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MSEA ELECTION  
2015 GUIDE

MSEA'S PETITION  
15,000

GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
PRIORITIES

# ACTIONLINE

The Magazine of the Maryland State Education Association Volume 15 Issue 3 February 2015



**150** YEARS  
1865-2015  
MARYLAND STATE  
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

**POWER • RELATIONSHIPS • INFLUENCE**

Our 150-year history of power and influence depends on your continued activism!

**SPECIAL FEATURE ►****POWER  
RELATIONSHIPS  
INFLUENCE**

The halls of power are abuzz with speculation about the new governor's priorities, and MSEA is back in the political arena doing what we do best—organizing educators to fight for public education.



# CONT

**3 UP FRONT**  
Governor Hogan shortchanges Maryland's schools. Find out how much your county could lose.

**5 SHORT TAKES**  
**Happy birthday, MSEA!** It's been 150 years since Maryland educators first gathered and we're celebrating all year! MSEA's **online petition** collects more than 16,000 signatures! Members in **Prince George's County** are organizing for power. **Doug Lea** represents Maryland on the board of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

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Click here for MSEA's Board of Directors and local affiliates directory.



## MSEA HONORS THE LEGACY

of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. throughout the year as we actively advocate for equity in educational resources for all Maryland students.



I see a common thread running through this issue—one of tradition, empowerment, and advocacy. MSEA is celebrating its 150th anniversary, February is Black History Month, and the General Assembly is in session with members, leaders, and lobbyists fighting for time, resources, and programs. I'm reminded of a quote of Dr. King's that has always resonated with me, "Power properly understood is nothing but the ability to achieve purpose," he said.

"It is the strength required to bring about social, political, and economic change." His words do truly live on and continue to inspire.

As we face a budget deficit and a new General Assembly, we need to fight hard to use our political and organizing power to take on some truly critical issues. We need your involvement, your passion, and most importantly, your voice. [READ MORE](#)

# EVENTS

## 14 500 WORDS

Maryland has a way to make sure every student has the same opportunity for success.

## 19 MSEA 2015 ELECTION

Why vote? Because our leaders make a difference. No other group has the power, relationships, and influence that MSEA does to create change for public school students, educators, and communities.

Click here for the official online ballot. Vote by February 20.



President Betty Weller and Sean Johnson, Chief Lobbyist

*Betty H. Weller*  
MSEA RESIDENT



# FIND OUT WHAT THE GOVERNOR'S CUTS MEAN TO YOUR SCHOOL— DONTSHORTCHANGEMARYLAND.COM

“Gov. Hogan’s budget is balanced on the backs of students across Maryland.” —Betty Weller, MSEA President

More than \$3,600 slashed per classroom, \$100,000 per school in proposed budget.

Educators, legislators, parents, and friends of education are sounding the alarm on Gov. Hogan’s cuts to public education—cuts that would total \$144 million this year and balloon to a devastating \$600 million over the next four years.

MSEA took the governor’s education cuts to task on February 3 at a press conference where President Betty Weller and high-ranking Maryland legislators spoke out against the short- and long-term consequences of turning back the clock on the achievements of The Bridge to Excellence Act—Maryland’s groundbreaking school funding

formula that launched years of well-documented success for our schools.

“Gov. Hogan campaigned to change Maryland, but unfortunately his budget would short-change Maryland,” MSEA President Betty Weller said.

“Gov. Hogan’s budget would cut \$144 million from public schools next year, putting an estimated 2,500 teacher jobs or 4,200 support staff jobs at risk. And while urban jurisdictions get hit hard, this is a statewide problem.”

At the news conference, dozens of legislators and public education supporters stood united to defend education funding. Here’s what some of them had to say:

## **MICHAEL BUSCH**

*Speaker of the House*

“Our communities, our educated workforce, and our economy depend on an educated workforce and community. I’m here today to tell each and every one of you—we’re going to restore these cuts to education.”

## **MAGGIE MCINTOSH**

*Chair, House Appropriations*

“This budget tears at the safety

net of our state by tearing at the safety net of K-12 funding. I believe it will severely damage the progress we have made.”

## **VERJEANA JACOBS**

*President, Maryland Association of Boards of Education*

“The cuts threaten real progress for real students. There are kids behind the numbers. ... Our kids have one chance to get it right. Now is not the time to let them down.”

## **RAY LEONE**

*President, Maryland PTA*

“We urge the General Assembly to bring reason to the table and work on solutions that further the education system for which our state is known.”

## **JOAN CARTER CONWAY**

*Chair of Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee*

“This budget is unacceptable and we will be working very hard to restore it.”

## **NANCY KING**

*Montgomery Senate Delegation Chair*

“These are not one time cuts, these are cuts that will continue for the next four years.”

# Governor Hogan's Education Cuts:

**\$144 Million** Cut from  
Maryland Public Schools

More than **\$3,600**  
Cut per Classroom

Over **6,700** Educator  
Positions in Jeopardy

**DontShortchangeMaryland.com**



**How much would  
your county lose?**

[Click here to find out](#)

Call our Legislative  
Hotline, 888.520.MSEA,  
to leave your message  
for Gov. Hogan and  
your legislators!

“This budget tears at  
the safety net of our  
state by tearing at  
the safety net of K-12  
funding. I believe it  
will severely damage  
the progress we have  
made.”

—Maggie McIntosh,  
Chair, House  
Appropriations

## MSEA IN THE NEWS

The Washington Post | Fox45 Baltimore | The Herald Mail | WYPR

## Short Takes

This year marks MSEA's 150th year supporting public education and advocating for educators and students across Maryland. In each of those years, association members have been center stage at debates, marches, rallies, county councils, and school board meetings standing up for the civil rights of students and members, including their access to high quality educational resources, equitable school programs and activities, professional development, and fair pay and benefits.

To honor the anniversary, this year MSEA will herald our successes with a series of posters, headquarters displays, and stories about the breadth and impact of our work and progress.

### MSEA AND CIVIL RIGHTS

When Baltimore's legendary newspaper, *The AfroAmerican*, ran a front page story in 1951 about the merger of the Mary-



land Educational Association, the African American teachers association, and the white Maryland State Teachers Association, it was big news with broad implications.

