

TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

VOL. 50, NUMBER 2

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

October 2017

WHAT IS THE KIRWAN COMMISSION?

Named after its chair, former University System of Maryland Chancellor Brit Kirwan, the Commission's 25 members are working to rewrite Maryland's school funding formula. They are scheduled to deliver recommendations to the General Assembly in December.

Since legislators passed the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act (also known as the Thornton Plan) in 2002, Maryland has provided historic levels of school funding. But the plan was never meant to accommodate current levels of child poverty. The percentage of Maryland public school students living in poverty has more than doubled since 1990—from 22% to 45%—putting our statewide student population on the verge of becoming majority low-income. When you consider those increased needs together with the higher standards and new programs implemented over the last five years alone, our current levels of education spending fall short for too many students.

MSEA worked with the General Assembly to create the Kirwan Commission in 2016 and now, David Helfman, MSEA's executive director, advocates for MSEA members in the commission's discussions.

How much funding are we talking about? In December, the Kirwan Commission received a report from national school funding experts recommending an increase of \$2.9 billion statewide (\$1.9 billion in state funding and

\$1 billion in county funding). According to their analysis—based on conversations with Maryland educators and recent academic research—that's how much more spending is necessary for schools to meet the needs of every child.

The recommendations would provide important gains in resources. But how those increases break down varies quite a bit. In St. Mary's County, schools would see a 44% increase over current spending (an additional \$78 million) while Howard would see an 8% increase over current spending (\$56 million more). The largest step up in total dollars would go to Prince George's, which would receive a \$600 million boost.

How and why are schools so underfunded? The Thornton Commission developed a plan that in the early 2000s was considered a national model for equitable school funding—and it was remarkably successful. Following its implementation, Maryland schools placed first in Education Week's state rankings from 2009-2013, first in the College Board's Advanced Placement performance rankings from 2007-2016, and second in fourth-grade reading improvement and fourth in fourth-grade math improvement on NAEP from 2003 to 2013.

But just like every other state in the country, Maryland had to make some serious budget compromises in the aftermath of the Great Recession. While Maryland did better than most states in avoiding massive education cuts,

the state froze, then capped, the amount of funding increases allowed for a number of years—which had a compounding effect in the Thornton Plan. Under Thornton, each year's increase, due to inflation and enrollment growth, is based on the previous year's allocation. The aggregate effect of this has ballooned the underfunding of our schools to nearly \$3 billion.

What are some of the ideas being discussed on the commission?

Members of the Kirwan Commission want to make recommendations on both what the increased number should be and how they should make this new investment.

The funding experts who came up with the \$2.9 billion recommendation also suggested some possible strategies, including: decreasing class sizes; increasing instructional staff; building in more planning time for teachers; and hiring more school counselors, nurses, and behavioral specialists. They also built in the implementation of pre-kindergarten for all four-year-olds to their overall recommendation. Other experts have testified in front of the commission and stressed the need to invest directly in the education professions by increasing salaries and building up training programs based on successful international models.

These conversations present a rare opportunity to accomplish large-scale improvements to working conditions for educators and learning opportunities for our students.



Bill Jones

**Gov. Hogan's Executive Order,
Election Day,
and the 181st Student Day**

In the spring of 2011, TAAAC initiated a grievance counting that mandatory attendance to a local high school's graduation ceremony was not allowed by the Negotiated Agreement. The contended contract violations were that it effectively added a second evening activity, unilaterally altered the normal workday, surpassed the 20 minute limit for non-professional duties, and disregarded the provision for graduation ceremonies in the Negotiated Agreement. TAAAC's position in the matter prevailed and the administration made the appropriate adjustment.

In subsequent years, the past three administrations have maintained an extra student day in the student year, extending it from 180 to 181 days. That is one day more than Maryland regulations require, and one day more than nearly every other Maryland school district uses. The 181st day created an opportunity for the administration to mandate staff attendance to graduation

ceremonies and assist in monitoring the behavior of graduates and guests. That 181st student day has been a contentious issue since, and has remained in existence primarily because no grievants have come forward to address the on-going contract violations. Now, however, there is yet more reasons to reconsider the necessity (or even the propriety) of that additional student day.

