

# TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

VOL. 50, NUMBER 8

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

*April 2018*

## Fix the Fund March

TAAAC members were out in force on March 19<sup>th</sup> to march to “Fix the Fund.” Members met at the Firefighters Memorial on Calvert St. and Bladen St. We marched up Bladen St. to Lawyer’s Mall to join more than 1,000 other educators from across the state to rally for the legislation to “Fix the Fund.” MSEA President, Betty Weller addressed the crowd and rallied repeated chants of, “Fix the Fund! Fix the Fund! Fix the Fund!”

In a clear demonstration of how member activism can lead to real results, the legislation passed in the Senate a couple hours after the marchers trekked around the State House in Annapolis. This rally was spurred after years of casino gaming revenues had been supplanted instead of going to increase education funding as voters intended. In 2012, voters in Maryland approved the existence of casino gaming in our county. The tax revenues generated from the casino gaming is put into the state’s Education Trust Fund. However, over the past 6 years governors from both parties have raided the revenues to balance the budget.

The “Fix the Fund” legislation creates a ballot measure to appear on the November ballot asking citizens if they want a lock box on the casino revenues to go to increasing education funding—not simply supplanting already existing funding as has been happening. That idea is what most citizens thought they were voting for back in 2012. This measure would add \$500 million annually to school funding annually, and in Anne Arundel it could mean as much as \$33 million more dollars annually to start to help fix the Step Gap that was created during the recession.





**Richard Benfer**

Public opinion about teacher compensation has become a topic of conversation at dinner tables across the county. When the County Executive sent an announcement through AACPS email about discounts on burgers at Green Turtle, it ignited the switchboard at TAAAC. TAAAC swiftly responded on social media and created a petition calling for educator pay steps that were lost be restored in lieu of discounts on burgers. The petition received 1,248 signatures in 4 days.

More feedback came following the County Executive's "Almost" budget meetings early in March and has swept social media. Members' postings about their encounters with the County Executive at those meetings were eye opening. The stories of disrespectful, condescending attitudes towards the plight of our educators, who stood strong during the recession and took a hit, are still feeling knocked down. Educators wanted to share how the lack of consistent steps has hurt them financially, and for some, altered their life decisions about things like a home purchase. The County Executive's response was that the educator can't

expect to go straight to Chartwell. These types of outrageous remarks have become the hallmark of the County Executive.

Another message from the County Executive's Education Officer sent to targeted educators via AACPS email accounts continued the very weak argument that teachers are paid well and the county has done a good job funding education; again, another smoking switchboard which was followed up by

***"If the county has been generating \$60 million in new money each year, and the county schools are half the budget, then it is logical that schools should be seeing at least \$30 million in new money annually coming into the education side of the budget."***

a response by TAAAC President Richard Benfer. In fact, funding on the education side of the budget has shrunk in comparison to the total county's general fund expenditures from 2013 to 2018. If the county has been generating \$60 million in new money each year, and the county schools are half the budget, then it is logical that schools should be seeing at least \$30 million in new money annually coming into the education side of the budget.

Many supporters of teachers and education support professionals have made statements in favor of our educators. County Councilman Pete Smith, from District 1, took to social media to compare teachers' workload with that of comparable jobs with similar degrees. Overwhelmingly teachers work more hours than they are paid. In fact, the school system could not survive without all the "extra" time volunteered by educators on a weekly basis.

Regardless of your opinion about the process of getting back steps, TAAAC works diligently at the bargaining table to get some type of restoration of steps. Last year the Board of Education put money in the budget to begin restoration of steps, but it was not funded by the County Executive. The County Executive said at the time that the "union needs to pay more" in healthcare cost and he held teachers' pay hostage over paying more in healthcare in order to get educator contracts funded. To mitigate the higher cost, the County Executive put \$7.5 million in the one-time money into the health fund which created a premium holiday. This is only a short-term fix and educators will begin seeing those new premiums for health insurance as early as June. Having a fully funded budget with a COLA and make-up step money will be critical to be sure that potential increases are not swallowed in healthcare cost.

