform. With your support, we know we are on the right track.

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Speaking of the Race to the Top program, the federal government gave Maryland's progress a terrific report card. The U.S. Department of Education's "Year One Report on Race to the Top," found that our State had raised academic standards, began building a better data system, and has taken important steps to strengthen teacher quality. Federal officials also give Maryland high marks for the attention paid to low performing schools and support

MARYLAND SCHOOLS TOPS IN NATION FOR FOURTH STRAIGHT YEAR

The Maryland public school system has now made this a habit: ranking first in nation for the fourth consecutive year, according to an independent national report being released this month.



Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley, left, discussed the Quality Counts results with *Education Week* editor Mark Bomster at an event this month in Washington, DC.

Education Week, the nation's leading education newspaper, looked at data in six critical categories over the past four years, and once again found that Maryland's state education system ranked at the head of the

class.

Maryland's grade of B+ placed at the top of the list in *Education Week's* annual "Quality Counts" tally. Massachusetts, New York, and Virginia followed Maryland, with B grades. As has been the case since the report's inception, most states received grades in the C ranges or below.

"I'd like to thank the students, parents, teachers, administrators, and all of our advocates for continuing to achieve at unprecedented levels," said Governor Martin O'Malley.

Interim State Superintendent of Schools Bernard Sadusky said that Maryland has never wavered from the goal of having the highest quality schools in every neighborhood.

given to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education.

The U.S. Department of Education has been watching closely at all 12 states involved in Race to the Top and has been critical of some that have had difficulty following through on its commitments. But Education Secretary Arne Duncan has been very supportive of our work thus far.

The four-year, \$250 million grant that is helping fuel our reform efforts is the largest competitive grant ever received by MSDE, but it comes with strings attached. First and foremost, we must keep our eye on improving student achievement throughout our system. I have been gratified with the support we've received from local school systems and the unions that represent our teachers. Everyone has come together in a spirit of cooperation to improve instruction.

You can find the complete report here. <http://www.rtt-apr.us/state/maryland>

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Calendar

February 13, 2012 – Special State Board Meeting, Baltimore (to discuss the State's ESEA Waiver Application)

February 28, 2012 – State Board Meeting, Baltimore



VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

Governor's Reaction

January 12, 2012

Governor Martin O'Malley reacts to the news that Maryland schools rank 1st in the nation for the 4th year in a row, in the 'Quality Counts' survey compiled by the industry journal, Education Week.



VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

"Schools are only as good as the school in your neighborhood, where your child or grandchild goes to class, or where you work as a teacher," Dr. Sadusky said. "*Education Week's* detailed analysis offers us a positive review of our efforts, and we are immensely proud of the ranking. We use it as fuel to redouble our efforts to strengthen every classroom."

Maryland has not been treading water since gaining the top slot in the nation in 2009. In 2010, Maryland became one of a few reform-oriented states to be awarded a portion of the federal government's \$4.3 billion Race to the Top funding, which has helped the State strengthen standards for students and educators, build a new data warehouse, and improve educator evaluation. Just last month, Maryland received an additional four-year \$50 million federal grant to help continue its reform efforts in critical early childhood education programs.

Maryland's 2012 ranking in Quality Counts is based on State education policies and student performance that reflect nearly two decades of work under recently retired State Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick and Dr. Sadusky to solidify the preK-12 curriculum; state accountability and standards; educator effectiveness; and work on school readiness, high school reform, and preparation for college and the workplace.

Quality Counts uses more than 100 indicators to develop its report, making it what many believe is the most broad-based look at educational quality that is currently available. Individual grades reported by *Education Week* show Maryland's consistent strength throughout the report card, as Maryland received a B+ in "Chance for Success; a B in "K-12 Achievement," an A in "Transitions and Alignment," a B+ in "School Finance," a B+ in "Standards, Assessment, and Accountability," and a B in "The Teaching Profession."

This month's announcement by *Education Week* continues Maryland's long history of success in the annual review. Maryland has consistently worked to strengthen policies and improve student achievement. The State placed third in 2008, the first year the publication issued a comprehensive ranking, before gaining the top spot for the first time in the 2009 "Quality Counts" report.

Maryland's lead on the rest of the nation grew with

School Infrastructure Money

January 10, 2012

Governor Martin O'Malley, State School Superintendent Bernie Sadusky, and Maryland lawmakers announce a \$372-million dollar proposal to bolster school infrastructure around the state. The announcement comes at Germantown Elementary in Annapolis.

In the News

Maryland Schools Number One Again
Washington Post

Six Schools Receive Maryland Blue Ribbon Recognition
Baltimore Sun

Some States Face Delays with Race to the Top
Wall Street Journal

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the 2010 report, and its success has been confirmed over the past two years.

For more information, see the *Education Week* website, www.edweek.org

SIX SCHOOLS RECEIVE STATE BLUE RIBBON

Six Maryland public schools this month were selected as 2012 Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools.

The schools are:

- Crofton Meadows Elementary School, Anne Arundel County
- Woodholme Elementary School, Baltimore County
- Ring Factory Elementary School, Harford County
- Rachel Carson Elementary School, Montgomery County
- Whitehall Elementary School, Prince George's County
- Pocomoke Elementary School, Worcester County

The schools are recognized on the basis of rigorous state and national requirements for high achievement and dramatic improvement. The students in each of the schools excel on state assessments in reading and mathematics.

"The work done in these schools is emblematic of the fine instruction taking place throughout our school system," said Interim State Superintendent of Schools Bernard J. Sadusky. "We congratulate these schools and know they will represent Maryland education well in the national competition."

The schools will be invited by the U.S. Department of Education to apply to be National Blue Ribbon Schools. With underwriting of Maryland sponsors, each school will receive a Maryland Blue Ribbon Flag, a \$2,000 monetary prize, an interactive Smart Board, and a school-wide Pizza Party. A dinner will be held in honor of the winning schools on March 19.

Maryland corporate sponsors include Comcast; Joe Corbi's Pizza; EduTrax; SMART Technologies, Inc.; State Farm Insurance; and Verizon, Maryland.

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