

MARYLAND Education Bulletin

News from the Maryland State Department of Education

September 6, 2012

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**A few words
from State
Superintendent
of Schools
Lillian M.
Lowery**

Welcome back to school! I've been traveling throughout Maryland the past few weeks, joining in on a number of school system openings. I can feel the excitement in the air.

Maryland schools are ranked highly, but I haven't spoken to a single educator – local superintendent, principal, or teacher – who believes our work is complete. I'm gratified that everyone is on board with the notion of increasing expectations for all students. Only then can our schools – and our children – increase their achievement levels.

We have much to accomplish between now and the end of class next June. Thank you for everything you do every single day to help our schools succeed.

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This year marks the return of the Maryland High School Assessment in Government. It was discontinued last year due to budgetary considerations, but the Maryland General Assembly has brought back the test this year.

Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, all students enrolled in the Government course will take the Government HSA. The first administration of the test will occur in January 2013. This year's administration will serve as a formative assessment as teachers and principals gear up for the administration in the 2013-2014 school year, when passing the Government HSA will become a graduation requirement for entering 9th graders.

The return of the test also changes the configuration for the combined score option for students.

NEW SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS IN MARYLAND

Maryland public schools opened their doors over the past two weeks, as more than one million students began the 2012-2013 school year.



Governor Martin O'Malley and State Superintendent Lillian Lowery helped open the refurbished Leith Walk Elementary School last week in Baltimore.

For the second straight year, all school systems had opened their doors prior to Labor Day, with more than 850,000 K-12 students filling classrooms and another 250,000 children involved in some form of pre-K, Head Start, or licensed childcare program.



The school year began with one note of tragedy. A student at Baltimore County's Perry Hall High School brought a concealed weapon to campus and shot another student in the school's cafeteria. Quick thinking by the school's staff minimized the situation, and elicited universal praise. The injured student is on the road to recovery, according to press reports.

Last week's Maryland State Board of Education meeting began with both State Superintendent Lillian Lowery and Board President Charlene Dukes expressing concern for the shooting victim and appreciation for the Perry Hall staff. "They are in our hearts and in our prayers," Dr. Dukes said.

Maryland's highly regarded public school system, ranked first in the nation for the fourth straight year by the leading education newspaper, is continuing to

Students entering 9th grade in the 2012-13 school year or in a prior school year (including students who entered 9th grade in 2011-2012, 2010-2011, or 2009-2010) have two options to meet the combined score option.

- Students *MAY* achieve a combined score of 1602 for English, Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology, and Government

OR

- Students *MAY* achieve a combined score of 1208 for English, Algebra/Data Analysis, and Biology.

Students entering 9th grade school year 2013-2014 and beyond **MUST** include the Government HSA score to meet a combined score of 1602. For more information on the Government HSA, please see <http://hsaexam.org>.

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Calendar

September 20-21 – Maryland Association of School Personnel Administrators Fall Conference, Annapolis

September 25 – State Board Meeting, Baltimore

October 3-5 – Maryland Association of Boards of Education, Ocean City, MD



VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

News from the Board

July 24, 2012

Maryland's Board of Education passes emergency regulations regarding concussions. The Board gets

move forward under the direction of Dr. Lowery. The State's system is entering the third year of its four-year \$250 million Race to the Top program, which is remaking Maryland classrooms by strengthening educational standards, building a new technology infrastructure, improving teacher and principal preparation and evaluation, and providing support to low-performing schools.

"Our State is committed to supporting innovative education programs for all schools, making absolutely certain there are improved classrooms in every neighborhood," Dr. Lowery said. "We are working to strengthen instruction and boost rigor for our students. Maryland schools are looking forward to another safe, productive, and exciting year."

Among the headlines for the new school year:

- **Piloting Educator Evaluations.** Maryland school systems will pilot new teacher and principal evaluation systems this school year, which include student growth as a significant part of the measure.
- **Maryland Curriculum is Incorporating National Standards.** More than 7,000 teachers this summer took part in the Educator Effectiveness Academies, which focused on the Common Core State Standards that will help raise the bar for students throughout the State.
- **Improved Federal Accountability Rules Now in Place.** The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) program helped schools and systems focus on problems with certain subgroups, but unfairly labeled too many schools that were making progress. Maryland this spring received a waiver from many of NCLB's most onerous aspects.
- **Improving Student Discipline Processes.** The State Board of Education is nearing completion of new regulations designed to keep more students in school, making certain strong discipline does not mean shutting out students from the educational process.
- **Preventing Serious Head Injuries in Interscholastic Athletics.** The State Board in July approved emergency regulations designed to help prevent concussions.

the report on MSA results, and new State Superintendent Lillian Lowery attends her first official meeting. Also, an update on the SEED School, Board elections, and more.

In the News

Interim Prince George's Superintendent Gets to Work

Washington Post

Opinion: Better Evaluations Mean Better Schools

Baltimore Sun

Montgomery Schools Open Amid Increasing Enrollment

Washington Post

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- **More High-level Career Education Programs are Being Launched.** Project Lead the Way program in Biomedical Sciences Career and Technology Education Programs of Study in Maryland have nearly doubled in the past two years.
- **Public Charter Schools are Growing in Maryland.** Two new charter schools are scheduled to open this fall, bringing the total to 52.

Enrollment in Maryland public schools has been on a steady rise for the past three years. After reaching a high point of 869,113 students in 2004, enrollment fell to 843,861 by 2009. Since then it has rebounded, reaching 854,086 students last school year - the State's highest enrollment level since 2007.

Stop Arm Violations Continue On Maryland Roads: Survey

Drivers continue to bypass the stop arms on school buses at a frightening rate, a new Maryland State Department of Education-sponsored survey has revealed.

Stop arms swing out from a bus and lights flash whenever it is making an on-roadway student pick-up. A total of 4,657 violations of school bus stop arms were recorded on a single day last spring. That is a lower rate than the initial survey completed in 2011, when more than 7,000 violations were recorded. But the rate of violation remains too high for the comfort of safety and education advocates.

"Schools are opening, and it is important to understand that it is illegal to pass a bus with its stop arm extended and its lights flashing," said State Superintendent of Schools Lillian M. Lowery. "There are no excuses for this violation. We need to keep Maryland school children safe."

MSDE coordinated the survey in April along with school transportation directors in all 24 systems. It is considered a snapshot of illegal activity on the roads. More than 63 percent of the Maryland school bus drivers took part in the survey, compared to 65 percent completing the survey last year.

Large systems noted the most violators. Montgomery County school bus drivers tallied the most - 1,494 drivers ignoring the stop arm - followed by Baltimore County (1,143). Kent County was the State's only system where drivers did not find a violation.

The survey was undertaken at the behest of a number of members of the Maryland General Assembly, which has been monitoring school bus safety. The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services is coordinating surveys of this type in all 50 States.

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