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## **From Contentia this month . . . *Your Rights and Responsibilities for Student Discipline***

At TAAAC we often get calls regarding the lack of follow through for teacher discipline referrals. We are told that referrals “disappear” and are never followed up by administration. Students are sent out from class for gross insubordination and are sent right back by administration or security. What can be done? The answer for teachers is to enforce the rules that are already on the books; Article 10 of the Negotiated Agreement.

*“Unit I members shall have the authority and shall exercise the responsibility for the control of pupils...the member will have support from the principal or appropriate administrator in the reasonable disciplining of the student. (Article 10, A)”*

*“A student who refuses to obey a reasonable request of a teacher may be excluded from class and shall be retained in the office for the remainder of the instructional period. (Article 10, B)”*

*“If a student’s disruptive behavior results in action less than suspension, the principal shall confer with the teacher who referred the student to the principal before returning the student to the teacher’s classroom. (COMAR, 13A.08.01.11.B.6)”*

To summarize, as Unit I members you have the right to exclude a student from class and the administration is obligated to follow up with you before returning the student to your classroom after the day of the referral. The meaning of the word “confer” is communication by any means, telephone, electronic or in person.

The discipline assigned by the administration is at their discretion; they don’t have to suspend or assign a punishment other than following the guidelines above. However, by insisting that the above procedures are followed, there is certainly an expectation that the referral itself will be processed and not “put in the drawer.”

The professional judgment of the Unit One employee must be respected. However, there are some hints that will help your referrals to be dealt with in a professional manner:

- 1) Be specific and detailed. Writing “classroom disruption” at the top of a referral and expecting much action is not realistic. Take the time to give both the background (“It was the sixth time he had thrown a pencil across the room”) and specifics of the event that occurred. The more detail you put on your referral, the more likely you are to have a professional response.
- 2) Note any contacts and other means you have attempted with the student prior to the referral.
- 3) Ask for administrative contact before return to classroom; remind them you know the rules.

***“You can’t teach children to behave better by making them feel worse. When children feel better, they behave better.”***

- Pam Leo



(Continued from page 2)

Last year, the County Executive's Education Officer said, teachers owe a debt of thanks to the County Executive for funding teacher steps and for putting a one-time \$10 million in the healthcare fund. It is difficult to thank the County Executive for funding teacher contracts when they were bargained in good faith. Once the agreement is ratified, the Board of Education becomes obligated to put money in the budget to fund teacher pay. It is difficult to thank the County Executive for putting \$10 million of temporary one-time non-recurring money into healthcare, when the request and the need were for a permanent allocation of \$20 million. The \$10 million in FY2017 became a \$10 million hole in FY2108 that the County Executive plugged with only \$5 million. The County Executive essentially made the enormous cut by not funding requested healthcare money in the past, and now has put a small Band-Aid on a gaping wound. It is difficult to thank the County Executive when his Education Officer continues to put up barriers to TAAAC leadership to schedule a meeting with him.

The County Executive has left out the point that county employees

have been caught-up in their pay by 21% to 29% since 2010. Teachers have seen just under 11% in the same time frame. It appears the county is coming out of recession, but the school system is still immersed in some sort of economic downturn. The other large urban counties around Anne Arundel have bounced back from the recession and school employees in those jurisdictions are catching-up on lost pay or are caught-up completely. Baltimore County never lost contractual steps during the recession. Because of this Anne Arundel County educators make less than the surrounding jurisdictions we compete with.

