



TAAAC
January 2026

Action Report

Kristina Korona, President
Jorge Córdoba, Vice President
Diane Barnes, Secretary-Treasurer

2% Does Not Fund the Staff Our Schools Deserve

On December 17, when Dr. Bedell released his FY27 budget proposal, members of the TAAAC Board of Directors were in our monthly meeting. As we read the press release, Board members reacted with the same disappointment, frustration, and anger that many of you are feeling. The proposed employee salary increase is the lowest in years—just a 2% COLA—which does not even keep up with inflation. As we are all experiencing, every dollar we make has less spending power day by day. We all see the impact of this reality every time we go to the grocery store and now as we shop for the holidays. It is difficult to see how this budget lives up to the claim that it is “choosing people over programs.”

Being an educator in 2025 is stressful enough: none of us needs the additional strain of financial pressures, and this budget, as proposed, will not alleviate them. During our discussion last night, Board members shared stories of our own financial struggles and the stories of members we have spoken with recently who are past the financial breaking point. We know that some of you are worried about your ability to cover your rent or mortgage, so you are deciding whether to take on a second--or third--job. And others are making hard choices about whether or not to resign this year in order to save money because you can no longer afford the high costs of child care.

We should not simply accept what is being offered. This is the time for us to take action to advocate for the salaries we all deserve. The eight elected school board members get the final say on the FY27 school budget request that is sent to the county executive for funding. They can amend this budget. To make this happen, the Board of Education needs to hear directly from you. As you are likely aware from our At the Table updates, there has been minimal movement in bargaining on the issues that matter most. Your first-hand accounts of the financial strains TAAAC members are facing—ones that will only become more challenging next year if our salaries don't keep up with inflation—can make the critical difference. This is why you and your colleagues must also attend the county executive's town hall in your district in the coming weeks. RSVP with the QR code.

Ultimately, our elected leaders are being forced to make hard fiscal choices because public education, like public services generally, continues to be underfunded in the United States. For decades, the top 1% have benefited from the gains that our democracy—and the public education system that is its backbone—have made possible; however, those who are the wealthiest in our society have continued to profit by receiving more tax cuts rather than paying their fair share which would fund the investments needed to create the world-class public school system that our students deserve. This is why TAAAC has joined the nationwide May Day Strong movement to make clear that workers must be prioritized over billionaires. Right now, in this economy, those at the top are doing extremely well while working families struggle to make ends meet. On May Day 2026, we will significantly expand the number of schools taking collective action. Stay tuned for more information about how you and your colleagues fight for the future that we all deserve!



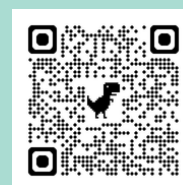
Testify at County-wide Budget Town Halls

Pick the feeder system where you live or work to speak up for increased COLAs, lower class sizes, and the Schools We All Deserve!

Here are the dates:

- January 6: District 7 at Southern High
- January 14: District 5 at Severna Park High
- January 15: District 4 at Arundel High
- January 21: District 1 at North County High
- January 22: District 3 at Chesapeake High
- February 3: District 2 at Severn Run High
- February 4: District 6 at Annapolis High

RSVP here:



**TAAAC Board
of Directors**

Charis Cephas • Maria Côté • Dyana Cronin • Maryalice Davis
Will Johnson • Chris Lerch • Melissa McHarg • Elizabeth Ruddy
Joy Reider Simpson • Keanuú Smith-Brown • Karina Zotti



TAAAC Member Resources

MEET ALYSSA

Alyssa Picard is the Executive Director of the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County. She has previously worked as a negotiator and organizer for the American Federation of Teachers Michigan state affiliate, as the Director of AFT's national Higher Education division, and--from 2023 to 2025--in the US Department of Education. She holds a PhD in US history from the University of Michigan.

MEET LISA

Lisa Rodvien is a dedicated community advocate, former public school teacher, and attorney who has spent her career advocating for students and teachers in public schools. A two-term member of the Anne Arundel County Council, she has built trusted relationships with educators, families, and local leaders while championing policies that support strong communities. As a Community Organizer with TAAAC, Lisa brings her classroom experience, policy-making knowledge, and deep commitment to empowering educators. She is passionate about building coalitions and elevating educator voices. Lisa lives in Annapolis with her husband George, their two cats and dog.

CONTENTIA: UNISERV UPDATE



You do not waive your rights when you enter the schoolhouse door to protect yourself against violent or threatening student behaviors. In general, your safety and the safety of your students takes priority over instructional responsibilities or other assignments. Even if a violent student is in special ed, they cannot harm others. If you are hurt or have further questions, please contact your UniServ Director. Scan the QR code to read your contract highlights and resources from the Student Handbook.

LOBBY WITH TAAAC

Every Monday during the legislative session, TAAAC members visit Annapolis to lobby our state delegates and senators around pro-public education legislation. We begin each evening with a free meal and a briefing of relevant legislation, as well as an overview of the officials we are meeting with. Interested? Sign up by scanning the QR code here.



