



# The EASMC Extra

44219 Airport Road, California, MD 20619  
Phone (301)737-2500, x300 • Fax (301)866-1967

*"One Voice for Public Educators"*



## Keep the Promise Campaign (KTP)

MSEA has launched a campaign to save our pensions, protect education funding and educator evaluations. Once again our pensions, funding and now our evaluation are in jeopardy from folks in Annapolis and Baltimore who may have never been on our side of the desk in a classroom or who have been out so long they wouldn't recognize today's classroom! This campaign is called Keep the Promise and it will be ongoing throughout the legislative session and beyond if necessary. Please check out the article on the campaign in the new MSEA ActionLine that you will be receiving at home this week. Or you can check it out on your school EASMC bulletin board or on the MSEA website at [www.marylandeducators.org](http://www.marylandeducators.org).

Here's how you can help or just keep informed about the campaign and what is happening in Annapolis around the issues in the campaign.

1. Sign up for MSEA's action alerts. Text the word PROMISE to 77007 to receive text messages about how and when to take action.
2. Sign up for FrontLine, MSEA's weekly e-newsletter, for the latest news on what's happening in the legislature or check it out on-line at [www.marylandeducators.org/frontline](http://www.marylandeducators.org/frontline).
3. Be a 5-Minute Activist and contact your state legislators and Governor O'Malley at [www.marylandeducators.org/promise](http://www.marylandeducators.org/promise).
4. Sign a Keep the Promise apple and petition! Each building AR will be receiving petitions and apples for members to sign in the metro mail. If they do not seek you out, please seek them out and ask to sign the apples and petitions. We will be sending one apple for all members of our delegation and one each for the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Delegates and the President of the Senate. When you have completed your apples return them to your EASMC building AR to mail back to us in metro! Imagine what the legislators will say and do when tens of thousands of apples rain down on them from the members across Maryland!
5. Donate to MSEA/EASMC's Fund for Children and Public Education and help remind legislators to Keep the Promise to students, educators, schools, and communities. Contribute to the MSEA Fund at [www.marylandeducators.org/donate](http://www.marylandeducators.org/donate) or email Jennifer Tidd at [jtidd@mseane.org](mailto:jtidd@mseane.org) if you would like to sign up for regular payroll deduction for the Fund for Children. We'll be pleased to send you a form! It's easy and pre-tax!

EASMC members have Kept their Promise to our students, parents, and community. It's time for the state legislature and governor to Keep their Promise to us! Take action today!



### Inside This Issue

Legislative Breakfast	2
EASMC Elections	3
March RA & Lobby Trip	3
MSEA Elections	4
Negotiations Update	5
Melt Away Debt	6
Read Across America	7



### BOD Contacts

- Wanda Twigg- President, [wtwigg@mseane.org](mailto:wtwigg@mseane.org)
- Anna Laughlin- Vice-President, [amlaughlin@smcps.org](mailto:amlaughlin@smcps.org)
- Mike Soly- Treasurer, [masoly@smcps.org](mailto:masoly@smcps.org)
- Linda Miedzinski- Secretary, [lsiedzinski@smcps.org](mailto:lsiedzinski@smcps.org)
- Melinda Kearns- Elementary, [mmkearns@smcps.org](mailto:mmkearns@smcps.org)
- Bonnie Skinner- General, [bjskinner@smcps.org](mailto:bjskinner@smcps.org)
- Billy Breslin- Secondary, [wfbreslin@smcps.org](mailto:wfbreslin@smcps.org)
- Michael Loughran- A&S, [mssloughran@smcps.org](mailto:mssloughran@smcps.org)
- Liz Morris- Retired, [emorris@md.metrocast.net](mailto:emorris@md.metrocast.net)
- Liz Purcell Leskinen- MSEA UniServ Director, [lleskinen@mseane.org](mailto:lleskinen@mseane.org)
- Jennifer Tidd, Admin. Assistant, [jtidd@mseane.org](mailto:jtidd@mseane.org)

# EASMC/CEASMC/CEA/CAESS Legislative Breakfast



On Saturday, January 8, 2011, the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Calvert/St. Mary's Legislative Breakfast was held at Lenny's Restaurant in California. Almost 100 members, legislators, school system and community officials attended the breakfast.

