

TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

VOL. 50, NUMBER 4

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

December 2017

Building Representative Retreat both Fun and Educational

The annual Retreat was held at the Spring Hill Suites and Timbuktu restaurant on November 10-11, 2017. Sean Johnson, the Assistant Executive Director and Political Director, gave the keynote address at the Friday dinner and reminded the crowd of 35 plus, TAAAC members and staff, that they have real opportunities to make a difference in their jobs and the children they serve during the 2018 election cycle. Virtually every race could be won by an education-friendly candidate if we can get both our members and other like-minded folks in the community to simply vote. Turnout will be the key factor in 2018 as MSEA/TAAAC pushes for candidates that want to support public education.

The event continued Saturday morning with four presentations. Mark Mench, TAAAC UniServ Director, presented to the building Reps the importance of building relationships with every single member in your building. Kristy Anderson, the MSEA General Counsel, gave a legal update and went over the challenging legal landscape that faces us moving forward as many courts are not Organized Labor-friendly. TAAAC members Robert Mauro and Robin Beers presented on the importance of 10-minute meetings and communication within a building. Kate Snyder, Allison Heintz, and Michelle Shrum finished our day with an exciting discussion about MSEA Go Teams and how organizing for the 2018 elections starts with each member.

The main takeaways for the building Reps:

- 1) The 2018 election cycle is very important to future school funding.
- 2) We control the fate of that election through our organization and willingness to participate in the electoral process.
- 3) Because all the money comes from politicians, politics are a necessary part of everything we do – especially in 2018.
- 4) The Kirwan Commission is redrawing the State Funding Formula and is a vital piece of the political puzzle.





Bill Jones

Our Persistent Funding Problems

There has been a persistent problem plaguing the employees of the Anne Arundel County Public Schools. Its name is Funding, and a great big portion of it would be resolved if our local funding authority would recognize and acknowledge what is happening to the school system.

The AACPS is having recruitment and retention problems to a greater degree than any other time in the past. We hear stories clearly indicating a reluctance of education students to apply to the AACPS because teachers are neither paid nor respected here. Even those that remain here are becoming increasingly frustrated with the constant piling-on of workload, steady increases in class size, flat salaries, and diminution of benefits. The job gets harder, net pay remains flat, and benefits get more expensive. Why would they not be agitated?

The comments area of TAAAC's most recent bargaining survey generated twelve single spaced typed pages of complaints/concern on the topics of workload, class size, pay, and benefits. On a multiple choice

COMMENTARY

item, 66% of the respondents indicated a willingness to work-to-rule. In my 25 years at the TAAAC office, I have never seen that level of willingness to take action that extreme. Maybe the following comparisons answer the question, "Why now?"

Salary

It is clear that the County's recovery from the recession has arrived and the county employees are enjoying some of the benefits. Sadly, the same cannot be said about

"The trend of allocating resources to the school system that are consistently less than requested and necessary has already affected the recruitment and retention of professional staff, the teaching and learning environment, and the morale and economic security of staff that choose to stay."

public educators. Salary and wage increases to bargaining units in the Anne Arundel County government were funded to an average of 5.8% in the current fiscal year with the high being 10%. At the same time, Unit 1 AACPS employees watched the County Executive bust a settled collective bargaining agreement and reduce the negotiated compensation package to the equivalent of 2.36%, less than half of the county employee average.

It is important to note that the disparate treatment is not unique to the current County Executive. From fiscal year 2010 through the current year 2018, salary and wage increases to bargaining units in the Anne Arundel County government were funded to an average total of 26.61%, with the high being 33.69%. Over those same nine years, Unit 1 AACPS employees have been funded to an average of a paltry 12.83%. It is a troubling trend that has led Anne Arundel educators to become the lowest paid of all Maryland urban school districts. Yes, it is now official. In recent years, Baltimore County Public Schools kept Anne Arundel off the bottom of the urban compensation rankings. It no longer does. We are the new floor.

The cause - Funding.

