

HELPING COMMUNITIES
MICRO-GRANTS

COMMON CORE
SHIFT FOCUS

STUDENT DISCIPLINE
DOCUMENT!

ACTIONLINE

The Magazine of the Maryland State Education Association Volume 16 Issue 2 December 2015

FIGHTING

HEROIN

Heroin-related ER visits for 15 to 24-year-olds in Maryland have jumped 500% since 2008. What's happening?

SPECIAL FEATURE ►

FIGHTING HEROIN

Drug overdoses now kill more Americans than car accidents or firearms. State law enforcement named it the #1 problem in a 2015 survey. People addicted to opioid painkillers are 40x more likely to try heroin. Doctors in the U.S. prescribe twice as many opioid painkillers as doctors in Canada. Addiction can occur in less than a month.



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UP FRONT

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MSEA DISPATCH

To follow student discipline guidelines educators must keep their ducks in a row and document, document, document, says MSEA's legal team. Executive Director David Helfman reports that Gov. Hogan's education cuts affect districts that educate 80% of Maryland's children and 92% of Maryland's minority students.

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500 WORDS

What's up with technology in your school? Do you have the devices, access, and training you and your students need? Read the results of the statewide survey.



THE TIDE IS TURNING.

President Obama's call for a 2% cap on standardized testing last month demonstrated the momentum behind reining in the over-testing that our students have experienced for too long. A couple of weeks later, it was exciting to see NEA's endorsed primary candidate Hillary Clinton forcefully declare that she is "against the idea that you tie teacher evaluation and even teacher pay to test outcomes. There's no evidence [for it]."



Our polling has repeatedly shown that this isn't a partisan issue—no matter the political party, region, or background, Marylanders of all stripes support reducing the overbearing emphasis on standardized testing.

Local associations' Time to Learn committees are making real headway. From building partnerships to reduce testing in Wicomico and Somerset counties to doing the hard work of calculating the impact of over-testing on students in Garrett and Allegany counties—to organizing around testing in every jurisdiction in between—we are leading on this issue.

As the state testing commission and 2016 General Assembly session kick into gear, count on MSEA and your local association to continue pushing lawmakers to reduce over-testing. Look for updates from your local and from Annapolis on how you can get involved.

Our movement for less testing and more learning is racking up wins across the country, and we're scoring more of our own here in Maryland. As a recent report from FairTest put it: "The movement's ultimate goal goes well beyond winning less testing, lower stakes, and better assessments. It seeks a democratic transformation of public education from a system driven by a narrow 'test-and-punish' agenda to one that meets the broad educational needs and goals of diverse students and families."

I think that's worth fighting for—don't you?

Betty H. Weller
MSEA PRESIDENT

Watch Betty's video at
marylandeducators.org/
DigitalAL
Contact Betty at
bweller@mseane.org

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Meet Toni Mejias, a Prince George's County member who supports the county's Office of Diversity for Latina/o Affairs.



MSEA CONVENTION 2015

It wasn't exactly business as usual at MSEA's annual convention in Ocean City this year. First, there was a record-setting number of delegates from across the state gathered in the huge meeting hall, and second, the business itself was high on their radar—they were eager to discuss and debate the professional issues they face every day.

And it wasn't just business. If you haven't been to a convention lately, you're missing out on free professional development—this

year's 30 trainings included Powering Up for Global Citizenship and Saving Our Sons in the 21st Century—lots of fun at MSEA's Got Talent, and our annual party at Seacrets, OC's hottest nightclub. And there was plenty of discussion and camaraderie, too, around educators' careers, best practices, policies, reforms, and student achievement.

At the representative assembly (RA), 640 delegates made plans for MSEA's next 12 months, casting votes in elections and on policy and legislative action. They heard speeches, won awards, and set a record for donations to MSEA's PAC fund to support the association's political voice.

Cecilia Pak, a second grade teacher in Montgomery County was one of 184 first-time dele-

gates. "There was a bit of a learning curve, but I was able to be a part of such a powerful process addressing pivotal educational needs," Pak said. "I was not only impressed with fellow educators, but humbled by their dedication to advocate for change and social justice. It was inspirational and it gave me a sense of ownership to my profession and made me reflect on my obligation as an educator to be a voice for making changes."

Rowena Shurn from Prince George's County was elected to MSEA's Board of Directors, Iris Harris was reelected as chair of MSEA's Crisis Fund, and candidates for two of Maryland's NEA director positions (which includes MSEA board membership) campaigned. It was a busy weekend!

The RA directed MSEA to address a number of issues this year, including one about educators' continuing concerns with PARCC. "As a result of the RA's action, we called on MSDE to make further changes to the test," said MSEA President Betty Weller. "We urged them to address what we know to be the most troublesome issues: time, accommodations, receipt of results, and the huge impact the test makes on learning, schedules, technology, and personnel."

MSEA is taking the issue of students opting out of testing to MSDE as well. "In January," Kristy Anderson, MSEA's chief legal counsel, reports, "MSEA will draft a letter calling on the State Board of Education to clarify the school system's responsibility when a student



opts out, as well as a response to parents' seeking to opt their child out of testing."

Promoting the value of education support professionals has long been part of MSEA's mission. Delegates passed the new business item introduced by Prince George's County ACE-AFSCME Local 2250 President Shirley Kirkland to create an ESP of the Year Program. "By creating this statewide award," Kirkland said, "we call attention to the careers, services, and importance of support professionals in all of our schools, worksites, and communities."

Carroll County delegate Robin Szymanski's successful new business item addressing special educator workloads, which included the introduction of a workload analysis model, passed. It's an issue she pursued successfully at the 2015 NEA Representative Assembly with fellow

Maryland delegate Sheena Washington of Prince George's County. Since then, NEA's IDEA Cadre created a draft for use in pilots. "Change has to start somewhere," Szymanski said. "My goal is to create partnerships in counties where we can further develop a pilot program using the workload analysis model. I believe we must organize our members around the need for change and when we're able to collaborate with our partners there's a higher likelihood for acceptance and progress."