"Dropping of the color clause," the paper said, "is expected to have national implications, Maryland being a 'borderline' state as regards segregation in education." And it did have implications. Soon after, neighboring Washington D.C. and West Virginia inte-

grated their associations in advance of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954. In 1966, just a little over a decade later, Everett Pettigrew

became the first African American president of MSTA. In 2003, Clara Floyd, a longtime civil rights activist, led the association as president for two terms, the first African American woman to do so.

As our state continues to struggle with issues of race, the achievement gap, social justice, and equal rights for LGBTQ educators and students, reproductive rights, poverty, and homelessness, MSEA members will remain on the front line.

## CALENDAR

**MSEA's ESP Professional Development Day is February 21** Strengthening leadership skills and knowing your workplace rights are proven ways to gain power and influence on the job. At **MSEA's ESP Professional Development Day**, education support professionals learn how becoming thoughtful and skillful leaders can motivate and inspire others to create change.



### February is Black History Month

Bring black history alive in your classroom using NEA's clearinghouse of lesson plans and activities for grades K-12. Find "**Musical Harlem**" from the Kennedy Center, "**African American World**" from PBS, "**The History of Hip-Hop**" from National Public Radio, and more at [nea.org](http://nea.org).



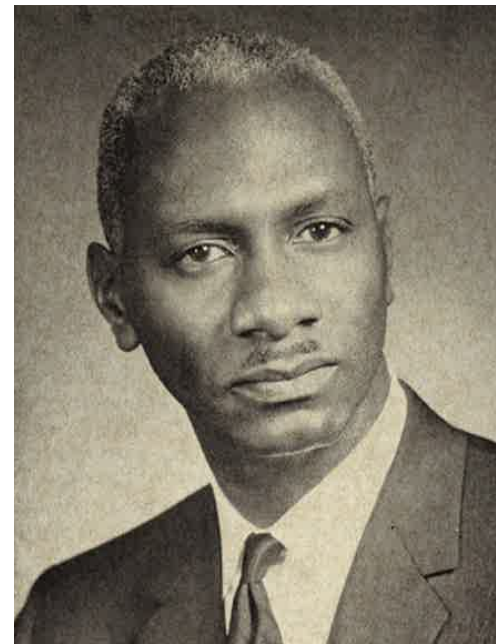
# 150 YEARS OF POWER, RELATIONSHIPS, & INFLUENCE

Look for the first of our 150th Anniversary posters in your staff lounge soon!

## MSEA's Top Ten Achievements

MSEA has won many victories critical to students, educators, and schools during the last four decades. Our members led the way pushing our pro-public education agenda with rallies, campaigns, personal contacts with legislators, postcard blitzes, phone calls, faxes, and emails—or whatever the available and most effective methods for advancing the issue were at the time.

[Click here to count down to #1!](#)



MSTA President Everett Pettigrew was the nation's first African American president of an all-inclusive, statewide education association. He served from 1966–67.

### Chaucer and St. Valentine

St. Valentine may have Geoffrey Chaucer and his poem “Parliament of Foules” to thank for his fame. Romance wasn’t attached to “Seynt Valentyne,” or the feasting day in his honor, before Chaucer called February 14 the day “Whan every foul cometh ther to chose his mate.” Visit [nea.org](http://nea.org) and search for free K-12 lesson plans.



### Memorize the U.S. Presidents on February 16

Have you forgotten? Memorization is still an important skill. With strategies like mnemonic devices, word association, chunking, and using acronyms, students and adults can have fun learning and remembering important facts like the U.S. presidents. [Click here](#) for tips, lessons, videos, and more.





# MSEA NEA DIRECTOR ELECTED TO NBPTS BOARD



Maryland now has a new voice on the **National Board for Professional Teaching Standards** (NBPTS). Doug Lea, an elementary band director in Howard County and a 2007 National Board Certified Teacher, joined the **NBPTS Board of**

**Directors** in November. He is also a member of the MSEA, NEA, and **Howard County Education Association** boards of directors.

Lea, a cancer survivor, challenged himself with the rigorous board certification process after his diagnosis robbed him of his vocal chords. “It made me a better teacher and saved my career.”

“National Board Certification is the highest credential in our profession,” Lea added. “It’s an independent organization that provides a certification for teachers who want to go above and beyond the basic expectations.

“From my perspective as a union activist, the certification process helps teachers better articulate the intellectual rigor of our craft and go deeper into our own teaching practice, skills that are helpful in advocating for more resources, more time, and more professional respect.”

Lea was the 2010–2011 Teaching Fellow for NEA, and as the current chair of its NBCT Caucus and Professional Standards and Practice Committee, he continues to promote teacher leadership in education policy.

“I believe that teacher leadership at this level can transform the education landscape by amplifying the voices of practitioners in policy and decision-making arenas,” Lea said.

## CALENDAR

**MARCH is National Nutrition Month** According to a recent report based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics, 51% of public school students live in poverty and that means they’ve probably experienced hunger. **Food in-security**, nutrition, and school success go hand in hand. Learn more [here](#).



**Music in Our Schools Month** The next time you need to defend music education from funding cuts, just say “**Google it.**” There is a ton of statistical and anecdotal evidence touting the benefits of music education to language development, IQ, and improved test scores. Who can argue with that?



# TRAINING FOR POWER AND INFLUENCE IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

When legislation passed in the 2013 General Assembly that changed the way public schools operate in Prince George's County, lots of people had lots to say about it. The restructuring placed County Executive Rushern Baker in the driver's seat of county schools and created a **hybrid school board** with some elected members, and some, including the superintendent, appointed by Baker.

Educators took notice. Now the Prince George's County Educators' Association (PGCEA) would be negotiating their contracts—working conditions, salaries, and benefits—with a school board loaded with county executive appointees. The Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) at High Point High School decided not to wait around to see what was coming next.

With the support of MSEA's Innovative Engagement and Organizing Grant, the team at High Point took a vision of an active, connected, and collaborative team of professionals and built an organizing program to make leaders of educators across the age and career spectrum.