Class Size

Over the past three years, the Board requested a total of 355 new positions to keep up with student enrollment, to meet specialized needs, and to take some moderate steps to begin lowering class sizes. Only 204 have been funded. Most notably, in budgeting for the current fiscal year the Board identified a need for 120 new positions. Thirty-three were necessary just to meet the increase in enrollment. The number of new positions funded was a scant 4.5. The result; big class sizes got bigger.

The cause - Funding.

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Healthcare

Once taunted as among the most robust healthcare benefits in Maryland. On January 1, 2018, our old benefit will have employees paying more for somewhat lesser benefits. Why?

As most TAR readers are aware, our AACPS health care benefit is self-funded. CareFirst provides administrative services and a network of practitioners, but the actual claims expenses are paid from our healthcare fund, to which the employer, employees, and retirees contribute.

In building the fiscal year 2017 budget, the Board requested an increase of \$20 million to meet increasing claims expenses. The County Executive cut the request to \$0, and replaced it with a one-time non-recurring \$10 million. It marked the official kick-off of our recent healthcare crisis. Budgeting for the current fiscal year, the Board requested an allocation \$20.5 million. The County Executive reduced that request to \$5 million, thereby replacing only half of the non-recurring \$10 million for 2017. To be fair, I will point out that the County Executive did come up with \$22.5 million more non-recurring money, 7.5 of which is paying for our temporary premium holiday. However, the one-time non-recurring nature of that \$22.5 million means that it will need replacing in 2019. Moreover, readers need to be aware that the extra one-time money had strings attached. One of those strings was that the four unions (TAAAC, AEL, SAAAAC, and AFSCME) had to reach settlements in their negotiations with the Board, and those settlements contained significant

concessions in healthcare benefit. Negotiators from all four unions were able to mitigate those concessions, but in the end had to accept some or risk an empty healthcare fund. So, our healthcare benefit now less robust and more expensive.

The cause - Funding.

The trend of allocating resources to the school system that are consistently less than requested and necessary has already affected the recruitment and retention of professional staff, the teaching and learning environment, and the morale and economic security of staff that choose to stay.

TAAAC leadership will be asking members to take part in some organized activities this year. Teachers' working conditions are student learning conditions. If we can't convince funding authorities to provide the necessary resources, who else is going to.



MARK HARING
High School
History & Social
Studies Teacher
Anne Arundel County

msea

@MSEAeducators

Mark Haring, Severna Park High History and Social Studies Teacher, and TAAAC Member was recently featured in the MSEA ACTION LINE for October. Mark's favorite exclamation, "Huzzah!" helps him in building positive relationships with students which leads to their success. Great Job Mark!

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From Contentia this month . . . *Did Know That AACPS Has a Workplace Bullying Policy for Employees?*

The following highlighted text is from the AACPS Employee Handbook:

Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is defined as repeated inappropriate behavior, either direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise (to include gestures or exclusion), conducted by one or more persons against another or others in an attempt to physically or psychologically intimidate or distress someone else, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment.

Employees alleging complaints of workplace bullying should report the matter directly to the Office of Employee Relations at 410-222-5086.

What are some examples of bullying behavior?

- Being treated differently from others in your workgroup
- Being sworn at, shouted at or humiliated
- Exclusion or social isolation
- Excessive monitoring, micro-managing or being given unrealistic deadlines

Bullying situations may involve:

- Bosses or supervisors against their subordinates.
- Employees against their peers.
- A group of co-workers targeting another worker (mobbing).
- Corporations/institutions, when bullying is entrenched in an organization and becomes accepted as part of the workplace culture.
- An abuse or misuse of power. Bullying behavior creates feelings of defenselessness and injustice in the target and undermines an individual's right to dignity at work.

“Tough” or “demanding” bosses are not necessarily bullies as long as they are respectful and fair and their goal is to get the best performance by setting high yet reasonable expectations for working safely.

If you believe you are being bullied at work, follow the policy as directed. Contact your UniServ Director at TAAAC if you have any questions or concerns.

The full AACPS Employee Handbook document can be found at
<https://www.aacps.org/cms/lib/MD02215556/Centricity/Domain/242/handbook.pdf>



Connect the dots of your profession—join your online ed community

mynea360.org

mynea360 is a powerful organizing and professional platform for you and your union where our diverse membership becomes one. Joining mynea360 gives you and your union more power, influence, and opportunity to make change.

