

MSEA ELECTION  
2014 CANDIDATE GUIDE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SESSION Q & A

500 WORDS ON ...  
EDUCATION NEWS

# ACTIONLINE

The Magazine of the Maryland State Education Association Volume 14 Issue 3 January/February 2014



IEPs and the Common Core  
IEPs are increasingly complex, layered, and challenging

**SPECIAL FEATURE ▶**

## IEPs and the Common Core State Standards

For teachers of students with special needs, implementing the Common Core State Standards and creating individual education programs is complex, layered, and challenging.



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Maryland is still at the head of the class in *Ed Week's* Quality Counts report; NEA awards MSEA a \$100,000 grant; and locals take action on Common Core professional development and school improvement.

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MSEA is in the news regularly, advocating for better implementation of education reforms for educators and students. Learn how you can get education news tailored to your interests and needs.

Visit [marylandeducators.org](http://marylandeducators.org)  
for MSEA's Board of Directors  
and local affiliates directory.

More content, videos, and resources at [marylandeducators.org/aldigital](http://marylandeducators.org/aldigital)



## I'VE OFTEN CALLED

the challenges educators are facing the tsunami of education reform. Lately, it's felt more like the Twilight Zone.

In our October issue, we shared how the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) had applied for a waiver to the US Department of Education (USDE), asking for: 1) a one-year extension before using new evaluation systems to inform personnel decisions and 2) allowing schools to administer only one assessment—the PARCC field test or the MSA—to students this spring. MSEA has long pressed for these changes.

Without this waiver, last year's MSA scores could count on evaluations this year and students could be double-tested on both PARCC and MSA, losing hours and hours of instructional time.

After the New Year, we learned that MSDE's waiver application had been "turned back" by USDE. Why? USDE is pressuring Maryland to commit long-term to including PARCC as 20% of a teacher's evaluation. These strong-arm tactics deny teachers a clear answer on how they'll be evaluated and make a mystery of what tests students will be given this spring.

This is unconscionable. The Education Reform Act of 2010 states that the specifics of teacher evaluations are mutually agreed upon by local school systems and associations. Although USDE and MSDE seem stuck on evaluating teachers based on a state test, they have no legal authority to force locals to do so.

We told MSDE this summer that we would take them to court when they threatened to reject locally developed, mutually agreed upon evaluation systems. They backed down. We want to get this right—working collaboratively and at the local level. But rest assured that if MSDE violates Maryland law by rejecting local evaluation systems, they'll be in court.

The real shame is that MSDE and USDE are wasting so much time and energy when the focus should be on giving teachers the training, support, time, and flexibility they need to implement Common Core and other changes well. Until MSDE and USDE understand that, we may stay stuck in the Twilight Zone.

MSEA PRESIDENT

Watch Betty's video at [marylandeducators.org/aldigital](http://marylandeducators.org/aldigital)  
Contact Betty at [bweller@mseane.org](mailto:bweller@mseane.org)

# EVENTS

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Her Promethean Board pen, class motto, and microphone keep Porsche Vanderhorst's classroom engaged, empowered, and filled with laughter.

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You'll be electing nearly one-third of MSEA's leadership team this year. Study this Election Guide before online voting begins on January 27.

## 22 MY TURN

Rebecca Rementer, like every school nurse, is a diagnostician, dentist, and social worker, and her office a triage center as more children lack access to medical services.

## The General Assembly Session—What’s in it for educators and students?



“ I work hard, but I’ve only received one raise in the past five years. What’s in the future? ”

**WHILE SOME LOCAL TEACHER** and education support professional associations have negotiated salary and benefit increases in the past five years, the rough economy meant that many were funded only barely or not at all in county budgets.

Improving educator salaries starts with the state continuing to make strong investments in education. As the economy struggles to improve, MSEA will be working hard to advocate for full funding of the Thornton education formulas in the

governor’s budget, including the updated Geographic Cost of Education Index, which provides extra funding to counties where the cost of living is higher.


Adequate funding from both state and county governments ensures that negotiated contracts can be funded, providing educators with the resources they need in the classroom as well as competitive pay so they can focus on their students, not on making ends meet.



“ Implementing mandates from MSDE and USDE will crowd out funding and resources I need for my classroom. How is MSEA going to help? ”

**WE NEED TO REASSESS THE** adequacy and equity of how we fund our schools. Maryland’s school funding model—the Thornton plan—has become a national model for public school financing, but it’s now 12 years old. It’s time to review and establish the investment necessary to fund the programs and student population of today, not a decade ago.

MSEA supports legislation to be introduced this year that would create the Thornton 2 Commission to ensure that there is adequate funding across the state. The commission would study education funding, the recruitment and retention of educators, appropriate facilities, and student achievement to understand the many factors and mandates that have made an impact on education since the passage of Thornton in 2002, including the current reform issues—Common Core State Standards, evaluations, and testing—that require additional costs to implement effectively.



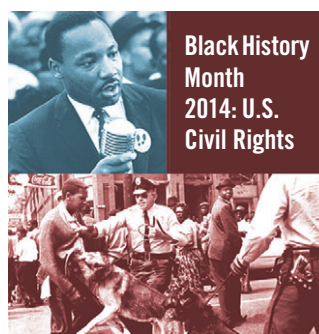
“ Giving my students MSAs this year when we are teaching new Common Core curriculum that isn’t aligned to the test is ridiculous. How does this make any sense? ”

**EDUCATORS, SUPERINTENDENTS,** education advocates, and editorial boards across the state have all said that it makes no sense to administer the MSA—the misalignment and lagging data will not reflect student learning or help teachers improve their practice. The time and money spent administering the MSA could be far better spent on

## CALENDAR

**Read Across Maryland all year long** MSEA’s literacy program is growing every year. Outreach includes partnerships with schools, libraries, and communities, across-grade reading incentives, contests, a dedicated website, special events and activities, and more. Get your class or school involved! Discover what’s happening in March and throughout the year. [readacrossmaryland.org](http://readacrossmaryland.org)

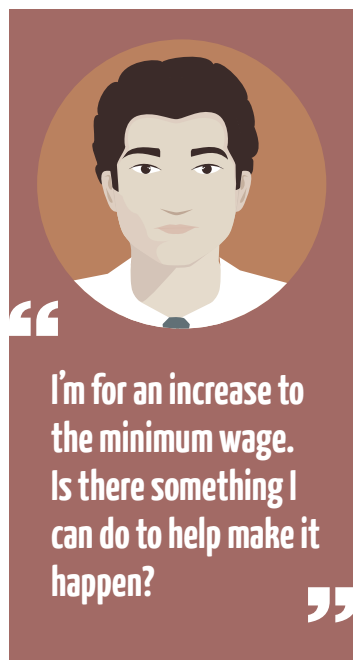
**Black History Month** Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and History in 1915. In 1926, he helped found Negro History Week, celebrated the second week in March to honor the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. The theme for Black History Month 2014 is Civil Rights in America. Visit [asalh.org](http://asalh.org) for more.



