

**TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY**  
2521 Riva Road, Suite L7  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**MINUTES - Representative Assembly Meeting**  
Wednesday, January 13, 2021

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by the President, Russell Leone, by a Virtual Zoom meeting, at 5:06 p.m.

TAAAC's Vision and Mission was read by Dyana Cronin.

**LAND  
ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Richard Benfer read a Land Acknowledgment statement recognizing Indigenous Peoples.

**ADOPTION OF ORDER  
OF BUSINESS**

Upon a motion by Melissa Connelly, seconded by Jill Grimm, the Order of Business as approved with flexibility.

Kristina Korona asked for clarification that last month she submitted amendments to the Election Rules. Is that on the agenda?

The agenda has been amended to add Election Rules under New Business. No objections, the Order of Business was adopted.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Upon a motion by Cathy Flanders, seconded by RaeAnne Mason, the Minutes of the December 9, 2020 meeting were approved.

**NOMINATING COMMIT-  
TEE**

MSEA Candidate Speeches - Nancy Davidson, Chairperson of Nominating Committee, reported that we will be hearing speeches from MSEA Candidates. The following candidates addressed the group: Russell Leone, running for MSEA BOD; Justin Heid, running for reelection for MSEA BOD; Michele Clarke, running for MSEA BOD.

TAAAC Candidate Speeches - The following TAAAC candidates addressed the group: Allison Heintz, running for reelection for BOD; Elizabeth Ruddy, running for reelection for BOD; Jan Delph, running for reelection for BOD; Jorge Córdoba, running for reelection for BOD; Kristina Korona, running for BOD; Jill Grimm, running for BOD, Minna Kim, running for BOD. Tami Thumbtzen, running for reelection

School Reopening - Board of Education Meeting & MD Health Department/Vaccines - Executive Director Page stated that we are in a real difficult space around bargaining for an agreement. Your FY'21 Bargaining Team has done a magnificent job in pushing the county about as far as we can. He stated that he does not think we are going to get to a document that we can sign.

President Leone stated that it is important to pay attention to what our Board of Education does tomorrow night. There will be a one agenda item held on Reopening Schools. One of the things Board members are doing in the last week and a half is looking at other counties around us and we have seen two very different plans from counties. Carroll County Board of Education ignored the recommendations of the Health Department and voted to put teachers back in the schools. On the opposite side of the spectrum, Montgomery County voted to delay for all students, targeted groups included, until March 15. We also know that the metrics have not changed from the Health Department.

President Leone stated that in terms of vaccines, we do know that educators are in the 1B category and that is projected late January or early February. TAAAC's stance on vaccines, is that vaccines should be available, but not to be required.

Meagan O'Donnell, Linthicum Elementary, asked whether the teachers that are being forced back potentially are accommodations being considered first?

Executive Director Page stated that those are the only accommodations they are focusing on right now.

Krista Davies, Meade High, asked if there has been any discussion about the teachers that might be forced back before anybody else, can they be given a higher priority in vaccines?

President Leone stated that is not something that he has heard being part of the plan.

Rob Connerton, Annapolis High, stated that he has a lot of

concerns about the whole accommodation stuff that has been put out, especially the January 11 date. He stated that it is his understanding that there is no time limit per Federal Law. He stated that he feels that with that date, it was kind of misleading. We should let people know that your time is not up.

President Leone stated that there is no time limit for applying for accommodations.

Jon Boughey, Chesapeake Bay Middle, asked for clarification on who has the ultimate authority about whether schools are open or not? Can the Health Department overrule the Board of Education dependent on health reasons?

Executive Director Page stated that the Health Department could overrule the Board of Education. Currently the position of County Executive Pittman and the County Health Officer is that they are leaving the decision to the School Board.

Bylaw Amendment - Leona Puglia, Bylaws Committee Chairperson, reported that Anne Arundel County Public Schools has added a new high school to the Crofton feeder system. The Bylaw Amendment is to increase the number of directors from 10 to 11 in order to represent that additional feeder. Questions, comments and a vote will happen at the February Representative Assembly.

All-Member Meeting January 20, 2021 - President Leone reminded Representatives that there will be an All-Member meeting on January 20, 2021. The link is on the agenda, as well as it being sent out in the All-Member updates. Encourage others to join us. We will be discussing things that are going on with negotiations and the work that we do.

## STATE

Blueprint for Maryland's Future/MSEA Legislative Priorities - President Leone reported that we talked a lot about the Blueprint for Maryland's Future last year. The **Blueprint** was vetoed by the Governor even though it did pass **through** Congress. In this legislative session the Blueprint **will be** up for veto override. We are estimating that it will probably be considered by legislators in February. We need to contact our

State Legislators to encourage them to override the Blueprint. This will impact a lot of funding. If the Blueprint does get overridden, there will be a companion bill that will have to be introduced.

Allison Heintz stated that the decisions made at the state level impact our schools. Copies of MSEA's Legislative Priorities have gone out. These are the issues that your Government Relations Team will be lobbying for. Lobbying this year will be different and we will be meeting with the representatives virtually. We still need help from members to make sure representatives hear from teachers in their district.

