

# The EASMC Extra!

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## Inauguration Day 2009 History in the Making!

On January 20, 2009, a historic event took place just a few miles away. The first U.S. president of African descent was sworn in on the steps of the Capitol Building. Millions of spectators descended on Washington, DC for this momentous event.



If you attended the inauguration or other events related to the inauguration and have photos you'd like to share, we'd love to see them. Send digital photos to [jtippett@mstanea.org](mailto:jtippett@mstanea.org) by February 20 if you'd like us to print them in future newsletters.

## SPARKS!

The first ever EASMC SPARKS! Training will take place on Friday, February 20 and Saturday, February 21 at MSTA Headquarters in downtown Annapolis. Congratulations to our first 13 SPARKS! We look forward to a weekend of fun, information gathering, networking and adventure. If you are a teacher with 6 or less years of teaching experience and would like to attend SPARKS! training, please email Wanda Twigg at [wtwigg@mstanea.org](mailto:wtwigg@mstanea.org) by February 2, 2009.

## Find Your Membership Number, Now!

MSTA members will be voting this month on several important statewide offices. EASMC will once again be using the electronic voting system! Please find your membership number now, so you will be able to vote !! Your number can be found on your MSTA membership card which is mailed to you with your MSTA pocket calendar in September. If you received a new card in 2007, you would not have received a new one in 2008. The number is also located on the mailing label of your MSTA ActionLine magazine. If you cannot locate either of those, you can ask MSTA membership to locate your number for you. Your building Association Representative will be getting a list of your ID numbers as well.

We will be voting for MSTA President, Vice President, NEA Director, and for four (4) seats on the MSTA Board of Directors, as well as for state delegates to the NEA Convention in San Diego. Please find your membership number now, so you can easily vote!

## MSTA Election 2009

### Vote! You CAN make a difference!

It's easy! All you need is a computer, Internet access, your MSTA membership number and the last four digits of your Social Security number. You may vote online anytime between Wednesday, January 28, and 5 p.m. Friday, February 27.

#### Here's How:

1. Go to the *MSTA OnLine* homepage, [www.mstanea.org](http://www.mstanea.org), and click the button, "MSTA Election 2009 *Vote Here Members Only.*"
2. Type in your 10-digit MSTA membership number and the last four (4) digits of your Social Security number and click "Login". Your MSTA membership ID is the 10-digit number (starting with three zeros) found on your MSTA membership card, on the *ActionLine* mailing label, and on any NEA publication. Can't find it? Ask your building representative to help, or contact Carole Masciarelli, MSTA Membership, 800/448-6782 x3611; [cmasciarelli@mstnea.org](mailto:cmasciarelli@mstnea.org).
3. Follow the instructions to vote for each position.



#### Inside this issue:

Negotiations Update	2
Read Across America Event	3
Legislative Breakfast	4
Lobby Night	5
Just Ask Liz	6

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"One Voice for Educators"

# Negotiations Update

We have met twice this month for salary. The first meeting was on January 9<sup>th</sup>. Our team presented our proposals. Liz did an exceptional job costing out items, organizing information, and presenting our proposals. She spent countless hours working for us and for CEASMC. She deserves all our thanks and gratitude.

We met again on January 22<sup>nd</sup> for a work session. This was not part of our formal negotiations. Instead, it was a time for both sides to really delineate common interests and find common ground for salary and other cost items. That work was productive, and it gave EASMC a chance to work with Greg Nourse, who has been recently hired as the SMCPS Director of Fiscal Services. It also gave us a chance to discuss compacting the salary scale.

SMCPS and EASMC have covered a lot of ground. We are almost finished with language changes, and have many tentative agreements ironed out. We have gotten some recent good news on the budgetary fronts from our governor and Annapolis. Now, we must turn our attention to our county commissioners. And so your work begins.

In the evening of January 22<sup>nd</sup>, the BoE had a budget hearing. Only a small handful of folks came out, but their message was clear. Our school system is only 1 of 6 to fully make AYP in a state that is ranked first in the nation. We have money in our county's coffers. We are in competition with Charles and Calvert Counties for teachers. Our children deserve the best. In order for us to provide the best, we must increase the county's percentage of the budget towards education. It is currently at a dismal 41.2%.

We must start calling and e-mailing our County Commissioners now to tell them to increase our part of the monetary pie. They may hold the purse strings, but you hold the power. E-mail or call them now and tell them you want the percentage of the budget for education increased significantly.

By: Brian Rose, Negotiations Chair

**I don't understand why Cupid was chosen to represent Valentine's Day. When I think about romance, the last thing on my mind is a short, chubby toddler coming at me with a weapon.**  
~Author Unknown

## MSTA ACCESS!

As a member of MSTA you have ACCESS to discounts on hotels, golf courses, ski resorts, travel, services, entertainment, movies, and recreation packages through the internet-based ACCESS program. It's free and especially designed for MSTA members!

