

# TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

“Empowered Educators, Successful Students, Connected Communities”

Vol. 52, Number 5

Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County, An MSEA/NEA Affiliate

February 2020

## Empowered TAAAC Members Strengthen Advocacy at Board of Education Budget Hearing

Over 100 TAAAC members and supporters stood as one at the January 27<sup>th</sup> Board of Education Budget Hearing. Members stepped up to advocate for special education resources, student conditions, and increased salaries. Speakers acknowledged and thanked the Board of Education members for their efforts last year, but stressed that we are not quite at our goal. With over 3,500 teachers still on steps behind their years of experience, asking the Board to make bold choices became a theme of the night.

Many new voices were raised in this forum. It was incredibly valuable for the Board of Education to listen to those not previously heard. Martin Noga, Annapolis High School, led the night’s testimony, “Today I have decided to use the words of my students...we have students who write to remind us who we are and what we are doing.” His influence in their lives was evident in statements like “you have truly invested in me” and “Mr. Noga showed an interest in my academic progress and in me.” With one student asking, “Please don’t go,” Martin highlighted the need for retaining our dedicated, high-quality teachers. Ginny Vastag, a teacher from Davidsonville Elementary, shared why she was inspired to speak. “Under the proposed budget, I would remain six years behind my years of experience.... I would like to be treated in a fair and equitable manner relative to my colleagues,” she stated. Ginny and about a dozen of her fellow TAAAC members informed the Board of Education members of how they continue to be impacted by not only salary gaps, but class size, inadequate staffing, and workload. Heather Kurdziel, West Meade Early Education Center, didn’t plan on testifying, but felt compelled to do so because the board members “are making decisions about what is important to them. I need them to know what is important to me.”

The Board’s Budget Hearings are just one part of the entire process (see page 6 for more information about the remaining process). Teachers, like those who have testified and emailed, need to continue to be vocal about our needs and why valuing our teachers is in fact what is best for our students.





Russell Leone

It seems like this time of year has become a predictable cycle for TAAAC. January comes and we go into full budget mode and fight for our salary increases. However, I want to remind you that the work of TAAAC does go deeper than our negotiated contract and a fight for proper salaries. (Although that is an important part of our work!)

Every month, your colleagues meet with the Board of Education (including Dr. McMahon) on curriculum and instruction issues. Through the ASI workgroup, TAAAC members bring ongoing concerns and offer solutions. Minutes for these meetings can be found on the AACPS Intranet.

We also have networking and support opportunities. We have a new group forming this year. They are the Early Career Educators. This is a group for those in their first 5 years of teaching. They come together to share ideas and offer support in a social environment. You can join this group on Facebook (TAAAC Early Career Educators). In addition, TAAAC sponsors social hours around the county for

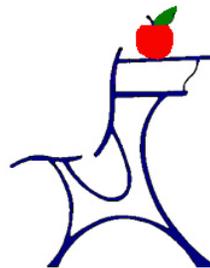
# Commentary

all Unit 1 employees to come together.

TAAAC also offers our own professional development opportunities to support your work with students. Exploring topics relevant to your students through guest experts and our own members experience, we offer free sessions for our members.

TAAAC members lobby our representatives and work with MSEA on legislative bills and actions that will impact our classrooms. Our work on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future has already begun to impact our profession in positive ways.

For more information on ways that you can take advantage of these opportunities, ask your building representative, join us on Facebook, or look for announcements in my weekly updates on Tuesdays at 2:30. If you are not getting the weekly update, contact the TAAAC office and provide your personal email address.



