



May 29, 2014

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

Maryland schools have spent a significant amount of time over the past two months testing our new assessments. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) exams were piloted in virtually all Maryland public schools this spring and I'm thrilled to say that the process went very well. We learned where our technical issues are and we have a much better idea about how to implement the assessments next spring.

The PARCC exams, aligned to Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards, represent a complete reset of our statewide assessment system. These are new tests on upgraded standards and the results will not be comparable to those of the Maryland School Assessment.

We've greatly appreciated the cooperation we've received from all 24 school systems. This is an important shift for Maryland education, and we are pleased to have the support of our educators as we move forward. For more on the PARCC exams, go to www.parcconline.org.

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The Maryland State Board of Education meeting room was packed with some of our State's top educators as Board members welcomed the 2013-14 Teachers of the Year. Each year I marvel at the number of creative, committed teachers we have in this State.

It was a diverse group – everyone from preK to high school, English to the arts. But each teacher I met had a couple of things in common: pride in Maryland's classrooms and a commitment to their

MATTHEW CRAWFORD NAMED PARENT INVOLVEMENT HONOREE

Dr. Matthew Crawford of Allegany County this month was named statewide winner of the seventh annual Maryland Parent Involvement Matters Awards program.



Dr. Matthew Crawford

Dr. Crawford, an outstanding volunteer at Flintstone Elementary, is an assistant professor of Chemistry at Frostburg State University. He doesn't use his busy schedule as an excuse not to get involved, but

rather has extended his commitment to enrich the educational experiences of Flintstone students. Dr. Crawford has focused much of his attention on increasing student interest and achievement in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), by helping develop "Discovery Days" at the school. These programs engage students in STEM and also integrate Maryland's College and Career Ready Standards. He invites his fellow professors to take part in programs at the school, and frequently invites students to visit FSU to perform experiments in actual lab settings. He also has been an important resource for teachers and staff grateful for his help, enthusiasm, and eagerness to advance STEM education.

Dr. Crawford was selected from five finalists also announced at the award ceremony. The finalists were narrowed down from a list of 24 semifinalists announced earlier. In addition to Dr. Crawford, the finalists were:

students.

The Maryland Teacher of the Year will be named in October, and I know we'll have another wonderful teacher receive that honor. I'm just glad I'm not part of the panel that votes on Teacher of the Year. I cannot imagine a more difficult decision.

* * *

This coming September, America will commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Star-Spangled Banner. Maryland and Marylanders played a pivotal role in the causes, conduct and outcomes of the War of 1812, and created two of the proudest symbols of America – the flag and the anthem-while the Chesapeake was engulfed in War.

Many bicentennial activities are being planned for Maryland in 2014 for the K-12 audience in virtual and non-virtual formats. Some of the most notable and easily accessible opportunities currently operating or planned include:

- Visiting Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, especially to be a part of the Bicentennial Living American Flag on September 9, 2014.
- Discovering War of 1812 sites along the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail in Maryland, Washington DC, and Virginia aided with the Chesapeake Explorer mobile app or printed guide, In Full Glory Reflected: Discovering the War of 1812 in the Chesapeake.
- Scheduling a trip for free tours of international tall ships and Navy vessels during Star- Spangled Spectacular in Baltimore, September 11-15.

There are too many activities for us to list here! For more information on any of these activities and more, please contact Heather Ersts, Outreach and Partnership Coordinator at the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission (410-767-6974, hersts@choosemaryland.org), or Abbi Wicklein-Bayne, Education Specialist, The Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail (443-321-3610, abbi_wicklein-bayne@nps.gov).

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Don't forget to connect with MSDE on Facebook.

- Heather Foster, Leonardtown Elementary, St. Mary's County
- Bart Lawrence, Hyattsville Elementary, Prince George's County
- Debbie Boger, Sligo Creek Elementary, Montgomery County
- Hina Naseem and Theresa Yodzis, West Friendship Elementary School, Howard County

"Working together, our State continues to produce real results and make the vital connection between parents, teachers and students at every level of our education system," said Governor Martin O'Malley.

"Thanks to the many dedicated parents and volunteers across Maryland like Dr. Crawford, Maryland schools ranked best in the nation five years in a row, achieving greater leaps in achievement for low-income students than in any other state in the U.S."

State Superintendent of Schools Lillian M. Lowery agreed that parent involvement has been critical to Maryland's educational success.

"Matthew Crawford's love of science is contagious, and has infected students at Flintstone Elementary in a unique and positive fashion," Dr. Lowery said. "Strong parental involvement elevates the activity taking place in our classrooms, and Dr. Crawford's work is an outstanding example. He gives back to his school and community with intellect, heart, and soul."

In addition to the finalist and statewide winner announcements, Ernestine Richardson-Watts from Baltimore City was presented with the JoAnne L. Carter Memorial Award in recognition of her special work with Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts. This award is given annually in honor of JoAnne L. Carter, Deputy State Superintendent for the Maryland State Department of Education, who lost her battle with cancer in 2009. A parent herself, Ms. Carter was a staunch advocate for parental involvement in education. The award, sponsored by her family, is given annually to a parent that exemplifies all that she held dear.

Ms. Richardson-Watts organized a food pantry for the students and their families at Augusta Fells Savage, and that work led to using the food pantry to serve

Our department's Facebook page provides regular updates on State initiatives, MSDE videos, and links to education news throughout the State.

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

Calendar

June 23 – Maryland State Board of Education meeting, Baltimore

June 24 – Primary Election



VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

News From The Board

May 20, 2014

Board News May features a discussion of the Waiver extension and Financial Literacy, among other things. But the real stars are the 2014-15 Maryland Teachers of the Year.

In the News

Editorial: Local Education Priorities Should Set School Calendar
Washington Post

Carroll County Student Named to State Board
Baltimore Sun

Twenty-Six Major Companies Back STEM, Common Core, NGSS
Education Week

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members of the community in the school's neighborhood. She didn't just launch the food pantry; she handles everything from dispensing food to stocking shelves, taking inventory, ordering food, and cleaning and sanitizing the facility. She volunteers from early morning until late into the evening.

The Parent Involvement Matters Awards is the nation's first and only statewide award program of its kind. The Maryland State Department of Education's program recognizes parents and guardians for their exceptional support of public education. Parents were nominated for demonstrating significant, positive impact in their communities across five areas of parental involvement: Communication, Volunteering, Learning, Decision Making and Community Collaboration.

The Parent Involvement Matters Awards are supported by the Maryland PTA, Harvest Enterprises, Inc.; Cullins Trucking, Inc; The Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc., and Lifetouch Prestige Portraits.

MSDE TO CO-HOST FIRST TWITTER CHAT ON JUNE 3

The Maryland State Department of Education will co-host its first Twitter Chat next week, featuring State Superintendent Lillian Lowery and Maryland PTA President Ray Leone.

The wide ranging chat on June 3 will delve into Maryland's continuing efforts to strengthen public schools through more rigorous standards, improved assessments, and better early childhood development programs.

Twitter followers @MdPublicSchools are encouraged to ask questions and participate in the discussion using the hashtag, #MSDEChat.

The Twitter Chat gets underway at 6:30 p.m. and will last an hour. Please join us in cyberspace.

The Maryland Education Bulletin is Published by:

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A Publication of the Office of Communications, Partnerships, and Grants

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