



May 2, 2014

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

We believe that Maryland teachers are second to none. But it is especially terrific when national organizations recognize this fact!

Maryland Teacher of the Year Sean McComb was named this week as the National Teacher of the Year, and the honor could not have gone to a more deserving educator. I'm so impressed by Sean and his dedication to his students.

But he's far from alone. Take, for example, Mark Miazga, recently named a 2014 Milken educator. Mark met with our State board last week, and everyone in the room could see his passion for his profession and his commitment to his students.



Mark Miazga

Sean and Mark are the two teachers currently making headlines, but Maryland public schools and their students benefit from thousands of tireless educators who go the extra mile. Our schools are the best, because our teachers and leaders are the very best our profession has to offer.

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Another factor in Maryland's educational excellence has been the Judy Centers. The Judy Centers offer nearly 13,000 children ages birth through kindergarten and their low-income families throughout the State high quality early childhood education programs. The Centers also provide critical services, such as full-day and full-year programs, healthcare, parenting education, early intervention services, and family engagement

MARYLAND TEACHER NAMED NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

The Maryland Teacher of the Year Sean McComb on Wednesday received the nation's top teaching honor: 2014 National Teacher of the Year. He was honored Thursday by President Obama.



New National Teacher of the Year Sean McComb was honored Thursday by President Obama.

The official announcement was made on the CBS Morning News. McComb is a teacher at Patapsco High School & Center for the Arts in Baltimore County. He teaches in Patapsco's Advancement Via Individual

Determination (AVID)

program, helping students strengthen their work habits and academic skills to graduate ready for college or career.

"Teachers are the foundation of our success as a State, and the major reason why our schools have been ranked number-one-in-the-nation for five straight years. Sean McComb embodies what it means to be a teacher -- tirelessly preparing his students for college or a career after high school, and setting a great example of the power of creative instruction taking place in classrooms all across our State," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "It is with deep gratitude that our entire State congratulates Sean, his students, and his colleagues at Patapsco High."

State Superintendent of Schools Lillian Lowery noted that Sean's work with students has helped provide them with an academic foundation that prepares them for life beyond the high school classroom.

opportunities. Data shows that children served by Judy Centers are more ready for school than their peers who did not benefit from the Judy Center experience.

This week the Judith P. Hoyer Foundation held its 8th annual awards celebration with U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer and U.S. Rep. Bobby Scott honoring our outstanding Judy Centers. This year's honorees are the DRU Judy Center at John Eager Howard Elementary in Baltimore City (Most Improved) and the Allegany County Judy Center (Innovative Spirit).

Congratulations to this year's award winners, and to all of our Judy Centers. Their efforts give Maryland education – and some of our youngest learners -- a wonderful boost.

* * *

Just last month we told you about two Maryland schools being nominated for National Green Ribbons. Now we can update that: they've both received that honor.

North Carroll High School in Carroll County and Travilah Elementary School in Montgomery County received honors this year, among 48 honored nationwide. U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said those schools are taking a comprehensive approach to being green that encompasses all facets of the facility.

Governor O'Malley says that paying attention to the environment is a choice, and it is a choice these schools have made. With schools like North Carroll High and Travilah Elementary, our future is in terrific hands.

* * *

Next week is Teacher Appreciation Week, and we hope you are celebrating at your neighborhood school.

Please join me in thanking our teachers for the wonderful job they do each and every day.

* * *

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"Maryland is preparing world-class students who can meet the needs of local employers and compete for opportunities in the global marketplace thanks to world-class teachers like Sean McComb," Dr. Lowery said. "I have enjoyed getting to know Sean the past several months, learning about his passion for his students and his belief in their success. Sean's students will tell you that they believe he genuinely cares, never giving up on them and paving the way for their success. He's the consummate educator, going above and beyond to make certain his students are ready for their futures."

