

# TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

“Empowered Educators, Successful Students, Connected Communities”

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

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## **TAAAC URGES COUNCIL TO FIX EXPERIENCE CREDIT INEQUITIES THIS YEAR**

On Monday, May 10, TAAAC President Russell Leone testified before the Anne Arundel County Council at the first of two budget hearings to advocate on behalf of educators.

“We are glad that this budget attempts to address the fact that our educators are an essential part of our community and should be showed the respect and dignity of fair pay,” said Leone.

The top two priorities TAAAC is advocating for on behalf of members are to fix the experience credit issue this year and ensure continued dialogue with the Council on any surplus funding seen in this budget.

Leone highlighted Kristen, a teacher at Glen Burnie High School, who is paid a salary less than her credited years of experience like 3,400 other Unit 1 educators in the county. With 15 years of experience and 8 years teaching in AACPS, she is currently on step 11, losing around \$9,000 annually. With this budget, she could be made whole this year.

TAAAC’s goal each budget season is to remove the distractions of inequitable pay to help educators fully focus on the most important task of offering students the world class public education they deserve, Leone told the Council. Throughout the pandemic, educators have shown incredible resilience and creativity in serving their students, and their time deserved appropriate recognition.

Specifically, TAAAC is proposing to use the \$5.5 million proposed as a 1% cost of living adjustment in addition to the \$5.6 million for back steps to fully resolve the experience credit inequities this budget cycle. The pandemic has taught us that the challenges ahead are unpredictable.

“We don’t want to risk not doing the best we can for all educators as quickly as possible,” said Leone.

TAAAC was also delighted to hear BOE President Melissa Ellis explain the importance of resolving the experience credit issue this year and not waiting as we all don’t know how the Blueprint will impact funding requirements.

As the final accounting of the FY21 budget cycle is released in the coming weeks, TAAAC is hopeful that the County and the Board of Education will again see surpluses along the instructional salary budget track. Leone encouraged the Council to be open in their conversations around how that funding is used, with the intent for it to go back to instructional salaries where it was originally budgeted.

These two areas of focus for budget discussions have the potential to dramatically impact the personal and professional lives of all educators in Anne Arundel County.

The County Executive’s budget recommendations are still subject to review and approval by the County Council. Their vote is scheduled on or around June 15. To make your voice heard, [click here to register](#) to speak at the in-person budget hearing on Thursday, May 20 at 6:00 p.m.

# Commentary



Russell Leone

Central Office for the decisions that impact our students and our work directly. Our responsibility to remind them their high esteem for educators must be supported by action. Our responsibility to let them know that we see their votes and know who truly appreciates the incredible dedication and talent we bring to our schools.

is something that we must all do whenever we have the opportunity. The County Council currently has the budget in their hands until June 15. Don't wait for their decision; tell them now what you expect—a budget that supports educators. One voice can make a difference, but thousands of voices will make an impact.

Recently, the nation recognized Teacher Appreciation Week. However, appreciation for our teachers and all other educators should not be confined to one week. Showing respect for the profession must have actions behind words of thanks and praise for our work. As educators, we love the kind gestures of notes and small gifts from students and families and shoutouts on social media. What we need are salaries that allow educators to hold this as their one and only job if they choose, planning time that is honored and sufficient to prepare engaging lessons and complete necessary paperwork, and a voice in what trainings and preparation will elevate our profession. Decisions guaranteeing these is a true demonstration of appreciation. As much as we are the leader in our classroom space, we must recognize these decisions are made by too many outside the classroom or even outside the school system.

While I express my appreciation for all you do for students every day, I continue to advocate through conversations with the County Executive and other elected officials. This

I hope that you were treated extremely well during Teacher Appreciation Week, but this appreciation must extend all year. You should expect it because you have earned it.

1921-2021  
**TAAAC**  
**100 YEARS STRONG!**

In 1968, TAAAC is legally recognized as spokesman for AACo. teachers and the school board is required by law to negotiate with TAAAC.

