

Barrio de Langley Park

A Neighborhood Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park
Issue 227, January 2012

A TERRIBLE PGCPS DECISION

High Point HS Graduation Too Distant

The *Gazette* (4 January 2012) reports that High Point High School's June graduation is scheduled to be held at Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro. That's about twenty-five miles away from the high school, and probably a majority of the involved families don't have an automobile to use in getting there.



A staff member at PGCPS is reported to have said that only the eight high schools with the largest graduating classes can use the nearby Comcast Center at the University of Maryland. What about other facilities at U. Maryland, e.g., Cole Field House? What about a nighttime graduation using one of the system's large gymnasias?

Of course, the problem can slightly be overcome if the school system would guarantee bus transit to all of the graduating seniors and their parents and their grandparents and their friends. Want to bet on that happening? It's too expensive.

What about holding several graduation ceremonies at High Point HS, e.g., A through G, H through M, N through Z? Three interesting graduation speakers!

It looks as if PGCPS, perhaps unintentionally, is joining in with the "gang" that too often punishes people in the Langley Park area. The school's PTSA vice president is quoted: "We have a very diverse population at the school, and some families don't have the means to drive themselves. They've worked hard to graduate. Don't make it harder for them." That is correct, but will central headquarters listen? (Is betting allowed in PG County? If yes, don't bet on PGCPS doing the right thing.)

A GOOD USA DECISION

The *Washington Post's* (9 January 2012) headline: "Ending immigration cruelty." The Obama administration has proposed a new regulation that will allow certain undocumented immigrants, family members of citizens, to remain in the USA while applying for legal status. If implemented, the regulation will make it possible for many families to stay intact. (Currently, those undocumented in the USA have to leave the country and then apply for a green card while away. That often takes many years to process and might force a person to stay in his or her heritage country for up to ten years: ten years of family fragmentation.) The regulation does not need congressional approval. BUT the ICE deportation officers are protesting, so implementation is uncertain.

\$125,700,000.00

These millions are the Prince George's County's shortfall for FY2013!

\$1,100,000,000.00

And this billion is the State of Maryland's shortfall for FY2013!

So schools are not likely to get needed extra money, and recreation centers are not likely to get needed extra money, and public health services are not likely to get needed extra money, and so forth. It looks as if we're in for another challenging year. Happy new year!

WHICH KIDS GET SUSPENDED?

A report in the *Washington Post* (28 December 2011) asserts: "Across the Washington area, black students are suspended and expelled two to five times as often as white students, creating disparities in discipline that experts say reflect a growing national problem." Hum: Disparities in discipline! What's going on? Damn: racism!!

The same pattern is found in DC and in several DC suburbs, including Prince George's County. In the county, the Black suspension rate is about 8% whereas for Latino/as, Asians, and Euros, the figures are below 4%. Keep in mind that most of the school leadership in the county is Black. Is this an example of the middle class punishing the working class and poor?

So what are we to make of this? There are two issues: (a) suspending a student, and (b) disparate suspensions by race and/or ethnicity.

SUSPEND?

A major report on suspensions is *Suspended Education* (2010), issued by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The authors write: "There is no question that teachers and principals must use all effective means at their disposal to maintain safety and to provide the most effective learning environments practicable.

"There is controversy, however, about the means to this end. The advent of harsher approaches has resulted in a deeply divided national debate on school discipline. ... Some have argued that suspensions remove disorderly students and deter other students from misbehaving, thereby improving the school environment so that well-behaving students can learn without distractions. Yet despite nearly two decades of implementation of zero tolerance disciplinary policies and their application to mundane and non-violent misbehavior, there is no evidence that frequent reliance on removing misbehaving students improves school safety or student behavior. [Is there any solid evidence one way or the other?] ... Because suspended students miss instructional time, frequent use of out-of-school suspension also reduces students' opportunity to learn."



RACE and/or ETHNICITY?

And what about race and/or ethnicity? The first reaction to the PG (and Metro-area) report might be: All those damn teachers and principals are out to get Black young people. But wait: The percentage in the public school system of poor working class Black students is higher than the same economic category of White students. BLP does not have the raw data, but a simple analysis would reveal whether the issue is race or socioeconomic status or some mixture of the two. The fact that the Post did not conduct that simple analysis is a sad comment on the Post.

SCHOOLS: DOES MONEY MATTER?

County Schools Superintendent Hite: "We've had to make difficult cuts, and we still face difficult decisions."

One major issue researched at the Shanker Institute this year is whether money matters in providing a quality education. Three questions are explored. They constitute a strong message to PGCPs: If you care about the education of children, funding must be enhanced.

1. Does money matter? Yes. On average, aggregate measures of per-pupil spending are positively associated with improved or higher student outcomes. In some studies, the size of this effect is larger than in others and, in some cases, additional funding appears to matter more for some students than others. Clearly, there are other factors that may moderate the influence of funding on student outcomes, such as how that money is spent – in other words, money must be spent wisely to yield benefits. But, on balance, in direct tests of the relationship between financial resources and student outcomes, money matters.