Our St. Mary's delegation was present at the breakfast and participated in a panel discussion of four pressing legislative topics. The topics presented were education funding, educator pensions, Fair Share/Agency Fee legislation for EASMC and CEASMC and educator evaluations.

While our delegation members do not want to cut spending on education as we have achieved the #1 ranking in the country for the third year in a row, they see no other way to balance the budget unless revenues are raised. None of the delegation members felt that revenues would be raised this year because of the feelings of many voters in the 2010 elections. They all mentioned that K-12 education would likely see a 5% reduction at the state level for 2012. This means that potentially 5% less money will come to the county from the state for public education. Combine this with the likelihood of receiving only Maintenance of Effort from the county commissioners for a second year and the fiscal climate looks dim at best.

The delegation also collectively feels that they do not want to shift a portion of our pension costs back to the county, but they all stated clearly that something had to be done to reduce the cost to the state. Most mentioned that the current employee's pensions would not be harmed, but that future hires would have to take less. This idea is unsettling to EASMC and we will be working with MSEA and other locals to fight this notion that future hires deserve even less than we will have in retirement. No idea is off the table at this time when it comes to our reducing or changing our pensions.

When asked if they supported Fair Share legislation for EASMC, Senator Dyson and Delegate Bohanan clearly stated they would support that effort. Delegate O'Donnell stated his continued displeasure with this legislation and used the idea of exclusivity as his rationale. He said that if we gave up the right to be the exclusive bargaining agent for our members that he could support the idea. EASMC will not be giving up that right without a fight anytime soon and no one has suggested it legislatively.

As teacher and administrator evaluations become more politicized relative to Race To The Top, we asked how the legislators feel about a potential bill to make student growth 50% of an evaluation. The delegation said they believe that they do not know enough about our evaluations to be involved and they hoped that this would be settled with the state and local Boards of Education.

We feel that the breakfast was a huge success and look forward to working with our legislators throughout the 90-day session. Many thanks are due to Anna Laughlin and Melissa Kiernan, EASMC Legislative Committee Co-Chairs for their work preparing for the breakfast and for their fine speeches during the breakfast. EASMC must also thank Jennifer Tidd our Administrative Assistant for all of her work behind the scenes sending invitations, keeping the RSVP list, arranging the restaurant and food, making the agendas, name tags and signing everyone in on Saturday. We truly could not hold this event without Jen's efforts! Thanks also go to Mr. Ed Carney, Horticulture teacher at the Forrest Center and his students for creating the flower centerpieces for the event.





## EASMC Elections

All members should have received an EASMC nomination form in your work site mailbox. Members should have also received an email with the open position descriptions and an explanation of how to nominate someone or yourself for an EASMC office. The open positions this year are Elementary, Secondary, and General Members-at-Large on the EASMC Board of Directors. You must be elementary certified and work in an elementary school and secondary certified and work in a secondary school to run for those positions. You may be either elementary or secondary certified to run for the general position. If you have questions about what being a Board member entails, please contact us at the EASMC office at [wtwigg@mseane.org](mailto:wtwigg@mseane.org), [jtidd@mseane.org](mailto:jtidd@mseane.org) or Linda Miedzinski, EASMC Nominations & Elections Chair at [ismiedzinski@smcps.org](mailto:ismiedzinski@smcps.org).

We are also holding elections for NEA and MSEA Convention Delegates. The NEA Convention is in Chicago this year and we can elect 2 people to attend and up to 2 alternates. The NEA Convention is always over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday. The MSEA Convention will be held in Ocean City again this year on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of October. We can elect up to 10 people to attend and 10 alternates.

Please complete your nomination forms and return them to Jennifer Tidd at the EASMC Office in the metro mail. A signature of the nominated person must be on the nomination form. Again, email Linda Miedzinski at [ismiedzinski@smcps.org](mailto:ismiedzinski@smcps.org) or Jennifer Tidd at [jtidd@mseane.org](mailto:jtidd@mseane.org) if you have questions. The deadline for receipt of nomination forms is Friday, February 4, 2011. Please consider running for an EASMC Office and/or to represent EASMC members at a convention. We need good leaders to keep our organization strong.