Our local political climate is turning slightly better, but that is due to all the pressure that you and members like you, as well as parents and students have put on the elected officials through letters, phone calls, and emails. This momentum has been carried over into the election season with the creation of TAAAC/MSEA GO Teams (Grassroots Organizing Teams). TAAAC has had countless candidate interviews for important races in key positions that will help restore confidence that future education budgets will get the monies they need. As of this writ-

ing, endorsement recommendations have been passed to the Association Representative Assembly where action was taken to recommend the following candidates for political office:

Steuart Pitman – County Executive

Allison Pickard – County Council District 2

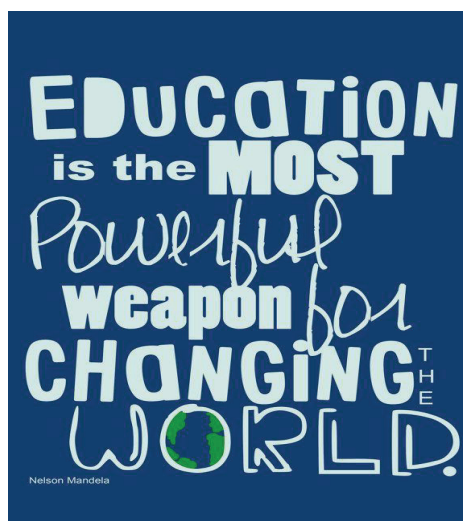
Debbie Ritchie – County Council District 3

Andrew Pruski – County Council District 4

Lisa Rodvien – County Council District 6

James Kitchen – County Council District 7

Until we see actions that do not harm public educators, we cannot rest. **YOU ARE TAAAC.** We can only make a difference as a **UNITED** front. We must make certain that the right folks, who are pro public education advocates, are elected to office in 2018. Our voice must continue to be loud and clear and we cannot be sidelined by small attempts by the current funding authority to keep us quiet.



## 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

# How Can We Help Traumatized Students Learn?

In Washington State, educators championed trauma-sensitive schools in response to studies that named abuse, neglect, war, homelessness, poverty, and domestic violence as barriers to school success. The result is Compassionate Schools: The Heart of Learning and Teaching, a program that supports educators in their work to help traumatized students become competent learners.

## *Six Principles of a Trauma-Informed Educator*

1. Always Empower, Never Disempower Trauma-sensitive educators recognize that student behavior may be outside the students' awareness and beyond their self-control. Discipline must never resemble that of those who perpetrated violence against students in the first place. Discipline must have, at its heart, unconditional positive regard for the student.
2. Provide Unconditional Positive Regard Studies of children who thrive despite adversity consistently reveal the healing power of an adult who cares. For those who have been hurt or betrayed, these "turn-around" adults demonstrate that grown-ups can consistently act and respond with "positive regard" the various ways an adult shows genuine respect for students as people.
3. Maintain High Expectations Consistent expectations, limits, and routines send the message that the student is worthy of continued unconditional positive regard and attention. Consistency in your classroom will allow students to begin to differentiate between the arbitrary rules which led to their abuse and purposeful ones that assure their safety and well-being.
4. Check Assumptions, Observe, and Question The abuse of children is not an issue specific to any one ethnicity, income, gender, religion, sexual orientation or ability. When we make assumptions about who is likely to be traumatized based on a stereotype of any one group of people, this may stop us from seeing who actually has been affected by trauma. Trauma is an individual response. When we consider the children in our classrooms, all possibilities exist for each child.
5. Be a Relationship Coach "Traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love and community," says trauma expert Judith Herman. Compassionate teachers think of themselves as relationship coaches. The relationships established with and among students influence the tone and demeanor in our classrooms.
6. Provide Guided Opportunities for Helpful Participation Belonging gives students' opportunities to be heard, to make choices, to have responsibilities, and to engage in problem-solving. When they participate they get to feel like they belong. Providing guided opportunities for helpful participation is an important principle of compassionate teaching. Such supervised opportunities can provide solace, create mutual trust, and affirm the self-worth of those involved.