"Doing so takes a giant step in resolving the instant issues of fitting 181 days into the Hogan school year; but it also brings the school system back into conformance with the Agreement to which it agreed and ratified, and improves its stewardship of teacher time and taxpayers dollars."

The 2018-19 school year contains a few obstructions creating difficulty complying with Governor Hogan's Executive Order to begin the school year no earlier than the Tuesday after Labor Day and end no later than July 15. The coming year contains a general election on which schools are closed, and July 15 happens to fall on a Saturday, a day that cannot be used as a school day. The AACPS Calendar Committee is struggling to find a solution. To many of us, the 181st student day should be low hanging fruit. The reasons include issues of labor relations, collective bargaining, and better stewardship

of both educators' time and taxpayer dollars.

1. The collective Negotiated Agreement shared between TAAAC and the Board contains provisions for staff to voluntarily attend graduation ceremonies outside of the regular work hours in return for a half-day of leave. That half-day of leave is scheduled (and can be used) in advance of the ceremony, thereby giving the school administration time to ensure that sufficient staff volunteered.

2. The contract violation contended in 2011, capping non-professional duties during the student day to twenty minutes, remains a legitimate contention. Those same non-professional duties like monitoring behavior and keeping order in high school cafeterias and auditoriums do not suddenly morph into professional activities at graduation. The wearing of gowns does not change the nature of the duties. It may be only a matter of time before a grievant or group of grievants attend to the contract matter.

3. Educators of all job titles are under constant pressure of a persistently increasing workload. The problem has been acknowledged by both bargaining teams, administrators at every level, and some appointed members of the Board. Nonetheless, the great majority of AACPS teachers have lost a full day

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Roxanne L. Beach, Editor

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of paid work time that could have been used for planning, collaboration, student learning objectives, parent contacts, or any of a myriad of other required work. Instead, there is another day to plan for and another day to teach.

4. The imposition of the 181st student day has budget impact as well. In an era of budget cutting, rising class sizes, healthcare concessions, and stagnant salaries, our school system absorbs labor costs, fuel expenses, and more schools bus mileage than necessary, and does so by its own choosing.

The current calendar difficulty provides perfect opportunity and sound reason to reduce the student year back to the required 180 days. Doing so takes a giant step in resolving the instant issues of fitting 181 days into the Hogan school year; but it also brings the school system back into conformance with the Agreement to which it agreed and ratified, and improves its stewardship of teacher time and taxpayers dollars.



MSEA Convention 2017

More than 600 delegates representing MSEA's 71,000 members will gather October 19-21, 2017, to carry out the annual business of the association. The representative assembly (RA) takes place at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City.

If you've ever wondered exactly what delegates do at the RA, here's a brief Q&A.

Who are your local association delegates?

Your local association delegates to MSEA's representative assembly (RA) are your colleagues, elected by members in your local to represent you at MSEA's most important annual event. The RA discusses and votes on proposed bylaw amendments, new business items, and resolutions that delegates present for debate from the RA floor.

What else happens at the RA?

Delegates will hear from MSEA President Betty Weller, Executive Director David Helfman, and leading education policymakers; introduce, debate, and vote on MSEA new business items, resolutions, and bylaw amendments that help guide the association's activities and engagement in education issues; and make endorsements.

What's a bylaw amendment?

MSEA's bylaws are the set of rules adopted by the representative assembly to govern its meetings or business. A bylaw amendment is submitted by a member, supported by at least 9 additional members, and presented at the annual RA. The proposed amendment must be submitted at least 90 days before the RA. There were no bylaw amendments submitted this year.

What's a new business item?

A new business item (NBI) is a statement or action requested by a member that is discussed and debated by the assembled delegates at the RA. An NBI may originate and be presented at the RA; if passed by the representative assembly, an NBI may require specific action by MSEA leaders, committees, or staff.

“What can Labor do for itself? The answer is not difficult. Labor can organize, it can unify; it can consolidate its forces. This done, it can demand and command.”