2. Do schooling resources that cost money matter? Yes. Schooling resources which cost money, including class size reduction or higher teacher salaries, are positively associated with student outcomes. On the whole, the things that cost money benefit students,



and there is scarce evidence that there are more cost-effective alternatives.

2a. A substantial body of literature has accumulated to validate the conclusion that both teachers' overall wages and relative wages affect the quality of those who choose to enter the teaching profession, and whether they stay once they get in. [Retaining the best teachers is essential.]

2b. Children in smaller classes achieve better outcomes, both academic and otherwise, and that class size reduction can be an effective strategy for closing racial or socio-economic achievement gaps.

3. Do state school finance reforms matter? Yes. Sustained improvements to the level and distribution of funding across local public school districts can lead to improvements in the level and distribution of student outcomes. While money *alone* may not be the answer, more equitable and adequate allocation of financial inputs to schooling provide a necessary underlying condition for improving the equity and adequacy of outcomes. The available evidence suggests that appropriate combinations of more adequate funding with more accountability for its use may be most promising.

Thus: While there may in fact be better and more efficient ways to leverage the education dollar toward improved student outcomes, we do know the following: Many of the ways in which schools currently spend money do improve student outcomes; when schools have more money, they have greater opportunity to spend productively, and when they don't, they can't; arguments that across-the-board budget cuts will not hurt outcomes are completely unfounded.

In short, money matters, resources that cost money matter, and more equitable distribution of school funding can improve outcomes. Policymakers would be well-advised to rely on high-quality research to guide the critical choices they make regarding school finance.

The full report is available at http://www.shankerinstitute.org/images/doesmoneymatter_final.pdf.

DEPORTATION

WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

A *New York Times* editorial (25 December 2011) brings our attention an important report about the decision of who may stay and who must leave this country. The report's conclusion, supported by the *Times*, is that, the deportation process for immigrants tolerates unfairness in multiple ways. Our current laws deny basic due process protections to the men and women held in immigration detention. Below are the first two paragraphs of the report. The full report is available at http://www.cardozolawreview.com/content/denovo/NYIRS_Report.pdf

The immigrant representation crisis is a crisis of both quality and quantity. It is the acute shortage of competent attorneys willing and able to competently represent individuals in immigration removal proceedings. Removal proceedings are the primary mechanism by which the federal government can seek to effect the removal, or deportation, of a noncitizen. The individuals who face removal proceedings might be: the long-term lawful permanent resident (green card holder) who entered the country lawfully as a child and has lived in the United States for decades; or the refugee who has come to the United States fleeing persecution; or the undocumented immigrant caught trying to illegally cross the border. By every measure, the number of deportations and removal proceedings has skyrocketed over the last decade. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of removal proceedings initiated per year in our nation's immigration courts increased nearly fifty percent, totaling over 300,000 last year. During that period, the representation rate of respondents in removal proceedings has remained relatively constant and abysmally low. Correspondingly, the actual number of unrepresented individuals has virtually doubled.

The lack of any right to appointed counsel in removal proceedings might come as a surprise to those uninitiated into the field of immigration law. A noncitizen arrested on the streets of New York City for jumping a subway turnstile of course has a constitutional right to have counsel appointed to her in the criminal proceedings she will face, notwithstanding the fact that it is unlikely she will spend more than a day in jail. If, however, the resulting conviction triggers removal proceedings, where that same noncitizen can face months of detention and permanent exile from her family, her home, and her livelihood, she is all too often forced to navigate the labyrinthine world of immigration law on her own, without the aid of counsel. This is the current state of the law and has been for over a century.



IMMIGRANTS = ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The BLP editors have found yet another study demonstrating that immigrants and economic development are linked. "Immigrants contribute to the economy in direct relation to their share of the population. The economy of metro areas grows in tandem with immigrant share of the labor force. And immigrants work across the occupational spectrum from high-paying professional jobs to low-wage service employment." The study by the Fiscal Policy Institute is available at this address: http://www.fiscalpolicy.org/ImmigrantsIn25MetroAreas_20091130.pdf

IN THE NEWS

SMART GROWTH

And Langley Park's Future

Over "vehement objections" by state Republicans, Governor O'Malley used a long-standing law to implement Plan Maryland, the state's master plan. The plan attempts to limit sprawl and save some farmland and nature areas—that is, to enhance state policy behind "smart growth." O'Malley's executive order could impact growth in many ways, e.g., where schools are built, which roads are built where, and the ability of rural landowners to develop their property. There are dollars to back up the plan: O'Malley said his administration would employ billions of dollars in state aid. Local governments that encourage dense development in urban areas will be rewarded but jurisdictions that don't limit development of farmland and open space may have their state aid reduced. Carrot and stick!