**Make a Friend Day** *A friend is, as it were, a second self.* —Cicero The brilliant and unfortunate Cicero (slain at the urging of Marc Antony) knew the value and comfort of a good friend. Friendship offers us affirmation, a shoulder to cry on, an ear to bend. As real-time connections dwindle, nurturing friendships is harder. Google “friendship” on February 11 to learn more.

additional instruction time for students and financial resources for districts to prepare for the new PARCC assessments. Despite strong public opposition and clear common sense, the Maryland State Department of Education has flatly refused to ask the US Department of Education (USDE) for a waiver to not give the MSA this year.

MSEA is a major player in the movement to stop the MSA from being administered this spring. Teacher and Montgomery County Delegate Eric Luedtke (D-Montgomery), and Senator Nancy King (D-Montgomery) have proposed legislation requiring MSDE to request a waiver from USDE to not give the MSA this year. If USDE refuses, the state will calculate whether the cost of giving the test is greater than any potential penalty from USDE for not administering the test. If the cost is greater than the penalty, the test won't be given, waiver or not.



**MSEA IS A LEADER IN THE FIGHT** to raise the minimum wage, whether it's for support professionals who work in Maryland schools or for working families struggling to get by whose economic hardships impact a student's focus on school. Since 1968, Maryland's minimum wage has decreased in value by more than 25%. If the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation, workers would be making \$10.75 per hour—\$3.50 more than the

current rate of \$7.25.

Raising Maryland's minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour will generate over \$490 million in new consumer spending and help create a fairer and more sustainable economic recovery without increasing costs to taxpayers.

Extensive research on state minimum wage increases makes clear that such increases do not result in slower job growth, even in times of economic recession. In fact, the boost in consumer spending from raising Maryland's minimum wage will support the creation of 4,280 new full-time jobs as businesses expand to meet increased consumer demand.

As a member of the Raise Maryland Coalition, MSEA is front and center. You can help by joining the campaign. Visit [raisemd.org](http://raisemd.org) and sign the petition.



You can track the progress of the state budget, education funding, MSA testing, and the fight to increase the minimum wage—sign up for *Up the Street*, an insider's look at the legislative and political issues that matter most to Maryland educators.

Visit [marylandeducators.org/UpTheStreet](http://marylandeducators.org/UpTheStreet)



Learn more about these issues and MSEA's legislative agenda in the digital edition of *ActionLine*, [marylandeducators.org/dal](http://marylandeducators.org/dal)

More content, videos, and resources at [marylandeducators.org/aldigital](http://marylandeducators.org/aldigital)



**Tell a Fairy Tale Day** Why did Albert Einstein say, "If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairytales?" Probably because of the rich imagery, detailed illustrations, life lessons, and wise advice. In fact, Einstein believed in fairy tales so much, he added, "If you want them to be more intelligent, read them *more* fairy tales."



**March is Music in Our Schools Month** Music programs around the country are in danger. State and local legislators are attempting to make up for funding shortfalls by cutting budgets and we all know that places many music and arts programs at risk. Become an advocate this month and all year long. Visit [nafme.org](http://nafme.org).

# MSEA'S \$100,000 NEA GRANT

"It's members' dues dollars coming right back to them," says MSEA Vice President Cheryl Bost of the \$100,000 grant awarded MSEA by NEA's Great Public Schools Fund. "We're putting those dues dollars to work right away to create a state-wide Common Core training program—Get More from the Core—that can reach every educator in every county."

Across Maryland, educators are feeling the pressure of the rushed implementation of the Common Core State Standards and other reforms. MSEA's grant funds will be exclusively member focused and county specific. Every local association will have a team of two local members trained by both MSEA and MSDE and well-versed in both Common Core standards and their

county's unique curriculum.

"The Common Core State Standards are not just on paper," Bost says, "they require us to make some changes to how we teach, to shift to a more experiential-based approach to our practice.

"We want to give our members more exposure to the new pedagogy of Common Core."

MSEA's partnership with MSDE in Get More from the Core means trainers will have access to the supports that the department has and is continuing to develop. A Common Core portfolio-building certificate is in the works for teachers who attend Get More from

the Core sessions and for other programs focused on developing a stronger CCSS-based teaching practice. While not adding credits toward certificate renewal, points earned toward a Common Core certificate will be a valued addition to resumes, demonstrating self-directed professional development.

"We are asking NEA for what we need," says Bost. "And what we need is more information about Common Core, new curricula, and evaluations getting to teachers in the classroom so they can do the work they are trained to do. These grants are helping to make that possible."

## DORCHESTER SCHOOLS USING NEA KEYS 2.0 FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Since NEA introduced KEYS—Keys to Excellence in Your Schools—20 years ago, more than 2,000 schools have used the powerful research-based, data-driven tool for school improvement. KEYS works because it includes the entire school community—school staff, students, parents, and the neighboring community—to determine individual school-wide goals, come to an agreement on the strategies for reaching the goals, and work together to achieve them. KEYS is built on solid research, starting with a time-proven survey that one Maryland school district has recently completed.

In Dorchester County, student success has been elusive. "Despite some legitimate short and long term gains in a variety of categories, our data tell us that too many children are not achieving," says Dorchester Educators President John Kahl. "Our state ranking in most categories is simply not acceptable to any of us."

Superintendent Dr. Henry Wagner agrees: "I see truly dedicated

professionals working as hard as possible in my travels throughout the district. If there are ways for us to work smarter, I believe that it is essential that we find them."

Kahl says the most important piece to successfully implementing KEYS in his county is the strong working relationship local association presidents and staff have long nurtured with Wagner and the county's board of education—a relationship that has made KEYS and the partnership, which also includes MSEA's School Quality and MSDE's Breakthrough Center, possible.

In December, stakeholders in Dorchester County's 14 schools completed their KEYS surveys. Two KEYS facilitators in each school and a districtwide KEYS steering committee, trained by NEA staff in KEYS data analysis, have interpreted the survey results for each school. Next steps, based on the data collected, include consensus-building on goals and strategies, determining professional development to support educators, monitoring progress, and evaluating the results.