Visit MSTA OnLine, [www.mstanea.org](http://www.mstanea.org), click on the ACCESS banner and enter the 10-digit Member ID located on the front of your MSTA membership card.

If you have lost your membership card, don't worry. The process of obtaining a replacement card is easy. Visit MSTA OnLine, [www.mstanea.org](http://www.mstanea.org), or call MSTA Membership, 800/448-MSTA, to have a new card mailed to you.



**Please contact our County Commissioners by e-mail at [bocc@co.saint-marys.md.us](mailto:bocc@co.saint-marys.md.us) or call 301-475-4200. See their extensions below.**

**Francis "Jack" Russell, x1359  
Kenneth Dement, x1353  
Lawrence Jarboe, x1351  
Thomas Mattingly, Sr. x1355  
Daniel Raley, x1354**

## Mark Your Calendars!

- Jan. 6- EASMC BOD
- Jan 10- EASMC Legislative Breakfast
- Jan. 13- EASMC RA
- Jan. 13-14- MSTA BOD
- Jan. 14- Opening of MD Legislative Session, SMCPS BOED Mtg
- Jan. 19- MLK, Jr. Holiday
- Jan. 20- Inauguration Day/Professional Day
- Jan. 22- EASMC/SMCPS Negotiations
- Jan. 22- SMCPS BOE Public Hearing on Budget
- Jan. 23-25- NEA Mid-Atlantic Conference
- Jan. 29- SMCPS BOE Mtg
- Feb. 3- EASMC BOD
- Feb. 10- EASMC RA
- Feb. 11- SMCPS BOE Mtg
- Feb. 16- President's Day Holiday
- Feb. 19- So. Md. CBC Mtg
- Feb. 20-21- SPARKS! training
- Feb. 20-21- MSTA BOD
- Feb. 28- MSTA ESP Conference
- Feb. 28- Read Across America Event





# You're invited to a birthday party for Dr. Seuss



**If you would like to lend a helping hand, please email Melinda Kearns, President of the Southern Maryland Reading Council at [mmkearns@smcps.org](mailto:mmkearns@smcps.org)**

**Date: Saturday, February 28, 2009**

**Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

**Location: So. MD Higher Ed Center  
44219 Airport RD  
California, MD 20619  
Multipurpose Room, Building 1**

**Come join in on the activities. There will be storybook reading, celebrity readers, face painting, live music, birthday cookies and more!**

**This event is sponsored by the Southern MD Reading Council, Collective Education Association of St. Mary's County and Education Association of St. Mary's County.**

**Contact EASMC, 301-737-2500, X300  
If you have any questions...**

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## **NEA Member Benefits Enters Into Relationship with New Classroom Supply Company**

As of January 15, 2009, NEA Member Benefits will no longer offer school supplies through the online discounter, Classroom Direct. Recent economic conditions have caused School Specialty Corporation, Classroom Direct's parent company, to consolidate operations and discontinue its current discount for NEA members.

NEA Member Benefits has already established a new relationship with SmileMakers, an online supplies discounter and a division of Staples. SmileMakers offers NEA members a five percent (5%) discount and free shipping on all orders, regardless of size. Members may also sign up for "Teachers' Club," which awards one point (worth 10 cents) for each dollar spent. First-time orders qualify for 25 extra points. Points may be applied toward future purchases. Access SmileMakers online at <http://www.smilemakers-support.com/landing/neaPage.html>.

Please pass this information on to your State President, Executive, and others, as you see fit. NEA Member Benefits will communicate directly with State Affiliate communications directors and editors to request that they remove old information about Classroom Direct from their Web sites and electronic and printed materials. New information about SmileMakers will be provided over the coming weeks.

If you have any questions about SmileMakers, please contact the NEA Member Benefits Member Service Center toll free at 1-800-637-4636, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (or Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.), ET.

## Legislative Breakfast

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual EASMC/CEASMC and CEA/CAESS Legislative Breakfast was held at the JT Daugherty center on Saturday January 10, 2009. The event was very well attended by both St. Mary's and Calvert members. St. Mary's state legislative delegation was in full attendance. Many thanks are due to Senator Roy Dyson, Delegates John Bohanan, Johnny Wood, and Tony O'Donnell for taking time out of their hectic schedules to attend and participate. This year's breakfast featured a panel discussion by the legislators. They heard information on four pressing topics to the Association and were then asked to respond to pointed questions about each topic. The topics were the B.O.A.S. T. bill (Building Opportunities for All Students and Teachers), state education funding in a dismal fiscal climate, Fair Share or Agency Fee legislation, and our labor dispute resolution bill. The Maryland legislative session opened on Wednesday January 14, 2009 and will last for 90 days.