Smart growth was championed by former governor Parris Glendening and it is being brought forward by Martin O'Malley. The



Is this Langley Park's Future?

idea behind smart growth is to make trips easier (by foot, bike, or mass transit) by channeling development into already developed areas, thus by increasing

density. Mixed use—that is, office, residential, and commercial units are close together—is part of the plan.

Applying smart growth to the Langley Park area, it calls for increased density at the University Blvd. - New Hampshire Ave. crossroads and probably the University Blvd. - Riggs Road intersection too. So the one and two storey buildings may someday be replaced by multi-storey mixed use buildings. That raises the issue of the small businesses at these intersections: can they be relocated near their current place of business at an affordable rent? And of course it also raises the issue of residences: will all of the affordable apartments be demolished, to be replaced by higher-rent units and condos? In an earlier issue of BLP, pages were devoted to a way to save all the current apartment houses yet add quite a few higher-rent apartments and condos. Preserve and add!

If the 2009 Crossroads Sector Plan is implemented, we will know that the goal of the planners and other officials really is to "get rid of" the working class and poor immigrants who fill the affordable apartments now. And certain people might think: Who cares if the community is broken up or many current residents are made homeless.

Baker and the Money Quest: County Executive Rushern Baker has been quoted, re balancing the budget: "We have to look at almost everything." So he's in favor of an increase in the gasoline tax. That's regressive, of course. But everything might even include bulldozing affordable apartment houses so that expensive multi-storey buildings can lead to higher real estate taxes flowing in. Let's hope the quest for money is not accompanied by the dis-

regard of the lives of human beings.

The Purple Line: Governor O'Malley has just set aside \$69 million towards engineering work on the maybe-to-be Purple Line. The total project costs is estimated to be about \$2,000,000,000. Maybe work will begin by 2015 and be completed by 2020. Residents and businesspeople of the Langley Park area: start thinking about a move in your future. Gentrification then displacement may well be ahead.



IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

A New White-House Memo: According to various publications, a December 29th White House memo states that "illegal immigrants may have to be held until they're convicted in local courts before the federal government will begin deportation proceedings." And anti-immigrant Mark Krikorian comments that the memo "means lots of criminal aliens will be released if the locals don't have the resources or inclination to prosecute, or if the [suspect] is found not guilty because of a technicality." He continues that "the administration wants to give up one of the most important tools in preserving public safety. ... We'll have more and more instances of illegals released by police because [federal immigration officials] wouldn't take them [and] who then go on to commit some heinous crime."

Yes, every undocumented immigrant is a murderer and/or rapist. And we dare not let them spend time with their families while awaiting a final decision on deportation.

Citizens Being Arrested: "On November 5, 40-year-old Antonio Montejano was holiday shopping with his four children at a Los Angeles mall and unintentionally dropped a \$10 bottle of cologne that his young daughter begged him to buy into a bag of items he had already purchased. Upon leaving the store, Montejano was stopped by security guards and arrested for shoplifting. He assumed the ordeal would end quickly since he had no prior criminal record. Instead he spent two nights in a

Santa Monica, California police station followed by another two nights in a Los Angeles county jail on suspicion of being an undocumented immigrant.

"Montejano pleaded with officers about his citizenship, presenting them with his driver's license and other legal identification, but they wouldn't budge. 'I told every officer I was in front of that I'm an American citizen, and they didn't believe me,' Montejano told the *New York Times*. He believes his detention was a direct result of his ethnicity. 'I look Mexican 100 percent,' he says.

"Because of an 'immigration detainer,' Montejano was denied bail and held even after a criminal court judge canceled his fine and ordered his release. He was finally freed on November 9, following intervention from the American Civil Liberties Union" (From *Alternet*, 20 December 2011.) Will the administration's December 29th memo eliminate happenings such as Montejano suffered?

In the States: E-Verify Diversity: New laws in Louisiana, Tennessee, South Carolina and Georgia require businesses to enroll in the federal E-Verify program to check that employees can legally work in the USA.

TOTALITARIAN?

On New Year's Eve, President Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) into law. It contains a sweeping worldwide indefinite detention provision—without charges or trial!! And it has no time or geographic limits. It can be used by this and future presidents to militarily detain people captured far from any battlefield. What if the next Joe McCarthy uses it?

California prohibits any state or local government office from requiring that employers use E-Verify, unless it is required by federal law as a condition of receiving federal funds.

E-Verify is designed to check a prospective employee's citizenship or immigration status. Supporters say it helps businesses avoid unintentionally hiring illegal immigrants. Critics complain that it is expensive to operate, pushes undocumented workers further underground, and is not always accurate.

