



October 4, 2013

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

Full implementation of the Common Core State Standards has been taking place in Maryland schools, but questions remain among some members of the public. We joined with the Maryland PTA to hold four regional public forums over the last month to answer questions, and our plan is to hold more later this fall.

Interest in the new standards is understandable. This is the first complete rewrite of mathematics and reading/English Language Arts standards in a decade.

We have had terrific interest and support at our forums in Easton, Hagerstown, Towson and Springdale. Our plan is to continue to answer questions about the standards and their implementation as they arise.

In addition, educators and parents can always go to MSDE's Common Core Resource site for additional information about the standards:  
<http://msde.state.md.us/cc>

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As this is being written, the U.S. Congress has not passed a Continuing Resolution budget bill, and the so-called "federal shutdown" is well underway. In the near-term, most federal education programs are unaffected. The great majority of federal funding passing through the Maryland State Department of Education is through grant awards (such as Title I funding for economically disadvantaged students, IDEA for special education, and Perkins funding for Career and Technical Education). These

## MARYLAND STUDENTS MAINTAIN AP PROGRESS

Maryland students recorded continued improvement in both Advanced Placement (AP) assessment participation and success, according to newly released data.



More than 65,000 Maryland students took at least one AP test last year, an increase of 3.6 percent over 2012, and the number of exams taken jumped 5.2 percent to 122,726. In spite of the increase, the number of student test scores reaching the high-achieving scores of 3-5 increased 3.6 percent.

Hitting a score of 3-5 qualifies students to receive credit at many colleges and universities. The data was released late last month by the College Board, which administers AP and other national programs.

"One of the most important things we can do to strengthen the middle class is to provide every Maryland child with the opportunity to get a great education--that's why we made the choice to invest in education, even in tough times," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "That investment is paying dividends: we have had the #1 rated public schools in the country for five straight years, and today's Advanced Placement data shows that we are continuing to make progress on our goal to prepare students for college and career. Congratulations to our students and the educators for making it happen."

Maryland student success on the AP exams has ranked first in the nation for the past seven years. The College Board will release its 2013 rankings early in 2014.

Scores on the SAT exam registered a slight decline, although participation increased. Maryland's composite SAT score fell four points to 1483 on the 2400-point scale. Maryland students scored a 497 in critical reading (even, compared to last year), 500 in mathematics (down 2 points), and 486 in writing (down 2 points).

programs are currently operating on balances from grant awards that have been previously appropriated by Congress and funding should be available through a short-term shutdown.

Additional federal funds are received on a reimbursement basis, such as for USDA Food Service programs and for Child Care Subsidy funding. We anticipate that funding for both of these programs will be available, again at least through a short-term shutdown.

We continue to monitor the situation and hope Congress can resolve its differences sooner rather than later.

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Great principals mean terrific schools, and the Maryland State Board of Education this month honored some of the best school leaders our State has to offer.

Meeting with the State Board

were Karen Barnes, principal of Southwest Academy in Baltimore County; Jason Dykstra, director of Accountability and Testing for Anne Arundel County and formerly principal of Southern Middle School in the county; William Heiser, principal of Catonsville High School in Baltimore County and formerly principal of North County High School in Anne Arundel County; and Jared Wastler, assistant principal, Liberty High School in Carroll County. All have recently received honors for their work. Congratulations all!



Karen Barnes meets with the State Board.

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Participation in the SAT was up 1.3 percent from 2012 to 2013, as nearly 50,000 students (48,106) took the test in Maryland last year. The State has been working closely with the College Board to increase participation of underrepresented minority group students over the past five years, and that effort has paid off. There was a 2.4 percent increase in African American participation last year, and an 18.25 percent jump in Hispanic student participation.

While Maryland has continued to increase participation in SAT, the nation's other major college readiness exam—the ACT—has also seen a dramatic increase in Maryland.