"When we say organize we mean not only to engage, but to agitate; not only to educate, but to mobilize; not only to bridge the gap, but to spur teachers to action," said Alyson Harkins, a teacher

at High Point and a member of the council. "Paying lip service to being pro-union is no longer enough. We must be able to move people to action.

"We expect challenges. The Organizing for Power program is about training our FAC to build strong collegial relationships with PGCEA members, setting the stage for coming together as one strong, powerful voice," Harkins added. "We've already contacted colleagues from surrounding schools to join us."

Two of three team workshops are behind them now—with guest speakers and organizers from professional labor and community groups sharing time-tested and new relationship-building tips and tutorials on how to engage members and prep them for a high-level campaign or action.

"We're imagining a new scenario for PGCEA," said Tawana Lane, a member of the council and PGCEA's board of directors.

"If our careers or professionalism are threatened, we want to see our union springing into action, mobilizing thousands of members, visiting legislators' offices, and organizing with the PTA, neighborhood associations, and fellow union members.

"Is such a scenario possible? Not only is it possible," added Lane, "it is imperative, if teachers' unions are to survive."

**National School Breakfast Week March 2–6** An espresso machine for the staff lounge or a visit from a Baltimore Ravens football player is just one of loads of cool prizes your school and/or students could win in **No Kid Hungry Maryland's Breakfast Challenge**.



**Bring it to Annapolis** Got a beef with testing? Worried about school funding? Join MSEA on Monday nights and visit your senator and delegates and let them know face-to-face what's happening in your classroom and at school. **Contact your local association.**



# DID YOU SIGN? MSEA'S PETITION TO PROTECT SCHOOL FUNDING GETS 16,000 SIGNATURES IN 10 DAYS

## PROTECT FUNDING for MARYLAND'S SCHOOLS



[CLICK HERE TO SIGN THE PETITION](#)

“Signing the petition is a great start to being a 2015 activist, but it can’t end there. It gives us great momentum—but the real test will be how many MSEA members and friends of education stay in the game.”

—Sean Johnson, MSEA’s chief lobbyist

A week before the General Assembly session began, MSEA launched a two-week **radio campaign and online petition drive** to urge Gov. Hogan and the General Assembly to protect and increase the investment in our schools. At press time, more than 15,000 Marylanders had signed on, with the number climbing steadily every day in a strong statement of public support for Maryland’s schools.

“The response to our petition has been overwhelming and incredibly positive,” said Sean Johnson, MSEA’s chief lobbyist.

“Signing the petition is a great start to being a 2015 activist, but it can’t end there. It gives us great momentum—but the real test will be how many MSEA members and friends of education stay in the game.

“We need those same supporters and more to call, email, and visit with legislators during session to urge them to protect funding for our schools.”

The campaign made headlines across the state—the *Washington Post*, *Baltimore Sun*, WBAL TV and radio, WNEW, the Associated Press, Maryland Public Television, and other outlets featured stories on the campaign.

“With a new governor and a General Assembly with nearly 70 new senators and delegates, we set the tone early about how important and widely supported investing in our schools is,” Johnson added.



Calling EVERYONE  
Involved in Schools:

**BAG THE JUNK'S  
NATIONAL  
CONTEST**



# SMART SNACKS ROUNDUP

**Did you know? Many kids get up to half their daily calories at school, so we want to make sure they have healthy choices.**

March is National Nutrition Month and NEA's Health Information Network is calling on schools to share how they've implemented the USDA's Smart Snacks regulations.

Submit a creative photo, video, or narrative describing how your school has implemented the USDA Smart Snacks standards. Share your successes of getting healthy options into vending machines, cafeteria à la carte lines, school stores, and fundraisers. Share your challenges, too.

## **YOUR SCHOOL COULD WIN:**

**Grand prize:** National Bag the Junk at School Video Shoot and a \$300 Nutrition Grant

**2nd Place:** \$200 nutrition grant

**3rd Place:** \$100 nutrition grant

**Eligibility:** K-12 Educators and Support Professionals, Students, Families

**Deadline:** 3/6/2015

**FOR RULES AND ENTRY FORMS, [CLICK HERE](#)  
On Twitter: #smartsnackroundup!**

# Stacey Buskirk

Kindergarten Teacher  
South Penn Elementary  
Allegany County

## 1 MY HUSBAND AND MY DAUGHTER

I changed careers from nursing to teaching with Pat's encouragement. Misty brings me much laughter and love!

## 2 SONGS

I incorporate songs throughout the school day to get the kids moving and learning. Some of my favorites are from Jack Hartmann, Dr. Jean, and Just Dance Kids.

## 3 SMARTBOARD

*Not pictured*

My kindergarten students are beautifully behaved and engaged when we use the SMARTboard. It's fantastic!

## 4 READING TOOLS

We use book boxes to hold selected books, decodable readers from our reading series, a hand lens to look for familiar letters or sight words, and a monster finger to help them track the print.

## 5 WRITING TOOLS

Students poke paper and Kool-Aid play dough for pin-it activities that help

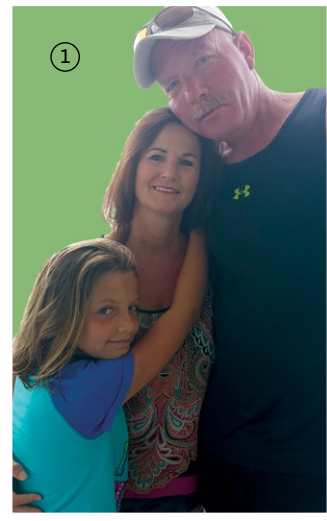
the students review letters, numbers, and sight words. They love them! Spaceman helps remember spaces between words in a sentence.

## 6 MY STUDENTS

The respect of a young child is amazing and rewarding. I LOVE my job!

## 7 KINDERGARTEN TEAM

*Not pictured*  
Chris, Julie, Shayna, and I work together planning lessons. We share ideas and create fun, engaging ways to meet the new standards and objectives.