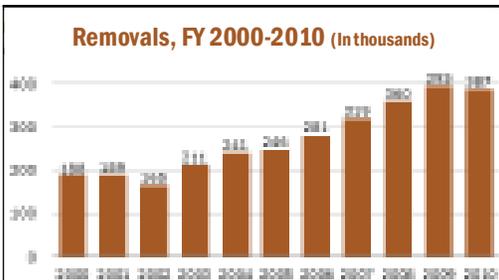
TAX CHEAT BEING ENRICHED?

A developer who stands to gain millions by building the headquarters in PG County for Maryland's Department of Housing and Community Development has reportedly been found to owe about \$125,000 in back taxes, penalties, and interest. How can it be that a tax evader was chosen to build that headquarters? Who isn't vetting with care? Somebody should be fired ... unless it was a Jack Johnson deal and he's almost gone.

LATINO/AS RE OBAMA: REMOVALS

The Pew Center reports: By a ratio of more than two-to-one (59% versus 27%), Latinos in December disapproved of the way the Obama administration has been handling deportations of undocumented immigrants, according to a national survey of Latino adults by the Pew Hispanic Center. Deportations have reached record levels

under President Obama, rising to an annual average of nearly 400,000 since 2009, about 30% higher than the annual average during the second term of the Bush administration and about double the annual average during George W. Bush's first term. Bush the Latino hero??? If we have to yearn for a return to the Bush days, the world really is crazy. (Well, thinking about Sudan, Syria, Iran, the religious killings in Northern Nigeria, terrorists in southern Philippines, the cartel killings in Mexico, etc., it is crazy.)



Removals are the compulsory and confirmed movement of an inadmissible or deportable alien out of the USA based on an order of removal. Graphic prepared by the Pew Research Center based on 2010 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics.

Who Is Informed? The Pew study indicates that only 41% of Latino/as who responded did not know that the Obama numbers have been higher than before his presidency. And of the native-born Latino/as, the figure for those who know is only 25%. So quite a few Latino/as seem not to be informed about the fate of their heritage brothers and sisters. The report is available at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/12/28/as-deportations-rise-to-record-levels-most-latinos-oppose-obamas-policy/>

Changes Now? The administrative memo of December 29 states that some people who appear to be undocumented immigrants may have to be held locally until they are convicted in local courts before the Feds will begin deportation proceedings. And there is a recent ruling that family members pursuing legal residency may not have to return to their heritage country.

But Are the Data Correct? The Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University has made an amazing discovery—or claim: "Case-by-case

records provided by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) show that many fewer individuals were apprehended, deported or detained by the agency than were claimed in its official statements: congressional testimony, press releases, and the agency's latest 2010 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics." The discrepancies are large; for instance, ICE reports that it apprehended 102,034 people in FY2005, but the Clearinghouse report offers the number 21,339. Surely, the later number reflects not getting the full data available. Surely. But maybe the ICE figure is somehow inflated? So right now, we don't know the numbers for apprehension, deportation, and detaining. Check out <http://trac.syr.edu/foia/ice/20120104/>

BE OBJECTIVE (whatever that is)

An administrative law judge in Arizona has ruled that a Tucson school district's Mexican-American Studies Program, because it offers one or more classes designed primarily for one ethnic group, promotes racial resentment, and advocates ethnic solidarity. The judge said the law permits "objective instruction" about the oppression of people. "However, teaching oppression objectively is quite different than actively presenting material in a biased, political and emotionally charged manner." Phew: the line between objective and subjective presentation surely depends on the judgment of the observer. If we say that Europeans engaged in some genocide in the conquest of what is now the USA, is that objective or subjective?

HEALTH CARE

Rush hospital in Chicago states that it will treat undocumented immigrants just as its staff does with citizens and others, including transplants if necessary. What, treat human beings the same??!! What a remarkable approach—that all health institutions should adopt. The report is from Fox Latino; it's at <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/health/2011/12/29/chicago-hospital-opens-doors-to-undocumented-immigrants/>.

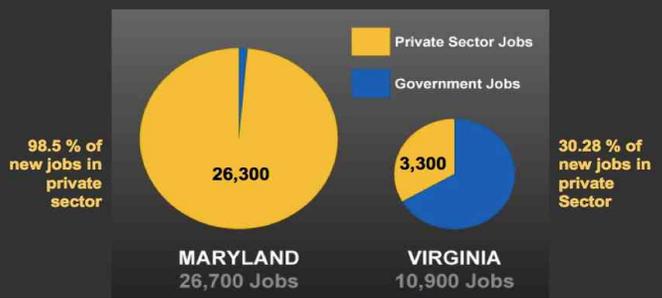
KEEPING A GOVERNMENT EYE OPEN

Speed Cameras: Prince George's County reportedly plans to add six new cameras each month. So those of us to take advantage of the seemingly "open road" had better be careful. The county has an eye on you! Don't blame the county for wanting to make the roads safer. But the

Governor O'Malley wants you to know!

But we wonder: Does the small number of public sector jobs mean that we haven't (re)hired the needed teachers, police officers, social workers, fire fighters, and other emergency and support personnel?