"Dorchester teachers have been working hard and the test results have not been showing it," Kahl says. "Using KEYS, we get a comprehensive look at each school's perceived strengths and weaknesses and give the school community the tools they need to respond and improve."

Watch a video about KEYS 2.0, in the digital edition of ActionLine—[marylandeducators.org/dal](http://marylandeducators.org/dal).

## CALENDAR



### National Anthem Day

Most Marylanders know the story about Francis Scott Key, the flag, and the "rocket's red glare," but who knew the melody of the Star Spangled Banner was a retread of a 1775 drinking song made popular by London's Anacreontic Society? Celebrate the song and the flag on March 3. Learn more at [amhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner](http://amhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner).



**Johnny Appleseed Day** If you're from the Midwest, you likely know all about Johnny Appleseed, an eccentric American legend who was an apple orchardist and nurseryman, early conservationist, animal rights activist, and late-life vegetarian. Celebrate his special day, March 11, and his industrious idealism and pioneering spirit by visiting [americaslibrary.gov](http://americaslibrary.gov).

## BALTIMORE COUNTY UNION PUSHES BACK HARD ON IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORMS

When a grievance filed on behalf of 8,700 teachers hits the news, people notice. So when news of the Teachers Association of Baltimore County (TABCO) grievance hit the Maryland press in late November, it wasn't long until reporters across the state and country picked it up. Why? The helter-skelter implementation of Common Core State Standards is taking its toll from sea to shining sea and MSEA's TABCO is pushing back.

The poor implementation of the CCSS, the grievance says, flies in the face of TABCO's contract with the board of edu-

cation, which stipulates in clear language that teachers who are expected to implement new curricula will be given relevant and necessary training, materials, and texts "within a reasonable period of time" before implementation.

CCSS-aligned lesson plans and relevant materials were not made available until just days before they were to be taught. Adding insult to injury, the website where teachers could download lessons is cumbersome and time-consuming to navigate. All this adds up to spiking teacher frustration—and workload—as

educators struggle to obtain the resources they need.

"Baltimore County teachers have put in an incredible amount of hours, effort, and passion trying to get the implementation of the standards right so that our students can do their very best," says TABCO President Abby Beytin.

"While the standards have the potential to help take our students to the next level, we just haven't yet received adequate support, training, or resources to take them there," Beytin adds. "Under these conditions, we feel ill-prepared to deliver a quality instructional program.

"We know that many of these mandates are coming from Washington, D.C. or MSDE rather than our county. We value

the good working relationship we have with Superintendent Dance," says Beytin, "and want to work with him to help our teachers and students get the implementation of these changes right." Beytin adds that there is some progress—now teachers are receiving curriculum one or two weeks in advance, but, she says, that's still not enough time for teachers to plan high quality lessons.

As TABCO and county school officials work together to discuss and resolve the grievance, look for continued attention on the consequences of implementing rushed, poorly planned reforms—and how unions like MSEA and TABCO are advocating for the training and resources to get them right.

## MARYLAND STILL RANKS AT THE HEAD OF THE CLASS

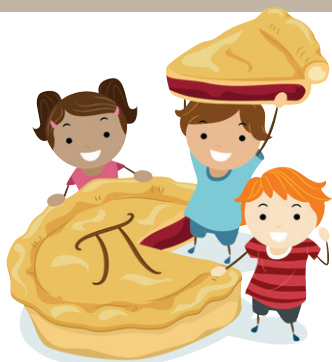
For five years in a row, Education Week's annual Quality Counts report has ranked Maryland's public schools #1 in the nation—a credit to the hard work of Maryland's educators and students. But when this year's report was released on January 9, there was a twist: states were no longer ranked, due in part to the delayed release of census data because of the federal shutdown. Although some of the report's data was consequently not updated, the fresh data still found that Maryland public schools are tops in the country.

"We continue to be a national leader in K-12 achievement and

school funding, and we're making exciting progress in closing the math and reading achievement gaps among students in poverty, including the 2nd most progress in reading and the 11th most progress in math," said MSEA President Betty Weller. "But there's room to grow in key areas, including enrolling more children in preschool and making sure that our schools are adequately and equitably funded across the state.

"This underscores the importance of convening a Thornton 2 Commission to ensure that all students have the resources and programs that they need to succeed and of expanding Maryland's preschool program, a proven reform that positively impacts student achievement," said Weller. Check out the 2014 Quality Counts report at [edweek.org/ew/qc](http://edweek.org/ew/qc).

More content, videos, and resources at [marylandeducators.org/aldigital](http://marylandeducators.org/aldigital)



### National Pi Day

When Congress passed Pi Day on March 14 (Get it? 3.14!), 2009, it acknowledged that U.S. students lagged behind other countries in math. With STEM programs growing in counties across the state, it looks like Pi Day may be getting its due in Maryland schools. Visit [piday.org](http://piday.org) for fun facts and more.

### SAVE THE DATE

#### March 15: Spring Representative Assembly

DoubleTree Hotel, Annapolis

*Leaders and delegates tend to business and prep a two-year budget*

#### March 22: ESP Professional Development Day

*Learn more and register at [marylandeducators.org/esppd](http://marylandeducators.org/esppd)*

## INSIDE MSEA WITH DAVID HELFMAN



It's been 46 years since my first campaign. As a young teen, I spent many Saturdays canvassing neighborhoods for a local justice of the peace candidate. I've been hooked ever since.

Politics—both in MSEA and Maryland—play an essential role for our association.

It's a big year for Maryland politics. From the first truly open gubernatorial election since 2002 to elections for our local school boards and county councils, and all 188 seats of the General Assembly, the outcomes will have a profound impact on your working life.

Will elected officials help us get the resources, time, flexibility, and training we need to get Common Core and other reforms right? Will we have political support for increased school funding for better pay and small class sizes? Will we be forced to combat more attempts to privatize support professional positions and weaken our bargaining rights?

How important are these issues to you? Are they important enough to spend a Saturday canvassing a neighborhood with me?

This is also a critical year for MSEA's politics. This issue lists candidates for MSEA treasurer, and NEA and MSEA board seats (statewide delegates to the NEA representative assembly can be found at [marylandeducators.org/msea2014election](http://marylandeducators.org/msea2014election)). If successful, these are the members who will set the tone for how our association engages in the issues that matter most to our professions and our students.

With your vote, you determine who is placed in these influential leadership positions. Your vote can build a strong, diverse leadership team, reflective of all of our association's generations, job classifications, and racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.

