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Up the Street: MSEA Legislative Updates

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THE WEEK THAT WAS IN ANNAPOLIS

- **Standardized Testing Cap Passes House Unanimously**

Late Monday morning, the House of Delegates gave final approval to MSEA's top legislative priority—a bill capping all mandated assessments at 2% of annual instruction time (**HB 141/SB 407**)—with a resounding 138-0 vote. Following the vote, MSEA President Betty Weller released a **statement to the press**, calling it the “the first giant step forward in this urgent effort to reduce over-testing.” You can learn more about the legislation's passage in *The Baltimore Sun*, *Associated Press*, [MarylandReporter.com](#), [WMDT \(ABC Salisbury\)](#), and [WFMD \(Frederick Radio\)](#). The bill now moves to the Senate, where it will receive a bill hearing in the next week or two.

HB 141 joins several other bills designed to curb standardized testing that have passed one or both chambers in the General Assembly so far this session. **Legislation to change the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) to a sampling test (HB 657/SB 794)**—effectively eliminating the KRA for the vast majority of kindergarteners and prohibiting standardized testing in public pre-K—passed both the House and Senate unanimously, leaving just slight differences between the bills to be worked out between the two chambers. Bills that would require school districts to disclose all mandated tests annually (**HB 412/ SB 533**) have also passed both chambers, while another transparency measure that would give more direct notification to parents about standardized testing (**HB 1233**) has cleared the House.

- **House Approves Budget, Conference Committee Named**

Following the Senate's unanimous approval of the FY2017 budget, the **House passed a modified version by a 133-5 margin**. Like the Senate budget, the House included full mandatory funding for Maryland public schools, as well as \$19 million to help local governments meet the cost of educator pensions. Differences in the two budgets will now be resolved in conference committee, whose members include: Senators **Ed Kasemeyer** (D-Baltimore and Howard-District 12), **Ed DeGrange** (D-Anne Arundel-32), **Rich Madaleno** (D-Montgomery-District 18), **Nancy King** (D-Montgomery-District 39), and **George Edwards** (R-Allegany and Garrett-District 1) and Delegates **Maggie McIntosh** (D-Baltimore City-District 43), **Tawanna Gaines** (D-Prince George's-District 22), **Adrienne Jones** (D-Baltimore County-District 10), **Kirill Reznik** (D-Montgomery-District 39), and **Wendell Beitzel** (R-Allegany and Garrett-

District 1A). One of those differences is the matter of \$5 million to support a new voucher-like program for nonpublic schools. The governor introduced the budget with this funding and the Senate left it unchanged. The House added a contingency to the funds, whereby they would only be available if legislation creating a tax credit program to support private schools were to pass. MSEA opposes the funding in the budget and can cut it by defeating the tax credit legislation currently being debated.

- **House Hearing Scheduled for Maryland Education Credit (BOAST)**

Gov. Hogan's private school voucher program proposal now moves to the House following a narrow passage (25-19) in the Senate (over the objection of a majority of Democrats). The House has scheduled a hearing for that legislation (**SB 706**) for next Thursday at 1 p.m. before the Ways and Means Committee. Similar legislation, known as BOOST, did not pass the House before Monday's crossover deadline, but can still be advanced later in session. MSEA is working closely with our partners in the Coalition for Public Schools to stop both bills—**which would advance the governor's far-right anti-public education agenda.**

We need your help to remind our friends in the General Assembly why they have rejected this failed idea repeatedly for the last decade. Private school advocates have been very vocal in communicating a misleading argument that vouchers help low-income students—despite all evidence to the contrary. We need to be even more vocal in explaining that at the end of the day, tax credit voucher programs divert funding that could be used for public schools to subsidize private schools. **Send an email to your delegates today to urge them to vote against BOOST and MEC.**

- **News and Notes**

- *Senate Shuffles Budget and Taxation, Judicial Proceedings Committees*

Due to the absence of **Sen. Lisa Gladden** (D-Baltimore City-District 41) on the Judicial Proceedings Committee—who has missed the last couple of weeks dealing with health issues—Senate President Mike Miller decided to move **Sen. Nathaniel McFadden** (D-Baltimore City-District 45) to take her spot. **According to *The Baltimore Sun***, Miller made the change because he thought there needed to be another African-American voice from Baltimore City for several of the policy decisions before the important committee, including a comprehensive criminal justice reform package. Gladden will take McFadden's place on the Budget and Taxation Committee when she returns.

- *Democrats Advance School Construction Funding for Overcrowded Districts*

While some bills demand most of the attention in Annapolis every year, some fly under the radar. An important bill that has gone largely unnoticed so far this session would double the annual mandatory supplemental funding that goes to school construction in the five districts with growing enrollment from \$20 million to \$40 million (**SB 271**). It passed the Senate on a party-line vote and now goes to the House.

- *NEA Holds Town Hall in Montgomery to Discuss ESSA Implementation*

NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia joined 150 Maryland educators in Silver Spring on Tuesday night for a conversation about implementing the new Every Student Succeeds Act. She was joined by MSEA President Betty Weller, MCEA President Chris Lloyd, NAACP Senior Vice President Hilary Shelton, and several association leaders from around the country.

CAMPAIGN 2016

- **Hillary Wins Arizona Primary, Continues to Lead Democratic Contest**

After primary contests in Arizona, Idaho, and Utah on Tuesday night, **Hillary Clinton maintained a lead of more than 300 pledged delegates over Sen. Bernie Sanders.** With the door closing further on Sanders' campaign, Clinton continued to emphasize the differences between herself and the Republican candidates—especially on counterterrorism in the wake of the ISIS attack in Brussels. With so much at stake in this election, Hillary needs all the help she can get from Maryland educators. Sign up to become an Educator for Hillary at www.strongpublicschools.org.

- **Raskin Makes First TV Buy, Puts Three Ads on the Air**

With his top two contenders in the race for the 8th Congressional District already advertising heavily on radio and television, **Sen. Jamie Raskin**—who has been endorsed by NEA's Fund for Children and Public Education—jumped into the battle on TV airwaves with **three fifteen-second ads** about his experience delivering victories on progressive legislation. You can help put a public education champion in Congress by **signing up to volunteer with his campaign here.**

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