## March RA and Lobby Trip

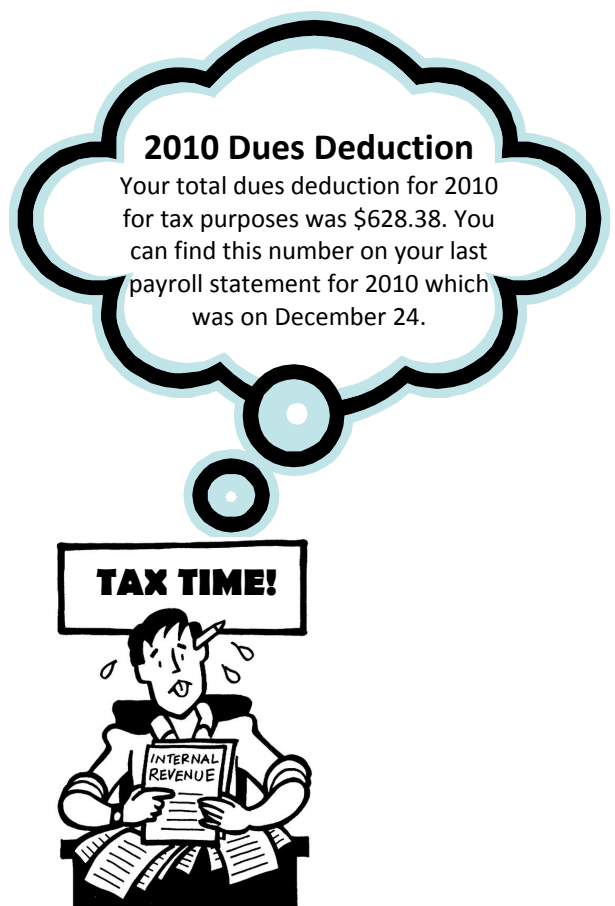
The EASMC Legislative Committee and the Board of Directors has decided NOT to hold the annual March RA lobby trip to Annapolis this year. We will be making trips on other Monday nights and members are encouraged to sign up to lobby with us. Our big agenda items this year are protecting our pensions, education funding, and educator evaluations. We will be much more effective lobbying if we have members participate that can tell personal stories about how pension changes, cuts to funding and an unfair evaluation system will hurt us and our students in the classroom.

Please check your calendar and see if you can go to Annapolis with us on any of the following dates. We will be driving up together and will leave from the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center between 4:15 and 4:30pm. EASMC will provide your dinner and transportation. The dates are January 31st and February 28th. Please email [jtidd@mseane.org](mailto:jtidd@mseane.org) if you would like to go with us and on which date. We hope you can go with us to talk with our legislators.



## TELL Maryland Survey

Once again this spring, all educators across Maryland will be asked to complete the online survey called "TELL Maryland." It will come to you at the request of the governor and the state legislature. The purpose is to hear what Maryland's educators have to say about school climate, leadership, working conditions and other important factors in school success. EASMC will let you know when the survey is live online and you can access it. I believe the last one took about 20 minutes to complete. We will be encouraging 100% participation from each school to make sure that all of our voices are heard at the state level. Data will be available to the school system to share with the staff and to Wanda, EASMC President.



## MSEA Elections

It's that time of year again! Your EASMC Building Association Representative will be reminding you to vote in the upcoming MSEA election. Once again, EASMC members will be voting online. You will need the last 4-digits of your social security number and your EASMC/MSEA membership number. You can find your membership number on your membership card which you should have received in the fall if you are a new member or in the fall of 2009 if you are a more veteran member. Your building AR will give you instructions about voting as will I. You will get plenty of reminders to vote! It takes literally a couple of minutes and is so important to the success of our organization. We would like to have more that 25% participation this year! Let's see how close to 100% we can get!

It is crucial that we participate in selecting the leaders of our state organization when we see the huge tasks ahead of us at the state level. With our pensions on the line, evaluations being rewritten, certifications being threatened and the plethora of other issues, it is imperative to have good strong leadership at the state level. There are 4 open seats on the MSEA Board of Directors this year and the Treasurer position is also up for election. EASMC will be making recommendations at the EASMC Board meeting on February 1 and getting those recommended names out to you. Please check out the candidates in the MSEA ActionLine that you should be receiving this week at your home. The election window is from January 25 to February 25, 2011. PLEASE VOTE for our recommended candidates. Email Wanda Twigg at [wtwigg@mseanea.org](mailto:wtwigg@mseanea.org) if you have questions.