# INSIDE MSEA WITH DAVID HELFMAN



As this issue hits your mailbox, it will be clear what Gov. Hogan's proposed budget provides for public school programs and services and school construction and repair. Given the \$750 million budget deficit, some politicians will continue to eye school funding as a source of cuts right until the closing gavel of the General Assembly session on April 13.

Until then, we remain on high alert. Our schools are the foundation of our communities. They attract families and businesses to Maryland, and outstanding educators too. Cutting school funding will not only negatively impact students, educators, and their families—it will hurt the quality of life that we enjoy in Maryland.

Our voices need to be strong and loud as we call for the full, equitable, and necessary funding for our schools. In the past week, more than 16,000 Marylanders—many of them public school educators—have signed MSEA's petition calling on Gov. Hogan and the General Assembly to provide more for our schools.

Time and time again, legislators remind us that your voices and stories are critical for better understanding and protecting public education. Case in point: hundreds of our kindergarten teacher-members responded to our recent call asking for input on the kindergarten readiness assessment (KRA). Their detailed responses and recommendations provided pitch-perfect support to our November call on the State Board of Education and MSDE to suspend use of the KRA until our concerns about its value are addressed. Through your action, educators' voices were heard. You made a positive difference in the professional lives of Maryland educators. Your activism can elevate the quality of public education for your students.

MSEA's efforts to protect your students' time to learn and your time to teach are just getting started. In the coming weeks, we'll be reaching out again, asking for input from all K-12 educators. What assessments are valuable? How do we best protect those and minimize the time spent on others?

You and your students need and deserve the support of every MSEA member. Please join us!



PHOTO: BRION MCCARTHY PHOTOGRAPHY © 2015

# A WORD FROM MSEA'S LEGAL TEAM

## You Deserve a Safe Work Environment



What is a student assault? It is the threat of physical harm combined with the present apparent ability to carry out that threat. The threat has to create a fear of imminent harm or result in offensive contact. An assault is an intent crime—a student under the age of seven, or a student lacking the mental capacity to form such an

intent, will probably not be prosecuted for an assault.

**If assaults are something that occur in your school, you have options. Let's take a look:**

**Document the event.** Your report must include a detailed description, plus the date, time, and location of the incident. Most importantly, your documentation must include witnesses.

**Report physical injury.** If you sustain physical injuries, complete the first report of injury form and submit it to the appropriate administrator at your school.

**See your doctor immediately!**

**Contact your local UniServ director.**

**File for workers' compensation benefits.** Don't rely on the school system to do it for you!

**Use assault leave benefits.** If you miss work due to injuries, your UniServ director can help you access assault leave benefits instead of sick days.

**File criminal charges.** This may be for documentation purposes only, but the act of filing informs parents or guardians and places the school system on notice. In some counties filing charges is necessary to qualify for assault leave benefits.

Above all, if you are the victim of a student assault, contact your local association for advice and guidance.

## Funding success

**School funding** is easily one of the most high profile and important issues the General Assembly debates every year. And this year, as the state faces a **\$750 million deficit**, school funding has a cloudy future. To get a good grasp of the landscape in Maryland, let's look at a bit of recent history.

**The Maryland Constitution** requires the General Assembly to establish "a thorough and efficient system of free public schools" and to "provide by taxation, or otherwise, for their maintenance." It's called the **education clause**, and it places responsibility for establishing a public school system on the shoulders of the state government—the only public service specifically **mandated by the constitution**. The only other thing the legislature is required to do is approve a balanced budget. It's great, isn't it, to know that the constitution has your back. But despite that support, public education finds itself

[Click here to find out how much sch](#)

# for every child

fighting annually for what students and educators need.

Back in 1999, noting out-of-state funding mechanisms and changing demographics, Gov. Parris Glendening and the legislature created the **Commission on Education, Finance, Equity, and Excellence**—also known as

the Thornton Commission after its chair, Alvin Thornton, a Howard University political science professor.

The commission reviewed the way Maryland funded its school system and issued a

report that led to **The Bridge to Excellence in Education Act**.

The act provided **\$1.3 billion of state aid to public schools** from 2003–2008, significantly increasing aid per student. The *New York Times* called the legislation and the state's commitment to students "**historic.**" Since then, Maryland schools

have seen nation-leading results in AP and NAEP scores, all-time highs in graduation rates, and were named **#1 in the country for five years in a row** by *Education Week*.

Ensuring adequacy and equity in funding for all students was the main focus of the far-reaching Thornton Plan.

It provides **greater state support to less wealthy counties**—as well as for children living in poverty, children with limited English proficiency,

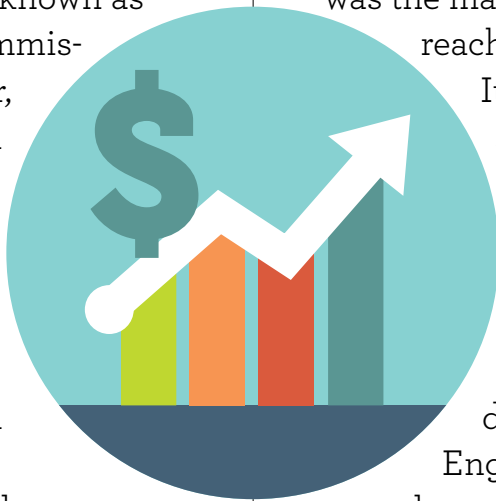
and special education students—and includes aid for transportation, early childhood, and other programs.

**A critical component of the Thornton Plan**, and one MSEA has fought for from the start, is the complicated-sounding **geographic cost of education index (GCEI)**. In a nutshell, GCEI provides additional funds

to **13 school districts where the cost of education is above the state average**. Those 13 districts are: Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's.

But making GCEI funding a reality got caught up in a legal snafu in 2003, and was further sidelined when it went **missing from Gov. Bob Ehrlich's budget each of his four years in office**. It wasn't until 2009 that Gov. Martin O'Malley and legislators began a three-year phase-in of GCEI funding.