Traci Davis, Charles County, got support for MSEA to conduct a survey of kindergarten educators on the implementation of the 2015-16 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. "We know by now that MSDE needs to create an assessment for kindergarten students that is developmentally appropriate," Davis said. "Teachers are losing

hours of valuable instruction time at the very beginning of the school year, a particularly important time for our young students. We'll use the survey results to fight in Annapolis and at home for a change—a change that will provide kindergarten educators with an appropriate assessment that will truly inform our instruction."

SLOs continue to be problematic for many educators across the state and Wicomico County teacher Kevin Johnson's proposal to continue MSEA's efforts with MSDE to better educate and inform local school systems passed. "There is a perceived notion that many districts are requiring or attempting to require teachers to incorporate standardized and/or county-developed tests as SLO measurements as some sort of component into the SLO process as a measure for teacher evaluations

as opposed to a measure of student growth," Johnson said. "The SLO process has become skewed from its original intent and is becoming more about compliance instead of student growth and instructional practice."

Catch up! Read about passed business items, watch speeches from Betty Weller and U.S. Labor Secretary Tom Perez, and see photos at marylandeducators.org/2015Convention.

Interested in becoming a delegate next year?
Talk to your local association.

GIVING BACK WITH MSEA MICRO GRANTS

MSEA is celebrating its 150th anniversary by offering 150 grants for members of up to \$500 to help enrich and improve Maryland communities. Whether you are a new or veteran member, live in an urban or rural community, are school-based or on the road, you're eligible if your application fits the micro-grant criteria.

It's a win-win for your local community, your association, and your school. If you have a great idea that needs support, you'll need to do some research and planning to receive your micro-grant. Here's some basic criteria:

- What community need does the project address?
- Who benefits?
- Can you build relationships and create partnerships?
- Can you mobilize colleagues and the community?
- Does your project speak to social justice concerns?
- Does the project help improve student learning?

"Your \$500 could make all the difference for playground upgrades and repairs, school landscaping, literacy programs—the opportunities are unlimited."

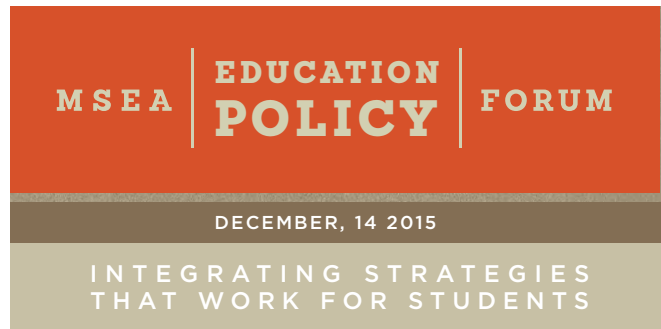
—MSEA President Betty Weller

"If \$500 isn't quite enough," said MSEA President Betty Weller, "there are plenty of community action groups to partner with. Your \$500 could make all the difference for play-

ground upgrades and repairs, tree planting, literacy programs—the opportunities are unlimited. I'm very excited about how these grants can reach communities where they need it most and underscores the important impact that educators have on our community."

Awardees get support from MSEA, including a toolkit of materials with tips to help recruit volunteers, attract media, and create compelling photos and videos for local association and MSEA social media and publications.

Learn more, including timelines and criteria, and download an application at marylandeducators.org/150MicroGrants. Project awards will be determined on a rolling basis and should be carried out no later than August 1, 2016.



If better informed voters are the answer to electing and holding accountable local and statewide policymakers, it only follows that better informed policymakers are the key to making reasoned, rational decisions that benefit our public schools.

For the second year, MSEA is hosting an education policy forum to provide decision-makers and education stakeholders with the kind of information they'll need as they face challenging issues like testing, reform strategies to close the gaps, and funding priorities. Among the expert panelists are Judith Browne Dianis, civil rights advocate and co-director of the Advancement Project, Julian Vasquez Heilig, blogger and professor at Sacramento State, Richard Kahlenberg of the Century Foundation, and Monty Neill of FairTest.

Heilig, whose *Cloaking Inequity* blog is consistently rated one of the top 50 education websites in the world by Teach100, said, "The next 10 years should look different. We know that we need community-based approaches to reform. The best community schools provide communities and families with services that they need so that school is essentially a harbor of a community, rather than the anchor.

"The way to create community schools is through a suite of reforms that are bottom-up, that use multiple metrics, and that involve the communities in the decisions that are being made. Reform can be community-based and democratically controlled."

CALENDAR



It's Crossword Puzzle Day!

December 21 Pencil? Check! Sharpener? Check! Word of warning: it's simply not above-board to kowtow to any of your ubiquitous devices when taking the challenge of a crossword puzzle. Liverpoollian journalist Arthur Wynne is the credited inventor of crosswords and one first appeared in the *Sunday New York World* on December 21, 1913.



Open House in Annapolis

January 13 It's time to suit up, Annapolis! The General Assembly opens its doors once again and so does MSEA for a friendly meet and greet before the serious debates of 2016 begin. We'll welcome legislators from both sides of the aisle to MSEA headquarters in Annapolis to kick off the annual 90-day session at 4 p.m.

CONNECT

ACTIVATE

EMPOWER

Last year Carroll County educators rallied around pro-public education candidates and helped gain critical seats on the county commission and school board. It was the hard work of committed educators—active members of the Carroll County Education Association—and a concerned public desperate to stop the free fall of elected officials’ support for public education that made the difference.

2016 brings another election for two more school board seats—and Carroll educators want to build on their success. With wins behind them and a higher profile as their calling card, CCEA is using a model proven over and over again to be a key to success in connecting with colleagues—one-on-one conversations guided by a trained member-facilitator.