Whether it's the MSEA or Maryland election, building strong teams of education advocates starts with your vote. Learn about the candidates, get involved ... and vote!

## A WORD FROM MSEA'S LEGAL TEAM



### Professional Email Etiquette: It's a GOOD Thing ... A VERY GOOD Thing

Always remember that email communications with parents, colleagues, supervisors, and administrators are a reflection of you and your profession. Emails from your school account should contain only thoughtful professional correspondence. Avoid personal sentiments in your school email signature, including quotes or references to religion or politics.

Be smart, savvy, and safe. One poorly worded email, or ill-advised response, could damage your reputation and your profession.

#### FOLLOW THESE 10 SIMPLE RULES OF EMAIL ETIQUETTE IN ALL OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL AND COLLEGIAL CORRESPONDENCE:

- 1 Always show the highest standards of professionalism—Use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- 2 Be efficient—Get right to the point and answer questions or concerns in clear and concise language.
- 3 Protect yourself from the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) violations—Use only initials, or first name with initial of last name, when referring to a student.
- 4 Communicate with parents about their child and only their child.
- 5 Don't use all UPPER CASE, or use different fonts, sizes, and colors—a professional email uses one simple black font.
- 6 Don't forward emails from anyone that contain potentially libelous, defamatory, offensive, or racist remarks.
- 7 Don't "Reply All"—If you don't know the other individuals included in the email, or the others don't need to be involved, reply only to the sender.
- 8 Think before you click "Reply"—Consider a telephone call and have a direct conversation, particularly if the issue is a complex one.
- 9 In the case of a "serial email-et," seek guidance from your administrator to stop the emails.
- 10 Do not use email to discuss confidential matters of any kind.



## Education News

All the news that's fit to print isn't just in print anymore—or on the 6:00 news.



The explosion of online news sites and social media means there's always breaking news that affects you and your and your students—24/7, 365 days a year.

Yes, there's a lot of information out there, but there are **simple tools** that help you cut through the noise and get the news that caters to your particular interests.



This first tool is so easy, it's even in the name:

**Really Simple**

**Syndication, or RSS.**

Set up an RSS account in less than a minute on popular sites like Feedly.com or Digg.com/Reader and you're ready to go. Next, add the websites of your favorite education news sources to your account.

Whenever a new article is posted on one of the sites you're tracking, it will show up in your RSS feed, ready for you to read. **Super simple!**

But don't stop with traditional news sites; check out all the great education blogs out there. For example,

head to the **Education Week** website (edweek.com)

**ED WEEK**

to find blogs tracking curriculum issues, digital learning, rural education, education policy, and much more.

You get bonus points for adding these blogs to your RSS account!

Interested in all the news on a certain topic? Easy. It takes about 15 seconds to create a **Google Alert** (google.com/alerts) for a word or phrase. Now, every time that there's a news story containing that phrase you'll get a notification, either in your email or on your RSS account.

**Google Alerts**

Maryland has great **public radio**

**WYPR NEWS**

**stations** that cover education frequently, from three-



minute stories on **WYPR**

or **WAMU** to hour-long panel discussions on **WEAA**. But if you miss a story, don't sweat it. Look for an archived podcast of the segment you're interested in with the NPR app or on the station's website. Listen when it's convenient for you.

**On Twitter?**



Great! So is every education reporter and pundit. Follow them for great content and breaking news, whether it's your local education reporter live-tweeting the board of education meeting or Diane Ravitch sharing interesting new research.

**Reporters** are always looking for educators to help them put a face to the news. It makes sense—voices straight from the classroom and worksite make a story more interesting, accurate, and relevant. But they can't tell their stories effectively without hearing yours. We're constantly communicating with reporters, learning what kinds of stories they're inter-



ested in and sharing association priorities, your

stories, and background on education issues.

**So don't just read the news—help make it happen.** If you have a story you

want to tell or there's an issue you're passionate about, contact MSEA's communications department. We'll help connect you with a reporter who cares about the topic.

Good education news coverage depends on good relationships with the

press—that's where MSEA

comes in—and good spokes-

people, which is where you come in.

Let's make sure that no matter how you hear the news, the

voices of **Maryland's edu-**

**cators** are part of the story!



## Meet Porsche Vanderhorst

Reading/Writing Focus Teacher and 7th Grade English Teacher  
Benjamin Banneker Middle School, Montgomery County



**1 BOXING GLOVES** Working out and maintaining my health is just as important to me as the work I do in the classroom. Every day I do some sort of activity to help me maintain balance.

**2 MY FAMILY** The support of my family, their example of a strong work ethic, and the prayers and laughs we share keep me sane!

**3 PROMETHEAN BOARD PEN** This technology has been vital! Students are engaged when we use the smart board.

**4 MICROPHONE** There are times when teaching feels like being on stage! I love being creative and animated. Since I sing, it is not rare to hear me drop a tune as a part of a lesson.

**5 CLASS BUTTON** I wanted our class motto—"We learn not just for a grade but to help others"—to stick with them. This button is a source of pride and motivation for my students, and a reminder to me of why I do what I do.

**6 BOOKS** *The Multicultural Reader* has been a most welcomed addition to our supplementary texts. The varied voices

and perspectives are imperative in my diverse classroom. *The Skillful Teacher* offers teaching practices to maximize learning.