Gov. Hogan's budget cut the GCEI by half to a \$63 million, and state aid by \$143 million by capping the inflation factor on the same Thornton formula that made Maryland's schools among the best in the nation for the past six years. At risk? Reasonable class size, professional development for educators, and services and programs critical to teaching and learning.





# POWER RELATIONSHIPS INFLUENCE



OUR STRONG POSITION OF POWER AND INFLUENCE IN ANNAPOLIS DEPENDS ON YOUR CONTINUED RESPONSE TO THE INJUSTICES YOU SEE YOUR STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES FACE—INJUSTICES IN RESOURCES, FACILITIES, ACCESS, AND EXPECTATIONS IN THE FACE OF UNYIELDING REFORMS, LIMITED FUNDING, AND CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS.

—BETTY WELLER, MSEA PRESIDENT

FATTI

MASCHII

AROLE

FEMINE

**WANT MORE INFORMATION? [Click here](#) to get the details on MSEA's top priorities.**

**T**he parking lots are full, men and women in business suits out in force. The halls of power in Annapolis are abuzz with speculation about the new governor's priorities, and MSEA is back in the political arena doing what we do best—organizing the voices of 71,000 educators to fight for public education.

“For 150 years, activists like us have made sure that educators are a presence in the corridors of power in the state capitol,” says MSEA President Betty Weller. “We’re a known quantity here in Annapolis—no other group has the influence, credibility, and passion that we do on education issues.

“This year—like every one of the previous 149—you’ll find elected MSEA leaders like me, local presidents, and our experienced lobbyists spending long days and nights researching issues, testifying in hearing rooms, and calling on delegates and senators with compelling first-hand stories urging them to make the right vote.

“We need more and more of our members to actively join the cause—our strong position of power and influence depends on your continued activism to right the injustices that your students and colleagues face—injustices in resources, facilities, ac-

cess, and expectations in the face of unyielding reforms, limited funding, and changing demographics.”

## **WE NEED RESOURCES, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES**

As *ActionLine* went to press, Gov. Hogan unveiled details of his budget, one that would force students and schools to do more with less under unprecedented demands and new reforms. “Gov. Hogan’s budget shortchanges Maryland’s students and schools and threatens the progress of our top-notch public schools, which are at the heart of what makes Maryland attractive to businesses and families,” said Weller. “The governor’s \$143 million in immediate school funding cuts compounds to nearly \$600 million in cuts over the next four years.”

Gov. Hogan’s budget will create overcrowded classrooms, inadequate technology (for things like PARCC testing), a shortage of classroom materials, and cuts to badly needed programs and vital staff positions.

“We stand ready to work with Gov. Hogan and the General Assembly to protect the funding in the budget and reverse these harmful budget cuts,” Weller added.

**“WE’RE A  
KNOWN QUANTITY  
HERE IN  
ANNAPOLIS—  
NO OTHER  
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INFLUENCE  
AND CREDIBILITY  
THAT WE DO  
ON EDUCATION  
ISSUES.”**

## WE NEED TIME TO LEARN, TIME TO TEACH

The ground could finally be shifting on the obsession with standardized testing that has burdened educators and students. “Parents, teachers, and students don’t see value, or purpose, in excessive testing,” said MSEA President Betty Weller, “but they do see consequences in lost instructional time and the narrowing of curriculum.”

MSEA is fighting back. We won the battle to prohibit the use of test scores in teacher evaluations and high school graduation requirements until at least 2016-17, and our recent call for the suspension of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) made headlines and headway.

With these two bills at the center of MSEA’s Time to Learn, Time to Teach agenda ready for legislators, we’re making our position clear:

**Prohibit Standardized Testing in Grades K-2** Our youngest learners should be focused on far more important things during the beginning of their school careers.

**Create a Blue Ribbon Commission on Testing in Maryland** This commission would study the issue and make recommendations to the governor and General Assembly on ways to reduce testing K-12.

## WE MUST PROTECT MARYLAND’S STRONG CHARTER SCHOOL LAW

Unscrupulous charter school operators in 15 states lost, misused, or wasted more than \$100 million in taxpayer money, according to a recent report. Michigan’s weak charter school law resulted in \$1 billion in annual state spending on schools with consistently poor re-

sults and questionable financial practices. Gov. John Kasich (R) recently proposed state regulation of charter schools due to performance and financial mismanagement.

Those headlines haven’t been in our strong charter school law promoting standards, accountability, and sound financial practices that MSEA fought for and won in 2004, and others are talking up a push to weaken charter school operators and advocates.

## PROTECTING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Every year, MSEA studies hundreds of related topics and legislation. We’re focusing on these important issues:

**Burden of proof** Look for a proposal that holds school districts responsible for proving the success of a student’s IEP. MSEA believes this is an affront to the professional status of special educators, and like testing “to teach” concern because of the additional educator workload that would follow.

**Protecting local control in evaluation and school calendar** MSEA will work to ensure that start dates, start times, and school calendars are not mandated by the General Assembly but are decided locally with the input of local educators.

**Rejecting vouchers, neo-vouchers, and tax dollars for private schools** MSEA will continue to fight against any schemes that divert public dollars to private schools that fail to meet the same standards of accountability as public schools.

# “I’M FIGHTING FOR AN END TO TESTING MADNESS”

—Erika Strauss Chavarria

HOWARD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL SPANISH TEACHER



In these times of endless testing in our public schools, it is crucial for us to be active in the fight to put an end to the obsession with high stakes tests. That’s why I’ll be in Annapolis during this General Assembly. That’s where the decisions that make or break public

education are made.

We all know this: the pressure to cover the content of standards-based tests mean that we are less able to plan creative, engaging, and student-centered lessons and the amazing technology that should be used to enhance creativity and innovative learning is now dedicated to test prep and testing.

High stakes test scores do not accurately measure a teacher’s ability in the classroom and should not be used for their evaluations. High stakes tests do not take into consideration the socioeconomic background or learning differences of our students, or the difficulties or hardships that they face in their lives outside of school.

Approximately 51% of students in this country are living below the poverty line which is the real reason behind the “achievement gap.” Educators should not be punished for a student’s inability to pass a test due to their life situation.