-Eugene Debs, in The Bending Cross, 1949

From Contentia this month . . . *Sick Leave/Personal Business Leave*

Sick Leave

As a regular Unit One employee, you earn sick leave at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ day per pay period (22) for a total of 11 sick days per year. The “premium” for joining the Sick Leave Bank is the donation of one sick day per year, leaving many TAAAC members with 10 days per school year. In addition, you may use sick days in $\frac{1}{2}$ day increments, so that one half-day is equal to 3.75 hours of sick leave and a full day 7.5 hours.

If you come to Anne Arundel County from another public-school system, you are permitted to bring all your accumulated sick leave with you. You may also accumulate it without limit.

You are required by the Negotiated Agreement to notify your administrator as soon as you know you will be absent. You are **not** technically eligible for sick leave unless you notify your administrator at least one hour prior to the beginning of the teacher day. Although Principals have the power to waive the one hour notification, they may hold you accountable if it is something that happens frequently.

Your administrator may request a doctor’s note only after three consecutive sick leave absences. It is important to note that your doctor may simply indicate you are under her/his care and NOT give a specific diagnosis.

You may take sick leave at any time including the beginning and ending of the school year and the days surrounding holidays. There are no “limits” on being sick. However, if you use up every sick day annually, you will get negative attention even if you have not violated the contract.

Personal Business Leave

Regular Unit I members shall earn two personal business days per year, and 210-day employees and above receive three.

The leave is normally approved (without giving a reason) at least 24 hours in advance. If you are inside the 24-hour window, your administrator may (but doesn’t have to) approve the leave if you give a reason.

You may not schedule personal business leave immediately before or after a holiday or weekday when school is closed, on an in-service day for teachers, nor at the beginning or end (five days) of the school year. Again, the Principal may grant an exception if you provide an adequate reason.

Unused personal business leave can accumulate up to five days (210 day employees up to six) to use in any given school year. Any unused personal business leave beyond five days converts to sick leave.



Mission Statement

TAAAC supports, organizes, and empowers members to improve their professional lives in order to provide, protect, and promote quality public education for every student.

#raiseannearundel

A WORD FROM MSEA'S LEGAL TEAM

Not yet tenured? You have plenty of rights and benefits

When you begin your job as an educator, you enter as a non-tenured—or probationary—employee for three years from the date of employment. During that probationary period, your contract is for one year. At the conclusion of any one of those first three years, your contract may not be renewed for any or no reason by the school system with appropriate notice. You may also choose to resign at the end of any of those three years with appropriate notice (usually May 1).

It may sound a bit gloomy, but you still have plenty of rights and benefits to protect you as you find your footing in your new career. You are absolutely entitled to all benefits of the contract that your local association negotiates for you, including protection from, and the ability to challenge, lower level discipline issued without just cause, and all planning time and short-term leave provisions.

Non-tenured educators should expect to be observed and evaluated in each of your first three years. You are again protected by the observation and evaluation process negotiated by your local association. State law ensures that non-tenured employees receive the support of a mentor and guarantees additional professional development and specific, ongoing support to help you achieve tenure.

If your school system tries to suspend you or terminate your contract during the course of the school year, you are entitled to due process protections, including notice of the alleged infraction, an opportunity to respond, and a hearing during which witnesses may be called to testify and be subjected to cross-examination.

As a new educator, review your contract carefully, know your association building representative, and save your local's contact info in your phone. MSEA and your local are ready to provide you with support and guidance in navigating your exciting and challenging first years!

ATTENTION:

Are You Paying Too Much??

If your employment status has changed and you have an annual salary under \$42,488, please contact the TAAAC office so that your membership dues can be adjusted accordingly.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Terry Antoniuk
Alana Bently
Jessica Benya
Donnesha Brady
Ariel Breidenbaugh
Danielle Brennan
Heather Brimer
Jennifer Clark
Elizabeth Comstock
Clarise Cooper
Jessica Deluca
Maureen Dollard
Julie Fitzgerald
Kristian Fontarez
Rebecca Funk
Geoffrey Gales
Reed Gallant
Kathryn Ganley
Laura Gilliland
Anne Haas
Jacob Hancock
Elizabeth Hewitt
Jonathan Hill
Kaelin Hursh
Shirley Jackson-Avery