## TAAAC Action Report

Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County  
2521 Riva Road, Suite L7  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(410) 224-3330 (410) 841-6022  
(301) 261-8309 FAX (410) 841-5117  
[www.taaaconline.org](http://www.taaaconline.org)

### Officers

Russell C. Leone, President  
Catherine Snyder, Vice President  
Tamara Thumbtzen, Secretary-Treasurer

### Board of Directors

Robin Beers  
Elizabeth Bringer  
Jorge Cordoba  
Dyana Cronin  
Allison Heintz  
Robert Mauro  
Kate Miller  
Elizabeth Ruddy  
Jan Delf  
Emmanuelle Carr

### Editor

Kenneth N. Page, Executive Director  
and Managing Editor  
Roxanne L. Beach, Editor

## From Contentia this month . . . *AACPS Progressive Discipline*

Your TAAAC staff spends a considerable amount of time advising and representing members on disciplinary issues. Although the BOE has not put their progressive disciplinary practices in writing, this is the structure that is generally followed as well as your rights and the role of TAAAC:

### 1) The progressive discipline ladder

- Counseling letter: This is the lowest level on the progressive discipline ladder and is not defined as a disciplinary action. A counseling letter is subject to appeal and may be removed from your personnel file upon request after three years.
- Warning letter: A warning letter can be challenged through the grievance process. Unless removed as a result of a grievance settlement, these letters remain in your personnel file forever.
- Reprimand letter: A reprimand letter can be challenged through the grievance process. Unless removed as a result of a grievance settlement, these letters remain in your personnel file forever.
- Unpaid suspension: The length of a suspension can vary. A suspension is subject to appeal. Documentation of a suspension will remain in your file forever.
- Termination: Termination is also subject to appeal.

### 2) Investigations

- Except for a counseling letter, all other disciplinary actions require a pre-disciplinary meeting with you. You are entitled to representation at any and all pre-disciplinary meetings.
- Sometimes allegations of employee misconduct are investigated by the AACPS Office of Investigations. You are entitled to representation during any investigative meeting you are directed to attend.
- If the allegations of misconduct involve a student, you may be subject to an investigation by Child Protective Services (CPS). You are entitled to representation during any investigative meeting you are directed to attend with CPS.
- If the allegations of misconduct involve a criminal act, the police or other law enforcement agencies may be involved. Once again, you are entitled to representation during any investigative meeting you are directed to attend with the police or any law enforcement agency.
- An administrator may direct you to submit a written statement describing an event. Albeit you should do so in a timely fashion as directed by your administrator, you should review your statement with your TAAAC UniServ Director prior to submitting it.

### 3) Appeals and rebuttals

- You have the right to attach a rebuttal to any counseling letter or disciplinary document placed in your file. There are not time limits on submitting a rebuttal.
- Grievance and appeals are governed by strict time restrictions. All appropriate appeals and grievances must be written and filed soon after any disciplinary action is taken.

### 4) Representation

- You have the right to representation at meeting a that is disciplinary or could lead to disciplinary action against you.
- You do not have the right to representation during non-disciplinary meetings.
- If you are unclear on the purpose of a meeting you've been directed to attend, ask for an explanation. Be explicit – "Is this meeting disciplinary in nature, or could it lead to disciplinary action against me?"
- There is no harm in asking for your TAAAC representative to attend a non-disciplinary meeting with you. Sometimes you simply need someone to sit next to you for support.

Finally, you should consult your TAAAC UniServ Director throughout any of the actions as described above. Contact TAAAC immediately as soon as you believe any type of disciplinary investigation may be initiated involving you.

## Quality Teacher Incentive Tax Credit

If you are a Maryland public school teacher and you paid tuition during the 2019 tax year for graduate-level courses to maintain certification, you may be entitled to an income tax credit on your Maryland return.

You may claim a credit for 100 percent of the unreimbursed amount of tuition paid or \$1,500 – whichever is less. A credit of up to \$3,000 is allowed on a joint return if each spouse qualifies for the credit.

### Qualification

To qualify for the credit, you must:

- Currently hold a standard professional certificate or an advanced professional certificate.
- Be employed by a county/city board of education in Maryland.
- Teach in a public school and receive a satisfactory performance evaluation for teaching.
- Successfully complete the graduate courses with a grade of B or better.
- Have not been fully reimbursed for these expenses. Only the unreimbursed portion qualified for the credit.

