



MSDE BULLETIN
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SAFE SCHOOLS SUMMIT DRAWS HUNDREDS TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS, SEEK SOLUTIONS

Parents, educators, students, and the community must work together to quell violence in Maryland schools. Participants in this week’s Summit on School Safety Solutions agreed that by working together, safety can be improved.

“If we don’t address these problems today, they will come visit all of us,” said U.S. Rep. Elijah E. Cummings. “I have come here to beg you to take this opportunity to be part of the solution. If you don’t want to do that, go home.”

Rep. Cummings and State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick convened Maryland’s first-ever statewide summit on school safety at UMBC on June 3. More than 300 participants from across the state came for a full-day of discussion and problem-solving. The broad cross-section of attendees also included law enforcement officers, teacher’s union representatives, mental health experts, and members of the faith community.

“We are here to have a courageous conversation; that is what we need,” said Dr. Grasmick.

In the end, several conclusions were reached:

- A student summit, focusing on school safety issues, will be scheduled for this fall.
- MSDE will set to work to better define some student behaviors, such as “insubordination,” to better assure that discipline is more consistent across schools and systems.
- An action group will be convened by Rep. Cummings and Dr. Grasmick to provide focus to many of the recommendations that emerged from the summit and help chart next steps.

The summit provided the opportunity for participants to hear from student behavior experts, educators on the front lines, and students who navigate their schools and neighborhoods. Only



Lt. Gov. Anthony Brown, above, kicked off this week’s Summit on School Safety Solutions. U.S. Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, left, discussed the summit’s outcomes with news reporters.

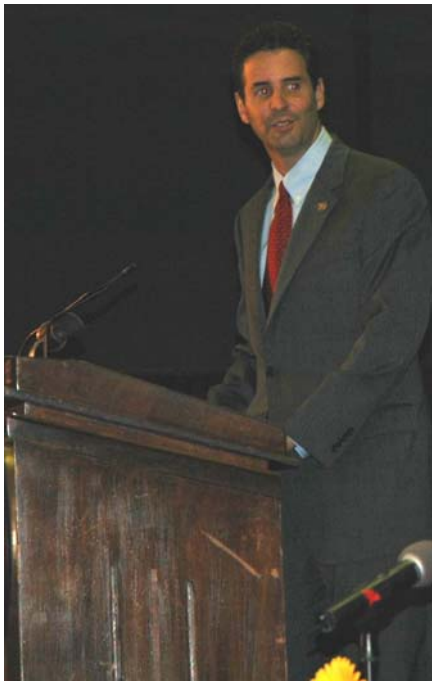
by listening to each other, they said, can schools be the safe learning environments they envision.

Ivan Juzang, an expert on youth behavior who has worked with young people in Philadelphia, suggested that communities reach out to the young. Many students simply do not know the opportunities that exist. “They want to be engaged; they want to be involved,” he said. “We are not linking them up to the right programs.”

Dr. Sam Goldstein, a behavioral psychologist based in Utah, said the real way to stem the tide of violence in our communities is by preventing it in the first place, through strong early childhood education, mentoring, and other programs.

“We have to teach kids how to deal with adversities,” Dr. Goldstein said. “Problems don’t just exist in underprivileged schools. They are everywhere.”

(more)



U.S. Rep. John P. Sarbanes addressed this week's Summit on School Safety Solutions.

SAFE SCHOOLS SUMMIT DRAWS HUNDREDS TO SEEK SOLUTIONS (Cont.)

The summit attracted scores of elected officials, united in their desire to strengthen school safety. Lt. Governor Anthony Brown, U.S. Rep. John P. Sarbanes, and U.S. Rep. C.A. "Dutch" Ruppersberger were among those addressing the attendees.

A number of ideas and suggestions emerged from the conference. MSDE will compile the information into a report, which will be distributed to schools and systems throughout the State.

"It is up to us to bring out the best in our children; all of their wonderful gifts," said Rep. Cummings. "The alternative is to do nothing and see the problem get worse." ■

MARYLAND STATE BOARD PUTS IN PLACE VOLUNTARY CURRICULUM FOR THE ARTS

The Maryland State Board of Education last week voted to accept the Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) for the arts.

Goals for visual arts, music, theater, and dance for grades K-8 are set by the detailed arts VSC. The new document provides schools and school systems with broad learning goals in the arts at each grade level.

Board members acknowledged the depth of the document before taking their vote. "This is an enormous piece of work," said Blair Ewing. "I am tremendously impressed."

Westat, an independent consulting firm, gave high marks to the arts VSC. Sandra Rieder, representing Westat, told the State Board that the VSC for the arts is comprehensive, well-crafted, and rigorous.

Richard Deasy, director of the National Arts Education Partnership, and Mary Ann Mears, chair of the Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance, provided the State Board with background on the Fine Arts Education Advisory Panel, which was established by the State Superintendent in 1996. They agreed that Maryland's longtime commitment to the arts education is unique in the country.

"There simply isn't the continuity and support for the arts in any other state the way there is in Maryland," Deasy told the Board. ■

STATE BOARD APPROVES RESTRUCTURING PLANS FOR SCHOOLS IN TWO SYSTEMS

The Maryland State Board of Education last week approved restructuring plans for 13 underperforming schools, nine in Baltimore City and four in Prince George's County.

Board members approved plans for Forest Park Middle, Francis M. Wood High, Harbor City Middle/High, Harford Heights Intermediate, Northwestern High, Paul L. Dunbar Middle, Sharp-Leadenhall Elementary, Sinclair Lane Elementary, and Woodbourne Day School in Baltimore City; and Kettering Middle, Drew Freeman Middle, Central High, and Fairmont Heights Middle in Prince George's County. All 13 schools will be using the option of replacing school staff in an effort to improve performance.

Baltimore City CEO Andres Alonso said he would be eliminating 300 central office positions, beginning July 1, in an effort to put more resources at the school level. ■

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