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CONNECT COLLABORATE SHARE ENGAGE

msea

Build an ed community that is powerful and influential with mynea360.org

If you've heard any talk about the Kirwan Commission—the group recommending the new funding formula that will affect salaries, class size, and resources—or the 2018 elections, you know that we are primed for improving our jobs and schools. As a union, we're working hard to be sure we're prepared.

This is our moment to come together—for our jobs, our students and our schools. mynea360.org is a powerful professional and organizing platform for you and your union—a platform where our diverse membership becomes one. With this 360 vision of union membership we find the education issues, experiences, needs, and hope that unite us all.

Our professional association has created a safe and supportive place where we can learn, share, and collaborate on professional interests and at the same time increase the organizing and political power of the union.

Joining mynea360.org gives *us and our union* more power, influence, and opportunity to make change.

That's what we need to make our profession stronger, our schools better, and our students more successful.

Grab your phone, tablet, or laptops and log in! It's easy!

- Log in to mynea360.org
- Build your professional profile
- Join 1,000s of groups working together on issues all over the country. Create your own group.

This is our moment to connect, collaborate, share and engage on the issues that define public education. Join mynea360.org!

Empowered Educators - Successful Students - Connected Communities

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Margaret Engl
David Foye
Claudia Gerardo
Jaimee Kaiser
Kara Kearney
Angela Nicklas
Asiya Nieves
Meghan Partlow
Gyanna Velez Martinez

TAX PREPARATION

Bob Pellicoro, who has served TAAAC members for the past 29 years, is easing into retirement from tax preparation. In order to give member clients time to make other arrangements he will accommodate his long-time TAAAC clients for their 2017 Income Tax Returns preparation. Please call the TAAAC office to schedule an appointment for one of the following dates:

March 12, 2017 – 10 AM – 6 PM
March 13, 2017 – 10 AM – 6 PM
March 15, 2017 – 10 AM – 6 PM

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

The Primrose School of Gambrills

Seeking a school-age teacher to work at our school from 4 PM to 6 PM Monday through Friday, also eight hour days when Anne Arundel County public schools are closed. This teacher would be responsible for engaging in caring for our school age students. This teacher would help with homework passing out snacks and creating fun team-based activities. Please contact Mrs. Rastogi at nrastogi@primrosegambrills.com or 410-923-2424.

Spend Summer in the Sun

DRD Pool Service Inc. is accepting applications for summer job openings as swimming pool field supervisors and swimming pool managers. No Experience Necessary, free training

For more information, call Noelle Navarro at (410) 761-7665, or e-mail to: n_navarro@drdpools.com

TAAAC Events Calendar

December 2017

- 4 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC Office
- 6 – Daytime Board of Education Meeting – 10:00 AM @ BOE
- 6 – ARC – 5:00 PM @ Severna Park High
- 6 – Middle School Concerns Committee – Following ARC
- 7 – Minority Affairs/Human Relations Committee – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 11 – TAAAC Executive Team @ TAAAC Office
- 13 – TAAAC BOD – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 14 – Negotiations Session @ TAAAC Office
- 14 – Membership Committee – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 18 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC Office
- 18 – Special Ed Task Force – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 19 – Elementary Concerns – 4:30 PM @ George Cromwell Elementary
- 20 – High School Concerns – 3:40 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 20 – Evening Board of Education Meeting – 7:00 PM @ BOE
- 21 – TAAAC ASI @ TAAAC Office

Visit www.taaaconline.org

Pay Days 6th & 20th



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

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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.

NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is currently accepting nominations for **President, Vice President, Board of Directors (5), and NEA Delegates (34)**.

Nomination forms must be received at the TAAAC office by 5 PM on Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Name _____

Address _____

School _____

Phone(H) _____ (W) _____

Personal Email _____

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

☐

☐ **President**

☐ **Vice President**

☐ **Board of Director**

NEA Delegate

[Have you been a delegate before? YES or NO]

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