Elizabeth Ruddy stated that an email will be sent out with instructions on contacting your representatives about the Blueprint override. If you would like to join the Go Team or the Government Relations Team, please email Allison Heintz or Elizabeth Ruddy. There is a lobbying training coming up on January 25, 2021.

MSEA Rep. to State Pension Board - President Leone reported that currently MSEA Vice President Doug Prouty is our Representative on the State Pension Board. It is important that we keep a teacher voice on the Pension Board because our pensions impact all of us. Mr. Prouty is up for reappointment so we need signatures to a petition to make sure he is there.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

NBI 21-01 - Nicole Disney-Bates from Meade Middle, is moving NBI21-01, seconded by Melissa McHarg from Manor View Elementary, that there is a Candidate Forum for the candidates for the Board of Directors and the Secretary/Treasurer to answer questions provided by the membership by the beginning of February.

President Leone stated that there are no more speakers in line. Shall we adopt NBI-21-01? Vote yes in support, **no** if you are not in support or if you abstain.

President Leone asked whether we shall extend the meeting. Vote yes or no in the participant box. It was approved to extend the meeting.

Resolution on Face Coverings - President Leone stated that there is a proposal on a position on a Resolution of Face Coverings.

Nicole Disney-Bates from Meade Middle, seconded by the Special Education Committee, moved that TAAAC believes that all students must wear face coverings when returning to any type of in-person learning where Unit I members are present. We further believe that this should be done without exception.

Gina Bruzdinski moved a friendly amendment and was accepted by Nicole Disney-Bates, to include that with exception for children under 3.

Allison Heintz moved a friendly amendment, accepted by Nicole Disney-Bates, that all students over the age of 3.

Jan Delph moved a friendly amendment, accepted by Nicole Disney-Bates, to propose that Unit I members and any other support personnel are present.

President Leone stated that the Resolution on Face Coverings, with friendly amendments, reads as follows: TAAAC believes that all students over the age of 3 must wear face coverings when returning to any type of in-person learning where Unit I members or any other support personnel are present. We further believe that this must be done without exception.

President Leone put the question, shall we close debate? Use the yes, no feature.

Nancy Davidson reported that NBI 21-01 did not pass. The vote is 46-No, 27-Yes, 4 Abstentions.

Election Rules - President Leone shared the amendments to the election rules that were submitted by Kristina Korona and seconded by Nicole Disney-Bates. The amendments are proposals to add the following: 1.) The TAAAC website shall include candidate speeches or links to candidate speeches, 2.) A candidate forum should be held in the month of January

before voting begins in which each candidate has an opportunity to speak and answer member questions, 3.) A link to the TAAAC Action Report in the specific TAAAC web page with candidate information will be included in the email with the ballot to vote and follow up emails reminding members to vote, 4.) The TAAAC private group Facebook Page shall be accessible to candidates to post information about their candidacy to allow for members to engage in discussion with candidates in advance of the election.

President Leone called the question. Shall we adopt the changes to the election rules?

Nancy Davidson reported on the vote for the Face Coverings. The vote passed with 61-Yes, 1-No, 1-Abstention.

President Leone stated he will share with the body that the Face Coverings is a TAAAC position and made sure that it is conveyed and expressed so that the public and the Board of Education know that this is our position.

It was moved by Richard Benfer, seconded by Kate Snyder, to endorse Russell Leone for MSEA Board of Directors. The motion was approved with a vote 24-Yes, 1-No.

#### **UNISERV UPDATE**

No report

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Credentials - Robin Murray reported that 93 Representatives were in attendance, which is 55% of the total Representatives, and 67 Units were represented, which is 45% of the total Units.

Membership Organizing - Kristina Korona stated that we would love to get more people involved in making calls. Building Representatives will be helping to do the one-on-one conversations but we want as many people as possible involved with the Membership Organizing Team to help with the larger organizing. We meet the first and third Thursday.

Special Events - Richard Benfer reported that the committee will be planning another meeting to talk about TAAAC's 100<sup>th</sup>

Anniversary. If you are interested in being a part of the committee, please email President Leone.

Nominating - Nancy Davidson reported that the amendments to the Election Rules did not pass. The vote 40-No, 7-Yes, 6-Abstentions.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President Leone thanked the Representatives for the endorsement for MSEA Board of Directors.

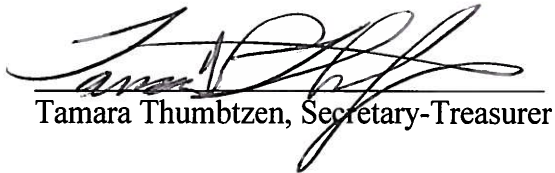
President Leone announced that the next Representative Assembly will be held by Zoom Meeting on Wednesday, February 10, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Melissa McHarg, seconded by Jon Boughey, to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tamara Thumbtzen, Secretary-Treasurer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Russell Leone, President

Minutes approved at ARC meeting \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)