Here's a brief recap of what our delegation had to say. All four of our legislators support the concept of the BOAST bill even though it provides public money for private schools through tax credits. They all supported the bill last year and will support it this year if it is brought to them. They felt that the likelihood of it passing this year was slim as a result of the dim fiscal situation.

Education funding is always a hot topic for us and our legislators and this year was no different. We know that the improvements we've seen in the classroom are a direct result of the increased level of funding we have received from the state as a result of the Thornton funding. Every school in St. Mary's County made AYP this year and Maryland has been ranked as the number one school system in America by Education Week. We believe that these results are directly related to the infusion of new money into our classrooms by the state. EASMC/MSTA is also directly opposed to the state attempting to push the cost or half of the cost of our teacher pensions back to the counties. We were most pleased to hear our legislators say that they recognize the work we are doing and the gains we are making and the sense that much of our success is related to the infusion of Thornton money. All four of them were also opposed to the idea of pushing our pension costs back to the county, but they said that right now they can't make any promises. The state's fiscal situation is dire and many cuts will need to be made. They spoke of probably cutting the GCEI (Geographic Cost of Education Index) money from the budget (about \$78 million). There was also talk of very minimal if any increases in public education funding for fiscal year 2010 and more potential cuts for 2009.

The third topic addressed was Agency Fee or Fair Share. Calvert County's Delegate Sue Kullen is sponsoring legislation for CEA this year and EASMC is hoping for similar legislation in the next legislative session. Three of our four legislators expressed concern over this legislation, but were pleased that the bill includes a grandfather clause that would prevent current non-members of the Association from being forced to become members. Only Delegate Bohanan said outright that he would support the legislation, even without the grandfather clause. Delegate Johnny Wood made his thoughts clear with the statement, "I never have been in favor of collective bargaining," but went on further to say that he might be able to live with the bill with the grandfather clause.

Our fourth topic was related to the MSTA labor dispute resolution bill. This bill would allow a third party neutral party (arbitrator) to resolve negotiations that result in an impasse proceeding. The third party arbitrator would be paid by the local school board and the Association, so there would be NO COST to the state. The arbitrator's decision would be binding, which means that both the school board and the Association would HAVE to follow through with that decision. This proposed bill would NOT CHANGE the fiscal relationship between the school board and the county. The arbitrator could not decide to do anything that was not already presented in the last, best, and final offer of each side prior to impasse. This portion of the bill would (hopefully) cause both sides to always bargain in good faith. Currently, Maryland is the only one of the 34 states with collective bargaining agreements to allow the State Board of Education to solve labor disputes between school boards and the local Association. Again, our legislators had mixed feelings toward the bill. Delegate Bohanan said it sounded reasonable to him. The other three expressed concern that MABE (the Maryland Association of Board's of Education) and MSDE (Maryland State Department of Education) would be in opposition to it and they were concerned about the cost (there should be none).

Please keep these factors in mind as we move into the legislative session and as we plan our trip to Annapolis to lobby or ask you to send emails or make other communication to our delegation!

Many thanks are due to Jennifer Tippet, EASMC Administrative Assistant for her logistical work behind the scenes that made the breakfast such a success. Thanks too to Anna Laughlin, LMS and Betsy Hundert, OES our EASMC Legislative Committee Co-Chairs for overseeing the planning of the event. Thanks to all of the members who got up early Saturday to attend and show our delegation that we are watching very carefully what they do in Annapolis.



## Lobby Your Legislators EASMC/CEASMC Bus Trip to Annapolis!

**Date:** Monday, March 9, 2009

**Time:** Pick up at 4:15pm from So. MD Higher Ed Center and arrive back at 9:15pm

On the road again! Reserve your spot today...first-timers welcome!

Sign up with your building rep or contact Jen Tippett at 301-737-2500 ext. 300 or [jtippett@mstanea.org](mailto:jtippett@mstanea.org)

**Talking Points & Major Issues:**

- Bargaining Bill
- Pension Costs
- State Budget
- Fair Share



**Deadline is Monday, February 23rd!**

## Congratulations to these members who have gained National Board Certification:

Jessica Cotugno, Piney Point Elementary  
 Eva Donahue, Great Mills High  
 Diana Kraft, Forrest Center  
 Deborah Lewis, Great Mills High  
 Lisa Lloyd, Esperanza Middle  
 Susan Taylor, Forrest Center  
 Jessica Tomcsik, Piney Point Elementary  
 Janet Varner, G.W. Carver Elementary

These hard working professionals will now benefit from the salary increase that has been negotiated for them as a result of their new certification. The State of Maryland will supplement their pay with \$2,000 and EASMC has negotiated an additional \$3,000 for each year of their national certification. This additional pay is counted toward their salary for retirement/pension purposes. Congratulations!!