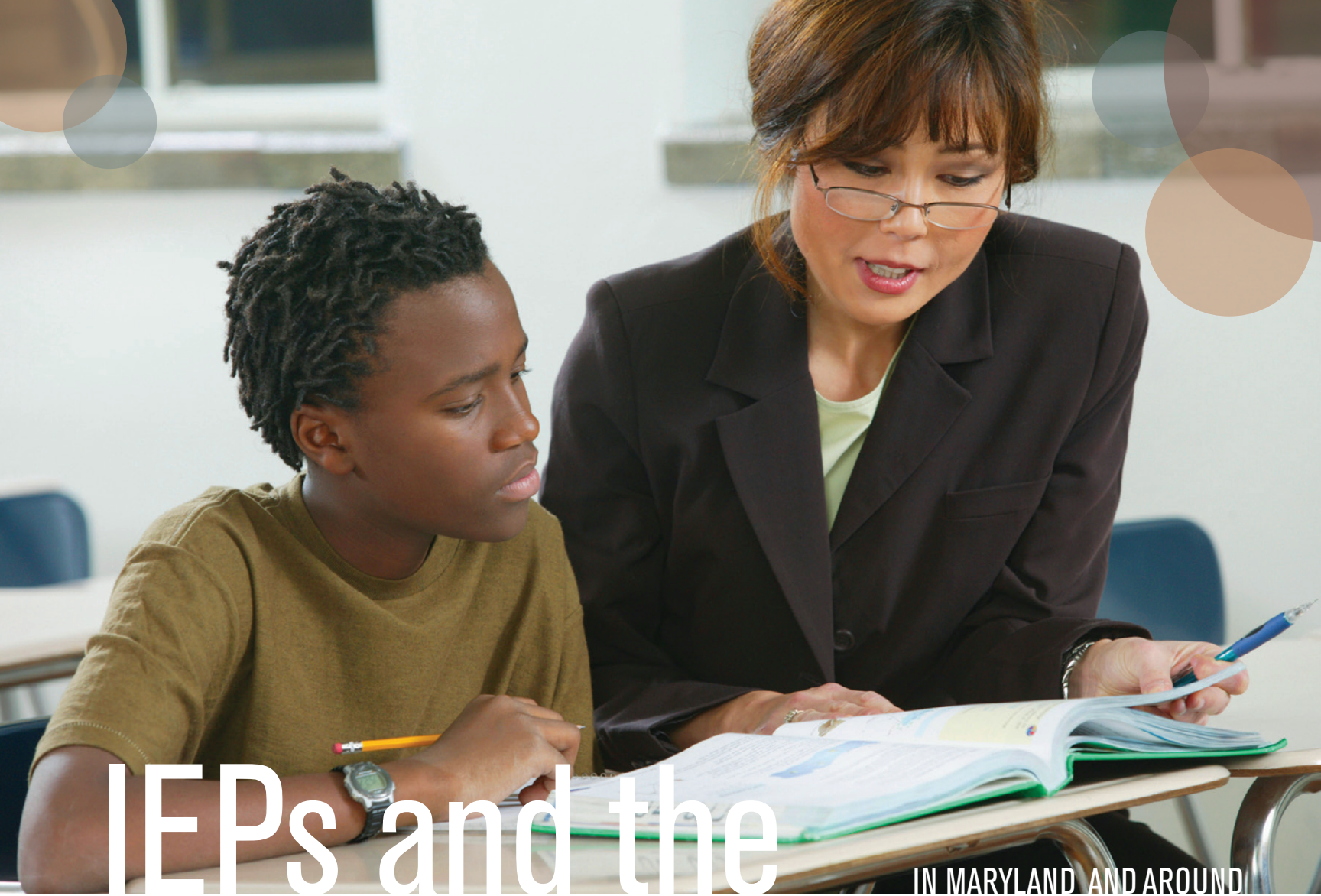
**7 DAILY AGENDA BOOK** I wear several hats—reading/writing focus teacher, community outreach chair, elected faculty representative, step team coach, classroom teacher, member of our professional learning community, to name a few. My agenda book reminds me when I should don each hat!

**8 PASSES** My students respond to color. The Orange Celebration Pass, the Yellow Lunch Help Pass, and the Red Character Conversation Pass promote our PBIS motto of being respectful, responsible, and ready to learn.

**MY STUDENTS' PARENTS** (Not pictured) Getting to know the parents has been one of the most rewarding parts of my work. When students know I have their parents on speed dial, they are more likely to give it their all.



PHOTOS: BRION MCCARTHY PHOTOGRAPHY © 2014



# IEPs and the Common Core State Standards

IN MARYLAND AND AROUND the country, teaching new curriculum aligned to the Common Core State Standards is challenge enough—especially with limited professional development around the pedagogy of the standards themselves and curriculum barely reaching many teachers in time to fully integrate new best practices into their delivery.



**FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS** the situation is even more complexly layered and challenging. These educators must deconstruct the Common Core standard by standard for their special needs students to write the required individual education programs (IEPs).

The first IEPs focused on a student acquiring basic academic success and functional skills but had little connection to the grade-level goals or progress of the typical student. Newer standards-based IEPs are a product of the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, which require that children with disabilities have access to the general standards-based education curriculum.

Today, IEPs must use Common Core grade-level standards as their starting point and closely tie students' IEPs to the standards through common language and goals. Special education teachers must unpack and analyze each standard, isolate the concepts and skills within each standard, assess each student's abilities, and, working with the student's IEP team, determine the best course of action for applying those concepts and skills to the student's IEP.

Educators across the board are still learning about the standards and how they align with their county curriculum. For special educators, including related service providers, analysis, application,

special educators, are having to look at the standards and tweak them for each student's IEP so it is both aligned to a standard—which implies a common goal for every student—and at the same time interpreted specifically to an individual," says Anne Arundel County speech-language pathologist Pam Bukowski. "It makes it very difficult to bring Common Core full circle for the special needs educator and their students.

"In our county, we're receiving in-service to address how Common Core is connected to our students' goals and objectives. We have to document what services a student needs to access the curriculum to meet the standards. It doesn't make it easier at this point that there is so much not known.

"We're all in the same place, but I don't know if I feel any better because they keep saying 'you don't know what everyone else doesn't know,'" Bukowski adds, "or if I should start to panic because nobody knows. Right now, there are just too many people in the lifeboat."

"Common Core is very challenging for special education teachers and students," says Linda Simms, a high school special education teacher and Bukowski's colleague in Anne Arundel County. "We've been working on it this year and it's been a difficult task. I've spent a lot of time testing the students and studying which objective or goal to write to meet their needs.

**"We'll need to take a look in the future to see if Common Core and the standards-based IEPs are effective with our special needs students."**

and documentation of the standards per student in an IEP adds another task to a position already burdened with a tremendous amount of paperwork. (And don't forget student learning objectives—SLOs—which may be required as one of the measurable goals of their students' achievement.)

"Related service providers, like all

"I think we'll need to take a look in the future to see if Common Core and the standards-based IEPs are effective for our students with special needs and helping them reach their goals," adds Simms.

The standards don't broach the writing of IEPs for educators nor do they provide specific guidelines for

## Prepping an IEP Using Grade-Level Standards-Based Goals

- Use Present Level of Performance
- Choose the Standard
- Unpack the Standard
- Analyze the Subskills and Develop the Goal
- Write the Short-Term Objectives and Benchmarks
- Monitor the Goal

SOURCE: California Department of Education, Special Education Division

applying the standards for special needs students. Lack of professional development around Common Core, and fully understanding the pedagogy that makes quality implementation and instruction of the curriculum supporting it possible, is a problem for all educators. But for many special educators, the new standards (never mind curriculum) are just now reaching their classrooms and the requirement of creating new Common Core-based IEPs isn't the

**“It feels for too many of us that the opportunity to be in a classroom is being overshadowed by the demands of these mandates.”**

biggest elephant in the room. Concerns for many special education teachers go further than the IEPs.

