



# The Maryland School for the Blind

## **ANNUAL REPORT**



# New MSB Mission

To serve students with blindness or low vision of all abilities from birth through 21 throughout their unique educational journey.

## Values

**Collaboration**

**Integrity**

**Accountability**

**Transparency**

## At MSB We Believe...

- 1 All students can learn.
- 2 Students should be educated in an environment that keeps them engaged with their family and community as much as possible.
- 3 Diverse viewpoints contribute to better decision-making.
- 4 Access for all.
- 5 The dignity of risk-taking is necessary to learn and grow.
- 6 Interdependence is an evolution from independence.
- 7 Effective education is measured by the student's ability to apply learning in daily life.
- 8 The Expanded Core Curriculum is essential for students with low vision or blindness.
- 9 Family and community partnerships are crucial for student success.
- 10 Data, analysis, and evidence-based practices lead to student success which drives decision-making, resource allocation, and MSB's priorities.

# A Message from the Superintendent and Board Chair

As 2022 ends, we reflect on our accomplishments this past year and advance plans to improve our programs and services for our students and families in 2023 and beyond. We are committed to providing outstanding support and resources to help our students reach their full potential.

In an effort to “rebuild community,” our theme for the year, we opened our campus to the public for the first time in over 15 years for the first annual See Beyond Festival in April. This one-of-a-kind event included activities for people to experience what it means to see beyond a person’s disabilities and focus on their abilities. Read more about it on pages 10 and 11.

Following two and a half years of the pandemic, MSB returned to normal operations in the fall, including all on-campus, residential, and statewide educational programs and activities for over 1,300 students throughout Maryland.

With the support of the state and the Board of Directors, MSB instituted a new compensation plan that is competitive with Baltimore County Public Schools for the first time in memory. This enabled MSB to hire over 84 new staff in 2022. Page 14 highlights some of our exceptional staff.

We continually strive to improve our campus facilities and programs by creating accessible living and learning environments for our students to grow and thrive. This is critical to our mission of serving Maryland students with blindness or low vision of all abilities throughout their educational journey.

To that end, MSB officially broke ground on a new building in a ceremony held in October. This new construction includes The Cottages on the Hill for older students with 23,000 square feet of living space. It will also house the Maryland Instructional Resource Center braille book repository, holding countless resources to serve the educational needs of blind and low-vision students throughout the entire state of Maryland. A rendering of the new building can be seen on page 8.

This is the beginning of the next phase of our initial 10-year Campus Master Plan. In the upcoming year, we will launch a capital campaign to fund future campus improvement projects, including a new pool and gymnasium complex. There are many opportunities for donors to advance these projects and significantly impact Maryland students with vision loss now and in the future. See page 15 for a breakdown of how your dollars impact our budget.

We are grateful for the support of our steadfast constituents. You are an important part of our community; together, we are impacting the lives of our students and their families.

Thank you!

*W. Robert Hair, Superintendent & CEO*

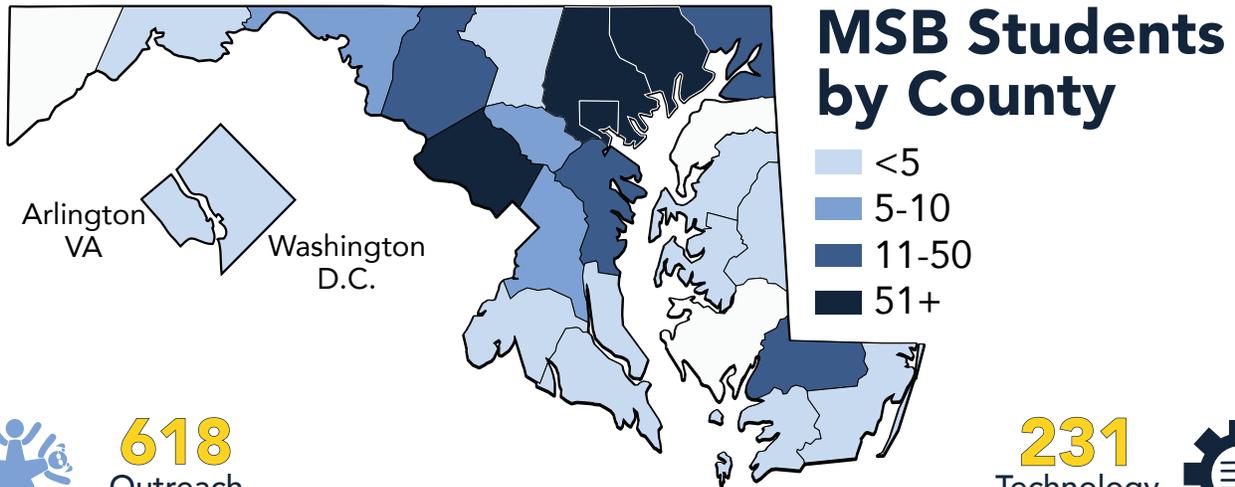
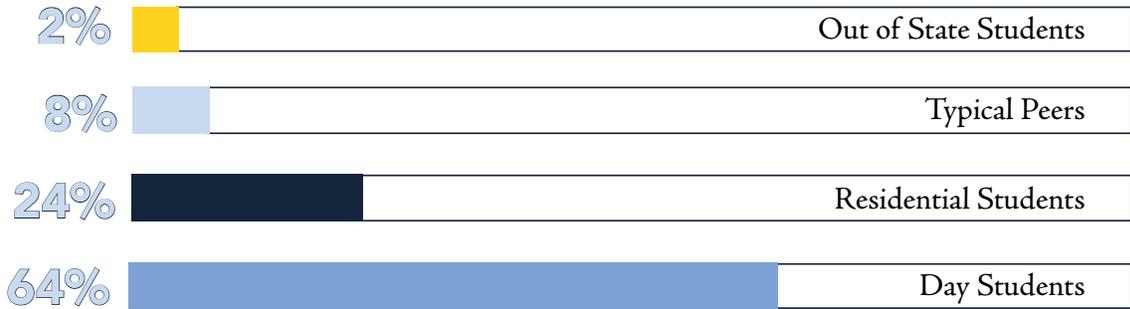


*Marion Mullauer, Board Chair*



# Students Served

*These totals are for all students served throughout the year regardless of when they enrolled/withdrew.*

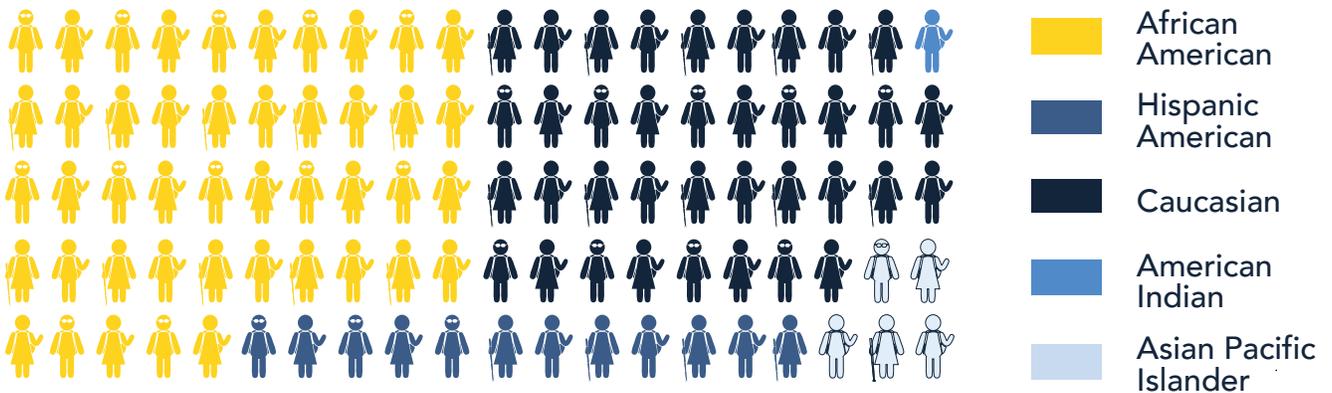


**618**  
Outreach Encounters

This represents the approximate annual number of one-on-one direct services provided to Maryland students in their home communities and on campus by MSB Statewide Outreach staff.

**231**  
Technology Assistance

This represents the approximate annual number of assistive technology services provided to Maryland students in their home communities and on campus by MSB Statewide Outreach staff.





# Maryland Instructional Resource Center

Operated by MSB in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the Maryland Instructional Resource Center (MIRC) is a centralized repository for braille, large print textbooks, and other educational materials. The MIRC provides textbooks and educational materials to students with blindness or low vision throughout Maryland.

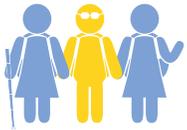
The MIRC is responsible for conducting the annual American Printing House (APH) Federal Quota Census of legally blind students in public schools across the State of Maryland. It supports eligible students in prekindergarten through age 21 enrolled at MSB and in Maryland's twenty-four local school systems by facilitating the ordering, delivery, and sharing of braille and large print textbooks and supplemental educational materials throughout the state.



**963** Tactile Graphics & Diagram Production



**12,356** Total Collection of Titles



**800** APH-Eligible Students Served



**10,135** Braille Page Production



Did You Know:  
One typical print copy of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* is equal to eight braille volumes and two large print volumes.

# MSB Graduates



## Class Officers

President: Lashai Richardson  
Vice President: Aiah Lebbie  
Treasurer: Avantay "Vinnie" Champion  
Secretary: Lyric Wharton  
Public Relations: Calvin Bradford

## Class Flower



"We made it back. We made it through.  
We are the class 2022!"

## Class Motto

## Class Colors



## Student Awards

These awards are presented annually to students who exhibit leadership qualities, academic excellence or noteworthy improvement throughout their years at MSB.

*MSB Staff  
Commendation Award*



David Jacobs, II  
Gwynn Oak, MD

*MSB Staff  
Commendation Award*



Lyric Wharton  
Baltimore, MD

*B. Franklin  
Newcomer Award*



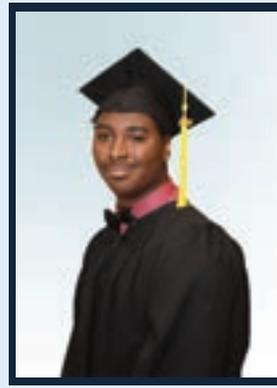
Krystian Williams  
Washington, DC



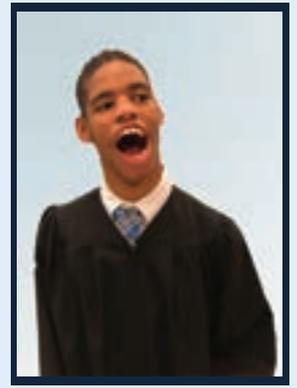
Calvin Bradford  
Glen Burnie, MD



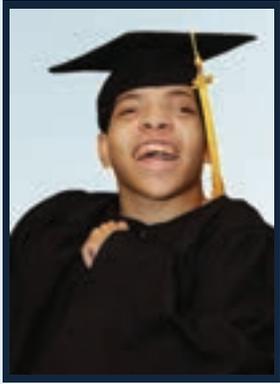
Tyler Brodsky  
Lutherville, MD



Michael Brooks, Jr.  
Clinton, MD



Avantay Champion  
Bowie, MD



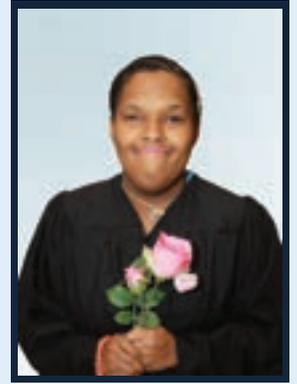
Donnel Byrd  
Salisbury, MD



Desmond Dove  
Baltimore, MD



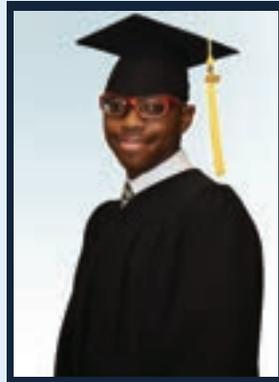
Tamika English  
North East, MD



Clarice Hall  
Baltimore, MD



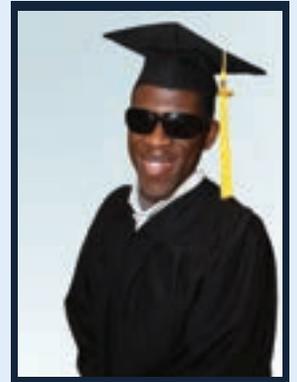
Samuel Hejeebu  
Marriottsville, MD



Ryshawn Hyman 'El  
Baltimore, MD



Alana Kendrick  
Columbia, MD



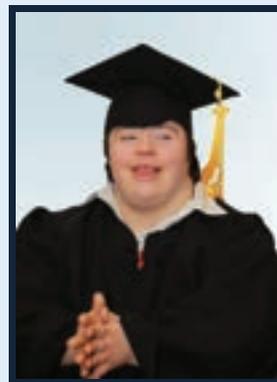
Aiah Lebbie  
Silver Spring, MD



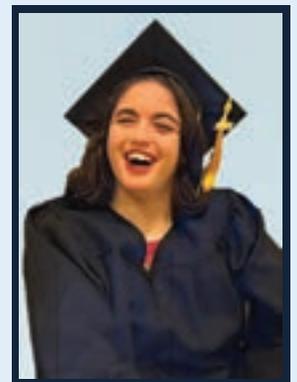
Germaine March, Jr.  
Baltimore, MD



Lashai Richardson  
Baltimore, MD



Geena Sharp  
Westminster, MD



Lily Tanenholz  
Baltimore, MD

# Rebuilding MSB

In October 2022, MSB broke ground on a newly designed residential facility, the Cottages on the Hill, for students who reside on campus during the school week. This project involves the demolition of the outdated Randall and Thompson dormitories that were constructed in 1981. The two identical buildings (one for male students and one for female students) were state-of-the-art facilities at the time.

Plans for the Cottages on the Hill include multiple residential buildings comprising 23,000 square feet of living space designed to accommodate students with mobility and vision challenges. The cottages will contain four six-student occupancy residences with accessible bathrooms, living and dining areas, and full kitchens. The buildings will also include overnight staff apartments, engaging outdoor living spaces, and new green space.

In addition to the residences, this project will relocate the Maryland Instructional Resource Center (MIRC). The 7,000-square-foot MIRC is a braille library and archive that serves as the central repository for braille instructional materials for all of Maryland's 24 school districts.

The project is designed by Marshall Craft Associates, who also designed the award-winning Early Learning Center at MSB. An architectural rendering for the Cottages on the Hill is shown to the right.



Thompson Hall



Groundbreaking 2022:  
Students bump fists together in excitement.



Living Space Upper Level

## Letting Go To Grow

Anderson Ayala-Pacheco is a popular high school student at the Maryland School for the Blind (MSB) and is loved by all who know him. He is also the center of his tight-knit family. His younger brother, Angel, looks up to him and he has a special bond with his twin brother Walter. He and Walter were born prematurely at 32 weeks. Walter was born with vision that could be corrected with glasses, but Anderson was completely blind. His parents, Walter and Yaneth, moved their family from El Salvador to the United States when the twins were 9 years old.

Both boys attended the same public elementary school, but Anderson needed more support, and before long the difference in their academic progress was becoming clear. By middle school, Anderson was falling behind in his classes, and his education team suggested he consider going to school at MSB.

Anderson had attended summer enrichment programs at MSB for a few years, so his family looked into full-time enrollment. After meeting with the admissions staff and his IEP team, his parents understood what a great opportunity MSB was for him, but they weren't sure how this could possibly work when they lived so far away from the school.

When the school recommended MSB's residential program, where Anderson would live on campus 5 days a week, his mom was torn. She couldn't imagine her son being away from home and family, but his excitement won her over. The family was also concerned about finances, but they were surprised and relieved to learn that all tuition, room, and board at MSB were provided at no cost to them.

Since becoming a student at MSB, Anderson has become more independent by using Assistive Technology for school-work, and his grades have improved. He works in the school's Rock & Roll Café, where he is learning to use his charm and customer service skills. He loves to make money at his job, and spend it as well!

The first time he was taught how to navigate a grocery store, he was so excited to be able to help his mother on weekends. She was happy to have an extra pair of hands to help with shopping, cooking, and cleaning the dishes.

Over the past 6 years, Anderson's family has trusted MSB with his growth, development, and safety five days a week for ten months a year. They still miss their son every day, but they can rest easy knowing that Anderson is learning vital skills, developing friendships and sharing his positive attitude. MSB staff say they can always count on Anderson to put a smile on their faces and help others when they need it.



Anderson is guided in the Cottage Groundbreaking by Secretary Carol Beatty.



Anderson with his best friend Sammy and their Camp Abilities Coach.

"It gives me hope that one day he will join his brother Walter at Hagerstown Community College, where they can both learn and grow together. THANK YOU for making all of this possible for my family and for the more than 1,300 families that MSB serves."

-Yaneth Pacheco

# see beyond festival

# MSB

## TEACHES THE COMMUNITY TO “SEE BEYOND”

On Saturday, April 30, 2022, The Maryland School for the Blind opened our campus to the public for the first time in over a decade for the 1st annual See Beyond Festival.

The turnout was incredible, highlighting just how interested Marylanders are in learning more about the blind and low-vision community. It is estimated that there were more than two thousand people in attendance!



Participants feel tactile items from the Natural History Society.



MSB student drummers perform before a crowd.

**Join us for the 2023 See Beyond Festival on Saturday, April 29, 2023 from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm**



An enthusiastic baseball participant reaches the beeping base.



A family runs the sprint track together.

Crowds of children and families gathered at the Kid Zone for the free balloon animals and sensory crafts. MSB's accessible playground was a big hit; many families were surprised at how challenging the playground is. Guests enjoyed live music and entertainment, a craft and vendor fair and local food.



Happy children enjoy the accessible playground. Families line up for the free balloon animals.

The purpose of the See Beyond Festival is to showcase that blind and low-vision people are people who can see less, not do less. Participants are challenged to try interactive experiences including sports, games, and activities while wearing light-blocking eyeshades. The goal is for people to walk away with a better understanding that everyone can learn and adapt if they lose their sight.



Participants try to guess the ingredients in the food taste tests.

Thanks to our generous sponsors who made it possible for participants to try the activities for free: Lewis Contractors, Penney Design Group, Marshall Craft Associates, Maury Donnelly and Parr, SIG, Cigna, T. Rowe Price, Ruff Roofing, PK Law, Chubb, Sons of the American Legion, Detachment of MD, Lions Clubs District 22A, SC&H Group, Parker Flavors.

## Beyond the Books

### Science Class Sparks Creativity

Experiential learning is extremely important to students with blindness or varying degrees of low vision. MSB high school teacher Mariah Monroe shared her approach to teaching science to all learners, with an inclusive focus on physical abilities and drumming up interest in the subject. In her classes, students use the five steps of the Scientific Method in order to investigate topics including the food chain, the solar system, the water cycle, and the rock cycle.



Student engages in rock cycle experiment.

It can be difficult to understand concepts that are out of sight, but her class learns these topics by engaging in hands-on activities. For example, in order to understand the water cycle, students boiled water in order to grasp the process of evaporation. She poses many questions to the students to keep their minds wondering. For instance, “Where did the water go? How has it changed in terms of states of matter?”

For the food chain lesson, the class went outside to experience the absorption of energy from the sun. They were encouraged to feel around their environment for tangible clues, which led to the discovery that plants benefit from the sun's energy in order to grow.

To understand the rock cycle, students participated in seven different hands-on activities to explore the three various stages. Students were given individual cups of sand, soil, plants, worms, water and peanut butter! They compressed these materials together, applied pressure and heat and allowed time for the “rock” to cool and harden. In addition, students allowed their rocks to undergo different weather, including rain and hot/cold temperatures. In the end, students created their own rocks, by incorporating what they learned about the process from each other’s experiments.

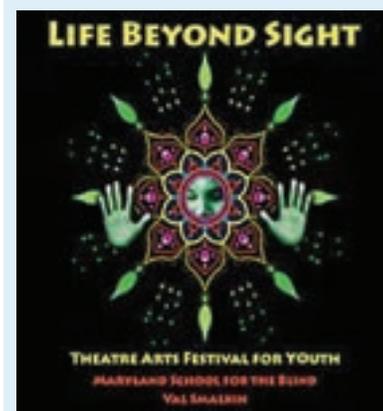
Creative lessons like these are key to teaching students with low or no vision.

### MSB Students Featured on Music CD

The Maryland School for the Blind Statewide Outreach Program provides year-round enrichment programming for students with blindness or low vision on campus and throughout Maryland. MSB partners with community organizations such as music and arts groups to present workshops and activities that provide both educational and recreational experiences for our students.

One special partnership the school shares is with the Theatre Arts Festival for Youth (TAFFY). TAFFY PRESENTS, led by Val Smalkin of Small Kin Music, has worked with our students for the past several years, presenting music workshops and using songwriting to assist teens with blindness and low vision in self-advocacy.

The lyrics resulting from the first songwriting workshop at MSB were so inspirational that the single workshop developed into an entire program with the objective of facilitating the students' communication to the sighted world through the production of a music CD. With the support of a collective of music educators and songwriters from across the country, the CD, titled *Life Beyond Sight*, was released in April 2022. It contains four original songs including, “*Not With My Eyes*”. Check it out on iTunes, Spotify and other streaming services.



Music CD Cover.

## Big Changes, One Step at a Time

"Some people think she can't do anything because she is in a wheelchair and because it takes her longer to process information. But if you take the time to get to know Kimar, you will see she can do a lot."

-Mary Robinson

At 14, Kimar Holcey is known throughout campus for her thousand-watt smile and laugh that echoes across the athletic fields. She participates in so many athletic events that she has one display rack in her bedroom just for medals.

Kimar and her mother, Mary, tried multiple schools in Maryland before they were referred to MSB. Few places in Maryland have the knowledge and expertise to support a student with the often overlooked and misdiagnosed Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI). Our expert teachers help many students with CVI.

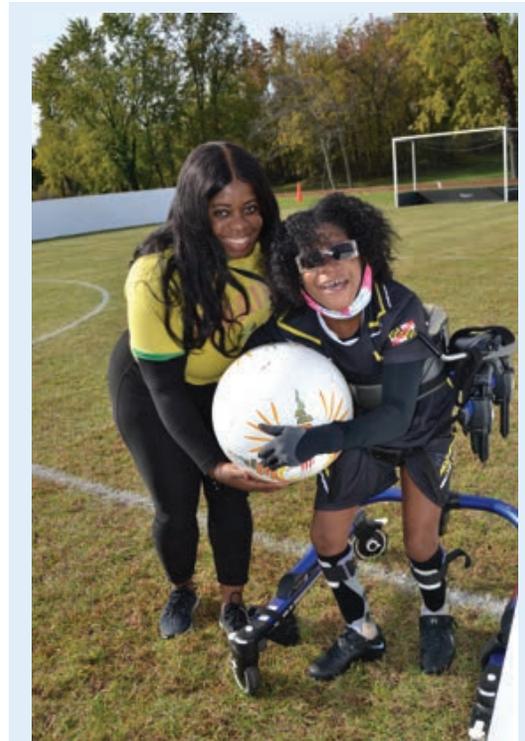
At first, Mary was afraid that the transition would not be easy, but the transition from Kimar's previous school to MSB was as smooth as possible.

"When Kimar came to MSB, everything changed for the better. MSB staff realized her educational goals did not meet her needs, so they immediately made changes. In a few short weeks, I saw Kimar become so engaged in learning, and that is when her love for learning and school grew."

Kimar blossomed quickly, her vision improved, and she increased math skills retention. Her teachers soon learned that she thrives in a team environment. Mary attributes much of her growth to the diversity of offerings and the emphasis MSB puts on athletics and physical education.

Athletics is one of Kimar's passions, but at other schools, her wheelchair limited the activities she could participate in. At MSB, we don't put limitations on our students! We know a wheelchair is just one of many tools for mobility. At MSB, various mobility devices allow students like Kimar to kick and race. At MSB, she has the support to participate in cheerleading, track, and soccer. Outside of MSB, she is a part of Athletes Serving Athletes, Team 360 on the Eastern Shore, and Maryland Twisters Stormchasers. Kimar loves doing different sports with her friends, but her favorite is running with her peers and support team!

Kimar's team runs in a race on the Bay Bridge.



Mom, Mary, and Kimar on the MSB Soccer Pitch.

"We as parents won't be there for our children forever. Sports teach children how to be a part of a team, how to be there for others, how to be nice to others and also how to take care of themselves," says Mary Robinson, Kimar's mother.

# Staff Awards & Highlights

## Amanda Aaron

2022 Principals of Schools for the Blind (POSB) Outstanding Related Service Provider of the Blind and Visually Impaired.



## Laura Bigelow

2022 Sarah Burton Award from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) State Steering Committee for school-based Occupational & Physical Therapists.



## Gina Fugate

2022 National Federation of the Blind Distinguished Educator of Blind Children and 2022 Dennis Gerald & Claire Loder McGough Fund Award for outstanding professional achievement in the advancement of knowledge related to the education of blind children.



## Dontay Kelly

2022 Principals of Schools for the Blind (POSB) Outstanding Paraprofessional.



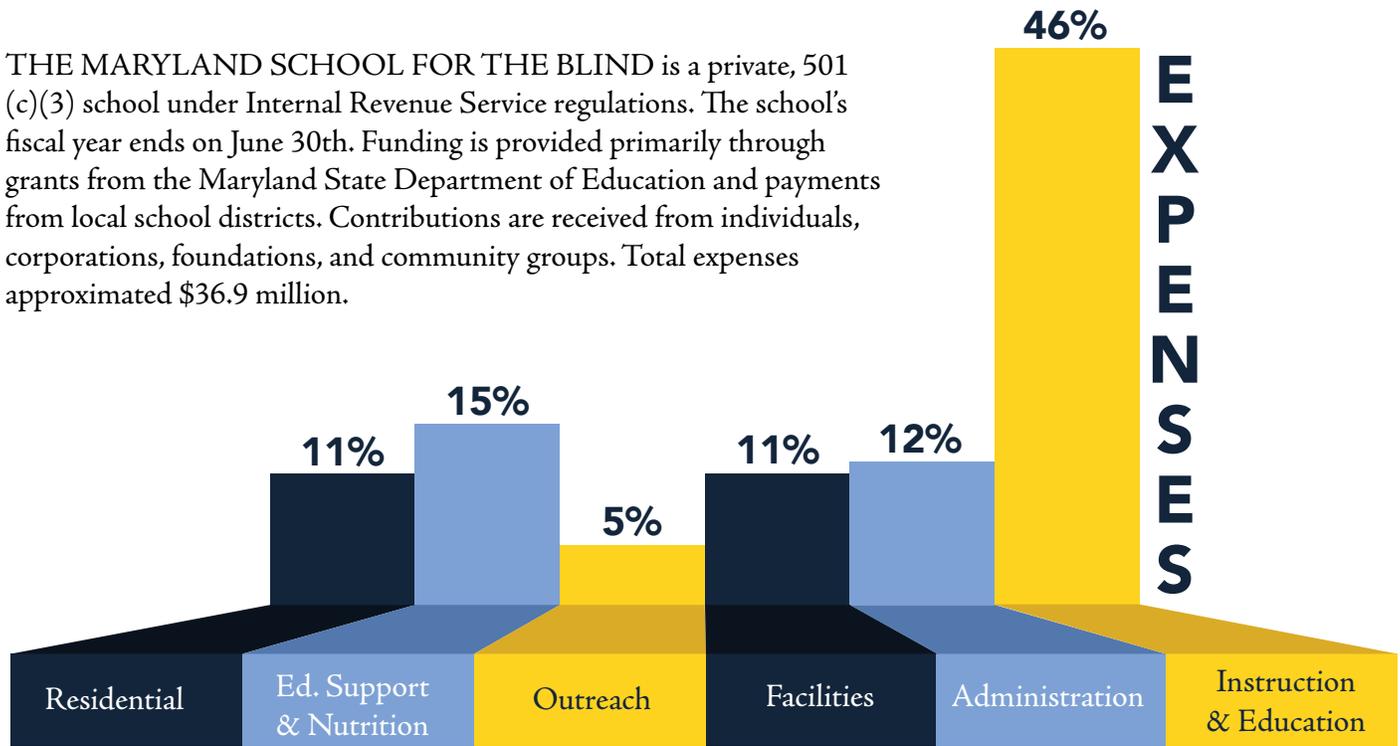
## María de la Concepción Hernández Legorreta (Conchita)