We need to end the testing craze. Educators should be trusted as professionals to teach and evaluate our students in a way that encourages their strengths and abilities. Our students deserve it and that’s what I’ll be fighting for!

# MSEA ELECTION 2015

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BALLOT.

# MSEA— Our Profession Our Association Our Voice

## WHY VOTE IN THE MSEA ELECTION? POWER • RELATIONSHIPS • INFLUENCE

### **MSEA's elected leaders guide the association**

It's true—no other group has the relationships, influence, and structure that MSEA does to create change for public school students, educators, and communities. That's why voting for the leadership that directs MSEA's priorities, policy, and action is so important. Last year, just 24% of the association's 71,000 members voted in the election for MSEA's board of directors and more than 40 delegates representing Maryland at the NEA 2014 Representative Assembly. It's time to set a new, and higher, standard for participation.

### **New opportunities for better representation**

Creating a new benchmark for participation, and strengthening member representation from all parts of the state, is exactly what delegates to MSEA's 2014 Representative Assembly had in mind when they gave a thumbs up to new regional delegate elections. On the 2015 [MSEA Election website](#) you'll vote for your region's NEA delegate candidates, at-large NEA delegate candidates, NEA director, and MSEA officer and board of directors positions.

## HOW TO VOTE

**Locate your MSEA member ID** on the back cover of this magazine. Hint: it's on the same line as your name. It's also on your MSEA membership card. Can't find it? Ask your building rep. You'll also need the last four digits of your Social Security number.

**Sign in here** for your secure and anonymous MSEA Election Ballot. Or click the "MSEA Election" box on [MSEA's homepage](#), to access the election website.

**Sign in** using your member ID number and the last four digits of your Social Security number.

**Study the candidate profiles** for MSEA president, vice president, board of directors, and NEA directors in this issue or review the entire 2015 Election Guide online, including more than 100 candidates for delegate to the NEA convention. The candidate profiles also appear on your ballot.

### **NEW ONLINE!**

**Watch videos** of officer and board of directors candidates.



## What do MSEA's leaders do?

The **PRESIDENT** is the full-time leader of MSEA and serves as the chief spokesperson and representative. Among many other duties, the president presides at all association meetings, appoints chairpersons and members of MSEA committees, and consults with the executive director on MSEA policies and programs. *The three-year term for president begins 8/1/15.*

The **VICE PRESIDENT** represents the president as needed and performs duties assigned by the president, such as representing MSEA members on statewide committees and task forces, or as directed by the MSEA bylaws. *The three-year term for vice president begins 8/1/15.*

MSEA's Board of Directors is made up of three officers (president, vice president, and treasurer), eight **MSEA DIRECTORS**, four MSEA NEA Directors, and the executive director. The board is responsible for the fiscal affairs and general management of the association, the interpretation of policies, the preparation of the proposed two-year budget, and more. *Four MSEA directors to be elected for three-year terms beginning 8/1/2015.*

NEA's Board of Directors consists of at least one director from each state affiliate. With 71,000 members, MSEA has four **NEA DIRECTORS**. NEA directors are also members of MSEA's Board of Directors. The NEA board meets four times a year and during the NEA Representative Assembly at the annual convention. The board and NEA Executive Committee are responsible for the general policies and interests of the association. *One NEA director to be elected for a three-year term beginning 9/1/2015.*

Every year, MSEA members elect fellow educators to represent MSEA as **DELEGATES TO THE NEA ANNUAL REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY (RA)**. These regional and state delegates, plus delegates elected by each of MSEA's 39 local associations, comprise the MSEA delegation to the RA. This year, more than 9,000 delegates from across the country will gather July 1-July 6 in Orlando. They'll debate issues that impact public education and set association policy and activities for the year ahead.

Candidate statements for all MSEA offices and delegate positions to the NEA Representative Assembly appear exactly as received from the candidates. MSEA and *ActionLine* are not responsible for any typographical errors, spelling errors, or grammatical mistakes.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

President

# CANDIDATE FOR MSEA PRESIDENT

The president will serve a three-year term beginning 8/1/2015.

## BETTY WELLER



**Position:** Teacher

**School:** MSEA President

**Local:** KCTA

**Member:** MSEA 40 years/NEA 40 years

**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* President, Vice President, Sick Leave Bank (chair).

*MSEA:* Treasurer, Vice President, President.

*NEA:* RA delegate, Structural Review Committee, National Council of State Education Associations (alternate).

*I am humbled to have served as your president for these past two and a half years. It would be my great honor to continue for another term. With the tsunami of education reform efforts in public schools in recent years, we have tried to make sure the voice of the experts (educators in schools and at worksites) has been in the forefront. We have worked hard to ensure fair evaluations and quality professional development. We aren't finished yet but we are making progress and we will continue to express the concerns of members on all issues education.*

*I appreciate the support members have given me and will do my utmost to see that your voice is driving reform efforts. I believe reform should be done with us and not to us. Thank you for all you do for our students every day.*

According to MSEA Bylaws, when only one candidate seeks election for MSEA president, the candidate shall be considered to be elected without the necessity of an election. President Betty Weller's nomination form and statement appear above as submitted.

# CANDIDATE FOR MSEA VICE PRESIDENT

Elect one vice president to serve a three-year term beginning 8/1/2015.

**MSEA**  
**2015**  
**ELECTION**

## CHERYL BOST



**Position:** Teacher

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**School:** Prettyboy E.S.

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**Local:** TABCO

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**Member:** MSEA 26 years/NEA 26 years

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**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* President, Vice President, Membership (chair).  
*MSEA:* Vice President, Board member, Membership Committee.  
*NEA:* Board of Directors, Conference Alignment Committee, RA delegate.

*First, I must thank all MSEA members for providing me the opportunity to represent you as MSEA Vice President. It is truly an honor to represent and lead such dedicated members. I believe actions speak louder than words, and I trust that you have seen through my actions as part of our leadership team that I work hard, stand up for what is right, and initiate the needed actions. I have endeavored to serve as your voice in continuing to insist on putting common sense into education reform, as well as in addressing budget and policy needs of our ESP. I have led the work to redesign our leadership trainings to ensure that they are more beneficial for all members and truly help build capacity and leadership at the local level. With your vote, I will continue to be your advocate and your voice, serving as MSEA VP.*

## JAMES A. WOODS



**Position:** Teacher

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**School:** Frederick Douglass H.S.