“Principals are getting pressure about test scores and it filters down to us and the students,” says one Maryland high school special educator. “Our students know what they can and can't do; asking them to perform beyond their capacity is discouraging and frustrating.”

“I love making lesson plans, I love interacting with students—it's a privilege, and I appreciate the opportunity to be in the classroom,” says another educator. “At the same time, it feels for too many of us that the opportunity is being overshadowed by the demands of these mandates. I know the state feels pressure from the US Department of Education, but right now, the way it's going down, it's at the expense of educators and our students.”

“Some of the standards are just unrealistic for students who have an IEP, learning disabilities, or processing deficits,” another teacher says. “The emphasis on continued testing creates tension for everyone.”

For these teachers, MSDE's pressure on locals to make 20 percent of a teacher's evaluation be based on the state assessment is of particular concern—the PARCC assessment is an unknown,

and as yet, there is no alternative. The curriculum is unfinished, IEPs are being redirected to the new standards, and the rigor of Common Core seems out of reach for many.

“Before we even think about administering PARCC to any group of students,” says MSEA President Betty Weller, “we need to be sure those required to take it have the skills to complete an online test. We need to know what accommodations they can use and be sure they have the

training they need to use them.”

In 2010, Senate Bill 557 sponsored by Sen. Paul Pinsky (D-Montgomery) attempted to bring some common sense to the ALT-MSA and required MSDE to consider providing greater guidance for creating the ALT-MSA, while allowing the special educator to modify the test to best meet the student's needs. Since the inception of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, many accountability reforms have been implemented with little review or evaluation to determine their effectiveness. As the PARCC test is piloted and used in Maryland it is important to again balance the need for accountability against the needs of Maryland's neediest students and not recreate a one-size-fits-all approach to testing that does more harm than good.

Maryland educators continue to need the time, training, and resources to get Common Core right and for special educators, implementation is especially challenging and complex. “We have special education for a reason—there are some kids who need special resources and help,” says Simms. “It seems with Common Core that we have the same expectations for every student to learn at the same rate, but that's not realistic.

“It's going to take some time,” adds Simms, “to really connect the Common Core standards and special education.”

## Commission on Special Education, Access, and Equity

In last year's General Assembly, MSEA helped pass House Bill 1161, which established the Commission on Special Education, Access, and Equity that includes five MSEA members appointed by Governor O'Malley. “We expect the commission to study not only access and equity for our students,” said MSEA President Betty Weller, “but how mandates and reforms are affecting our special education students and their teachers' workload, caseload, and paperwork.”

## Delegates look at alternative assessment needs at 2013 Convention

Delegates at the MSEA 2013 Convention passed a new business item calling for MSEA to “encourage MSDE to provide teachers of students with severe/profound disabilities with training for the Common Core State Standards by requiring local boards of education to provide those teachers with a curriculum aligned to Common Core and nationally recognized standards based on alternative academic programs (“special ed fundamental life skills curriculum”). This should be done prior to the implementation of the alternative PARCC Assessment.”

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# 2014

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# MSEA

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## LEADING THE

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Beginning January 27, you'll be voting online for MSEA treasurer, four members of MSEA's Board of Directors, and one NEA director—that's nearly one-third of your entire MSEA leadership team.

You'll also be choosing nearly 40 MSEA delegates to represent Maryland at the 2014 NEA Annual Meeting and Representative Assembly in Denver, Colorado on June 26–July 6. Those members will join 9,000 fellow educators from across the country to discuss, debate, and vote on NEA's position on a number of important classroom, school, and public education issues that affect member and student success.

With so many serious issues facing educators today—Common Core curricula implementation, new evaluations, new assessments, discipline issues and more—we need strong MSEA leaders and activists to lead the charge on issues that affect you, your students, and our strong association.

**Mark your calendar and add a reminder in your smart phone—MSEA voting is January 27–February 28!**

# CHARGE FOR A STRONG MSEA

## QUICK STUDY:

### WHAT DO MSEA LEADERS AND DELEGATES DO?

**MSEA's Treasurer** keeps an accurate account of all funds belonging to MSEA, signs checks to pay expenses as approved by MSEA's president and executive director, and prepares and presents a financial statement at MSEA's Representative Assembly held during the annual convention. *The three-year term starts 9/1/2014.*

**MSEA's Board of Directors** is made up of three officers (president, vice president, and treasurer), eight MSEA directors, four MSEA NEA directors, and the executive director. The board is responsible for the fiscal affairs and general management of the association, the interpretation of policies, the preparation of the proposed two-year budget, and more.

*Four directors to be elected for a three-year term starting 8/1/2014.*

**NEA's Board of Directors** consists of at least one director from each state affiliate. With 71,000 members, MSEA has four NEA directors. NEA directors are also members of MSEA's Board of Directors. The board meets three to four times a year and during the NEA Representative Assembly at the annual convention. The board and NEA Executive Committee are responsible for the general policies and interests of the association. *One NEA director to be elected for a three-year term starting 9/1/2014.*

Every year, MSEA members elect nearly 40 of their colleagues to represent MSEA as **Delegates to the NEA Annual Representative Assembly**. These state delegates, plus delegates elected by each of MSEA's 39 local associations, comprise the MSEA delegation to the representative assembly. More than 9,000 delegates from across the country will gather June 26–July 6 in Denver. They'll debate issues that impact public education and set association policy and activities for the year ahead.

## HOW TO VOTE

VOTE ONLINE  
JAN 27–FEB 28

### BEFORE YOU VOTE...

**Read the candidate profiles** for MSEA treasurer, board of directors, and NEA directors in this issue or review the entire 2014 Election Guide, including more than 100 candidates for delegate to the NEA convention, online at [marylandeducators.org/msea2014election](http://marylandeducators.org/msea2014election).

**Locate your MSEA member ID** on the back cover of this magazine, on the same line as your name. It's also on your MSEA membership card. Can't find it? Ask your building rep. You'll also need the last four digits of your Social Security number.

**Log on to [marylandeducators.org](http://marylandeducators.org).** Look for the "MSEA Election" box on the homepage for the secure and anonymous MSEA Election Ballot.

Sign in using your member ID number and the last four digits of your Social Security number.

**Vote!** You can find out who won on March 11 at [marylandeducators.org/msea2014election](http://marylandeducators.org/msea2014election).

**What if there's a runoff?** Visit the website for a schedule and candidate information, or see the March/April issue of *ActionLine*.

