

# AT THE TABLE

BEYOND STEP  
EQUITY

BARGAINING IN THE  
BLUEPRINT ERA



A BARGAINING BULLETIN

Hopefully, as you read this, the correct retroactive back step and COLA payment(s), covering the pay periods between July 1, 2021, and January 12, 2022 have been sent or directly deposited. (If questions arise about calculations and taxes related to this payment, please message [retropay@aacps.org](mailto:retropay@aacps.org)). These payments finally close the door on the step-equity and back-step issue that has hindered our negotiations for too many years. Now we can focus on the new challenges "Beyond Step Equity" with a laser focus on how best to make the Blueprint for Maryland's Future work for our AACPS students, staff, and community.

The TAAAC and AACPS bargaining teams met for the second time on Monday, March 22 to continue negotiations toward an FY23 agreement and the inaugural year of the Blueprint. This cycle we hope to reach an agreement nearest the July 31, 2022, expiration date of the current contract. As we have mentioned previously, the Blueprint does in balance outline better funding formulas but also comes with challenges in how the law identifies those meriting certain classes of wage increases.

So far, these Blueprint era negotiations have included concerns and challenges many of you have already expressed via telephone and email pointing out the potential unfairness of the Blueprint-mandated wage increases connected to National Board Certifications. The Bargaining Team has heard you and has the same concerns which have already been shared at the bargaining table. Currently scheduled to take effect this July, the Blueprint Law only contemplates a special wage increase for educators with National Board Certifications and who spend their time "primarily" in the classroom with students. This concern is real, based both on the language of the law and the proposals AACPS has shared on these topics. Your TAAAC Bargaining Team is proposing a broader, fairer, and more inclusive view of the wage increases and will bargain to the end for this result. As with all bargaining, there is no guarantee AACPS will agree.

Additionally, we are attempting to increase planning time and alleviate non-professional duties closer to the requirements of our colleagues in other counties throughout the state - a proposal in opposition of AACPS's ask for more than 20 minutes of time for non-professional duties. With the sub-coverage agreement also scheduled to expire at the end of the school year, and with no end to staff shortages appearing imminent, we have also prioritized including this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as part of any contractual agreement.

With inflation at a 40-year high, we have no choice but to push the County Executive and Council to consider increasing the AACPS 4% COLA recommendation. We also must insist, the County include TAAAC in any discussions where AACPS is seeking to move or

**YOUR  
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TEAM**

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reallocate budget surplus money planned for our salaries or to hire additional staff. Stay tuned for ways to support our proposals through conversations with the Board of Education, County Council members, and the County Executive.

We are scheduled to meet again on April 25 and hope to have more details then.

Kenneth Page

*TAAAC Executive Director and Chief Negotiator*

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