“The 2016 elections are very serious for us,” says Heather Goodhart. “The goal of each conversation is to motivate new activist members to join us as we mobilize the community for

the school board primary and election.”

With the support of an MSEA Innovative Engagement and Organizing Grant, members including Goodhart, Emily Cramer, and Gary Foote, have created a data-driven approach to building a stronger CCEA by targeting the county’s 10 schools with the lowest share of CCEA members and finding out exactly what they think.

“Our goal is to be sure members recognize the importance of our local elections and what it means for our students and our jobs,” says Cramer. “The 2014 election brought more open and honest dialogue to educators and commissioners on funding issues. We’ve seen members newly involved. Perhaps the most telling result is members rejoining CCEA.”

“Colleagues may not be aware of the value and influence we are gaining,” adds Foote. “Every educator benefits from the work of their union brothers and sisters. We want to build a larger family.”

STRONG ESP

STRONG SCHOOLS



Standing strong
With one voice.



The 2015 National ESP of the Year Janet Eberhardt, a community relations specialist and elementary advisor from California, and NEA Secretary-Treasurer Princess Moss were in Annapolis on November 18 to celebrate ESP Day with dozens of MSEA members.

“Schools are ecological systems and children are at the center,” Eberhardt told the NEA Representative Assembly in July. “We must be united—whole school, whole community—to do whatever it takes.”

MSEA Director Debbie Schaeffer takes a photo of Linda Firman, Howard County, and Janet Eberhardt.

More content, videos, and resources at marylandeducators.org/DigitalAL

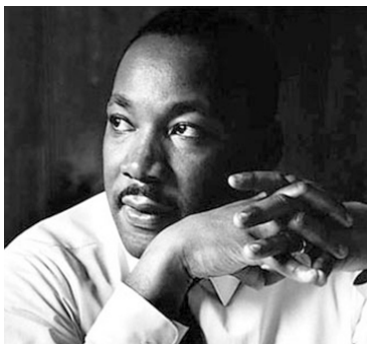
GIVE
BLOOD
SAVE
A LIFE



January: National Blood Donor Month

Winter blues got you down?

One of the easiest ways to jump start some good vibes is by giving blood. Ask anyone who donates regularly and they’ll tell you with pride about it—and the chocolate chip cookie the nice nurse gave them. You can give blood every 56 days and platelets every seven days. Schedule appointments at 800/733.2767 or download the American Red Cross app.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration January 16 MSEA honors Dr. King at the annual celebration featuring special guests Dr. John Moore and winners of the MSEA co-sponsored Reginald F. Lewis Museum Juried Art Competition for high school students. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at the BWI Airport Hilton. Learn more about how you can attend at marylandeducators.org/2016MLK.

INSIDE MSEA WITH DAVID HELFMAN



Governor Hogan repeatedly

claims that he is the first governor to appropriate any Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) funds in his first year of office. This calls for some fact-checking!

By statute, GCEI was to be phased in over five years, beginning in Fiscal 2006. Governor Ehrlich failed to begin funding during his last two years of office (the Fiscal 2006 and 2007 budgets).

Martin O'Malley's first budget was a huge one for public school funding, including a \$567 million increase in Thornton school funding and a \$119 million increase in school construction.

For O'Malley and schools across Maryland, these significant increases were a greater priority than beginning the GCEI phase-in. He then phased in GCEI in two years—rather than five—fully funding GCEI for the last six years of his term.

Governor Hogan then cut GCEI funding in half, and continues to refuse to release \$68 million to school systems despite the General Assembly appropriating the funds to do so. The \$4.8 million lost in Anne Arundel County cost special education services, positions, and salaries. In Baltimore City, the \$11.6 million in GCEI cuts translated into position cuts. Baltimore County diverted funds from building repairs. In Carroll County, 56 teaching and crisis counseling positions were eliminated. These cuts were echoed in Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's counties.

In all, these cuts affect districts that educate 80% of Maryland's children and 92.1% of Maryland's minority students.

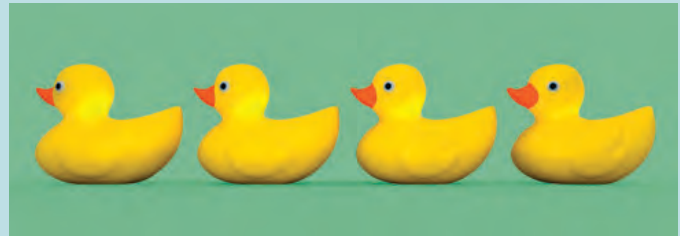
It's clear that Gov. Hogan understands the impact the cuts have had. His Office of Community Initiatives recently announced that "Governor Hogan and Lt. Governor Rutherford [have] learned that some schools in our state have no or few books in their libraries.

"We must ensure that ALL schools in Maryland have books in their libraries. We are also collecting backpacks and all kinds of school supplies, so that students and teachers have the materials they need to have a successful day in school."

Gov. Hogan can lead the way by making a \$68 million contribution to the cause. Will he?

A WORD FROM MSEA'S LEGAL TEAM

Navigating Discipline Policies: Keep Your Ducks in a Row and Document Everything!



In July 2014, when MSDE adopted guidelines that prohibit zero tolerance policies for responses to student discipline, it also put in place provisions for continuous education services to suspended and expelled students to maintain a connection to the school program.

MSEA and NEA are active in a nationwide movement supporting the use of restorative practices that bring alternatives to traditional student discipline measures and offer opportunities for positive confrontation and relationship building, not isolating, punitive discipline. But as innovations to suspension and expulsion continue to be adopted, it's important that educators understand their options and responsibilities when student behavior becomes disruptive.

MSDE's guidelines—which counties have conformed to—require an explanation of why and how long-term suspensions or expulsions are last-resort options. Principals may still authorize suspensions for not more than 10 school days, including in-school suspensions, but now there is more restriction around their options.

What can you do when these new rules make it difficult to get the support you need to maintain a healthy and productive classroom environment?