# 2014 MSEA ELEC TION

## TREASURER

### CANDIDATES FOR TREASURER

*Elect one treasurer to serve a three-year term beginning 9/1/2014.*

#### Bill Fisher



**School:** Dr. Thomas L. Higdon

**Position:** Teacher

**Local:** EACC

**Member:** MSEA 38 years/NEA 38 years

**Association Position:** Local: President, Vice President, Executive Board.

MSEA: Treasurer, Board of Directors, Budget Committee.

NEA: RA delegate, Budget Committee.

Teaching in Charles County for 39 years has given me the opportunity to understand the many reasons why educators have to struggle to do their jobs; workload, unfunded mandates, broken contracts. Learning the new Common Core as well as the evaluation system has put pressure on us! We must continue to speak out together to improve Maryland schools and safeguard our profession. Your vote for me as Treasurer will ensure that MSEA will remain a fiscally strong force for all educators and support staff. Contact me with your ideas to keep our profession and our schools #1. Thank you! Reelect BILL FISHER for MSEA TREASURER.

#### James Woods



**School:** Fredrick Douglas HS

**Position:** Teacher

**Local:** PGCEA

**Member:** MSEA 20 years/NEA 20 years

**Association Position:** Local: Building representative.

MSEA: RA delegate.

NEA: RA delegate.

I want to thank all MSEA Members for helping to make Maryland #1 in education for 5 years in a row. We have been able to accomplish this even though we are 8th in wages and 47th in our pensions. We have delivered on the education side of the equation, what is O'Malley and the MSDE going to do to help us get the other side of the equation to balance out. We need smaller class sizes, better wages, benefits, and a retirement that we can live on. Vote for me to be your voice of reason as Treasurer of MSEA.



# MSEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## CANDIDATES FOR MSEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Elect four members to MSEA's Board of Directors to serve a three-year term beginning 8/1/2014.*

### Steven Brooks



**School:** Patuxent HS

**Position:** Education Support Professional

**Local:** CAESS

**Member:** MSEA 17 years/NEA 17 years

**Association Position:** Local: President, Vice President, Board of Directors.

MSEA: Board of Directors.

NEA: Board of Directors.

Hi, I am Steve Brooks and I am running for MSEA Director. Having served as a NEA Director, MSEA Director, local association president and vice president, I have a wealth of knowledge, skills, and abilities which can be valuable in supporting Maryland educators. My experiences can prove valuable and I am resourceful in dealing with vital education issues.

Being a former Board member for our MSEA and a NEA Director has provided me with many experiences which can help support the general management of our state association. Vote for Steve Brooks. I would enjoy supporting the implementation of policies and procedures which can be beneficial to all educators in our state association.

### Anna M. Gannon



**School:** Gorman Crossing ES

**Position:** Teacher

**Local:** HCEA (Howard)

**Member:** MSEA 20 years/NEA 20 years

**Association Position:** Local: Vice President, Board of Directors, various committees.

MSEA: Women's Concern Committee, Instruction and Professional Development Committee, Governor's Council on Virtual Learning.

NEA: RA delegate.

I want to represent you on the MSEA Board of Directors. I pledge my time and dedication to helping empower the voice of Maryland educators. With your increased activism, together we can advocate for quality professional development and collaborate on the issues that impact students and educators across the state. I will bring the same dedication and vigor that I use in my classroom to the position of Board of Directors. Thank you for all of your hard work to provide the best working environment for all staff and students! Let me be your advocate and voice. Re-elect ANNA GANNON to the MSEA Board of Directors.

# 2014 MSEA ELEC TION

## MSEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### CANDIDATES FOR MSEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Ted Payne



**School:** Local President

**Position:** Teacher

**Local:** CCEA

**Member:** MSEA 21 years/NEA 29 years

**Association Position:** Local: Building representative, Executive Board, President.

MSEA: Board of Directors, RA delegate, NEA RA Resolutions Chair.

NEA: RA delegate, Resolutions Committee.

Public schools are rapidly changing. Many of these reforms, including evaluations, the change to Common Core Standards and changes in technology, have serious implications for our Profession. Locally, continual budget shortfalls and decisions by elected officials have added additional stress. This is why we must maintain a united voice working toward achieving our common goals. As a local President and current Board of Director, I have had many opportunities to work with elected policy makers as well as the community members which drive public education. If re-elected, I will continue working with our members and the state education policy makers to make sure reforms that are mandated are best for the education of our children. Many challenges still face us in the coming years and I am asking for your support to serve on the MSEA Board of Directors.

#### Doug Prouty



**School:** Local President

**Position:** Teacher

**Local:** MCEA

**Member:** MSEA 18 years/NEA 18 years

**Association Position:** Local: President, Vice President, Board of Directors.

MSEA: Board of Directors.

I have strived for the past three years on the MSEA Board of Directors to represent and consider the interest of all MSEA members, from classroom educators to the support staff who all contribute their labor and caring to our #1 ranked schools. We have struggled for the past three years with the effects of the recession and decisions about evaluation by the state Department of Education that do not reflect what is best for the educators and students of Maryland. As a local President, I have seen the struggles of implementing the Common Core in a time when resources are limited. If re-elected, I will focus on helping MSEA to address these issues at the state level and supporting locals in their work to make gains in salaries, benefits, and the time and resources we all need to do our jobs well.

# MSEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## CANDIDATES FOR MSEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Elizabeth W. Ray



**School:** Aberdeen MS

**Position:** Teacher

**Local:** HCEA (Harford)

**Member:** MSEA 14 years/NEA 14 years

**Association Position:** Local: Secretary-Treasurer.

MSEA: Various committees, state task forces.

NEA: RA delegate.

MSEA 2014 RETIRED ADVISORY COUNCIL ELECTION

I have worked tirelessly to make sure that our concerns were not ignored however, echoed throughout the state: Appointed by Governor Martin O'Malley to serve on the Governing Board of the Maryland Center for School Safety (sworn in to serve a three-year term). Appointed to represent MSEA on the MSDE Task force on Best Practices in School Discipline by President Elizabeth Weller (November 2012-present). Appointed to serve on Governor's Task Force on School Safety by Governor Martin O'Malley (December 2011- December 2012). Appointed to Chair MSEA Special Education Task Force Committee by President Clara Floyd (July 2011- December 2012).

### Myrna Roberts



**School:** Crossland HS

**Position:** Teacher

**Local:** PGCEA

**Member:** MSEA 16 years/NEA 16 years

**Association Position:** Local: Board of Directors, Nominations and Credentials Committee, building representative.

MSEA: Crisis Fund Trustee, RA delegate, Women's Concerns Committee.