In 2011, Maryland created 8x as many private sector jobs as Virginia, and 2.5x as many total jobs.



Graphic from www.martinomalley.com

Mothers & Part-Time Work

income to the county doesn't hurt. We don't have the PG data, but the City of Baltimore earned about \$12 million in 2011!

License Plate Readers: The Martin O'Malley regime has significantly expanded the Maryland License Plate Recognition (LPR) program. Perhaps as a consequence, Maryland's motor vehicle theft rate has decreased 35.8% in the past three years. Maybe the investment is paying off. O'Malley: "Together, thanks to the dedication of law enforcement and the cooperation of local communities and the innovative use of state-of-the-art technology, we've driven violent crime and property crime down to their lowest rates ever reported."

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS/PARENTING

Find Info on PGCPs: There is an online PGCPs document that has lots of information about student enrollment options and requirements at the secondary school level. Want to know which schools have creative and performing arts? That's on page 6. Want to know what the content is in English core courses? That's on page 14. Service learning as a graduation requirement is on page 80. And on and on! The address is <http://www.pgcps.org/~procedur/6000/6150.pdf>.

Connecticut: Wow! The Connecticut classroom of the future may not be limited by a traditional school year, the four walls of a classroom, or even the standard progression of grades - if the state's school superintendents' proposed set of dramatic changes are implemented. Instead, the current system would be replaced by a "learner-centered" education program that would begin at age 3; offer parents a menu of options, including charter schools and magnet schools; and provide assessments only when an individual child is ready to be tested, rather than having all children tested in a class at the same time. (This proposal information was in *Education Week*, 4 January 2012.)

Education Elsewhere: There is considerable coverage of other education matters elsewhere in this issue. Be sure to check out. ■

A research project report in the *Journal of Family Psychology* (v25, 2011) states: "Mothers working part time tended to report less conflict between work and family than those working full time. During their children's pre-school years, mothers employed part time exhibited more sensitive parenting than did other mothers, and at school age were more involved in school and provided more learning opportunities than mothers employed full time. Mothers employed part time reported doing a higher proportion of child care and housework than mothers employed full time. Part-time employment appears to have some benefits for mothers and families throughout the child rearing years." An exception was "couple intimacy"; it was not greater compared with unemployed mothers.



There are important recommendations to employers based upon the research: "Employers tend to use part-time work as a money-saving strategy and to consider part-time employees as both expendable and not worthy of investment through the provision of benefits, training, or career advancement. During times of economic stress, when both mothers and fathers may feel a need to maximize their income, part-time work is even more likely to be a cost-saving measure for employers. Yet part-time work seems to be contributing to the strength and well-being of families. It is likely that many mothers (and probably some fathers as well) would elect to work part time if this status were recognized by employers as a legitimate approach to building a career while maintaining a healthy family life. Employer policies providing fringe benefits, at least proportional benefits, to employees in part-time positions and giving part-time employees access to career ladders through training and promotion could be beneficial to employers as well as parents." ■

OPPORTUNITIES

FOR FATHERS (CURRENT OR FUTURE)

The "Fatherhood Factory" is designed to help men 18 to 40 deal with the challenges of their role as fathers. Topics include finding a job, returning to school, wellness, parenting, and more. And free haircuts! The next meeting is on Wednesday, January 25, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. Meetings are monthly. If you plan to attend, let the program know at 410 379-3426.

FOR DETAINED IMMIGRANTS

The Obama administration has announced the implementation of a 24-hour-a-day, 7-days-a-week hotline for detained illegal aliens so that they may be "made aware of their rights." The hotline is a component of a "broader effort to improve our immigration enforcement process and prioritize resources to focus on threats to public safety, (on) repeat immigration law violators, recent border entrants, and immigration fugitives while continuing to strengthen oversight of the nation's immigration detention system and facilitate legal immigration." The hotline number is 855-448-6903.

FOR COLLEGE OR COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS

The below web address sends you to a listing of many scholarships, and few are Black-only. College-bound or in college? If so, check them out: <http://blackstudents.blacknews.com/>.

FOR HELP WITH INCOME TAX RETURNS

The Prince George's County's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program provides free tax preparation to area residents. Volunteers are trained and Certified as IRS Volunteer Income Tax Preparers. During 2011, the program prepared over 1,300 federal and state tax returns, which resulted in more than \$750,000 of federal tax refunds and over \$250,000 of Maryland tax refunds. Services saved people nearly \$81,250 of tax preparation fees. The program is for low-income people. For information or to bring your tax returns for help, call 301-322-0713.