- Establish and maintain a safe learning environment through classroom management and active individual interventions.
- Write referrals when the behavior disrupts the learning environment and other interventions aren't working.
- Remember that guidelines include provisions for low-level disciplinary action for disrespect and disruption, but your documentation of prior interventions will be necessary to warrant administrative action.

If you are having problems that aren't being addressed, call your local association UniServ Director for advice and guidance.

Technology in Maryland Schools

The results of MSEA/UMD survey on technology in Maryland schools are in.

Top quality professional development for the demands of the classroom has been a sticking point among practitioners and policymakers for the past several years.

Most recently, educators struggled as the local and state implementation of Common Core and student learning objectives fell short of expectations due, in great part, to short-sighted planning and inadequate training for educators and administrators. MSEA responded to the need with More From the Core/Common Core Leadership and SLO cadres which provide trained experts in the standards and SLO writing in every county.

Implicit in SLOs is the ability to collect, track, and use data to inform instruction and that requires certain digital competencies, as do creating innovative lessons

that support the new standards in a truly 21st century learning environment.

But there remain significant pieces of the implementation puzzle missing, and one of those is the efficient and effective use of technology that is expected to be in place in schools for both educators and students to be successful in the digital age, with little regard to the experience, skill, economic, or geographic digital divides.

Last spring, hundreds of educators completed The Teachers' Voice: Using Technology Survey, a joint effort between MSEA, the Baltimore Teachers Union, and the Maryland Equity Project (MEP) of the University of Maryland. MEP recently released a report on the survey, with findings that support your

frustrations around expectations, the lack of deep, specific professional development, adequate laptop or tablet resources for students (despite recommendations by the Maryland Technology Advisory council nearly five years ago), and the infrastructure and resource issues around PARCC.

While the survey points to professional development as a serious concern for educators, it is not due to educators' lack of interest or awareness. In fact, awareness of this deficiency in training is high on the radar.

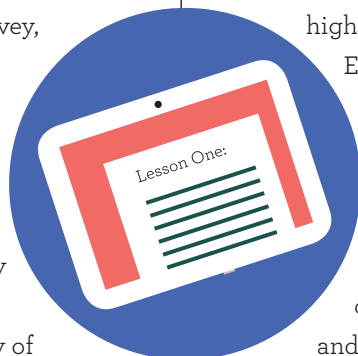
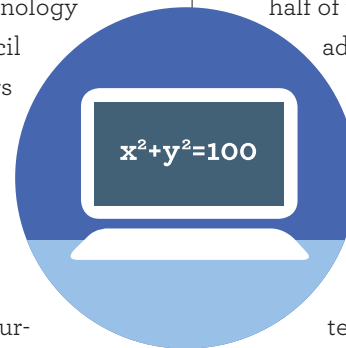
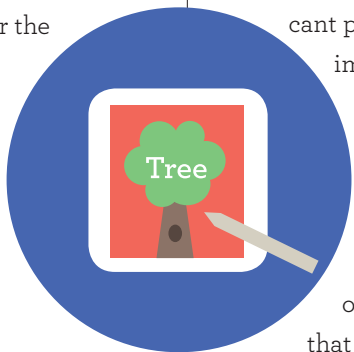
Educators know it affects opportunities for collaboration and learning through video conferencing, and integrating library catalogs, ebooks, simulations, spreadsheets, blended learning, and other

tools into their practice.

It's no surprise to educators that standardized testing has a huge impact on the availability of technology for instructional purposes. Only half of teachers were adequately satisfied with their school's internet connectivity during PARCC testing, and majorities of teachers reported no or minimal access to desktop computers, laptops, and tablets during testing windows. These issues continue to drive concerns around equity among classes, schools, and districts.

MSEA members will use the survey findings to work with local and state policymakers to improve training, access, and infrastructure and to fight for technology equity throughout the state.

You can learn more about the survey and read the full report at marylandeducators.org/TechSurvey.



Common Core

BY ROWENA SHURN

Breakthroughs in Pedagogy is a new ActionLine series written by members to improve and deepen educators' understanding of practice-related issues.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have truly been a paradigm shift for many educators.

I see student learning of a cursory level of content shifting to student mastery of more complex content. As educators, we must dig deeper into the language of that content and provide students a bridge from concrete to more abstract thinking. We plan with the idea of meeting the instructional needs of students more holistically—rather than in isolation of subject and content. This provides a natural shift to the integration of learning across the curricula with more deliberate cross-curricular connections. To do this, I look at how standards in one area apply to learning in other content areas.

For example, I find that to better address text complexity, educators in all content areas must use instructional strategies and choose appropriate texts that allow students to gain critical knowledge through the comprehension of challenging text. Some strategies I've found to be successful include:

- Providing students with a short anchor text to model a strategy.
- Setting the purpose for reading and encouraging students to get

the gist of the first reading.

- Teaching them how to close read—unpacking the text and use context and think-alouds to develop meaning.
- Using the double-entry strategy to teach students how to develop text dependent questions—what the

text says and what the text means. This enables the student to dig deeper into the text and develop inferences and evaluations based upon what is explicitly and implicitly stated.

One of the most successful models to assist teachers in implementing CCSS is teacher-led collaboration. This works best when there is embedded time within the school day that is explicitly designed for teacher collaboration. When different content teachers lead professional development in these collaborative settings, individuals can share strategies that may be successfully modified for other content areas.

Collaborative teams produce more creative and exciting learning among colleagues and that naturally filters down to the instructional program. Teacher

teams are able to develop lesson plans and common language so that as students transition throughout the day they're experiencing a continuity of the curricula. Some successful instructional strategies that I have shared with colleagues are the gradual release model, student-led discussions or Socratic seminars, and inquiry-based learning.

Building a professional and supportive learning community is critical. If there's one key element that contributes to teachers feeling more comfortable with CCSS, it is this collaborative model. With so much on the plates of educators, understanding the standards as you implement the curriculum takes time and shared professional expertise.