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**Local:** PGCEA

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**Member:** MSEA 21 years/NEA 21 years

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**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* Building representative.  
*MSEA:* RA delegate.  
*NEA:* RA delegate.

*I would like to thank the thousands of Teachers who made Maryland #1 in Education in the Country for the past five years. I'm running for MSEA Vice-President so that I can be a voice of reason with our Elected Officials and you the member of MSEA.*

*What have we gotten from Annapolis after we delivered in the classroom for the past number of years? Lost Planning Time. SLO's (Student Learning Objectives). The Framework for Teaching by Charlotte Danielson. Lack of Student Discipline. One of the worst Pensions in the Country. Health Care Costs that will go up drastically in 2015 and beyond.*

*WE DESERVE BETTER. Our Students need a Great Education and we have delivered, now its time for Annapolis to Deliver for US! I would be honored for your support.*

## CANDIDATE PROFILES

Vice President

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## CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elect four members to MSEA's Board of Directors to serve a three-year term beginning 8/1/2015.

### CANDIDATE PROFILE

Board of Directors



### RICHARD BENFER



**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Local President

**Local:** TAAAC

**Member:** MSEA 21 years/NEA 21 years

**Association Positions Held:**

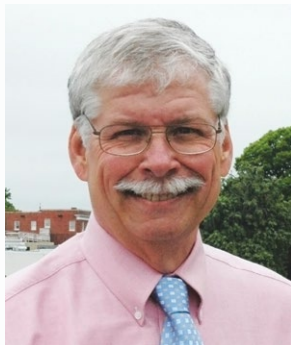
*Local:* TAAAC President.

*MSEA:* Board of Directors.

*NEA:* GLBT Caucus.

*Thank you for allowing me to serve you for three years on the MSEA BOD. The experience has been rewarding and enlightening. Learning and navigating the process of BOD operations has helped me be an effective advocate for you. I ask for your vote so I can continue represent you statewide. I serve as the BOD liaison to the MSEA Human and Civil Rights Committee where we shed light on the very real problem of Human Trafficking. I brought MSEA's Anti Bully Program into schools and serve on MSDE's Task Force on Teacher Education in Early Childhood Education. Lobbying at the state legislature during the legislative session helped keep standardized test scores out of educator evaluations. Collaborating with local ESP groups has given me a more complete understanding of their needs. I will move forward building on the relationships I have established to help me advocate for all MSEA members.*

### JOE COUGHLIN



**Position:** Education Support Professional

**School:** Technology Support Center

**Local:** ESPBC

**Member:** MSEA 14 years/NEA 14 years

**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* President, Board of Directors, Building representative.

*MSEA:* Budget Committee, Negotiations Team, ESP Concerns Committee.

*NEA:* RA delegate.

*Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to fight for your interests this past three years as a member of the MSEA Board of Directors. We are the most committed educators in the country. Maryland's #1 national ranking is the result of MSEA members' talent, time, expertise and caring. I am proud to fight tirelessly on your behalf. My experience includes advocating in Annapolis to keep the promise of a solvent retirement system, a fair evaluation system, curriculum that matches Common Core, and a living wage while combatting endless testing and outsourcing. With your support, I will continue to fight for reforms that you believe are best for our profession and the education of all children. This year, our profession and families will be facing tougher challenges as the leadership in Annapolis changes. Please vote for me, Joe Coughlin, as your advocate on the MSEA Board of Directors. Thank you!*

# CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elect four members to MSEA's Board of Directors to serve a three-year term beginning 8/1/2015.

**MSEA**  
**2015**  
**ELECTION**

## CANDIDATE PROFILES

Board of Directors

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### LINDA FIRMAN



**Position:** Education Support Professional

**School:** Cradlerock E.S.

**Local:** HCEA (Howard)

**Member:** MSEA 9 years/NEA 9 years

**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* Board of Directors.

*MSEA:* Political Action Committee (captain).

*NEA:* Resolutions.

*I'm committed to as a voice serving for great public schools for every student.*

### L. KAREN GREENE-TURNER



**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Roberto Clemente M.S.

**Local:** MCEA

**Member:** MSEA 18 years/NEA 18 years

**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* Building representative, MCEA Elected Faculty representative.

*I believe public education advocacy provides opportunities for instructional improvements that lead to teacher satisfaction and strong leaders; which builds capacity for student achievement.*

### VERONICA HENDERSON



**Position:** Education Support Professional

**School:** Office of Student Data

**Local:** ESPBC

**Member:** MSEA 25 years/NEA 25 years

**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* Board of Directors, Vice President, Secretary.

*MSEA:* Board of Directors, Instructional Professional Development Committee, Cadre Trainer.

*NEA:* Board of Directors, National Council for Education Support Professional member, Resolutions Committee.

*I, Veronica Henderson, am asking for your votes to elect me to continue to be a voice for the voiceless through leadership, advocacy, and commitment.*



**CANDIDATE PROFILES**

MSEA Board of  
Directors

# CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elect four members to MSEA's Board of Directors to serve a three-year term beginning 8/1/2015.

## LORI J. HRINKO



**Position:** Teacher

**School:** North East M.S.

**Local:** CCCTA

**Member:** MSEA 18 years/NEA 20 years

**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* President, Negotiations Team, Teacher Evaluation Committee.

*MSEA:* Board of Directors, Regional Organizing Committee, Eastern Shore CBC (chair).

*NEA:* RA delegate, Constitution, Rules, and Bylaws Committee (co-chair).

