



March 30, 2012

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

Maryland is home to so many great things in education. One of our favorites is the Maryland Summer Centers program, coordinated by MSDE. For 45 years, the program has offered unique instructional experiences for gifted and talented students entering grades 3 through 12.

The registration deadline is looming for the 14 Maryland Summer Centers. Applications must be postmarked by April 15.

The Centers offer one to three-week residential and non-residential programs with a focus on the arts, sciences, technology, computer science, and engineering. The activities are designed to encourage critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving while challenging students academically.

The Maryland Summer Centers program, in partnership with public and nonpublic agencies, provides Maryland's diverse gifted and talented students with advanced, rigorous, experiential learning opportunities that nurture these students' talents and abilities within unique learning environments. Costs range from \$200 to \$1,200 and full and partial scholarships are available for those who need financial assistance. An online brochure and application forms are available from local gifted and talented education coordinators or on the Maryland State Department of Education website.

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Read Across Maryland is concluding today, with events by Governor O'Malley and others that put a spotlight on the importance of reading.

SCHOOL READINESS RISES ONCE AGAIN

Children entering kindergarten in Maryland public schools are coming to class with stronger academic, physical and social skills than ever before, according to a new report by the Maryland State Department of Education.



Children Entering School Ready to Learn—School Readiness Information for School Year 2011-12

"Children Entering School Ready to Learn—School Readiness Information for School Year 2011-12," a report by MSDE's Division of Early Childhood Development, reveals steady progress across all demographic subgroups. Maryland students entering kindergarten fully prepared for learning increased by 2

percentage points from 2011 to 2012, rising to 83 percent. That is an increase of 35 percentage points since the baseline year of 2002.

"This progress by our youngest learners is both gratifying and motivating," said Dr. Bernard J. Sadusky, Interim State Superintendent of Schools. "The effect of a high-quality early learning experience cannot be understated. We need to give our children the best start we possibly can, because it establishes the foundation for the rest of their education."

The annual MSDE study reflects assessment information on kindergartners' readiness levels in social and personal areas, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social

MSDE's Division of Library Development and the School Library Program Office in the Division of Instruction partnered with the Maryland Library Association, the Maryland Association of School Librarians and the Maryland State Teachers Association to celebrate the month long campaign, encouraging children to read 30 minutes for 30 days.

Tray Chaney, star of *The Wire*, is an actor who cares deeply about reading and its importance to young people. He joined MSDE at the kickoff event, and came back today at Spauldings Library in Prince George's County for the concluding celebration. Clara Floyd, President of MSEA and Irene M. Padilla, MSDE Assistant State Superintendent of Libraries, presented two Kindle Fires to students who read the most during the month of March. Donated by the Division of Library Development, the Kindle Fires were purchased through the federal funding from the Institute for Museum and Library Services.

But why stop there? Reading is a great activity year-round! And Library Week starts on April 8.

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Don't forget to connect with MSDE on Facebook. Our department's Facebook page provides regular updates on state initiatives, MSDE videos, and links to education news throughout the State.

Calendar

April 8 - 14, 2012 – Library Week

April 9, 2012 – End of the General Assembly Session, Annapolis

April 16, 2012 – Judith Hoyer Awards, Turf Valley Resort, Howard County

April 23 - 27, 2012 – Week of the Young Child

April 24, 2012 – State Board Meeting, Baltimore

In the News

Funding for Schools, Not Corporations
Baltimore Sun

studies, the arts, physical development, and health. Trained kindergarten teachers review work samples and observations in making their determination of readiness.

Kindergarten readiness has improved significantly since all early childhood programs were brought under the MSDE banner in 2005. Since the Division of Early Childhood Development was established seven years ago, the number of accredited childcare programs has grown significantly and MSDE has established several quality initiatives to improve the early learning opportunities for all children.

Also important has been the reduction in the achievement gap between students of different ethnicities. For example, African American children have made dramatic strides since the initial report, rising 42 percentage points overall and narrowing the gap with White and Asian peers. Improvement by Hispanic children also has been dramatic, increasing 35 percentage points.

The MSDE assessment of incoming kindergarten students, known as the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) Kindergarten Assessment, this year found improvement across demographic categories in the percentage of students ready for kindergarten work. For example:

- School readiness levels for English Language Learners have increased 35 percentage points since 2002, rising to 72 percent deemed as “fully ready.” That number represented a five point increase over last year.
- The improvement in school readiness for low-income children—students receiving free or reduced price meals—has jumped 42 percentage points since 2002, to 76 percent.
- The number of special education students considered fully ready for kindergarten improved 29 percentage points since 2002 to 59 percent.

MSDE has found that improved MMSR results also translate to better results in the Maryland School Assessment by the time students reach third grade. Children who enter kindergarten fully school-ready are far more likely to be proficient in both reading and math by Grade Three.

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The MMSR study results continue to spotlight the critical importance of high-quality early learning opportunities. Children who come into kindergarten from structured early-care settings started school better prepared for learning than those who remained at home or in the homes of relatives, the research found. Children enrolled in public school pre-K programs (83 percent fully ready for kindergarten), child care centers (87 percent), and non-public nursery schools (93 percent) the year prior to kindergarten exhibited stronger school readiness levels than those who were at home or in informal care settings the year prior to kindergarten. There also were significant gains for children who were enrolled in Head Start Centers, whose readiness increased from 29 percent in 2001-2002 to 76 percent in 2010-2011.

This year's results also put Maryland on track to meet the goals of Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge. The State had projected a narrowing of the school readiness gap in its grant application. This year's results indicate that incoming kindergartners from low-income backgrounds and those with disabilities have narrowed the readiness gap with their peers.

MSDE is a national leader in the evaluation of early childhood learning, establishing an annual evaluation of what entering kindergartners know and are able to do. The complete School Readiness report will be available soon on the special MSDE website, www.MdSchoolReadiness.org.

FOUR SCHOOLS NOMINATED FOR NATIONAL GREEN RIBBON

The Maryland State Department of Education has nominated four schools to the U.S. Department of Education to receive the Green Ribbon Schools (GRS) Award for 2012.



Green Ribbon Schools
Program

State education agencies
in 33 states, in
collaboration with the
U.S Department of
Education, are
participating in the
inaugural year of the GRS award program. MSDE

received 15 completed applications from public and private schools and nominated the maximum number allowed based on the State's student population.

The four Maryland schools nominated are: Dunloggin Middle School (Howard County Public Schools), Folger McKinsey Elementary School (Anne Arundel County Public Schools), Francis Scott Key Middle School (Montgomery County Public Schools), and the Lucy School (nonpublic, Frederick County). All applications for the award were evaluated by a committee comprised of staff from State and national government agencies, State and regional environmental organizations, and private businesses

Federal officials will recognize schools that save energy, reduce costs, feature environmentally sustainable learning spaces, protect health, foster wellness, and offer environmental education to boost academic achievement and community engagement.

"Maryland schools take seriously their commitment to environmental education and to practices that will strengthen our world for future generations," said Interim State Superintendent Bernard J. Sadusky. "These four schools represent the great work going on throughout our State."

Education Secretary Arne Duncan will announce the winners of the award on April 23.

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