The courses taken must be required to maintain certification and the cost of the courses must exceed any amount reimbursed by AACPS.

### Claiming the credit

To claim the credit:

- Complete Part C of Form [502CR](#).
- File Form 502CR with your Maryland return.

The credit can be claimed on Maryland forms 502, 505 or 515. It is not available on short Form 503. If the credit exceeds your tax liability, the unused credit may not be carried forward to any other tax year. You may be eligible to claim tax credits from previous years. Please discuss this with your tax advisor.

## MSEA Honors TAAAC Member Monica Lindsey with Human & Civil Rights Award

TAAAC member Monica Linsey was recognized for her extensive work to promote and defend human and civil rights. Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) presented this award to Monica at its annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast on January 18. Monica is a special education teacher at Old Mill High School. Monica was key in establishing the South Sudan Hope Network in 2017, which helps communities in Sudan build and furnish schools. Monica also formed the group Connecting the Dots, which brought different community groups together to understand the relationship between past events and today. This group was instrumental in MD Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which led to the first lynching marker to be erected in Annapolis last October. She also helped organize the March for Racial Justice in 2017 and in 2018 jointly filed a lawsuit challenging free speech restrictions in Lawyers Mall in Annapolis. Monica stated, “The struggle continues for social justice and civil rights and I am committed to keeping the dream alive and staying actively involved in improving things around me.” Monica was chosen from nominees from around the state and TAAAC congratulates Monica for this well-deserved award.



Russell Leone, Monica Linsey, and Jorge Córdoba

# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Tina Acquaah	Alfredo Hurtado
Lucy Amos	De Mendoza
Kayla Bennett	Nikki Jones
Elisabeth V. Bilek	My Khuu
Alexzandra Brown	Virginia McGowan
Denise Chadwick	Aicha Miloudi
Jennifer Connelly	Joseph Mogavero
Claudia Cooper	Landra Phillips
George Day	Kaitlyn Shaw
Heather Dickens	Jordan Snellenberger
Ashley Endrusick	Catherine Stuckert
Kirsten Farley	Lisa Troshinsky
Shannon Farrell	Deborah Vanderclute
Nathalie Froncillo	Michael Wiercbicki
Valerie Green	Jennifer Winterling
Emma Hastings	

## NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for **Credentials Committee** and the **Nominating Committee**.

Nominations will be accepted until the April 8, 2020 RA meeting.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (C) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Email \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like to place my name in nomination for the following position(s):**

- Credentials Committee**
- Nominating Committee**

## INCOME TAX PREPERATION

R.J. Pellicoro Assoc. will be at TAAAC offices on March 18 and 20, 2020 to prepare 2019 Income Tax returns for long time TAAAC clients. He is no longer taking new clients.

As in the past, contact the TAAAC office to make appointments for these dates. For those clients who would prefer to receive their 2019 tax returns earlier, please contact Bob Pellicoro at (301) 706-7619 to arrange for mailing tax data directly to R.J. Pellicoro Assoc.

## Foundation to Help Local Students

One of TAAAC's functions is to assist local students in continuing their education. TAAAC does so through its Foundation for Educational Excellence which gives competitive scholarships to college bound young people.

The Foundation provides eight scholarships to local public high school students each year which are funded by members, outside donors, and occasional fundraising events. One of these is funded by TAAAC-R. In addition, there are two memorial scholarships funded through direct donations: The Robin Coleman Award for Computer Science and/or Technology, and the Samuel and Bessie Chao Memorial Book Award. Applications are distributed through all public high school counselors. The forms were sent out on February 12 for the 2020 scholarship awards. For more information, contact your school counseling department or call the TAAAC office.

