

Marshall, Adrienne [MD]

From: Johnson, Sean [MD]
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 6:03 PM
To: Johnson, Sean [MD]
Subject: Up the Street - February 5, 2016

Trying some new formatting... excuse the forwarded message.
Have a great weekend.

Thanks,
Sean

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Up the Street: MSEA Legislative Updates

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THE WEEK THAT WAS IN ANNAPOLIS

- **Gov. Hogan Delivers His Second State of the State**

Public education was barely mentioned in the governor's second State of the State address, which focused on the need for greater bipartisanship in Annapolis. He repeated talking points about record-high investments during his first two budgets and

the need to find innovative ideas for closing the achievement gap—without proposing any new policies or legislation. Unsurprisingly, he made no mention of the larger class sizes, cut programs, and increased teacher turnover that followed his decision last May to withhold \$68 million from 13 school districts.

Earlier in the week, The Washington Post **fact-checked** Gov. Hogan’s “record education funding” claim as technically true in terms of overall state spending, but misleading in the context of annual increases in spending over the last decade due to enrollment and inflation growth.

- **The Democrats Respond**

This year, **Sen. Catherine Pugh** (D, District 40, Baltimore City) was tapped by Democratic leadership to give the official response to the governor’s speech. Her speech criticized Gov. Hogan for cutting education funding last year and called for needed improvements to the Thornton funding formula following more than a decade of increased low-income, special education, and ESOL students.

Before the governor’s speech, the county executives from Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties and Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake joined state legislators to ask the governor for more investment in education, health care, and transportation. They pointed out cuts to a regional hospital in Prince George’s County and the Interstate 270 Watkins Mill interchange in Montgomery County, the cancellation of the Red Line in the Baltimore region, the \$68 million withheld from public schools, and the deferment of \$350 million in higher education school construction for a new Baltimore City Detention Center.

Both Senate President **Mike Miller** and Speaker **Mike Busch** said the governor’s speech lacked substance. President Miller called it a “feel-good speech driven by polls” and Speaker Busch said there were “gaps between the rhetoric of the speech and the reality of the implementation of programs.”

- **Testing Reduction Bills Introduced**

In last week’s *Up the Street*, we wrote about how legislators are working with MSEA and other education advocates to advance a number of less testing initiatives. Several of those bills have now been introduced:

- Del. **Eric Luedtke** (D, District 14, Montgomery) and Sen. **Roger Manno** (D, District 19, Montgomery) are sponsoring legislation to limit the amount of time used on mandated tests to 2% or less of each school year, or 21.6 hours. This policy—which is backed by the U.S. Department of Education and has been successfully implemented in New York—would substantially cut back on standardized testing in the vast majority of Maryland school districts (**HB 141/ SB 407**).
- Del. **Haven Shoemaker** (R, District 4, Carroll) and Sen. **J.B. Jennings** (R, District 7, Baltimore and Harford) are sponsoring legislation to change the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment into a sampling test given during the summer. This will prevent the months of disruption seen in kindergarten classes the last two years from happening again in the future (**HB 657**).
- Del. **Eric Ebersole** (D, District 12 Baltimore and Howard) introduced legislation to provide more flexibility for local school districts to develop their own teacher and principal evaluation models—eliminating the “default” power of the State Board of Education. This will ensure that PARCC tests are no longer a mandated component of teacher evaluations and ensure that the district models are subject to collective bargaining (**HB 633**).
- Del. **Anne Kaiser** (D, District 14, Montgomery) and Sen. **Paul Pinsky** (D, District 22, Prince George’s) are the lead sponsors of a bill to require school districts to annually disclose all mandated standardized tests in their master plans (**HB 412/SB 533**).

Every year we fail to curb standardized testing is another year that our students lose weeks upon weeks of time to learn. Our legislators need to hear **from you** that we can no longer afford to wait for action. If you have not already, please **send an email today by clicking here** and writing your own message about the importance of reducing time on testing. If you have (thank you!), help us spread the message and ask three of your friends or colleagues to write emails of their own. You can also contact your legislators by phone. Use MSEA’s Legislative Hotline to get connected to the legislative switchboard in order to reach your senator and delegates. Call 888-520-MSEA (6732).

- **Other News**

- *General Assembly Leaders Introduce New Plan to Help Middle Class Families*
Leaders from both the House and Senate held a press conference on Monday

to introduce their four-point plan to help middle class families get ahead in today's economy. **The legislative package** includes proposals to help families save for college, provide student loan relief, close the gender pay gap, and incentivize employers to provide retirement savings plans.

- *Earned Sick Leave Bill Introduced*

The Working Matters coalition held a **press conference** on Tuesday to announce the introduction of this year's legislation to guarantee up to seven days of earned sick leave for all workers (**HB 580/SB 472**). MSEA is a partner in the coalition and this bill is one of our **2016 Legislative Priorities**.

- *Delegate Craig Zucker Becomes Senator Craig Zucker*

After waiting almost the entire 15 days allowed by law, Governor Hogan finally made it official Wednesday and appointed **Craig Zucker** to become the District 14 senator. The appointment—which fills a vacancy left after the retirement of former Sen. Karen Montgomery—now gives the Senate enough votes to override Gov. Hogan's veto of **legislation granting former felons the right to vote once leaving prison**.

- *Montgomery County Board of Education Names Jack Smith New MCPS Superintendent*

On Thursday night, the Montgomery County school board announced the hire of **Jack Smith**, currently Maryland's interim state superintendent of schools, as its new school chief. Dr. Smith took over his current post after Lillian Lowery left for a nonprofit job in Ohio. He served as Calvert County's superintendent for seven years before joining MSDE. **In a statement given to the Washington Post**, MSEA President Betty Weller said she "appreciated that Jack had an open door and a willingness to discuss policies that affect our students and educators." She encouraged him to maintain that level of accessibility with Montgomery County educators.

CAMPAIGN 2016

- **Union Voters Help Hillary Win Iowa**

While it was a close finish, Hillary Clinton left for New Hampshire on Monday night

with a victory in Iowa and a lead in delegates. Her Iowa caucus win could not have been possible without the efforts of educators, who worked together with other union activists to deliver a 52-43 winning margin among caucus-goers from union households. Help make the difference again in New Hampshire and future primary states by signing up to be an Educator for Hillary at www.strongpublicschools.org.

- **Congressman Cummings Officially Declines to Run for Senate**

As expected, Congressman **Elijah Cummings** (D, Maryland 07) has decided to run for re-election to his House seat rather than try to win a primary to become Maryland's next senator. Cummings had been publicly weighing a Senate run for nearly a year after Barbara Mikulski announced she would not run for re-election. He made the decision a day before the state's deadline to file for the ballot, passing on a competitive Democratic primary contest that includes Reps. **Chris Van Hollen** and **Donna Edwards**.

- **Race for Maryland's 4th Congressional District Narrows**

The crowded race for Maryland's 4th Congressional District (Prince George's and Anne Arundel) got some breathing room after **Del. Dereck Davis** (D, District 25, Prince George's) and former Prince George's County Council President **Ingrid Turner** dropped out of the race. Davis cited the need to focus on the current General Assembly session and Turner opted to run for the County Circuit Court instead. Even with two fewer campaigns, there are still six candidates vying for the congressional seat left open as Rep. Donna Edwards runs for the U.S. Senate.

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Center for Public Affairs

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