### Upcoming EASMC RA Meetings

- ◆ Tuesday, February 10, 2009
- ◆ Tuesday, March 10, 2009 (Possibly March 9 in Annapolis)
- ◆ Tuesday, April 14, 2009
- ◆ Tuesday, May 12, 2009 (Annual Meeting, Potluck Dinner)



### EASMC Representative Assembly:

#### Do you know what's really happening in EASMC & SMCPS?

Is your school or site represented at the monthly RA? Is your building getting all the latest information and updates about what's happening across the system and within the Association? Would 3 or 4 of you be willing to share the responsibility of attending the RA on the second Tuesday of the month? It's work to get representation at every meeting, but the benefits are well worth the effort! Let us know how we can assist you in getting representation for your site!

#### Was your site represented at the RA on January 13th?

<b>BBES</b>	Brian Rose, Jeanne Taylor	<b>LHS</b>	Melissa Kiernan
<b>CHS</b>	Nancy Lewis, Alice Willingham, Karl Pence	<b>LMS</b>	Rick Condle
<b>DES</b>	Melinda Kearns	<b>LPES</b>	Beverly Scroggins
<b>EMS</b>	Karen Maloney	<b>OES</b>	Betsy Hundert
<b>FCTC</b>	Bonnie Skinner	<b>RES</b>	Sheila Coon
<b>HES</b>	Cyndi Stahr	<b>TCES</b>	Linda Richardson
		<b>Retiree</b>	Don O'Neal



Liz Purcell Leskinen  
UniServ Director



**Question:**

I received a negative observation and feel that I am being targeted by my principal. What are my rights?

**Answer:**

Receiving a negative observation is not always a sign that you have been targeted or treated unfairly. It may be that your perception truly differs from that of the observer and that the truth is somewhere in between. Times change and with new challenges, new research, new trends, and new leaders, there are sometimes new ideas that can make your job easier and more effective. First, I would consider the accuracy, tone, and seeming intent of the comments that feel negative. Make an honest assessment and incorporate the results into your post-observation conference. Be proactive and demonstrate your willingness to pursue a path of continuous improvement, but bring artifacts and examples to rebut any comments that you find unfair. You can and should ask for changes. Remember that both you and your observer want you to be successful. It is not in anyone's best interests (yours or your administrator's) to create additional work that detracts from the focus on student achievement. I find that in most cases, you are best to truly try to understand what it is that you might do differently and assuming it is reasonable, do it. Under Dr. Martirano's leadership, there are many options currently available for assistance without risk to you or your credibility. In any case, EASMC stands ready to support its members whether through advocacy (in those cases when the observation is definitely unfair, unproductively harsh, or factually inaccurate), objective advice, direct observation and feedback, or professional mentoring by successful and experienced EASMC colleagues. Rather than experience undue stress, please reach out for a hand if you are in need.

**Question:**

I just received my SMCPS Declaration of Intent form recently, which is a month or more earlier than usual. Why are the forms being distributed so early? Am I at risk if I put down my current plans and they change later?

**Answer:**

I contacted Dr. Weiland, Director of Human Resources, to find out why the forms are being distributed early. I explained that while we appreciate the HR Department being proactive, that we are concerned that staff and administration alike may not yet know enough about next year's plans to make good decisions or predictions at this time.

Dr. Weiland explained that they are getting a jump start this year because the process will be more complicated than usual with the opening of Evergreen Elementary School, which will result in redistricting affecting at least four schools. The early planning is mostly to support staff and to ensure that you have plenty of advance notice. He stressed that you should not be concerned if you do currently plan a change, but later change your mind. This iteration is to identify those folks who are reasonably certain of their interests. Dr. Weiland said that the lists of employees requesting transfers is updated and distributed to site administrators monthly. You may send Dr. Weiland a written request at a later date to be added to the transfer list if you so decide. In either case, recognize that the site administrators DO get the transfer request list, so I recommend that you personally share your intent with your principal, although you are certainly under no such obligation.

My advice is to submit your list of possibilities if you think that a transfer is remotely in the stars for you. You are in no way at risk or obligated to accept a transfer should it be offered to you and you can send a written request to Dr. Weiland at any time to be removed from the transfer list should you have a change of heart. However, the advantage is that you will be on the first lists that go out for consideration.

**EASMC Dues for Taxes**  
For your 2008 tax purposes, EASMC/MSTA/NEA dues was \$598.08. You may find this amount on your last pay stub for 2008. Remember if you itemize, this is an important deduction!

**Welcome New Members**  
- Cleo Tiede, Leonardtown Middle School  
- Meredith Cunningham, Leonardtown High School

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
The Public Hearing on the County Commissioner's budget will be held on Tuesday, April 21, 2009 @ 6:30 PM at Chopticon High School.  
Please plan to attend!