### 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 three or four 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 repre-

#### Was your site represented on December 14, 2010?

<b>BBES</b>	Brian Rose, Murphy Holley
<b>CPCS</b>	Bryan Clapp, Joanne Clapp
<b>CHS</b>	Karl Pence, Nancy Lewis, Jessica Yohe, Alice Willingham
<b>EES</b>	Zenia Wallish
<b>FA</b>	Meddo Swaby
<b>GKES</b>	Mary Hafner
<b>LHS</b>	Melissa Kiernan, Ilene Cohen, Tammy Parsons
<b>LMS</b>	Allison LaSota
<b>LMDES</b>	Kimberly Edwards
<b>LPES</b>	Beverly Scroggins
<b>OES</b>	Patty Parsons
<b>PPES</b>	Renee Campbell
<b>SRMS</b>	Kristen Breslin
<b>TCES</b>	Lisa Cointot
<b>WMES</b>	Karen Myers



### Membership for Life

Did you know you can pay for your EASMC/MSEA/NEA retired membership dues now? It's true! You can pay now on a monthly installment plan (24 months), while you are actively working and receiving a paycheck, rather than waiting to join upon retirement. As a retired member, you will continue to get all of the education related information from EASMC/MSEA/NEA as well as continue to benefit from all of the NEA member benefits that you have come to enjoy. Contact Jennifer Tidd at [jtidd@mseanea.org](mailto:jtidd@mseanea.org) for more information on how to sign up for continuous membership today!



"Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour. "

- John Boswell



**NEA Click & Save**, the online discount buying service for NEA members, highlights select retailers and merchants each month. Check out these featured "Buy-lights" for February!

NORDSTROM



endless  
SHOES & HANDBAGS

Join the 170,000 NEA members already registered for NEA Click & Save. Go to [www.neamb.com/clickandsave](http://www.neamb.com/clickandsave) today!

## Negotiations Update

EASMC and SMCPS are planning to exchange proposals on Wednesday, February 2 with our first session of negotiations set for Thursday, February 17. Only select articles are open this year in addition to salary. Hopefully, everyone is following the news and understanding that this budget year may well again, be a difficult one. The state budget has not been formally presented to the legislators yet, but the early reports say that education funding will be taking a 5% hit at the state level. This potentially means that SMCPS will receive 5% less from the state for FY 2012. Combine that with the reports of another year of Maintenance of Effort from the St. Mary's County Commissioners and there is a great possibility that SMCPS will be running the 2012 school system with less money than FY 2011. Please contact your county commissioners and let them know that we need more than Maintenance of Effort and your legislators to ask them to fully support education funding.

**County Commissioners:**  
[bocc@stmarysmd.com](mailto:bocc@stmarysmd.com)

**Delegation:**

John Bohanan, [john.bohanan@house.state.md.us](mailto:john.bohanan@house.state.md.us)  
Johnny Wood, [john.wood@house.state.md.us](mailto:john.wood@house.state.md.us)  
Tony O'Donnell, [anthony.odonnell@house.state.md.us](mailto:anthony.odonnell@house.state.md.us)  
Roy Dyson, [roy.dyson@senate.state.md.us](mailto:roy.dyson@senate.state.md.us)



## Have You Checked Out Our Website?

The EASMC website is packed with important information including:

- EASMC Leaders
- Negotiated Agreement
- Legal Assistance
- Criminal Accusation Info
- Legislative Topics
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Calendar of Events
- Photo Gallery
- And Much More!

Want to know what's going on in your Association? Check us out!