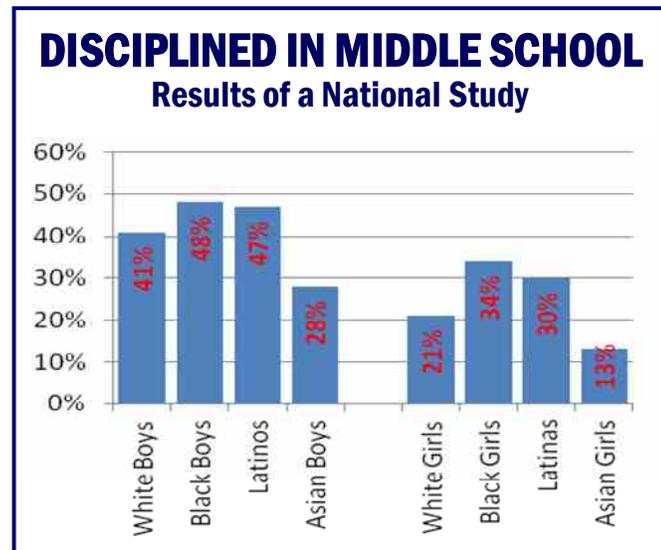
It is not unique, however, that Black suspensions are higher than those of Whites and other racial/ethnic categories. In the SPLC study, Black males were suspended from middle school at a higher rate than other groups. In all groups, male suspension was higher than for females.



But what if, controlling for socioeconomic status, the Black students still had a higher rate of suspensions: what should we conclude? And the answer probably is that there are neighborhood/peer/family factors that led to the increased improper behavior. Here are two of them: neighborhood factors are important in influencing young people, often via peers; and families with a single resident parent create more challenges of oversight than do families with two parents.

The Post does include this information: "Experts say disparities appear to have complex causes. A disproportionate number of black students live below the poverty line or with a single parent, factors that affect disciplinary patterns. But experts say those factors do not fully explain racial differences in suspensions. [Maybe all the factors explain only 97% of the disparity? Or 98%?] Other contributing factors could include unintended bias, unequal access to highly effective teachers and differences in school leadership styles." So if some "experts" say the causes are complex, why didn't the Post explore those?

An Indiana University faculty member comments: "It is not just a matter of kids coming from poverty. Poor kids do get suspended more. But that does not explain why poor black kids get suspended more than poor white kids and why affluent black kids get suspended more than affluent white kids." Well, did the Post try to find out if this asserted pattern exists in the area? In Prince George's County?



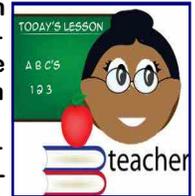
Latinos and Latinas: The data made available to the Post do not show a disproportionate rate of suspension for Latinos or Latinas. Good, although a bit surprising. However, the major study of middle school students across the country shows something different: Black boys are disciplined at a higher rate than others, but Latinos are very close behind; and the same pattern pertains

to Black girls and Latinas. (See graphic.) Are the patterns reflective of socioeconomic status, or family, or what?

There is considerable research on families indicating that Asians have great cohesiveness and that Asian children on average are more successful in school than are other groups. That difference is probably reflected in the graphic.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Teachers: A former county delegate comments: "Student discipline is the key reason why teachers are leaving the classroom in droves. Nearly half of teachers leave the profession after five years. Sure, teacher pay is an issue, but classroom discipline is both driving talented teachers from the profession and, importantly, limiting the amount of student learning occurring in the classroom."



Classroom discipline is often challenging for teachers, and that is especially true of classrooms where the young people come from families with little education or are coping with very hard times. So maintaining discipline is often linked with maintaining the services of a good teachers.

Communication: Could miscommunication contribute to the differential rates? For instance, many mainstream Whites and Asians do not easily understand Black English. Here's an anecdote from the middle school study: "A White male teacher was running late for class. Upon his arrival, the Black male student met the teacher at the door and said, 'Man, I was just fixin' to bounce on you.' To the student's bewilderment, the teacher wrote him up to be suspended. The teacher (mis)interpreted the phrase 'fixin' to bounce on you' as a threat of physical violence, when from the student's perspective he was noting the teacher's tardiness and jokingly saying that he was just about to leave the classroom (i.e., 'bounce'). While this is a simple example, it highlights the kind of language and cultural misunderstandings that can result in disproportionately in school discipline."

A Mother: Here is the dilemma facing the school system and parents, as expressed in a recent email: "While I'm not convinced out-of-school suspensions are much of a 'solution' to misconduct, I invite folks to consider the potential consequences if the most disruptive students are kept IN the school. Depending on how that's handled, that choice could damage the County's already-limited learning opportunities for students (and their families) committed to education and hard work--a group already predisposed to moving elsewhere, or to private schools if affordable and available."

A Former School Official: A former school official writes: "The truth is that in about 1/2 of the cases I heard ..., I seriously wished that we could expel the parents and keep the child. There is an amazing number of cases in which the parent sees nothing wrong with the kid carrying weapons. In one case a parent whose kid was expelled for distributing drugs had the unbelievable audacity to blame the school. ... WAY too often parents want to blame everyone but their kid and themselves for their kid's behavior."