*Celebrating 100 years of advocacy for educators and students.*

It is the responsibility of all of us to hold accountable the legislators, other elected officials, and AACPS

## 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)

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## From Contentia this month . . . *TAAAC Recovery Services*

The BOE recently issued a directive for Special Education teachers and Related Service Providers to begin completing two huge buckets of work:

- 1) Giving Recovery Service hours to students in need who lost learning during the pandemic.
- 2) Examining every SPED student and determining who was going to get the Recovery Services and in what order.

The first part, the delivery of instruction, was relatively simple. The BOE entered formal negotiations with the TAAAC team and an hourly rate. These will be delivered by volunteers down the road.

The second section was much more problematic. The BOE initially said (in essence), “just do it” and gave no time, money, and little guidance on how to do this enormous amount of work. It involved formal meetings on every student with the parents, voluminous paperwork – plus the regular IEP meetings (separate meeting) to conclude the 2021 school year. People were understandably apoplectic. It involved all related service providers (some 900 plus folks) and very little time to get started.

After an emergency meeting with the TAAAC Special Education Committee, the Chair, Nicole Disney-Bates and Mark Mench, TAAAC UniServ Director, met with representatives from the BOE.

They agreed this was a troubled rollout and the train stopped for a month while the BOE met and redid the plan. All Recovery Services were on “pause.”

The group convened again on Monday, May 10. The BOE agreed to our requests:

- 1) Greatly reduced paperwork with pull-down options.
- 2) Phone calls instead of meetings for the parents in accepting or declining the services.
- 3) A greatly stretched out timeline that does not have deadlines or end dates. It asks that priority be given to the kids who need the services the most.
- 4) Per Diem Pay (one hour per kid on your caseload).

Dr. Arlotto also met with MSDE, who indicated the services had to be completed and there was no “opt-in” option, which TAAAC had suggested. Essentially, the work has to be done. So far, at least, the above is our best option.

That being said, there are still several issues to work out including:

- Is participation in Recovery Services mandatory for all teachers with a caseload?
- What if the amount of time is less/more than one hour to complete the work?

If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to your UniServ Director to discuss.

# TAAAC ALL-MEMBER MEETING

A TAAAC all-member Zoom Meeting is scheduled for 5 p.m. June 17<sup>th</sup> consistent with an earlier New Business Item (NBI), adopted by the Representative Assembly. TAAAC leadership looks to provide substantive end of the school year updates, take member questions, provide a bargaining update, review the impact of the County budget as adopted by the County Council, and talk about how best to support our 12-month employees going into the summer. During this all-member meeting, we look forward to seeing and hearing from you. Please use the below link to register:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEld-Cvpz0rE9ERNt3p27ShwvKuH82enfWF>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

## Sick Leave Bank Open Enrollment/Cancellation

Unit I employees that would like to join the TAAAC Sick Leave Bank may do so during the Open Enrollment Period, which is July 1 through September 30. New Unit I employees may join within the first 30 days after their effective date of employment.

**Unit I employees who wish to cancel their participation in the TAAAC Sick Leave Bank must do so by June 30 or risk the irretrievable loss of their one-day contribution.**

Your Association Representative Chairperson has been provided with a list of SLB members for their work location or you may call the TAAAC office.

Those interested in enrollment/cancellation may go online to complete the form at

<http://taaaconline.org/sick-leave-bank/>

## NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for 5 positions on the Negotiating Committee.

Nominations will be accepted until the June 9, 2021 RA meeting and the election will be held at the meeting.

Please use the following link to complete the official nomination form online:

<https://taaaconline.org/nominations-open/>



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TicketsatWork.com is back and updated with new deals for the new year. Start off 2021 on the right foot with great savings on workout gear and fitness programs, healthy meal plan deliveries, new electronics and appliances, and more!

For more information, please use the following link

<https://taaaconline.org/theme-parks-and-more/>

**If you haven't signed up yet, click the above link and enter our company code: TAAAC**