"Sean is a gifted and giving teacher, and Team BCPS is proud that one of our own has been recognized for this tremendous national honor," said Baltimore County Superintendent S. Dallas Dance. "We are privileged to have him as a teacher at Patapsco and in Baltimore County, and we are happy to share his talents and his wisdom on a much larger scale. Now the nation is his classroom."

McComb is typically humble about the being a finalist for the prestigious honor, noting that no teacher joins the profession for the awards.

"My teaching is built on the belief that relationships and engagement can turn challenges into opportunities for excellence for all students," he said. "As we embrace that truth, we help awaken students to their full potential and the possibility to live out the American dream."

McComb focuses on creating critical readers, strong writers, and judicious thinkers. Through his work with the AVID program, he teaches the value of service, working on projects with students that help feed the hungry in the community. McComb serves as a system curriculum writer and as an adjunct teacher at Towson University. He is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, where he also received a Master's in Education degree, and recently completed School Leadership certification from Goucher College.

Maryland has had a remarkable run of success in the National Teacher of the Year program. The State has had three other finalists for National Teacher of the Year in recent years - Montgomery County kindergarten teacher Kimberly Oliver Burnim in 2006, Frederick County chemistry teacher Michelle Shearer

to education news throughout the State.

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Calendar

May 5-9 – Teacher Appreciation Week

May 17 – 7th Annual Maryland Parent Involvement Matters Awards, Baltimore

May 20 – Maryland State Board of Education meeting, Baltimore

VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

News From The Board

April 22, 2014

Curriculum and Assessments provides the stars as Board News April features the Next Generation Science Standards, and plans to rework the Social Studies curriculum. Also, a Race to the Top update, two new Maryland Green Schools, and the Milken National Educator from City College.

In the News

Baltimore County Educator Named National Teacher of the Year
Baltimore Sun

Maryland Graduation Rate, National Graduation Rate on the Rise
WJZ-13

Commentary: PARCC is a Welcome Change
Baltimore Sun

Commentary: New PARCC Assessments Take the Next Step
Annapolis Capital

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in 2011, and Cecil County English teacher Rhonda Holmes-Blankenship last year. Burnim and Shearer also were named National Teacher of the Year.

MARYLAND EDUCATION MAINTAINS STRONG SUPPORT IN LEGISLATURE

Maryland's highly regarded education system continued to receive strong support during the recently completed 2014 session of the Maryland General Assembly, including funding for an important expansion of PreK programs.

The legislature also gave a slight boost to aid for education, increasing funding \$94 million to more than \$6 billion. The increase came despite the fact that legislators continue to work within the parameters of a tight State budget.

“Strong funding and expanded early learning opportunities will help Maryland develop world-class students who graduate ready for college or career,” said State Superintendent of Schools Lillian M. Lowery. “Building on the leadership of Governor O’Malley, the Maryland General Assembly continues to show that it is on the side of students and educators.”

The legislature’s strong financial support of public education began more than a decade ago with the passage of the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act in 2001. The critical growth in funding has helped fuel educational improvement in all parts of the State.

The General Assembly approved Governor O’Malley’s expansion of Maryland PreK programs, SB 332 and HB 297, approving a \$4.3 million grant initiative allowing local systems and community based organizations to build on existing programs. The grants would allow programs to accept students from higher income families and expand some half-day programs to full-day.

Other important education-related bills and initiatives also received legislative support this session. For example:

- State Early Childhood Advisory Council - HB 461 establishes the new State council,

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requiring the council to develop a strategic plan to improve school readiness for young children.

- **Innovative Competitive Grant Programs -**
The General Assembly supported two competitive grant programs designed to move Maryland education forward. The Digital Learning Innovation Fund and the Early College Innovation Fund, initiatives developed by Governor O'Malley, awarded their first grants in 2013. The Digital Learning Innovation Fund helps local school systems accelerate the conversion to digital learning environments. The Early College Innovation Fund paves the way for students seeking career and technical education or training in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields.

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