As a coach, I'm able to help teachers decipher the standards and develop their instructional program. We explore how their awareness, thoughts, and beliefs align with student data and how to make adjustments to instruction that improve their students' outcomes. I help by

asking probing questions that guide them to developing their own instructional problem-solving strategies that meet the needs of their specific students.

Here are some of the resources that I've found to be valuable with the transition to CCSS:

- The Common Core Mathematics Companion
- The Common Core Companion: The Standards Decoded
- Coaching Classroom Instruction (Classroom Strategies)
- The Art and Science of Teaching
- Better Lesson betterlesson.com
- ASCD ascd.org
- ReadWriteThink readwrite-think.org
- International Association of Literacy literacyworldwide.org
- Achieve the Core achieve.org/resources

Rowena Shurn is a Peer Assistance and Review Consulting Teacher in Prince George's County. She's also a member of the MSEA and Prince George's County Educators' Association boards of directors and co-chair of MSEA's Instructional and Professional Development Committee.



Across Curriculum

Inquiry-Based Learning

Stephanie Jones

Fourth Grade Teacher/Team Leader
Eastern Elementary School
Jr. Rebels Cheerleading Coach
Washington County



①



②



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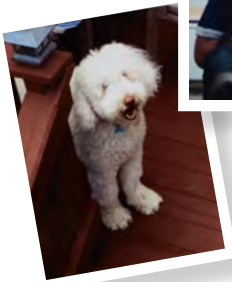


PHOTO: BRION MCCARTHY PHOTOGRAPHY © 2015



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⑥

1 ROALD DAHL I think it's important to share a love of reading with students. I love books and my classroom is filled to the brim with them. Roald Dahl is by far my favorite author! His books bring so much laughter and imagination into my students' lives.

2 IPAD The kids and I love technology and use our iPads every day. An app called SeeSaw is a digital portfolio for my students. They think of it as their own personal Instagram! It's a great way to show off the wonderful work they're doing, and a way for me to give descriptive feedback.

3 BENTLEY-COOPER & WILLOW My two crazy pets! My students love hearing all about their adventures. They quickly become the topic of class meetings and are used quite often in word problems.

4 YOGA Yoga gives me peace of mind after a hectic and fun-filled school day. It's also when most of my creative ideas come to me.

5 CLASSROOM THEME I like to make my classroom "a home away from home." In 4th grade, we learn all about Maryland, so why not bring a little nautical atmosphere to Western Maryland.

6 MOMMOM My grandmother plays a huge part in my life inside and outside of the classroom. She helps with everything from cutting laminate and sorting papers to setting up my classroom in August.

SPECIAL FEATURE

FIGHTING

HEROIN



DRUG OVERDOSES NOW KILL MORE AMERICANS THAN CAR ACCIDENTS OR FIREARMS. STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE U.S. NAMED IT THE #1 PROBLEM IN A 2015 SURVEY. PEOPLE ADDICTED TO OPIOID PAINKILLERS ARE 40X MORE LIKELY TO TRY HEROIN. DOCTORS IN THE U.S. PRESCRIBE TWICE AS MANY PAINKILLERS AS DOCTORS IN CANADA. ADDICTION CAN OCCUR IN LESS THAN THIRTY DAYS. WHAT'S HAPPENING?

As Leslie Bartoshesky reads, her eighth-grade students are still. The book she's reading aloud from is *Dope Help*, a collection of journal entries and letters from a young woman, Erin, who died of a heroin overdose at 21, to her mother, Marie Allen. The book is the centerpiece of Leslie's lessons on heroin addiction. "We need an approach like this in Wicomico County because heroin use is a problem that is getting worse. It's not getting better."

Allen's book is used throughout Wicomico County and it opens the door to a subject that many students have already experienced through family members and friends. "So many students have shared with me that their brother is in jail because he was dealing heroin, or my cousin is doing heroin right now. I guarantee that at least 50% of these kids have a relative or know someone who is dealing with heroin right now.

"Some will share, but it's such a

personal thing that a lot of them are embarrassed or scared. They know that addictive tendencies can be hereditary and wonder what does that mean for them? The book gives us so many opportunities to discuss their fears and the enormous impact of heroin and drug addiction on everyone involved—not just the addict."

At the end of the school year, Marie Allen is the guest at eighth grade assemblies, and shares her story firsthand before closing with a Q&A. The county gives each eighth grader a copy of the book and Leslie tells them that, "it's a book to keep on the shelf at home, so that in their darkest days if they think they need to use a drug, they can remind themselves of the heartache."

No county is untouched

In Wicomico County where Leslie works, recent studies report that from 2008–2013 the county was fifth in the number of heroin-related deaths, despite a population ranking 14th of

Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. Statistics for 2013 and 2014 reveal the second highest per capita rate of heroin-related death rates in the state; only Baltimore City had a higher rate. In October, county authorities seized \$500,000 worth of heroin in a major drug bust.

In Washington County, there have been 15 fatal and six nonfatal heroin overdoses. Three of the recent deaths were young men ages 20–23, all graduates of Boonsboro High. The FBI calls Interstate 81, long an important connector of Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania, one of the country's "heroin highways." Washington County sits right on I-81. In June, in Martinsburg, West Virginia, the FBI and state law enforcement arrested a 27-year-old Baltimore supplier and 39 dealers from Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia who supplied the tristate region with around two kilograms of heroin per month.

In Cecil County, 2013 marked the county's highest per capita heroin-re-

“Unless it’s happening to you, it’s not happening. But let me tell you, it’s happening.”

—Senator Katherine Klausmeier
(D-Baltimore County)

Sen. Klausmeier is among 11 members of Governor Hogan’s Heroin and Opioid Emergency Task Force. The task force submitted its final report December 1 after fact-gathering meetings across the state. Lt. Gov. Rutherford said in August he was unsure of how state and local efforts would be funded. Klausmeier warned, “We have to tackle this problem now.”