Melanie Kandl
Heidi King
Lindsey Klunk
Andrew Lockard
Jasmyn Mackell
Tori Malone
Angela McElroy
Christopher Menser
Chelsea Miller
Choi Moon
Rhonda Morton
Abigail Moses
Michelle Mulhare
Mika Nakano
Nicole Noel
Heather Palmieri
Frances Pickeral
Marcela Pinzon Serpa
Kerry Plummer
Kelly Reider
Rosette Renner
Edwardo Ribeino
Taylor Rigsby
Daon Riley
Alan Rodiguez

Elizabeth Sabo
Emedel Samar
Divine Sanders
Meghan Schiller
Mary Beth Shepherd
Katie Shuttera
Stephanie Skeen
Aubree Slavik
Curtis Somers
Amy Stein
Carlie Taylor
Martin Tierney
Alexis Tinsman
Erin Troast
Rachel Truffer
Forrest Turetsky
Eric Tyler
Elizabeth Van Pate
Brittany Vogel
Shirley Wais
Megan Weaver
Caroline Hron Weigle
Virginia Wilson
Melinda Young

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

October 2017

- 3 – Evening Board of Education Meeting – 7:00 PM @ BOE
- 4 – ARC – 5:00 PM @ Severna Park Middle
- 4 – MSEA/TAAAC Delegate Caucus – 6:30 PM @ Severna Park Middle
- 5 – Middle School Concerns Committee – Following Delegate Caucus Mtg.4
- 9 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC Office
- 10 – Elementary Concerns – 4:30 PM @ George Cromwell Elementary
- 11 – High School Concerns – 3:40 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 11 – Minority Affairs/Human Relations – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 11 – TAAAC Executive Team @ TAAAC Office
- 12 – TAAAC ASI @ TAAAC Office
- 12 – Membership Committee – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 16 – Special Ed. Task Force – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 18 – Daytime Board of Education Meeting – 10:00 AM @ BOE
- 18 – TAAAC BOD – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 20-21 – MSEA Convention – Ocean City, MD
- 23 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC Office

Visit www.taaaconline.org; Pay Days 11th & 25th

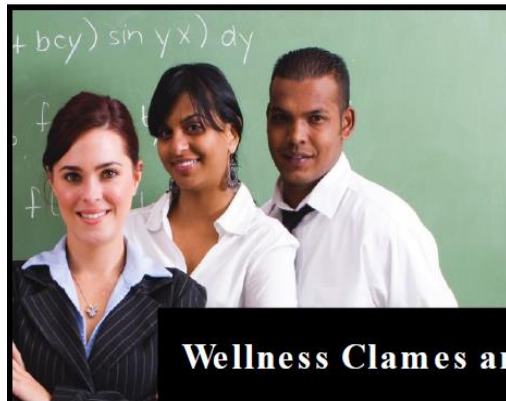


"In education you learn very quickly that it doesn't really matter who gets credit for the job, it's getting the job done that's important... And getting the job done means putting education back on its feet."

Oklahoma Representative
Karen Gaddis
An Educator, Not a Career Politician

Education Votes
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ClearShark H2O is revitalizing passion to protect Maryland's waterways, ensuring this precious resource is treasured for years to come. We're creating engaging opportunities for our youth to connect with Maryland's waterways by designing experiences that ignite a passion and appreciation for them.




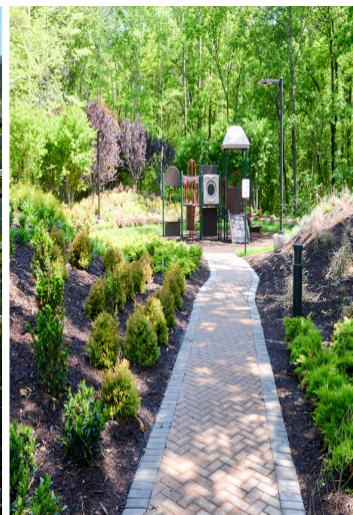
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**Maryland State Education Association
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2017-2018 ENROLLMENT FORM**



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NEA	\$	_____
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Local	\$	_____
Total	\$	_____

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EMPLOYEE ID NUMBER **REQUIRED** AND _____
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CITY	STATE		
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Members are automatically opted in to MSEA's members-only and other newsletters. You may opt out at any time by clicking the unsubscribe link found in every email. How would you like to receive your MSEA ActionLine magazine? ☐ Print ☐ Digital copy (email)