GREEN SPEAKER SERIES



Are you interested in enhancing your curriculum with hands-on environmental projects? This upcoming session is designed specifically for Anne Arundel County educators looking to encourage sustainable improvements and meaningful engagement surrounding environmental issues. Learn how to navigate county-specific resources, engage your students in meaningful fieldwork, and take the first steps toward environmental uplift at your school without the overwhelm. Join the Green Committee on Thursday, January 15 at 5:30pm at Arlington Echo. Use the QR code to sign up.

IMMIGRATION JUSTICE

Do you want to support your immigrant students and community? The next TAAAC "Know Your Rights" training is on January 10. Scan the QR code to RSVP and learn more.



RSJ BOOK CLUB



The Racial Social Justice Committee is hosting a book club in January and February to discuss chapters from Teachers Unions and Social Justice. Use the QR code here to RSVP.

Welcome to the new hires who joined their union this month. Get to know your colleagues and ask them to join your union too: <https://www.mynea360.org/s/join-now>

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TAAAC Candidate Statements

CANDIDATES FOR SECRETARY TREASURER



WILL JOHNSON

I am running for Secretary-Treasurer of TAAAC because strong unions are built by organized members not just elected leaders. As Secretary-Treasurer, I will endeavor to build a union where educators and school staff are connected, engaged, and ready to act together. I want our resources focused on building power in every school and worksite, supporting organizing, developing leaders, and turning participation into collective action. When members move together, our union moves forward with purpose and strength. Empowering U! means organizing, uplifting, and strengthening our union—together.

CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



MARYALICE DAVIS

I am a proud veteran educator in AACPS, and honored to be on the Board of Directors. Through TAAAC I have been honored to represent our educators and students at the local and national levels: I hope to continue! Empowering U! Means organizing, uplifting, and strengthening our union - together!



DEANNA EDMUNDS

As Director, I would support members in organizing their buildings to affect change at the school, county, and state level. I believe every member has something to bring to the fight and every voice needs to be heard. Empowering U! means organizing, uplifting, and strengthening our union--together.



BENGAMIN GUIDOT

I'm a high school social studies teacher who joined AACPS and TAAAC 2.5 years ago. I'm running for Director to strengthen our collective voice, fight for fair workloads and pay, and ensure every educator feels respected, supported, and heard.



JOY REIDER SIMPSON

As a teacher and former lawyer, I know the greatest good we can do is to stand up for the rights of others. I have stood up for you—Director, Building Rep, FAC, MSEA and NEA RA Rep, IPD Committee, Negotiations, etc. Empowering U! means organizing, uplifting, and strengthening our

Elections will open on January 26, 2026 and close on February 13, 2026.

To vote, check your personal email for information from MSEA@intelliscanvotes.com



TAAAC Candidate Statements

CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



JENNIFER SELL

Jennifer Sell (she/her) teaches Science at Annapolis Middle School, is the co-lead for the TAAAC Member Organizing Committee, a member of the TAAAC Racial Social Justice Committee, and is a racial justice activist/organizer in Anne Arundel County. She is also a mentor for the MSEA Women's Leadership Program.



SAMIRA TAÑEDO

I'm honored to be running for the Board of Directors with the Empowering U! Slate. I believe in our members — in our voice, our strength, and the power we hold when we stand united.



SARAH WELLER-BENTIVEGNA

I am a Special Education Resource Teacher with 24 years of experience in AACPS. I have previously served our teachers as a TAAAC Building Representative, Board of Directors member, and on the Negotiating Committee. I am looking forward to advocating for our professional rights once again.

CANDIDATES FOR MSEA AND NEA Delegates

Elections will also open for 50 MSEA Delegates and 40 NEA Delegates, who will be attending the MSEA Representative Assembly in Ocean City in October 2026, and NEA Representative Assembly in Denver, Colorado in July 2026, respectively. Candidates include: Dawn Austin, Diane Barnes, Rebecca Baucom, Jon Boughey, Rhonda Brown, Alicia Brands, Em Callahan, Robin Cooper, Theresa Currier, Maryalice Davis, Joy Dougherty, Deanna Edmunds, Sara Gillen, Sheen Goldberg, Jill Grimm, Benjamin Guidot, Will Johnson, Nydia Key, Russell Leone, Robert Mauro, Melissa McHarg, Kate Miller, Michelle Morris, Aaron Moul, Melissa Napfel-Sisk, Jenni O'Brocki, Kristen Park, David Pickens, Mary Pitta, Joy Reider Simpson, Colin Reinhard, Mary Robinson, Dr. Hadassah Saunders, Jennifer Sell, Samira Tañedo, Nicole Tello, Angela Vogt, Sarah Weller-Bentivegna, and Lizzie West.

UNION ELECTIONS

Voting will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, January 26, 2026 for the following positions:

- TAAAC Secretary Treasurer (1)
- TAAAC Board of Directors (5)
- MSEA Delegate (50)
- NEA Delegate (40)

Elections will close at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 13, 2023.

Keep an eye on your personal email: In addition to information about voting in union elections, TAAAC HQ will also launch a Job Satisfaction survey during these same dates. Check your email for both the ballot AND the survey.