

# MARYLAND Education Bulletin

*News from the Maryland State Department of Education*

September 10, 2013

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

Teachers are fully implementing the Common Core State Standards throughout Maryland, and we've had many positive reports from classrooms across the State. But we realize there may still be some questions, so we've scheduled a series of regional public forums beginning tonight in Talbot County.

We're joining with the Maryland PTA to host the forums. MSDE and PTA leaders will discuss the Standards, and attendees will hear from a teacher already using the Common Core in the classroom. Each forum will be held from 7-8:30 p.m. and is open to the public. Please join us!

September 10 – Easton High School, Easton, Md.

September 16 – South Hagerstown High School, Hagerstown, Md.

September 19 – Ridge Ruxton School, Towson, Md.

October 1 – Charles Herbert Flowers High School, Springdale, Md.

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For even more information about the Common Core, please remember to check out the information found on the MSDE website, [MarylandPublicSchools.org](http://MarylandPublicSchools.org).

There are more than two dozen publications available at our Common Core resource page. Go to <http://msde.state.md.us/cc>

## MARYLAND SCHOOLS ARE BACK IN SESSION

Maryland public schools are open for business, as more than one million students started the 2013-2014 school year last month.



State Superintendent Lowery joined Governor O'Malley, Mayor Rawlings-Blake, and others recently helped to open the new Baltimore Design School in Baltimore City.

By the time all schools opened their doors on August 27, more than 860,000 K-12 students filled classrooms and another 250,000 children were involved in some form of pre-kindergarten, Head Start, or licensed childcare program.

"With better choices, we have built what *Education Week* magazine says is the #1 best public school system in America for the fifth year in a row," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "To create jobs, a modern economy requires modern investments. In Maryland, we've chosen to make targeted investments in education so our children will grow up with the opportunities and skills they need to succeed."

Maryland's highly regarded public school system is fully implementing new, more rigorous standards this fall. In addition, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) system is continuing work on its \$250 million Race to the Top program, which is further strengthening Maryland classrooms by building a new technology infrastructure, improving teacher and principal preparation and evaluation, and providing targeted

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MSDE last week announced the seven finalists for the 2013-14 Maryland Teacher of the Year, and once our State has an outstanding group of educators vying for the honor. The finalists are:

Carol Garner, Allegany County  
 Jodie Hogan, Anne Arundel County  
 Ketia Stokes, Baltimore City  
 Sean McComb, Baltimore County  
 Steven Luthultz, Cecil County  
 George McGurl, Howard County  
 Christina Ulrich, Montgomery County

The finalists were selected by a panel of judges representing key Maryland education organizations representing principals, teachers, school boards, teachers unions, parents, and higher education. The bar set for finalists is very high; nominees are measured against a set of national criteria that include teaching philosophy and results, community involvement, knowledge of education issues, and suggestions for professional and instructional improvement.

The 2013-14 Maryland Teacher of the Year will be announced at a gala celebration on October 11. He or she will go on to compete for the national Teacher of the Year. Maryland's nominees have done quite well – having been named National Teacher of the Year in 2006 and 2011.

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support to low-performing schools.

“Our schools will continue to move forward this fall with full implementation of the Common Core State Standards, which set the stage for better instruction and improved student learning,” said State Superintendent of Schools Lillian M. Lowery. “Maryland schools are well-positioned for a productive and exciting year.”

Enrollment in Maryland public schools has been on a steady rise for the past four 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 859,638 students last school year – the State's highest enrollment level since 2006.

Maryland's student population also has experienced major changes over the past decade. Maryland has been a majority-minority State for several years. White students represent nearly 42 percent of the student population, followed by African American students, who make up 35 percent of the student population. Both the White and African American student populations have been in decline in recent years. Hispanic students represent nearly 13 percent of the student body, while Asian students account for nearly six percent. Percentages of Hispanic and Asian students are on the rise. Also increasing is the percentage of students identifying themselves as two or more races. This accounts for nearly four percent of Maryland students.

Also increasing in the State's schools is the percentage of students coming from circumstances of poverty. Last year, 44 percent of Maryland students were eligible for free- or reduced-price meals, the federal proxy for poverty. Ten years earlier that tally stood at 29.7 percent – nearly a 50 percent increase over the decade. At the elementary school level, 49.2 percent of students were eligible for free- or reduced-price meals during 2012-13 school year.