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☐ Hispanic ☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ☐ Multi-Ethnic ☐ Other ☐ Unknown

DATE OF BIRTH _____ / _____ / _____ HIRE DATE _____ / _____ / _____
 MONTH DAY YEAR MONTH DAY YEAR

Use of Cell Phone By providing my phone number, I understand that the National Education Association, NEA Member Benefits, NEA360, the MSEA and MSEA local affiliates may use automated calling techniques and/or text message me on my cellular phone on a periodic basis. Neither the National Education Association nor any of its affiliates charge for text message alerts. Carrier message and data rates may apply to such alerts. Text STOP to 84693 to stop receiving NEA messages. Text STOPMSEA to 84693 to stop receiving MSEA and MSEA local affiliate messages. Text HELP to 84693 or go to nea.org/terms for more information.

LOCAL

WORK LOCATION

POSITION

SUBJECT

Check your salary level for dues computation:

- ☐ Over \$42,488 ☐ \$21,244-\$42,488
☐ Below \$21,244

Method of payment:

- ☐ Payroll deduction (Sign and date below.)
☐ Cash / Check

Check one:

- ☐ Full-time (more than .50)
☐ Part-time (.25 -.50)
☐ Part-time (less than .25)

Membership Commitment

Yes – I want to join with my fellow employees and become a member of the local affiliate, the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA), and the National Education Association (NEA). I hereby request and voluntarily accept membership in these associations and agree to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of all three associations.

Maintenance of Membership/Dues Deduction Authorization

I authorize continuing payment or deduction of dues from my pay in each pay period a pro rata portion of the annual dues required for membership in my local affiliate, the MSEA, and the NEA. I fully understand that the annual dues required for membership in the three associations are subject to periodic change by the governing bodies of the associations and authorize deduction of any modified monthly dues established by the governing bodies of the three associations. This authorization continues from year to year, regardless of my membership status, unless (a) I revoke this authorization in a signed writing sent to the local affiliate by such time as is designated in my local affiliate's collective bargaining agreement, my local affiliate's policy, or my local affiliate's bylaws; or (b) my employment with the board of education ends. In the event of my separation, the board of education shall deduct the balance of my yearly dues from my final paycheck.

Dues payments are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Dues payments (or a portion) may be deductible as a miscellaneous itemized deduction.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Fund for Children and Public Education Contribution Voluntary Authorization

Yes! I want to see our elected officials stand up for public education and my students. I hereby authorize the following contribution to the Political Action Committee of NEA, MSEA, and my Local Association to build a strong voice for educators:

TOTAL PAC PAYROLL DEDUCTION PER PAY PERIOD ☐ \$5.00 ☐ \$10.00 ☐ \$15.00 ☐ Other _____

SIGNATURE _____

The NEA, MSEA and applicable local Funds for Children and Public Education collect voluntary contributions from Association members and use those contributions for political purposes, including but not limited to making contributions and expenditures on behalf of friends of public education who are candidates for federal, state, or local office. I understand that I am making a joint contribution and that ten (10) percent of my contribution will go to the NEA Fund, and that the remaining ninety (90) percent will be divided evenly between the MSEA Fund and the local account. Contributions to the Fund are voluntary, making a contribution is neither a condition of employment nor membership in the Association, and members have the right to refuse to contribute without suffering any reprisal. Although The NEA Fund requests a contribution of \$5.00 per pay, this is only a suggestion. A member may contribute more or less than the suggested amount, or not contribute, without affecting his/her membership status, rights, or benefits in NEA, MSEA, or any of MSEA's affiliates.

Contributions to the Fund are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal or State income tax purposes. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation, and name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year. Only U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents may contribute to the Fund. All donations from persons other than members of NEA and its affiliates, and their immediate families, will be returned forthwith.

With full knowledge of this information, I agree that my authorization for political action pledges as indicated by the check mark herein and my authorization for payroll deductions, shall continue in force from year to year unless revoked or modified by me giving written notice to my local association.

PLEASE RETURN WHITE, CANARY AND PINK COPIES TO YOUR LOCAL • RETAIN THE GOLD COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS

