



**Rick Charette**  
5-day residency  
pages 22 and 24.  
A treat for  
elementary  
students  
system wide.



**Patriotism a  
theme at all  
grade levels  
see stories  
on pages  
8-9 and 15.**



**William  
S. Cohen  
School  
featured  
this issue  
pages  
10-20.**

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Schools Working for Academic Excellence

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Winter 2006

## Bangor Students Top M.E.A. Scores

by Corinne C. Foley



ME A honorees from left to right: teacher mentor Deanna Jones, students Katherine Nadeau and Melanie Craig and teacher mentor Margaret Chernosky.

On Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, two Bangor High School seniors, along with their teacher mentors, were honored in Augusta for being among the top fifty scorers in the state of Maine on the Maine Educational Assessment (M.E.A.) taken last year. The M.E.A. scores for Melanie Craig and Katherine Nadeau were in the top 1/3 of 1 percent of all juniors in Maine last year. Melanie and Katherine chose to honor two Bangor High School teachers as mentors: Mrs. Margaret Chernosky from the Social Studies (Geography) Department and Mrs. Deanna Jones from the English Department. The awards ceremony consisted of small group discussions, a speech given by the Teacher of the Year, and a PowerPoint® presentation showcasing each student being honored. After the students received their awards, they gave a flower to their teacher / mentor.

Melanie Craig plans on focusing her post-secondary studies on either Pre-Med or chemistry. She has applied to the following institutions: M.I.T., Connecticut College, Hobart Williams Smith, Union College, Barnard College and the University of Maine at Farmington. At Bangor High School, she has been involved in the following activities: National Honor Society, Teens Against Domestic Violence, Students Ending Environmental Destruction (S.E.E.D.), the A.I.D.S. Committee, Amnesty International, the Spanish Club, Student Congress, the Science Bowl and the Math Team. Melanie commented that the number of courses available for students at Bangor High School helped her to feel well prepared for the M.E.A.

Katherine Nadeau has many diverse interests. For her post-secondary studies, she is leaning towards the biological sciences, possibly pharmacy. She is applying to the College of the Holy Cross and also to the University of Maine. This year, Katherine

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## Bangor Students Raise Over \$10,000 to Provide Aid to Hurricane Katrina Victims



Pictured here are high school students Andrew Mead and James Rogers, who assisted with the Rock for Relief Concert, and Vine Street students, Kobe Smith and Emily Reilly, who participated in the Dimes for Disaster Campaign. Many thanks to all students, staff and community members involved in this effort.

## Assistant Superintendent Hired Betsy Webb Joins the Bangor School Department

When the position of Assistant Superintendent opened in June, Superintendent Dr. Robert Ervin did not have to go far to find the right candidate, approximately one mile as the crow flies. Betsy Webb was Superintendent of Schools in Brewer, and for four years the two of them had collaborated on everything from academic program design to calling off school on storm days. He had watched her development from Principal to Superintendent carefully and knew that she had the educational philosophy to make a significant contribution to the excellence of the Bangor School Department. She did not simply accept the work ethic, she welcomed it. For Dr. Ervin, the decision was easy. Fortunately, Mrs. Webb crossed the river.

When she joined the school department in mid-September, little introduction was necessary, and her knowledge and skill were immediately evident. The fit has been excellent from the start. Having family connections to the school department, she

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## Bangor Schools “Outperform”

In a letter dated June 21, 2005, Thomas Sheridan, Vice President of School Evaluation Services for Standard & Poor's, informed Superintendent Dr. Robert Ervin that the Bangor School Department has been identified as an “outperformer.”

### 9 Maine School Districts Named Academic Outperformers by Standard & Poor's

NEW YORK: Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services today recognized nine Maine school districts as academic “outperformers.”

To be identified as an outperformer by Standard & Poor's, school districts had to report significantly higher percentages of students that scored proficient or above on state reading and math tests than other school districts with similar levels of student poverty in Maine over two school years. Academic achievement levels were compared with the percentage of economically disadvantaged students because they are often correlated.

“We congratulate the students, teachers, administrators and, indeed, the entire communities that support public education in these districts,” said William Cox, executive managing director of Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services. “The data we analyzed show that these nine school districts had truly noteworthy performances; each district deserves public recognition for its efforts.”

Standard & Poor's developed the analysis used to identify outperforming school districts as a way to highlight outstanding academic performance, and

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to help educators in school districts with similar demographics identify appropriate benchmarks to guide their own improvements.

Achieving proficiency in reading and math for all students by 2014 is one of the goals of the federal No Child Left Behind law. Linking school districts in need of improvement with outperformers that have similar students so that effective practices may be replicated is one method that can help educators reach that target.

Standard & Poor's conducted its outperformer analysis using data provided by the state. The number of economically disadvantaged students in each school district is determined by the percentage of students receiving free or reduced price lunch. Academic performance was determined by using the aggregate percentages of students scoring proficient or better on the state's reading and math tests.

Maine's outperforming districts are: Bangor School Department, Cape Elizabeth School Department, Easton School Department, Falmouth School Department, MSAD 04 Guilford, MSAD 27 Fort Kent, MSAD 51 Cumberland, Scarborough School Department and Yarmouth Schools.

The list of outperforming school districts and the analysis used to identify them are accessible on each state's homepage.

*SchoolMatters* is a service of Standard & Poor's and a project of the National Education Data Partnership. The National Education Data Partnership is a collaboration among the Council of Chief State School Officers, Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services and the CELT Corp. It is funded by a \$45 million investment from The Broad Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

**Contacts:**

Susan Shafer  
Standard & Poor's  
(212) 438-2193

**Outperforming School Districts in Maine, 2002-03**

**Summary Findings**

A recent analysis by Standard & Poor's found that of the 111 school districts in Maine that have sufficient data for analysis, 9 school districts, or 8.1 percent, outperformed demographically similar school districts in reading and math proficiency (RaMP) for two consecutive years (2001-02 and 2002-03). These "outperforming" school districts are diverse, serving student populations in 2002-03 that range from 1.9 to 54.9 percent economically disadvantaged, while achieving average proficiency rates in reading and math that range from 34.1 to 63.4 percent.

S&P believes that highlighting Maine's 9 outperforming school districts is important because it may help shed light on effective strategies and "best practices" that can help lower-performing "peers" make needed improvements necessary to impact student achievement.

**What does it mean to be an "outperforming school district"?**

To identify school districts that consistently outperform demographically similar school districts, or peers, Standard & Poor's has developed the Outperformers Method. The method uses three fundamental criteria to identify outperforming school districts:

1. **School districts must achieve higher levels of student proficiency than peers.** Outperformers must report higher percentages of students that score at or above state standards on reading and math tests than other school districts that serve similar proportions of economically disadvantaged students;
2. **School districts must perform at a level that significantly exceeds statistical expectation.** Outperformers must achieve proficiency levels that fall above the threshold for the expected performance zone, as simply beating peers is not sufficient.
3. **School districts must outperform consistently.** Outperformers must repeat this performance for at least two consecutive years.

The analysis is limited to K-12 school districts and uses state-provided data where available. For states where enrollment data were not accessible, economically disadvantaged enrollment data are as reported by states to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

*Webb cont'd. from page one*

was well aware of the expectations that the Bangor community has for its schools. In addition, she had extensive experience with the federal and state mandates impinging on school operations. As Assistant Superintendent of Schools, she is responsible for supervising and initiating improvements in school curriculum and assessment. She works closely with Principals on instructional matters. Of Mrs. Webb, Superintendent Ervin has said, "she compliments my style and interests well, and under her direction, I know that her energy and intellect will move the school department to even higher achievement."

