



March 7, 2014

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

Is anyone else sick of snow?

We may not have had a record-breaking amount of snow this year, but we have had enough "snow events" to keep students out of class for a number of days throughout Maryland. As such, we adjusted our MSA assessment window. The testing window for the MSA reading and mathematics testing for the paper assessment began this week, March 3, and was to end March 12. It has now been extended to March 14, with the make-up window being March 17-18.

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It is time to "Read Across Maryland," one of our favorite events. I've scheduled time next week to read to some kindergartners in Harford County next week, and I'm sure many of you are doing the same thing. It is a great time to spotlight the importance of early literacy—and it is great fun!

MSDE's Division of Library Development and Services and the Division of Instruction joined with the Governor's Office to kick off of Read Across Maryland two weeks ago, and scores of other events are planned. With the slogan, "Thirty Minutes for Thirty Days," students and library customers are encouraged to download a Read Across Maryland reading log, record their progress for the month and then upload the log to the Read Across Maryland website (<http://www.readacrossmaryland.org>).

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Maryland last month honored nine schools with Excellence in Gifted and Talented Education (EGATE) School Awards, which recognize top elementary, middle, and high school programs.

MARYLAND TOPS NATIONAL AP RANKINGS ONCE AGAIN

Maryland students have led the nation in success on the Advanced Placement (AP) exams for eight straight years, according to a report released last month by the College Board.



The percentage of Maryland seniors who earned a score of 3 or higher on one or more AP exams reached 29.6

in 2013, the highest percentage in the nation and an increase over the 28.1 percent tallied in 2012, according to the College Board's "10th Annual AP Report to the Nation." A score of 3 or better is the threshold at which many higher education institutions award college credit for high school students in an AP assessment.

Connecticut is ranked second in success, with 28.8 percent of its seniors earning a 3 or higher, followed by Virginia, with 28.3 percent.

The College Board said that Maryland "has led the nation in improving student access and supporting student performance in AP." The percentage of Maryland graduates scoring a 3 or higher on an AP test has increased nearly 12 percent points from 17.7 percent in 2003.

"Strengthening and growing the middle class is the North Star of everything we do as an Administration. And because there is no greater ladder to opportunity than education, we've made the better choice to invest in our children -- today's results are another indication that our choices are paying off," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "The AP program offers one of the most important pathways to a better future, and we are committed to preparing our students for college and career success globally."

Now in its fourth year, the EGATE awards spotlight gifted and talented programs aligned with the *Maryland Criteria for Excellence: Gifted and Talented Program Guidelines* and Maryland regulations for gifted and talented programs. Each EGATE school submits a comprehensive application which provides documentation of 21 criteria of excellence under four program objectives: student identification, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and program management and evaluation.

The 2013 EGATE schools are:

Central Elementary School, Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Davidsonville Elementary School, Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Folger McKinsey Elementary School, Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Northwest Middle School, Carroll County Public Schools

Milton Somers Middle School, Charles County Public Schools

Capitol Heights Elementary School, Prince George's County Public Schools

Greenbelt Middle School, Prince George's County Public Schools

Mattaponi Elementary School, Prince George's County Public Schools

Westside Intermediate School, Wicomico County Public Schools

In the four years of the award's existence, 30 schools from 9 school systems have earned the EGATE status. Members from the Maryland Advisory Council for Gifted and Talented Education and local school system personnel review and score the EGATE applications, which document the school's gifted and talented program activities over a 15 month period. Congratulations to our new EGAT honorees!

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Our hardworking students, dedicated educators, and outstanding parents deserve our congratulations and support."

The percentage of Maryland graduates taking an AP exam has nearly doubled over the past decade. In 2003, 25.7 percent of Maryland graduates had taken at least one AP exam during their high school career. By 2013, nearly half of all graduates had taken one of the rigorous exams—47.4 percent. Only the District of Columbia (55.7 percent) and Florida (53.1 percent) had a higher rate of participation.

"The 10th Annual Advanced Placement Report to the Nation," the College Board's analysis of the college-level assessment program, gives many high marks to efforts taking place in Maryland schools. For example:

- Maryland has seen a big increase in the percentage of Black/African American students having success on the AP assessments, as 11.7 percent of students receiving a grade of 3 or better in Maryland were Black/African American. That percentage ranks third to Mississippi (13.6) and Louisiana (12.2) among states in the nation. The percentage of Black/African American test takers is also increasing.
- Hispanic students in Maryland continue to perform well on the AP exams. Hispanics accounted for 9.3 percent of the Maryland graduating class last year, and 8.8 percent of the seniors who scored 3 or higher on the AP exam were Hispanic.
- In raw numbers, there were 13,315 Maryland students who took an AP exam in high school in 2003, and 9,184 received a 3 or better. By last year, 27,370 students took an AP exam, and 17,111 scored a 3 or better.