*I began fighting for members and public education as a student union member. I have continued to do so for the past 18 years. I am committed to serving MSEA and its members locally, at the state level, and nationally. I am a listener and a problem solver that works to find acceptable solutions for all involved. Now more than ever we need to make our voices heard. We are the leaders in our profession and we need to stand up for ourselves and our students. Salaries and benefits must be maintained and improved, workload and appropriate staffing must be addressed, and teacher evaluations must be fair and jointly approved. Testing should not be more important than learning and scores should not be more important than students. Re-elect me to the MSEA Board so I can continue to work for you.*

## DEBBIE SCHAEFER



**Position:** Education Support Professional

**School:** Severna Park M.S.

**Local:** SAAAAC

**Member:** MSEA 20 years/NEA 20 years

**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* President, Vice President, Board member.

*MSEA:* Board of Directors.

*Hello, my name is Debbie Schaefer and I am running for re-election to the MSEA Board of Directors. I have served on the MSEA Board for the past three years. As a member of the board, I feel that I have a greater voice in advocating for better working conditions and protecting our member's rights. I am also a member of the MSEA ESP, Membership, Budget, and Legislation Committees. I am currently Vice President of my local the Secretaries and Assistants of Anne Arundel County (SAAAAC) and served 6 year as President. I am asking for your support and your vote, let's continue to improve MSEA and keep Maryland Public Education number "1".*



# CANDIDATES FOR NEA DIRECTOR

Elect one member to NEA's Board of Directors to serve a three-year term beginning 9/1/2015.

**MSEA**  
**2015**  
**ELECTION**

## CANDIDATE PROFILES

NEA Director

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BALLOT.](#)

### MICHAEL DAVIS



**Position:** Education Support Professional

**School:** Atholton H.S.

**Local:** HCEA (Howard)

**Member:** MSEA 9 years/NEA 9 years

**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* RA delegate.

*MSEA:* RA delegate.

*NEA:* RA delegate, Director.

*Serving as an advocate and voice for Education professionals in and out of the board room is my focus. These last three years as NEA Director has afforded me the opportunity to work with stake holders on challenging issue such as fair share, violence in schools, high stakes testing and fair principle/teacher evaluations. I have learned and have a focus to continue the work to move MSEA/NEA forward. Speaking on behalf of paraprofessionals we must continue to have involvement at all levels and we must work as a united front to get ESP voices heard.*

*It has been challenging these last three years and I will continue advocate on the state and national level but I will build a stronger connection with the local level and promote a more cohesive level of voice and fight with each level of the association.*

### THERESA MITCHELL DUDLEY



**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Benjamin Tasker M.S.

**Local:** PGCEA

**Member:** MSEA 16 years/NEA 16 years

**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* Vice President, Board of Directors.

*MSEA:* Board of Directors, Pension, Instructional and Professional Development Committee.

*NEA:* RA delegate.

*Please vote for me for NEA Director so I can continue to serve MSEA.*

*My association experience began as a building representative in 2001. In 2003, I attended my first MSEA and NEA conventions. I served PGCEA on the Membership Committee, a board member for 10 years, and currently as Vice President. I served on the MSEA Board of Directors for three years. My work includes the Pension Task Force, Resolutions and IPD Committees, IPD, and the Maryland State Teacher Memorial Task Force. We have major issues to contend with in teacher evaluations, common core implementation, and high stakes testing. My children graduated public schools.*

*My experience began 23 years ago as a substitute teacher, Computer Lab Aide (2250) and now a certified teacher. I teach 6th grade science at Benjamin Tasker Middle School in Bowie. Thank you for your support and vote.*

# MSEA 2015 ELECTION

## CANDIDATE PROFILES

NEA Director

## CANDIDATES FOR NEA DIRECTOR

Elect one member to NEA's Board of Directors to serve a three-year term beginning 9/1/2015.



### PAUL LEMLE

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Local President

**Local:** HCEA (Howard)

**Member:** MSEA 11 years/NEA 13 years

**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* President, Government Relations (chair).

*MSEA:* RA delegate.

*NEA:* RA delegate, State Political Action Committee (captain).

*Colleagues, I'm a cancer survivor, father of three adopted children from Ethiopia, and a secondary teacher of law/government. As president of Maryland's largest merged (teacher and ESP) association, I've led a dynamic, sustained effort to build power.*

- *In face to face meetings with over three thousand members, we've doubled participation in our PAC, now the 2nd largest in the state.*
- *Through hard political work and exciting new partnerships with congregations and fellow unions, we've elected members to our BOE and the General Assembly.*
- *We recruited 900 new participants in our sick leave banks.*
- *As measured in our job satisfaction survey, member confidence in HCEA is 89%—even non-member confidence is 75%!*
- *We have successfully negotiated step increases for the past three years, a 3% COLA for 2014-15, without health insurance increases.*

*If elected, I will bring the same energy to MSEA and NEA!*



### RUSSELL LEONE

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Severna Park E.S.

**Local:** TAAAC

**Association Positions Held:**

*Local:* Vice President, Board of Directors, Nomination Committee (chair).

*MSEA:* Leadership Training Retreat (chair), Elections (co-chair).

*I believe in two basic truths about our educators. One is commitment. I believe that you work well beyond your work day to make sure your students are closing gaps. You work tirelessly for students, parents, and your community.*

*The second is professionalism. Whether working on the Summer Leadership Training committee to grow future leaders or serving as a PTA teacher representative to build relationships and strengthen our public perception, I strive to make sure we are viewed as the professionals we are. As a local board member, I listen to our members concerns about our profession and am not afraid to voice them.*

*I am dedicated to ensuring further recognition our members deserve on the national level. I believe Maryland is the greatest state in our nation and we have the ability to lead our profession. Let me be your voice to make sure others know this nationwide.*

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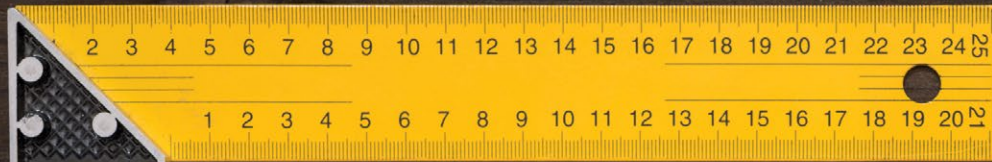
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