More information on Maryland school demographics can be found on the Maryland Report Card website, [www.MdReportCard.org](http://www.MdReportCard.org).

## SCHOOLS MOVE FORWARD AS STANDARDS EVOLVE

Maryland schools continue to move students toward proficiency on State exams even as learning standards evolve, according to data recently released by the

## Calendar

September 10 – Regional Forum on the Common Core, Easton High School, Easton

September 16 – Regional Forum on the Common Core, South Hagerstown High School, Hagerstown

September 19 – Regional Forum on the Common Core, Ridge Ruxton School, Towson

September 24 – Maryland State Board of Education Meeting, Baltimore

October 1 – Regional Forum on the Common Core, Charles Herbert Flowers High School, Springdale.



### VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

#### Board News

August 27, 2013

Maryland releases the MSA Science scores. They dip slightly in 5th, but climb slightly in 8th grade. The release spawns a discussion of science and STEM in the early years. Also, Maryland's School Progress Index, and a Race to the Top update.



### VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

#### Back to School

August 26, 2013

Governor Martin O'Malley and Maryland Schools Superintendent Lillian Lowery talk about Common Core as students head back to the classroom. Included: the Top Ten Things parents need to know about Common Core.

## In the News

Head Start Benefits from Governor's Boost  
WYPR Public Radio

Common Core Standards will use New Test  
WBAL-TV

Common Core Forums Set  
*Washington Post*

State Superintendent Welcomes Teachers Back to School  
*Easton Star Democrat*

Maryland State Department of Education.

More than six in 10 elementary and middle schools made their rising school progress targets for 2013, despite increasing targets and transitioning to the Common Core State Standards. The standards will not be aligned to the assessments until the 2014-15 school year.

School Progress and School Progress Index data was released for elementary and middle schools during last month's Maryland State Board of Education meeting. Also released were the 2013 results on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) for Science, which found fifth grade scores falling slightly, while slight improvement was registered on the eighth grade exam.

The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires annual assessment on science at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Maryland tests students on the MSA science exam at the fifth and eighth grade level, and assesses biology students in high school. Results on the biology exam will be released later this fall along with other high school data.

#### • School Progress

Last month's data release marks the second under Maryland's flexibility regarding the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, granted last year. Under NCLB law, all students would be required to score at proficient levels by 2014, and progress toward that goal was gauged by a statewide measurement known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Under Maryland's approved "School Progress" plan, each school is measured against its own targets, and must work to strengthen achievement across all subgroups.

Data from 2011 began a new baseline, and schools and systems are working to cut in half by 2017 the percentage of students not scoring at proficient levels on the exams.

As in the past, the accountability system measures all students as well as racial subgroups and groups of students receiving additional services, such as special education and English language learners. Schools and systems must work to hit improvement targets, known as annual measurable objectives (AMOs). AMOs are being calculated for the student population in each school as well as for special service and racial subgroups.

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Under the School Progress calculation, nearly 62 percent (61.8 percent) of Maryland schools met the increasing AMO targets for this year for the all student category, compared to 84.8 percent in 2012. The targets will continue to rise through the next four years.

Looking at the data on a subgroup basis, 83.4 percent of Maryland's student subgroups met their rising progress targets for 2013, compared to 95.2 percent in 2012.

- **MSA Science**

The Maryland School Assessment in Science is different than other MSA tests in that it was not tied to school AYP accountability measures under the old No Child Left Behind version of ESEA. MSA Science results became included in accountability last year through MSDE's flexibility plan.

Scores at the fifth grade level dropped 1.5 points, from 68.5 percent of students scoring in the proficient ranges in 2012 to 67 percent. On a racial subgroup basis, the biggest drops were registered by Hispanic students (down 2.5 percent), as well as White and American Indian students (both down 2.3 percent). Asian and African American students had more modest dips, 0.4 and 0.7 percent respectively.

Scores at the eighth grade level improved, moving from 70.7 percent of students scoring in the proficient range in 2012 to 71.4 percent in 2013. Bigger improvements were registered by African American (2.1 percent) and American Indian (1.9) percent.

School Progress and MSA Science data is available on the Maryland Report Card website, [www.MdReportCard.org](http://www.MdReportCard.org). For background on the School Progress and the School Progress Index, go to <http://mdk12.org/data/index.aspx?Nav=1.8>

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