NEA: RA delegate, Election Committee.

My name is Myrna Roberts and I am a candidate for MSEA Board of Directors. Since joining the teaching profession I have advocated for educators and their right to fair and prompt resolutions to disputes between school-based managements and boards for education and students and their right to a quality education.

The key to our survival comes from educator's voice. Therefore, I have continued to participate in membership recruitment and The Keep the Promise Campaign.

I promise to support: pension reform, pro-public education legislators and public policy-makers, reduction of educators work load, against school privatization, and punishing struggling schools, against teacher evaluations on test scores that do not reflect what students are learning, closing the achievement gap.

Vote Myrna Roberts MSEA Director.

# 2014 MSEA ELECTION

## MSEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### CANDIDATES FOR MSEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Blair B. Todd



**School:** Charles Carroll MS

**Position:** Teacher

**Local:** PGCEA

**Member:** MSEA 14 years/NEA 14 years

**Association Position:** Local: Board of Directors, Vice President, Negotiations Team.

MSEA: NBI Committee Chair, Legislative Committee, RA delegate.

NEA: RA delegate.

I am an active member who seeks to help this organization become all that it was destined to become. I believe this organization has the power to transform education in this state, and become the authority for what is and is not beneficial for students and educators in Maryland. This organization should have an influential seat at every table of where major decisions are made regarding our public school system. I will work hard to ensure that MSEA exercises the power to not only change school policies, but to create them. As BOD, I will continue to serve you by pushing for issues you deem important. I've lobbied government officials on your behalf. I've help decide what educators will push for in Annapolis during MSEA's legislative committee, and at NEA conventions, I chair a committee that meets at 6am in order to serve the members effectively. Thank you.

#### Joseph Webb



**School:** Suitland HS

**Position:** Teacher

**Local:** PGCEA

**Member:** MSEA 15 years/NEA 44 years

**Association Position:** Local: Treasurer, Board of Directors, building representative.

MSEA: Committee member, RA delegate.

NEA: Committee member.

Dear Colleagues: If I did not truly and fully believe that love is the most powerful force that has ever existed in any universe, My God would face His greatest challenge, and I would seek a greater God. My candidacy for MSEA director reaffirms my dedication to service and commitment to excellence. Colleagues, you are embroiled in a battle for survival, MSEA must respond (quickly and forcefully) to this madness: assaults, bullying, intimidation of educators, abusive, intrusive, repetitive paperwork, denial of a living wage. We must guarantee all educators a fair, safe, and orderly working environment where nobody is allowed to hurt even one of us without experiencing justified retribution from all of us. I shall fight to ensure that educators and students will reach their full potential and become all that they can be. Education is our hope for a better tomorrow. Agape, Joseph Webb.

#### Michael J. Jackson

**School:** Crossland HS

**Position:** Teacher

**Local:** PGCEA

**Member:** MSEA 6 years/NEA 6 years

**Association Position:** Local: Building representative. MSEA: RA delegate.

NEA: Alternate, Resolutions Committee.

# NEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## CANDIDATES FOR NEA DIRECTOR

*Elect one member to NEA's Board of Directors to serve a three-year term beginning 9/1/2014.*

### Theresa Mitchell Dudley



**School:** Benjamin Tasker MS

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**Position:** Teacher

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**Local:** PGCEA

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**Association Position:** Local: Vice President, building representative, Board of Directors.

MSEA: Board of Directors, Pension Committee member.

NEA: RA delegate.

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With your vote my work can continue on the MSEA Board and also represent Maryland on the NEA Board of Directors. I am humbled to have served you as a MSEA Board Member for the past three years. We are all being pushed to do more with unprecedented attacks on our commitment as educators. SLOs, PAARK, pensions, and other issues we face require unabashed leadership. As we transition into these new horizons, we deserve strong leadership on local, state and national issues. Over twenty years ago, I started my career as a substitute, then worked as a Computer Lab Aid (ESP), and now I teach middle school in Prince George's County. My children are public school graduates and I believe a quality education is a civil right. Next year, I'll have an empty nest and continued commitment to serve. You can reach me on Facebook or email. Thank you!

### Doug Lea



**School:** Deep Run ES

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**Position:** Teacher

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**Local:** HCEA (Howard)

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**Member:** MSEA 25 years/NEA 25 years

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**Association Position:** Local: Treasurer, Peer Assistance and Review coordinator, Negotiations (co-chair).

MSEA: Emerging leader, RA delegate.

NEA: National Teaching Fellow, RA delegate, National Board Certified Teacher Caucus chair.

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Evaluations, legislation, professional development, teaching and learning conditions and the misuse of standardized testing are just a few issues facing us. If you allow me to represent you, I promise to bring your perspective to the Board. I understand the politics at NEA. I learned how things work and how things get done by spending a year at NEA headquarters as the NEA Teaching Fellow. Day after day I worked closely with NEA staff and governance on a variety of policy issues. I was core staff to NEA's Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching where we crafted a vision for the future of our profession for the NEA. The Commission's work was instrumental in shaping NEA's major focus on Leading the Profession. The vision: Teachers don't need a seat at the policy table. Teachers should own the table. I would be honored to represent you.

## Rebecca Rementer

RN, BSN

School Nurse, Pemberton Elementary  
Wicomico County

The one critical common ground among all school nurses is that we do everything in our power to keep children in school. We are often the only form of health care a child receives. There are times when a sick child comes to the health room telling me that their parent sent them to school, instructing them to go directly to me. This is where reality comes into play—many students simply can't get to a doctor's or nurse's office, whether they have one or not.

It may be due to lack of transportation, lack of insurance, a single parent situation where multiple young children are at home and no one can take care of the children, or the parents absolutely cannot leave work or take off work for fear of losing their job.

School nurses need to step out of their comfort zone and reach out for help. Within the school system, my home-school liaison and pupil personnel worker colleagues are invaluable, as are local services and charities. My goal is to do what I can to get medical care, including preventative care, to every child. This includes bringing preventative medical and dental care to the child in the school. Even if it takes an entire day of phone calls and paperwork to obtain care for that one child, then that is one more child at their desk ready to learn.

**“My goal is to do what I can to get medical care, including preventative care, to every child.”**



Watch Rebecca's  
video in digital  
ActionLine  
[marylandeducators.org/aldigital](http://marylandeducators.org/aldigital)

PHOTO: BRIAN MCCARTHY PHOTOGRAPHY © 2013



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