RESOURCES

Foundation for a Drug-Free World

A nonprofit public benefit corporation that empowers youth and adults with factual information about drugs so they can make informed decisions and live drug-free.
drugfreeworld.com

National Institute on Drug Abuse drugabuse.gov

Lesson Plan and Activity Finder

Created for middle and high school students and their teachers.
teens.drugabuse.gov

Hazeldon Publishing
Heroin and Prescription Painkillers: A Toolkit for Community Action
hazeldon.org

lated death rate. Earlier this year, a North Carolina man was arrested in the county on I-95 with 750 bags of street-ready heroin worth \$15,000. In March, after a months-long investigation, law enforcement officials arrested a Cecil County man and charged him as a drug kingpin. They found 4,000 single-dose bags of heroin.

Cecil County Executive Tari Moore told *The Washington Post* in January of this year: “This is one of those things no one likes to talk about, but it’s gone too far. We can’t hide from it anymore ... We have to own it. We have to do something.” Moore advocated for a stronger focus on the problem of heroin and other drugs by the Maryland Association of Counties and for the second year, it’s one of four of the group’s 2016 legislative priorities.

A surge nationwide

In the U.S., heroin usage increased 79% between 2007–2012. Between 2002 and 2013, the rate of heroin-related overdose deaths nearly quadrupled. In 2013, the most recent year with statistics, more than 8,200 people died of heroin-related overdoses.

“What’s most striking and troubling is that we’re seeing heroin diffusing throughout society to groups that it hasn’t touched before,” Center for Disease Control Director Dr. Tom Frieden said earlier this year. “We’re seeing heroin affecting people in urban and rural areas, white, black, and Hispanic, low, middle, and high income. We’re seeing heroin diffusing throughout society but we can turn this around.”

The CDC says that heroin use has increased across most every demographic group, including a 100% increase for women, a 50% increase for men, and a more than 100% increase for the 18–25 age group and non-Hispanic whites, many in

suburban areas. For those with household income of more than \$50,000 and private insurance, the increase is 60%.

The numbers are startling. In every national and state report of the heroin epidemic, the rising use of the drug is inextricably connected to the use of prescription opioid painkillers. In 2012, according to the CDC, health care providers wrote 259 million prescriptions for painkillers. That was enough for every adult in the United States to have a bottle of pills. The CDC ranks Maryland in the third highest group of states for painkiller prescriptions, with 72–82 painkiller prescriptions per 100 people. The National Institute of Drug Abuse says that within a decade of taking nonmedical prescription painkillers, one in 15 people will try heroin.

That includes young people. A 2013 study published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* reported that adolescent male athletes were two times more likely to be prescribed opioid painkillers and were four times more likely to misuse them. But, of course, athletes aren’t the only ones who get hurt, or the only ones prescribed opioid painkillers. Addiction experts say that addiction to opiates like Vicodin, Percocet, and OxyContin can happen in less than a month. Young people are particularly vulnerable to the effects of opioids given their own issues with impulse control, decision-making skills, and reckless behavior. For teens without a prescription who experiment with opioids, many start by taking something a friend gives them at a party or raiding their parents’ or grandparents’ medicine cabinets. It’s when prescriptions run out and pills become too expensive on the street that teens start looking for heroin as the cheaper alternative. Addiction can rapidly follow.

There is another dangerous and growing trend in the epidemic—the use of the

THE FACTS ABOUT HEROIN AND OTHER OPIATES

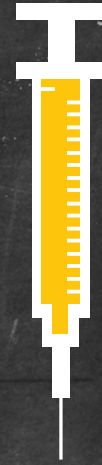
VISUALIZING AN EPIDEMIC



In 2010, U.S. patients consumed **99%** of the world's hydrocodone (Vicodin) and **80%** of the world's oxycodone (Percocet and Oxycodone).



75% of heroin addicts in the U.S. used prescription opioids before using heroin



100% The increase in heroin use by young adults in the U.S. ages 18-25 in the past decade



90% of first-time heroin users are white



86% of 2014 intoxication deaths in Maryland were opioid-related



45% of people who use heroin in the U.S. are also addicted to prescription opioid painkillers

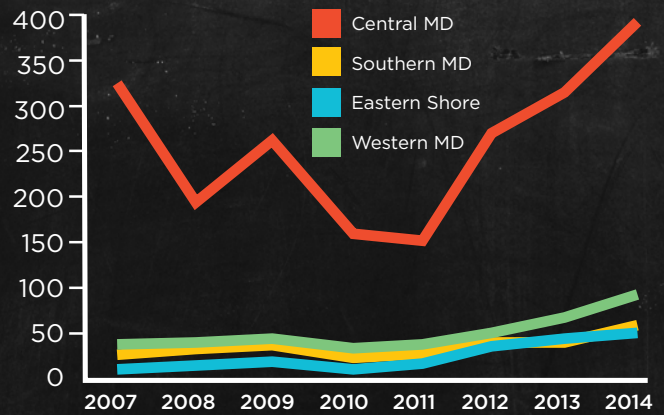
88% The increase in heroin deaths in Maryland between 2011-2013



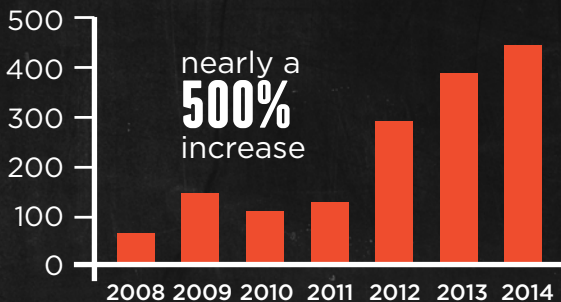
100% The increase in heroin deaths in Maryland between 2010-2014 in all regions, among all age groups, and among men and women, whites and African Americans



Number of Heroin Related Deaths by Place of Occurrence, Maryland, 2008-2014



Number of Heroin-Related ER Visits Among 15-24 year olds



50% increase in opium production in Mexico as marijuana prices drop



25% of heroin-related deaths in 2014 occurred in combination with alcohol, cocaine, and fentanyl

3X the increase in fentanyl-related deaths in Maryland 2013-2014

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Maryland Department of Mental Health and Hygiene; The National Institutes of Health; *The Washington Post*

“THIS WAS MY BRILLIANT, BRILLIANT CHILD, WHO KNEW BETTER.”