The number of Maryland seniors taking the ACT has increased 22.1 percent over the past five years and stood at 21 percent of the State's graduating class this past spring, compared to 73 percent of seniors taking the SAT. At the same time, according to data released last month, scores on the ACT have risen steadily. Maryland's ACT composite score rose to 22.3 out of a possible high score of 36 in 2013, compared to 22.1 in 2012, and Maryland student scores jumped in all four tested areas (English, math, reading, and science). At the same time, the national composite declined from 21.1 to 20.9.

Among the other information in the College Board's report:

- Scores on the PSAT/NMSQT test were up across the board for juniors taking the exam. The mean critical reading score for juniors increased 0.2 points to 47; the mean math score was up 0.2 points to 47.1, and the writing skills mean jumped 0.9 points to 45.8.
- There also was improvement registered by students taking the PSAT as sophomores. While the critical reading mean was flat at 42.4 points, the math mean score improved 0.1 point to 42.1 points, and the writing skills mean was up 0.5 points to 40.5 points.
- AP participation went up across racial subgroups. African American students tallied an 11 percent increase in participation, and a 12 percent jump in the number of tests taken. Hispanic student participation jumped 16 percent in just one year. Asian participation—which has always been strong—went up another 8.7 percent, while White student participation increased 3.2 percent.

Twitter users can connect with us @MdPublicSchools for fast-breaking information.

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## Calendar

October 11 – Maryland Teacher of the Year Gala, Baltimore

October 18-19 – Maryland State Education Association Convention, Ocean City

October 30 – Maryland State Board of Education Meeting, Baltimore

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## VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

### News From The Board

September 24, 2013

Maryland enters the fourth year of development and implementation, with a trimmed down Teacher-Principal Evaluation Plan. The Board gets an update on 'Dashboards,' the publicly funded SEED School for at-risk students, and Principals of the Year have their day in the sun.

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## VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

### Common Core Forum, Washington County

September 16, 2013

MSDE and the Maryland PTA are holding a series of forums on the Common Core State Standards. State Schools Superintendent Lillian Lowery, PTA President Ray Leone, and others discuss and take questions about the standards. See an excerpt from the forum Monday night in Washington County.

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## In the News

Education Secretary Duncan: Beating Up on the Common Core is 'Political Silliness'  
*Education Week*

Facebook, Attorney General Announce Cyberbullying Effort  
WTOP Radio

Prince George's Schools Recognized for Anti-Obesity Efforts  
*Washington Post*

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- Success on the AP also was registered across all racial subgroups, according to the College Board data. The number of African American students scoring a 3 or better on an AP exam went up 13 percent in just one year; the number of Hispanic students scoring at this high range jumped 12.6 percent. The number of Asian students reaching a score of 3-5 was up 8.9 percent, while the number of White students hitting that mark rose 4.1 percent.

## SIX PUBLIC SCHOOLS NAMED BLUE RIBBON RECIPIENTS

Six Maryland public schools last month were selected as 2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education.



State Superintendent Lowery announced the six nominees for Blue Ribbon honors last December.

The schools are:

- Boonsboro High School, Washington County
- Century High School, Carroll County
- Chadwick Elementary School, Baltimore County
- Charlesmont Elementary, Baltimore County
- Folly Quarter Middle School, Howard County
- Robert Frost Middle School, Montgomery County

All six schools nominated by MSDE this year have been honored with this national award. The schools are recognized on the basis of rigorous state and national requirements for high achievement and/or dramatic improvement.

"Maryland education is the envy of the nation because of our outstanding schools, and these six schools are sterling representations for our State," said Maryland State Superintendent Lillian M. Lowery. "Maryland's National Blue Ribbon Schools are examples of outstanding teaching

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and learning. The students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members of these fantastic schools are to be congratulated. Winning this coveted award is not easy.”

The schools will be invited to Washington, DC on Nov. 18-19 to be honored by the U.S. Secretary of Education. Maryland corporate sponsors include BG&E, Comcast; EduTrax; Joe Corbi's Pizza; Music and Arts Stores; and SMART Technologies, Inc.

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