# Pitman Rallies with GO Team

TAAAC/MSEA GO Team (Grassroots Organizing Team), Board of Directors, and Association Reps have been very busy raising awareness about our local budget processes. In addition to the local issues, the GO Teams have worked to turn out members to the Fix the Fund march on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

The GO Team got a surprise visitor when TAAAC's recommended candidate for Anne Arundel County Executive, Steuart Pitman dropped in for a visit during phone banking at the TAAAC Office. The GO Team enjoyed hearing from our endorsed candidate. Mr. Pitman provided encouragement to the GO Team for their efforts to get members out to the march.

After that meeting, Steuart Pittman joined TAAAC members on March 19<sup>th</sup> to march around the state house during the MSEA arch to "Fix the Fund."

The visit from TAAAC's candidate for County Executive energized GO Team members and has motivated them further as they prepare for Campaign 2018. GO Team volunteers will engage in organizing and mobilizing members for turnout at County Council Budget Hearings in May as well as Election activities leading to the primary election on June 26, 2018 and general election on November 6, 2018.



County Executive Candidate Steuart Pitman marches with TAAAC leaders at March to Fix the Fund.

Steuart Pitman stops by the TAAAC office to visit TAAAC/MSEA GO Team phone bankers.



# The 2018 Mills-King Award

The 2018 Mills-King Award Ceremony held on March 22nd was an inspirational, well-attended success this year honoring exemplary individuals for their contributions to Human Relations in the field of education. All six nominees for this celebrated award received a brief biography presented to the audience by TAAAC President Richard Benfer. Nominees this year included: *Davede Alexander, Monica Brown, Christina Burnham, Sherry Burnham, Jenny Clark, Susie Collins, Taryn Ferch, Jessica McCorvey, Leah Milano, Michele Noble, Leah Porritt, Susan Shim, Deborah Sparby*. The judges from the TAAAC Human Relations Committee deliberated over a difficult decision to choose one recipient, but consensus was reached, naming Leah Milano as the 2018 recipient of the Mills-King Award for Excellence in Human Relations.

Leah's service to her school community far exceeds her job as a school counselor. She is always the first to volunteer for school programs and initiatives. Leah has organized programs to provide food and meet other needs for her students and their families when faced with crisis. Through her skills as a school counselor, Leah has successfully extended her role beyond her job expectations. She has built positive relationships throughout the greater Glen Burnie community, enabling her to link families with outside resources including counseling, support groups, and rehabilitation facilities. She employs her counselor skills beyond the school day to help students deal with extreme anxiety, facilitate support groups, and promote leadership within the community.

Lovely center pieces adorned the tables that were made by Sunset Elementary students under the guidance of Art teacher and TAAAC member Michelle Shrum. Beautiful choral renditions were performed by the Glen Burnie High School Vocal Ensemble conducted by TAAAC member Anthony Pinder.

This year's keynote speaker, Vincent O. Leggett, provided inspirational words for our nominees and a rich history lesson of Walter S. Mills and Douglas S. King.

Congratulations to Leah Milano and all the nominees for their timeless commitment to human relations through community service and education.





## NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for the **Sick Leave Bank Approval Committee** and the **AACPS Calendar Committee (Elementary)**.

Nominations will be accepted until the May 2, 2018 ARC meeting.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

☐ **Sick Leave Bank Approval Committee**

☐ **AACPS Calendar Committee (Elementary)**

## NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for **MSEA Delegates**.

Nominations will be accepted until the June 6, 2018 ARC meeting.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

☐ **MSEA Delegates**

(Have you been a delegate before? YES NO)