Appointed to the National Board of Education Sciences by President Joe Biden.



## Financial FY22 F/S

THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND is a private, 501 (c)(3) school under Internal Revenue Service regulations. The school's fiscal year ends on June 30th. Funding is provided primarily through grants from the Maryland State Department of Education and payments from local school districts. Contributions are received from individuals, corporations, foundations, and community groups. Total expenses approximated \$36.9 million.



## REVENUE

**83%**

State of Maryland

**3%**

Federal

**12%**

Local Education Agencies-LEA

**2%**

Private Gifts

## MAJOR SUPPORTERS

The Maryland State Department of Education

Eugene B. Casey Foundation, Lewis Contractors, The Schluderberg Foundation, Inc., The John J. Leidy Foundation, Inc., Casper G. Sippel, Inc., First Financial Federal Credit Union, The Huether-McClelland Foundation, Inc., The Markell Company LLC, The Campbell Foundation, Inc., The Frank and Miriam Loveman Foundation, The Mangione Family Foundation, Cole Foundation, Rogers-Wilbur Foundation, Inc., Rotary Club of College Park, Lions Club of Jarrettsville, Our Lady of Hope Church, HBO, Hirsch Electric, LLC, Mary Jean & Oliver Travers Foundation, Inc., Ferris Charitable Operating Foundation, American Turners Baltimore, Inc., and the Fund for Educational Excellence.

## FY22 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022

### OFFICERS

Chair: Marion Mullauer  
1st Vice-Chair: Raymond Brown  
2nd Vice-Chair: Karen Malinowski  
Treasurer: Brian Ropp\*\*  
Secretary: Renee Winsky  
Ex-Officio Member: W. Robert Hair,  
MSB Superintendent

### EMERITUS/EMERITA

Edward J. Veilleux (Board Chair Emeritus)  
James Datovech (Board Chair Emeritus)  
John Sippel (Emeritus Board Member)\*

\*Deceased

\*\*State Appointed

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Mark Booker  
Liza Brown-DiCostantino  
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\*\*Dr. Nancy Grasmick  
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William Ratchford  
Dr. Karen Rigamonti  
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\*\*Delegate Stephanie Smith  
Christopher Trapani  
Dr. Joanne Waeltermann  
Robin Zimelman



## The Maryland School for the Blind

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BALTIMORE, MD 21236  
410.444.5000  
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