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program, which began in 1955, allows students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. Students of different interests and backgrounds can choose from more than 30 courses to demonstrate their knowledge of rigorous academic curriculum. Complete results are available at <http://apreport.collegeboard.org>.

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Calendar

March 10 – Blue Ribbon Schools Day, Annapolis

March 25 – Maryland State Board of Education Meeting, Baltimore



VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

Mark Miazga, an English teacher at Baltimore City College, has won a \$25,000 Milken Educator Award.

February 27, 2014

He became the only Maryland winner this year, in a surprise announcement at a schoolwide assembly. See the winning moment!



VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

News From The Board

February 25, 2014

In Board News February, Maryland asks for a delay in using test scores as part of Teacher/Principal Evaluations. The Board discusses Best Practices regarding its reform of School Discipline policy, you'll meet the Executive Director of Maryland's Center for School Safety, and see the 2014 Title One Distinguished Schools. All that, plus the Maryland Teacher of the Year National Finalist Sean McComb and his growing family.

In the News

Maryland Remains Number One in Advanced Placement
Baltimore Sun

Mark Miazga's Big Day
WJZ-13

Keeping Track of the ESEA Landscape
Education Week

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PUTTING THE SPOTLIGHT ON GREAT TEACHING

Maryland's top teachers were in the spotlight last week, as the State gained a new Milken Educator and the State Board welcomed Maryland's National Teacher of the Year Finalist to its meeting.



City College teacher Mark Miazga received the surprise of his life from the Milken Family Foundation

Mark Miazga, an English teacher at Baltimore City College, received the surprise of a lifetime with the announcement of his selection as a 2013-14 Milken Educator Award (MEA) recipient.

Miazga's honor was unexpected. The Milken Educator Award is presented as a surprise, and brings with it an unrestricted \$25,000 cash prize. It was presented during a school assembly by Milken Family Foundation Co-Founder Mike Milken and Maryland Superintendent of Schools Lillian M. Lowery.



Patapsco High School teacher Sean McComb, already Maryland Teacher of the Year, is in the final four for National Teacher of the Year.

Adding their congratulations to the applause from more than 600 cheering students and colleagues were Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown and Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. In a moment's time, Mark Miazga experienced a fanfare typically reserved for all-star athletes and award-winning entertainers. He will join up to 40 of America's most outstanding secondary school educators who will receive the honor in 2013- 14, and is the only Maryland recipient.

"It's passionate educators like Mark Miazga that make Maryland's schools some of the best in the nation," said Lt. Governor Brown. "By continuing to work together to support our educators and protect critical investments in our schools, we provide the

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pathway to success for every young Marylander."

Miazga's English classroom has been described as a place where "students come to understand what being smart and thinking for oneself is about." Miazga, in his 13th year of teaching at Baltimore City College, a college prep high school made up largely of minority students, goes above and beyond to cultivate meaningful relationships with his kids. Lessons challenge students to think beneath the surface meaning in texts and conduct high-level discussions. He gives specific feedback on students' writing, with room to revise.

The Milken Educator Awards story doesn't end with his surprise notification. New recipients are invited to join the Milken Educator Network, a group of distinguished educators coast-to-coast whose expertise serves as a valuable resource to fellow educators, legislators, school boards and others shaping the future of education.

Two days earlier, the State Board congratulated Maryland Teacher of the Year Sean McComb, a teacher at Baltimore County's Patapsco High School, as one of four finalists for national Teacher of the Year Honors.

The National Teacher of the Year program also involves a distinguished network of educators. Maryland's McComb is excited to head to Washington, DC to compete in the final four along with educators from Florida, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

Maryland State Board members provided McComb with best wishes as he was set to leave on his journey.

The National Teacher of the Year will be announced next month.

The Maryland Education Bulletin is Published by:

Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
MarylandPublicSchools.org
410.767.0600
410.333.6442 (TTY)
1.888.246.0016

Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.

State Superintendent of Schools

Kristy Michel, *Chief Operating Officer*

Jack Smith, Ph.D., *Chief Academic Officer*

Penelope Thornton Talley, Esq., *Chief Performance Officer*

Charlene M. Dukes, Ed.D., *President*
State Board of Education

Martin O'Malley, *Governor*



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Bill Reinhard, *Editor*

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