There is still a lot of ethnic and racial prejudice in the USA and most other countries. But to identify whatever degree of prejudice may exist, we need analyses that are much more sophisticated than the one printed in the Post. And to the Post, we say: Be careful with unintended consequences! Don't yell "fire" until you know the facts!

PRESIDENT OBAMA SENT ALP A MESSAGE!*

"Americans are rightly frustrated with our Nation's broken immigration system, and I share that frustration. We need an immigration system that meets America's 21st century economic and security needs, and that can only be achieved by putting politics aside and coming together to develop a comprehensive solution that continues to secure our borders, holds businesses responsible for who they hire, strengthens our economic competitiveness, and requires undocumented immigrants to get right with the law. That is how we can reaffirm our heritage as a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws.



"Hi Action
Langley Park!"

"My Administration has invested an unprecedented amount of resources, technology, and manpower to secure our borders, and our efforts are producing real results. Today, our Southern border is more secure than ever with more law enforcement personnel working along it than at any time in American history. Along with significant reductions in the number of people trying to cross the border illegally, crime rates along the border are down, and we have seized more illegal guns, cash, and drugs than in years past. In addition to doing what is necessary to secure our borders, my Administration is taking action against employers who knowingly exploit people and break the law, and criminal immigrants who pose a threat to the safety of American communities.

"I remain deeply committed to working in a bipartisan way to enact immigration reform that restores accountability and responsibility to our broken immigration system. The Federal Government has the responsibility to continue to secure our borders. Those immigrants who are here illegally have a responsibility to pay taxes, pay a fine, learn English, and undergo background checks before they can be considered for legalization. At the same time, we need to provide businesses a legal way to hire the workers they rely on, and a path for those workers to earn legal status. Stopping illegal immigration also depends upon reforming our outdated system of legal immigration. We should make it easier for the best and brightest immigrants to stay here and help create jobs in America. The law should also stop punishing young people who were brought to this country illegally as children by giving them a chance to stay and earn a legal status if they pursue higher education or serve in our military.

"By creating a 21st century immigration system that is true to our principles, our Nation will remain a land of opportunity, prosperity, and freedom for all. To learn more about my Administration's efforts regarding immigration, or to read our Blueprint for Immigration Reform, please visit www.WhiteHouse.gov/issues/immigration."

*ALP and perhaps another million people! The email was dated 6 January 2012. ----

Alas, the political climate will surely prevent all or almost all needed immigration from passing Congress. And unless there is a stunning change in the climate, it may be years before the obvious social, economic, cultural, and political needs will be met with comprehensive immigration reform. Of course, Obama knows this.

MORE COPS!

Fifty Officers Graduated! Welcome New Officers!

Just a few days ago, County Executive Rushern Baker and Police Chief Mark A. Magaw, along with other public safety officials, hosted the graduation of fifty police officers from the Training Academy. The ceremony was held at Henry A. Wise High School in Upper Marlboro. Basic Training Session #119 graduated 46 new PG County Police Department officers, three City of Bowie Police Department officers, and one Maryland National Capitol Park Police Department officer.

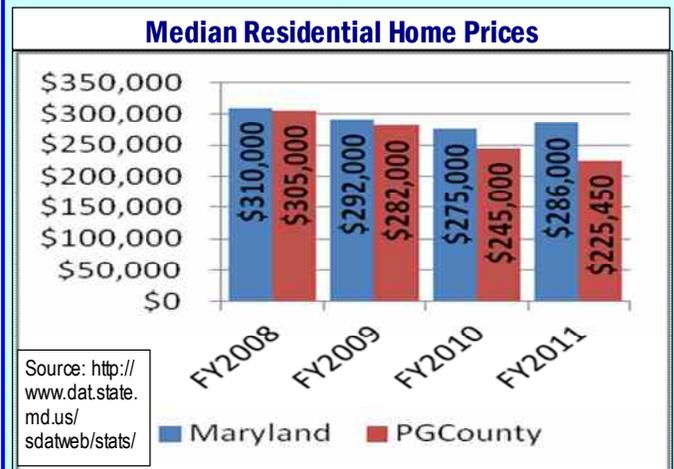
Chief Magaw: "These young men and women represent the future of law enforcement in Prince George's County. I take great pleasure in welcoming these fine young officers into the law enforcement family." (For those who might not remember, for several years Chief Magaw headed the police division that includes the Langley Park area.)



County Exec Baker and Chief Mark Magaw with new officer Jovann Jones

HOUSING PRICES IN MARYLAND AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

Over the past four-plus years, housing prices around the country have plunged. After a very "good" year in FY2007 ("good" because prices went up, but not because the rise was



an indication of a healthy national economy), FY2008 was flat taking into consideration that the recession didn't hit until the latter part of calendar 2008. Starting in FY2009, the state's values of houses began a downward trend, and the county's value decline was even worse. The county's comparatively poor situation may have been caused by the high percentage of home sales that were foreclosures.