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Alexandra Anderson

Danielle Bojazi

Connor Bolcik

Krista Chalfont

Katelyn Chiarello

Ethan Cordell

Eneida Greenberg

Nathan Hesse

Calandra Jackson

Brittany Jones

Bridget Knepper

Susan Malone

Casey Penans

Anne-Marie Robinson-Siemen

Britney Russell

## 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.



## 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



# TAAAC Events Calendar

## April 2018

- 4 – Daytime Board of Education Meeting – 10:00 AM @ BOE
- 4 – ARC – 5:00 PM @ Severna Park Middle
- 4 – MSEA Spring RA Pre-Caucus – Following ARC
- 4 – Middle School Concerns Committee – Following ARC
- 5 – Finance Committee – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 6-7 – TAAAC Go Teams Boot camp – Doubletree, Annapolis
- 9 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC Office
- 9 – GR Lobby Night #9 – 4:30 PM @ Harry Browne's
- 11 – High School Concerns – 4:00 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 12 – Membership Committee – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 14 – MSEA Spring RA – Turf Valley, Ellicott City
- 16 – Special Ed Task Force – 5:00 PM @ Firemark Building, Veteran's Hwy.
- 17 – Elementary Concerns – 4:30 PM @ George Cromwell Elementary
- 18 – TAAAC Executive Team @ TAAAC Office
- 18 – Evening Board of Education Meeting – 7:00 PM @ BOE
- 19 – TAAAC ASI @ TAAAC Office
- 23 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC Office
- 24 – TAAAC BOD – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 25 – Teacher of the Year Banquet – 5:30 PM @ BWI Marriott

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

Pay Days 11<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>

## HERSHEYPARK 2018 TICKETS

Hersheypark Admission Ages 3 and up

Gate Price \$67.80 TAAAC Price \$38.00

Order your undated (go any day you wish) tickets by Friday April 13, 2018 for opening day on April 27, 2018. Please email [mmench@mseane.org](mailto:mmench@mseane.org) or call 410-224-3330 and ask for Mark Mench.

After April 13 you may call the TAAAC office at (410) 224-3330 for tickets. Delivery will take approximately two weeks.

Tickets are valid from April 27 – September 30, 2018

## Job Opportunities



### NOW HIRING: Pool Supervisors for Summer, 2018!!

**Anchor Aquatics** is a locally family owned company offering the highest quality commercial swimming pool management and service. Anchor Aquatics has been providing quality service since 1969 and has an outstanding reputation for safe, clean aquatic environments. We pride ourselves in being professional, responsive, and approachable. Anchor Aquatics values their customers and employees and our goal is to provide the highest quality service to clients while maintaining a friendly working atmosphere for employees.

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**NOW INTERVIEWING:** Contact George Evans at [george@anchoraquatics.com](mailto:george@anchoraquatics.com) or (410)956-0744. Apply online at [www.anchoraquatics.com](http://www.anchoraquatics.com).

### 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](mailto:n_navarro@drdpools.com)

**VIPKID** is a Chinese online education company that provides English lessons to Chinese students ages 4-12. Hours of teaching are based on Beijing time (roughly 9 pm- 9am EST time).

Basic requirements to be a VIPKID teacher: Bachelor's degree and a stable internet connection/webcam.

If you are interested or have any questions, I'm happy to answer any questions and help you through the interview process.

[maureenseverin@gmail.com](mailto:maureenseverin@gmail.com)  
[www.vipkid.com/cn](http://www.vipkid.com/cn)

Referral code: 032YNZ

## LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE

- ✓ Offering discounted **long-term care insurance** to TAAAC members and their spouses/partners.
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- ✓ Giving members a way to remain in control of their healthcare choices.
- ✓ Providing members with peace-of-mind.

**For a no obligation consult and quote, contact:**

**Michael Markowitz – 410-455-0680**

**Mike.Markowitz@acsiapartners.com**



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OUR YOUTH

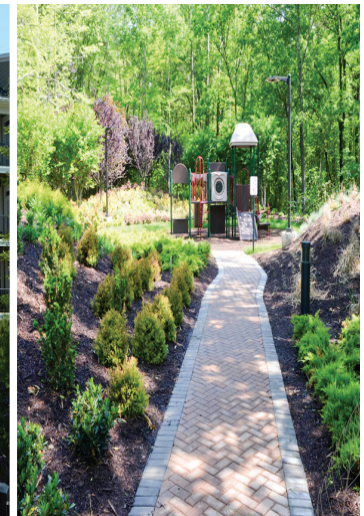


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