BY AMY CASSAGNOL

JP was the oldest of my four boys. He was one of those kids and adults that people just loved. He was so wonderful.

When he was in high school, he had a sports injury and had ACL replacement surgery. That’s when doctors gave him oxycodone the first time. I recently found the medication schedule following his surgery and it was three oxycodone in the morning, three at night, and other medications in between—for nearly a week.

Now, it seems like JP became addicted immediately, like so many people I’ve met.

After he graduated from college, he couldn’t keep a job. He always had an excuse and he was constantly sick, but we never knew why. I would drive him some place as he was secretly trying to detox himself and he would ask me to pull over so he could vomit. Finally, he said, “Mom, I’m addicted to pain pills and it’s really bad. I need help.” He went right into rehab and six months later he was clean and working again.

After that, it was more rehabs, hospital stays, halfway houses, battles with insurance. You just can’t imagine this nightmare as a mom. This was a kid who had every genre of book in his room from mythology to WWII. This was my brilliant, brilliant child, who knew better.

JP relapsed before Thanksgiving of 2014 and came back home after living on his own. There was a change in him—he desperately wanted to get

clean for good. We found a facility in Bel Air. He was thriving there, had incredible support, and made so many friends. He was helping other kids. Even after he left the program he would go and volunteer as a speaker. But that’s also where he met his girlfriend.

He was clean for more than six months. In July, we had a family get together to share pictures from vacation.

But that night he was more relaxed, more fluid, more conversational. I just knew something was wrong. He said that they couldn’t spend the night because of work and they left.

He texted me, “Mom, I made it home. I love you.” The next morning, I got up, had my coffee, and I texted him, “Are you at work yet?” And then, as I was sitting on my porch drinking coffee, three police officers walked up and said, “We need to talk to you.”

JP and his girlfriend must have stopped in Baltimore to pick up that night before they came to see us. I believe they used before they came by and again when they got home. He died in his sleep.

There’s seems to be no answer to this crisis. Nobody knows what the left hand is doing. Counties don’t talk to each other. The doctors prescribe the stuff. I was at the FedUp Rally in October and speakers were comparing this crisis to the AIDS epidemic—how it was just ignored until finally the government couldn’t ignore it any more.

There are more kids dying from heroin and opioid overdoses than car accidents, cancer, and guns.

We know the root cause of this heroin epidemic, but no one is doing anything about it. Yes, it’s the heroin dealers, but it’s also the people who are producing pharmaceuticals and nobody wants to mess with them. They are poisoning our kids.



Amy Cassagnol, left, and her friend Jimena Ryan at the FedUp Rally in October. Amy, a second grade teacher in Montgomery County, lost her son JP to a heroin overdose in July 2015.

JP’s condition was really obvious to my sister and to me. He and his girlfriend came in with long sleeves and shorts—and we all had shorts and tank tops on. My first instinct was to just rip his sleeves off.

Before when he was sober, there was this sadness about him, but he was strong because he was going uphill.

prescription drug fentanyl, a synthetic opioid used to treat cancer. It looks and acts similar to heroin, but is 80–100 times more potent than morphine and 30–50 times more potent than pure heroin. In Maryland, it made its way to the streets several years ago. Last year it was responsible for 71 deaths in Baltimore City, 36 in Baltimore County, and 23 in Anne Arundel County. Fentanyl-related deaths in Maryland more than tripled between 2013 and 2014.

Story after story confirms what the CDC says: almost all people who use heroin also use another drug, and most use at least three other drugs.

- People who are addicted to alcohol are **2x more** likely to be addicted to heroin.
- People who are addicted to marijuana are **3x more** likely to be addicted to heroin.
- People who use cocaine are **15x more** likely to be addicted to heroin.
- People who are addicted to opioid painkillers are **40x more** likely to be addicted to heroin.

Fighting back

Like almost every other county in Maryland, Harford County has been hit hard by the heroin epidemic—in 2014 the county was ranked third in the number of overdose deaths. Like the middle school program in Wicomico County, Harford is shifting their program to a younger audience. This year, County Executive Barry Glassman and Sheriff Jeffrey Gahler partnered with Harford County Schools Superintendent

Barbara Canavan, Health Officer Susan Kelly, and Gahler’s HOPE (Heroin Overdose Prevention and Enforcement) workgroup, to open the door to more people, more ideas, and more networks as the county faced an average of more than two fatal overdose deaths in each of the first eight months of 2015.

One outcome was six community informational drug abuse forums held at middle schools throughout the county. According to the state’s Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 6.5% of Harford’s sixth grade students regularly drank alcohol and 8.3% of eighth grade students had used marijuana at least once within 30 days of the survey. Heroin use by children as young as 11 has been reported in the county.

At the forums, more than 1,000 parents and their children heard first-hand the struggle and consequences of drug addiction from former addicts, parents who had lost a child to overdose, county law enforcement, and rehab specialists. “I think these sessions were a wake-up call for a lot of parents who didn’t realize that heroin is so inexpensive and that it’s available in every zip code,” said Glassman. “Plus, it’s so addictive that we have to focus on prevention, even for our middle schoolers. We’re also encouraging parents to talk to their children. It’s more effective than any government program.” Glassman put \$100,000 in his 2016 budget for drug prevention and treatment initiatives and hopes to add more.

In Anne Arundel County, County Executive Steve Schuh in January declared a county-wide heroin public health emergency. In 2014, the county had 291 overdoses, 48 of them fatal. With its close proximity to Baltimore and Washington, D.C.—both major markets for drug traffickers—heroin

is plentiful and county health officials report more than one overdose death every week.

In August, the *Capital Gazette* reported that an Overdose Fatality Review Team, made up of Anne Arundel County police, paramedics, courts, jails, social services, and other agencies—one of 15 such inter-agency teams across the state—is studying heroin and opioid use. Hard-hit Cecil and Wicomico counties and Baltimore City piloted the program in 2014, reviewing individual cases of people who died of overdoses looking for patterns and shortfalls in support.

Police Chief Tim Altomare, a member of the county Heroin Task Force, which includes the school superintendent, told the *Capital Gazette* that 34% of the Anne Arundel overdose victims in 2014 were ages 18–24. “I will tell you we have a kid struggling with this at every one of our high schools,” Altomare said. “It is in every community.”

For students, families, communities, schools, and educators, heroin is a relentless, pervasive enemy. As innovative collaborative county initiatives look for answers, educators will once again find themselves at the center of a social issue that reaches far beyond the school house. But it will be on educators to spot a nodding off student, teach drug awareness, or perhaps recognize a sick parent and their neglected child.

“I tell my students that life is so unwritten,” Leslie Barthoshesky says. “Right now they’re planning their lives and must embrace the good things in it. That starts now. But at some point somebody will offer them alcohol or drugs—they have to know in their heart what is right for them.”

Toni V. Mejias

*Assistant to the Officer for Diversity for Latina/o Affairs
Prince George's County*

My educational experience began at the school with the largest percentage of Hispanic immigrants in Prince George's County. The families in the community were in need of many resources and I took an interest in assisting them and any other immigrant families in need. I worked alongside the bilingual parent liaison, providing the families with food and clothing, and assistance with enrollment.

Later, when I worked as a principal's secretary and bookkeeper, I took on the role of parent liaison. We had a growing population of Hispanic families who were in need of many resources. I was their interpreter, translator, and many times an outside counsel. I understand the difficulties our immigrant families face—from crossing borders, to the fear of being deported, to the struggles to raise their families.

I witness how hard they work for a better life and I am grateful to lend a hand. When one family was just minutes away from losing their home, I was able to use my real estate knowledge (I'm a licensed Maryland sales agent) to help stop the judgment against them. I was able to help a young homeless mother with two children connect with the government resources she needed to find a home and furnishings.

Now, I'm the assistant to our county diversity officer for Latina/o affairs. We work to support our schools, students, families, and community. I no longer work directly with our families, but I take pride and pleasure knowing that my work provides all the resources possible through a listserv/community network, a bilingual newsletter, *Our Future/Nuestro Futuro: Hacia Un Buen Camino* (with more than 4,000 subscribers), volunteer interpreting and translating, and assisting and volunteering for family and community events. Hearing that students received scholarships from information in our newsletter confirms that I made the right decision to join the PGCPs educational community.



“I understand the difficulties our immigrant families face—from crossing borders, to the fear of being deported, to the struggles to raise their families.”

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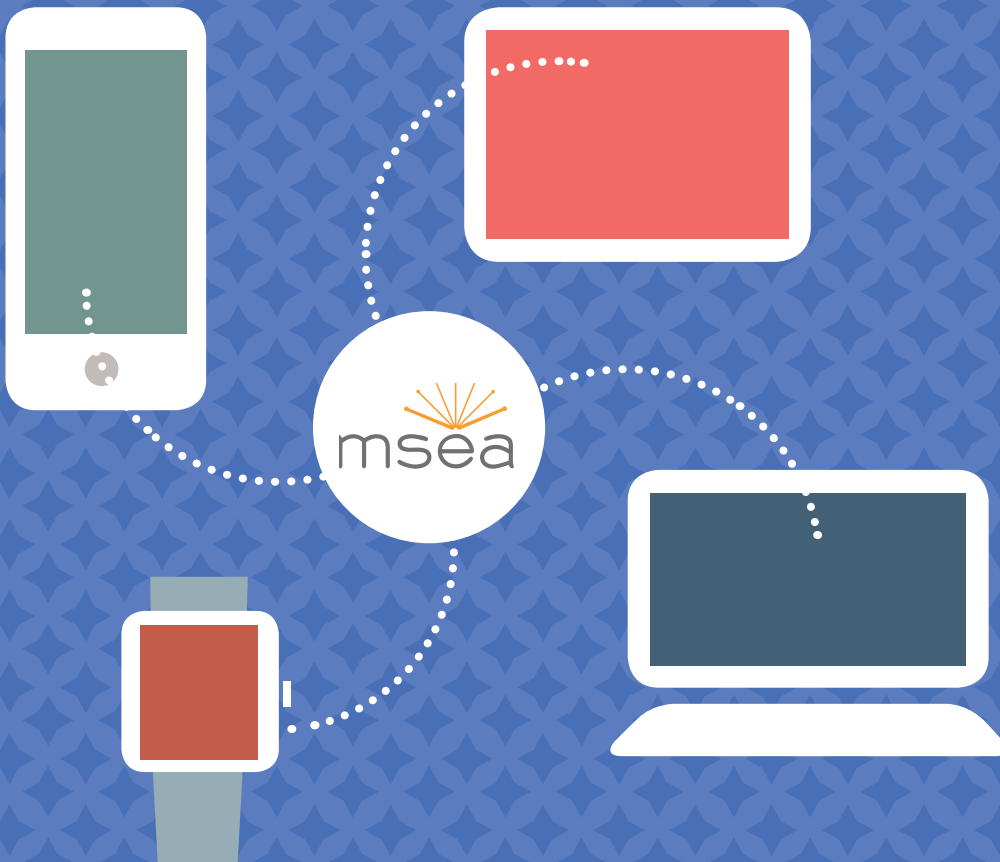


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