What about some concrete reality? Here are some facts about one of many housing lost-money tragedies in Langley Park: A family bought a house in 2006 for \$465,000. In 2010, the same house was purchased for \$156,500. Many "middle class" Langley Park families have gone bankrupt or the equivalent. It's tragic when the American Dream disappears.

THE COYOTE

Border Patrol officers have claimed that their work plus fences and night vision and other infrastructure have led to the recent 24% decrease in the apprehension of undocumented immigrants. Of course, some credit should also go to the USA economic slump. But there's another view offered by staffers at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs. It is that credit really should go to the coyotes!



"While increased enforcement may have increased the likelihood of getting caught, immigrants have adapted their journeys to account for the risk; they have hired professionals with a good deal of experience to navigate the difficult terrain. Using a Coyote essentially grants success for most undocumented immigrants. We find evidence of the increased reliance of coyotes in the rise in demand that has caused crossing fees to increase 5% annually. What used to be a \$978 trip in 1995, can now cost upwards of \$7,000. [Maybe \$3 to \$7k is a better estimate.] When immigrants were asked about what they saw as the biggest deterrent to making the journey, 43%, cited the harsh climate, while only 23% ranked the border patrol as their biggest fear, and even fewer, 2%, viewed the minuteman as a legitimate threat."

Hum: So if the USA charged the coyotes \$2,000, that would mean a trip charge if \$9,000, so fewer people would pay the helper to cross the border and the USA would make a lot of money—helping to close the national debt. But how can we encourage Mexicans and others to find the needed \$9k? We must advertise the wonders of a life in the USA, perhaps by widely distributing old copies of House Beautiful and Playboy.

BARRIO DE LANGLEY PARK

This neighborhood planning newsletter is edited and published by Action Langley Park, with a supportive link to the Langley Park Project of the University of Maryland as an element of the university's community outreach. The Editor is Bill Hanna, who is a university professor and also Executive Secretary of Action Langley Park.

BLP appears irregularly, but approximately every two weeks. Submissions and suggestions are welcome at actionlangleypark@yahoo.com. Back issues of BLP will soon be available on the web.

BLP is read in the United States, Canada, and Mexico! Maybe elsewhere too! If you have friends or associates elsewhere in Maryland or the USA or elsewhere who are interested in immigration issues, please pass BLP along or let us add the person to one of our email lists.

For information about Action Langley Park, a nonprofit 501c3 organization, email actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.

WHAT AND WHEN: 2012

Here we list upcoming ALP activities and other events that come to our attention. Have an event to list? If so, send information well in advance to actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.

The Foreclosure Prevention Project is open Mondays through Fridays 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Free; offered by Community Legal Services. The intake line is 301.864.8186.

January 10—LPCC Children's Programs. It's the start date for 2012 programs at the Center, including tutoring for 6-12 year olds and poetry for 8-13 year olds. Check offerings—and costs—at 301 445-4508.

January 21—Free Community Dinner & Food Distribution at St. Michael and All Angels Church, 8501 New Hampshire Ave. in upper Langley Park. From 5 to 6:30 p.m. This is a regular event on the third Saturday of the month. For information, call 301 434-4646.

January 25—Fatherhood Factory: Be a better father! (see Page 5)

February 4—Midwinter Folk Festival, noon to 10 p.m. at the Takoma Park Middle School.

March 8 & more—Physics is Fun—in the physics department, University of Maryland: March 8, 9, 10: Color; May 3, 4, 5: Great Physics Demonstrations. From 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Information: 301.405.5994. Get young people to these events!

March 22—Action Langley Park meets at 7 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. Be there!

April 21—Maryland Day, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at the University of Maryland in College Park. Lots to see and do!!

April 28-29—Science and Engineering Festival: "Our mission is to re-invigorate the interest of our nation's youth in science, technology, engineering and math by presenting the most compelling, exciting, educational and entertaining science gatherings in the USA." It's free! In DC. Information is available at: <http://www.usasciencefestival.org>

May 5: Cinco de Mayo! Let's celebrate it at Langley Park Day! And Mothers' Day is the 13th. We can celebrate that too!

May 6—Langley Park Day 2012 from



noon to 4 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. There will be music and dance performances; a major health fair checking vision, HIV status, blood pressure, and more; food and craft vendors; children's art and game activities; face painting, and more. Be sure to mark your calendar now!!



NEED IMMIGRATION LEGAL HELP?

There's good news: www.immigrationlawhelp.org is a new website to help low-income immigrants find free or low-cost immigration legal help. The website provides information about more than 900 nonprofit immigration legal services providers in all 50 states. In Maryland, CASA de Maryland (301 431-4185), Catholic Charities (301 942-1790), and Justice for Our Neighbors (301 927-6133) are among the listed organizations.