Visit us at  
[www.easmc.net](http://www.easmc.net)



## Calendar

- January 21 End of Semester
- January 26 SMCPS BOE
- January 28-30 NEA Mid-Atlantic
- February 2 EASMC BOD
- February 4-5 MSEA BOD
- February 8 EASMC RA
- February 9 SMCPS BOE
- February 11-12 NEA BOD
- February 14 Valentine's Day
- February 21 President's Day
- February 23 SMCPS BOE



## Using a “Snowball” to Make Your Debt Melt Away

You made a resolution to get out of debt, or to reduce your debt, because times, and jobs, are uncertain. You have a number of credit cards, a car payment and a home equity loan out there you haven't used in a while. You'd like to get rid of all of this debt or most of it.

Where do you start? How do you do it? It seems daunting, but fortunately personal finance experts have given this some thought and devised some strategies.

First thing, obviously, is avoid taking on new debt as much as possible. Use a debit card for purchases instead of a credit card, so you're only spending money you have. (Be careful, though, to avoid some of the risks in using a debit card, such as overdrafting your account or greater liability if you lose the card.)

Second, itemize your debt. What is the balance on each? The interest rate? The minimum payment? (You don't need to include the primary mortgage on your home in this list unless you would like to.)

Total up your minimum payments that have to be made each month. Then figure out how much more you have available to pay on the debt. The core strategy in paying off debt is to focus on one account at a time and apply all the money you have beyond the minimum payment obligations to that one debt.

Logic, and math, will dictate that you focus on the debt with the highest interest rate first. The sooner you get that paid off, the less interest you'll pay and the more money you'll have to pay off your other debts. With mathematical certainty, this is the quickest way.

Highly motivated people should probably proceed in this manner.

But financial guru Dave Ramsey recommends making a concession to human nature. People aren't always rational and, sometimes, their motivation wanes. Paying down debt, like breaking a bad habit or losing weight, needs some positive reinforcement along the way.

So Ramsey recommends the “snowball” method of paying down debt. In this method, you pick your smallest debt to pay down first. You make the minimum payments on all your other accounts, and apply all extra funds available to that one debt.

Because it's the smallest debt, you will be able to pay that off more quickly than any of the others. Then you can apply the minimum payment you were making on that debt, plus all the extra available funds, to the next-smallest debt, and pay that down.

By the time you get to the third debt, you have the

minimum payments from the first two, plus your extra monthly amount to apply to it. These larger monthly payments will whittle away that debt even faster, the way a snowball gets bigger as it rolls down a hill.

The positive reinforcement of seeing these debts disappear one after the other is worth more, Ramsey reckons, than tackling a higher-interest debt that might be so extensive it doesn't seem like your monthly payments are even making a dent in it.

If you have two debts that are more or less equal in amount, you should of course tackle the one with the higher interest rate first, but keep generally to the strategy of working your way from the smallest debt to the largest.

One way to make that “snowball” grow even faster is to add the “snowflake” method to your strategy. In this method, you pull out all the stops and do everything you can to increase the amount you can pay toward your debt each month—sell things on eBay, have a yard sale, never pass up an opportunity to earn some extra money, limit your Starbucks visits to once a week, etc. Take all this extra cash, these “snowflakes,” no matter how small, and apply it your current priority debt. Even make interim payments, if you can, to reduce the principal as quickly as possible. An extra \$100 or \$200 a month can quickly make a visible difference in your outstanding balance.

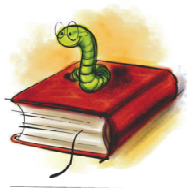
Then there's the question of whether you should augment your debt payments by cutting back on payments to your retirement plan. Financial advisers are split. Some say you should never cut back payments on your retirement plan because compounding tax-free is so advantageous. Others argue that accelerating your debt payments to reduce those high interest charges might justify suspending retirement payments for a while—though only for two years at most.

A middle path if you are paying the maximum allowed into your retirement plan is to cut it back to the level that your employer is willing to match, so you continue to benefit from those matching funds.

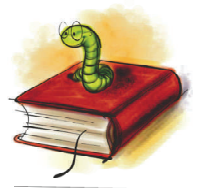
Ultimately, you have to set your own priorities, depending how big your debts are and how long you have to save for retirement.



**Melt  
Away  
Your  
Debt  
Forever!**



# You're invited



# to a birthday party for Dr. Seuss



™ & © 1997 Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. and NEA. Cat in the Hat image  
™ & © 1957 Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. All Rights Reserved.



**Date:** Saturday, February 26, 2011

**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...