### Link up with TAAAC on Social Media



Please scan the code to follow us on Twitter



Please scan the code and Like us on Facebook

## TAAAC Events Calendar

### February

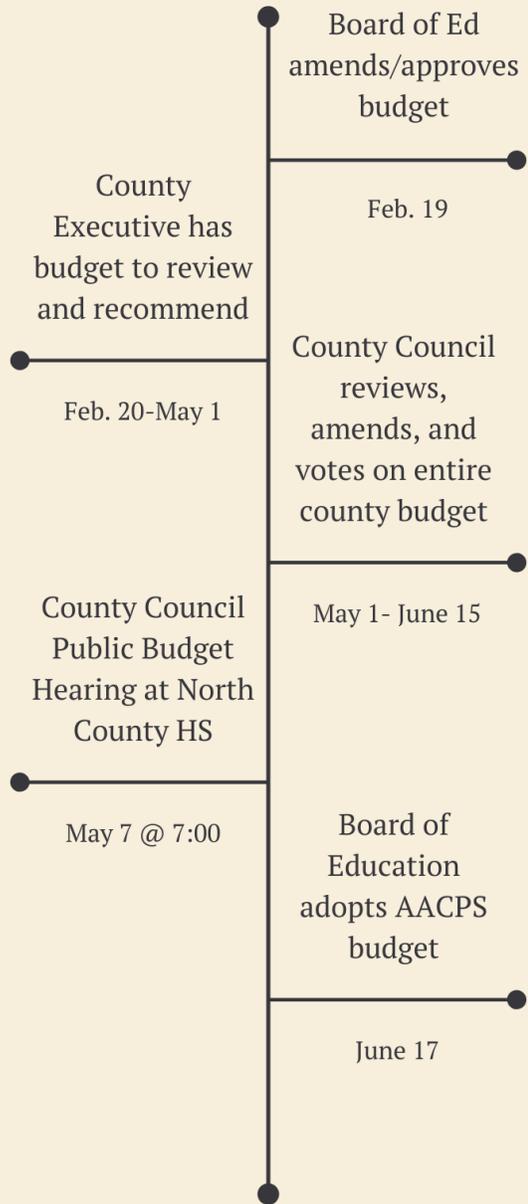
- 13 – Minority Affairs – 5 PM @ TAAAC
- 17 – President’s Day – TAAAC Closed; All Schools and Central Offices Closed
- 19 – IPD – 4:45 PM @ TAAAC
- 20 – TAAAC/ASI – 3:45 PM @ TAAAC
- 20 – Membership – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC
- 21 – ONLINE VOTING – Closed @ 5PM
- 24 – SLB @ TAAAC
- 24 – Government Relations – 5 PM @ MSEA
- 25 – Nominating Committee – 5 PM @ TAAAC
- 25 – Negotiating Committee – 5 PM @ TAAAC

### March

- 2 – Government Relations – 5 PM @ MSEA
- 9 – SLB @ TAAAC
- 9 – Negotiating Committee – 5 PM @ TAAAC
- 9 – Government Relations – 5 PM @ MSEA
- 11 – RA Meeting – 5 PM @ Severn River Middle Meeting prior to RA: Elementary, Middle and High School Concerns Committees
- 12 – Mills/King Award Ceremony – 6 PM @ Firemark Building, Millersville
- 16 – Government Relations – 5 PM @ MSEA
- 19 – TAAAC/ASI – 3:34 PM @ TAAAC
- 23 – SLB @ TAAAC
- 23 – Government Relations – 5 PM @ MSEA
- 23 – Negotiating Committee – 5 PM @ TAAAC
- 26 – Special Events Committee – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC

Visit [www.taaaconline.org](http://www.taaaconline.org)

## THE REMAINING AACPS BUDGET PROCESS



## Bubba’s 33

One of TAAAC’s most delicious supporters is Bubba’s 33 in Glen Burnie. They offer a ten percent discount to any TAAAC member who stops by. If you don’t have a Bubba’s discount key ring, call the TAAAC office and we will get one mailed to your school.

## **ATTENTION!**

### **Are You Paying Too Much**

If your employment status has changed and you have an annual salary under \$44,656 and/or are working .5 or less, please contact the TAAAC office so that your membership dues can be adjusted accordingly.