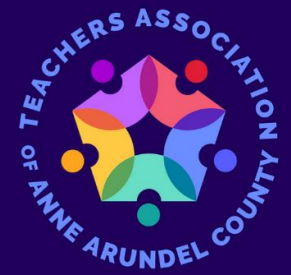


AT THE TABLE



A BARGAINING BULLETIN

Our Negotiations Team met with AACPS yesterday, June 22, for an extended bargaining session to address starting salaries and recruitment of Unit 1 employees, and meet the mandates set by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

As many of you know, following our negotiations this year, we received notice from the County Executive's office that \$3.1 million was found and allocated to starting salaries, following the approval of the County Council this month. Due to the advocacy of TAAAC members, pro-public education allies, and our negotiations team who called for this money to address recruitment and retention, we were excited to learn this funding would be allocated to the AACPS budget to increase starting salaries to \$58,161.

While this money supports our calls to address the educator shortages we face in Anne Arundel County and begins to fill the need our members have been ringing the alarm bell on all year to be competitive with other counties and fill the 250+ Unit 1 vacancies, we wanted to also focus on the retention of our dedicated staff who are here now. The vacancies put a strain on our current Unit 1 staff, and we know without appreciation for the work you do every day, especially in the years during and following the pandemic, we are more likely to continue losing highly qualified and experienced educators.

TAAAC leadership began to meet with the County Executive's office when this budget line item was identified, to discuss using some of this money not only for starting salaries, but to increase the negotiated COLA for our current members, and especially those at the top of the scale. We were frustrated that this money was "found" after months of negotiations and it was being allocated to only a small group of educators rather than our whole membership, but we knew this was an opportunity to support our membership overall and set us up for successful negotiations in the future. Since the County Executive and County Council are not a party to our negotiations outside of the role as a funding body, we shifted our focus to AACPS, and began to meet with Superintendent Dr. Bedell and the Board of Education. At that time, we were told the money would ONLY be used to increase starting salaries. Our Negotiations Team insisted we sit down for a formal bargaining session at the table to bring several proposals that would address both recruitment and retention.

AACPS' initial proposal was to compress the salary scale permanently, by removing steps 1 and 2. This, we rejected out of hand as we have finally resolved the step inequities members faced for over a decade. We countered with proposals including a COLA increase for all employees, a

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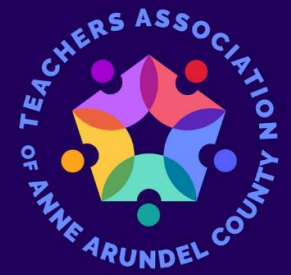


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AT THE TABLE



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bonus for employees at Step 25, and other ideas that would focus only on retaining employees who are currently part of AACPS. These were each rejected by AACPS. We also proposed scheduled retention bonuses and decreases in non-professional duty time, each of which were also rejected, even though it was made clear that Dr. Bedell is committed to making AACPS competitive throughout the state and wants to continue to show appreciation for our current staff.

So, we were faced with a decision: do we accept this money that will support recruitment and make us competitive to hire more educators and address the shortages, or do we walk away?

At the end of the day, it would be counterproductive to walk away from the table and this money. This will set us up for stronger negotiations next year where we will be able to advocate for greater COLAs due to the reoccurring money now in the AACPS budget.

The agreement our Negotiations Team reached priorities and affirmed the following:

- No one will make less than \$58,161 as of July 1, 2023
- Our salary scale would not be compressed
- This is a 1-year Memorandum of Understanding that expires with the current contract on June 30, 2024

While we are disappointed that this MOU does not address overall retention, we do recognize that increasing starting salary in FY24 leaves us more money in FY25 to increase compensation for current Unit 1 employees. This MOU makes us more competitive with surrounding counties; and it is clear the County Executive has heard TAAAC members ring the alarm bells that we are falling behind.

AACPS and TAAAC negotiated our contract and this MOU in good faith to come up with the highest wage increase we've seen since the recession, and we are excited to have finished this contract prior to the end of the school year. Stay tuned for a joint statement from TAAAC President Nicole Disney Bates and Superintendent Dr. Mark Bedell next week.

While we have our issues with the way this process unfolded, TAAAC, AACPS and the County Executive all remain committed to improving teacher compensation. We look forward to working with AACPS and county leaders to make this the best place for ALL.

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