Mrs. Webb also has been a Principal in Brewer and Dover-Foxcroft and has held school positions in educational technology and business education. Her mother is Christine MacGregor, the former Principal of the Fourteenth Street School.

**A Familiar Face Returns to the Bangor School Department**

Joe Dahl has returned to the Bangor School Department as the Fruit Street School Principal. Joe retired from his position as the Fairmount School Principal at the end of the 2003 school year with 31 years of administrative experience and 10 years of service in Bangor. During his two year "retirement", Joe enjoyed training bird dogs and filling in as an interim principal in SAD #3 for six weeks in 2004 and from February to the end of the school year in SAD #22 last spring.

Joe began his career in education as a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in Madison for one year and then taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade in Portland for five years. Science is Joe's particular area of expertise. For the next 13 years, Joe was the teaching principal of a K-6 elementary school in Cornville, which is a small bedroom community of Skowhegan. Joe describes his time at this school with positive memories of the hard working farming and lumbering community. The school was the community center where social events were held. The students and their success were extremely important to the townspeople and Joe remembers how the school, with community support, brought in activities for the students including basketball, cheerleading and baseball. The community felt a great sense of pride when the result of their efforts included more Cornville students participating in the extra-curricular activities at Skowhegan junior high and high school after they moved on from Cornville Elementary.

For the next six years, Joe was a principal of the K-8 Hodgdon School which housed approximately 600 students. Joe enjoyed this experience as well. However, when his daughters were going to college in the Boston area, Joe and his wife wanted to move back to the Bangor area. Joe had grown up in Old Town. In 1993, Joe accepted the position as Fairmount School Principal.

Joe's wife, Pam, is beginning her 13<sup>th</sup> year teaching first grade at the Fruit Street School. Joe jokingly shared, that they are the "grandparents

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is involved in the National Honor Society and also is a member of the yearbook staff. Earlier in her high school career, she was a member of the newspaper staff as well as the Students Against Environmental Destruction (S.E.E.D.) group. Katherine felt that the difficulty-level of Honors and A.P. courses offered at Bangor High School allowed her to get more in-depth with her studies, which helped her to perform so well on the M.E.A. last year.

of the school." Joe missed the people when he was away from education and he finds great satisfaction once again working with the staff, the students and the families. The enthusiasm that the younger children bring to school each morning and their desire to be at school has been rewarding



to him already in these first few months. His goals for Fruit Street include: having the parents feel welcome and part of their children's school experience, working with staff through professional development, being part of the educational

process in the classrooms, working to have everyone like being at the school and to want to do their best.

As busy as this Fruit Street Principal is, there is still time for family and his love of dogs. Joe and Pam are "actual" grandparents to four grandchildren with another one on the way! Dan is the youngest Dahl child. He lives in Charlotte, N.C. and is the owner / president of World Mortgage Corporation. Carrie is an emergency room doctor at the Beth Israel Hospital in Boston and has two sons. Kimberly is the Vice President of Bank of America in Belfast and has a daughter and son.

As far as his love for bird dogs, Joe has been selected to judge the trials in Moncton, New Brunswick in Canada this year in which he will select the best hunting dogs of the show. The dogs come from all over North America and Joe looks forward to being a part of this event as he has done previously at the Fredericton, New Brunswick show.

Bangor is fortunate to have this familiar face return.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

*Class Size Reduction Grant Improves Achievement*  
As part of its effort to improve classroom instruction, the Federal Government has funded a program called "Class Size Reduction" (CSR) through the "No Child Left Behind Act". This money provides the Bangor School Department with five additional teachers during the 2005-2006 school year. Working in the Downeast, Fruit Street and Vine Street Schools, these additional teachers allow for pupil/teacher ratios below 18:1; a significant decrease in the ratio from where it would have been without these funds.

End-of-the-year reading assessment profiles in "Class Size Reduction" classrooms record high skill levels, an indication that the reduction in public/teacher ratio has an impact on student achievement.