

BUILDING REP BASICS: Becoming a Building Rep

Becoming a leader at your school is a small step you can take to advocate for your students, as well as better working conditions for yourself and your peers.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the time commitment?

Approximately 4 hours per month.

Our admin is supportive; why do we need a Building Rep?

If/when your admin is transferred, retires, or resigns, having a union presence in your building will ensure respect for your contract.

What if I have never done something like this?

You are not alone! UniServ Directors are available for training, and you can work with colleagues from other schools to learn the ropes!



WHY BECOME A BUILDING REP?

Enforce your contract!

- Advocate with your colleagues by identifying ways to mitigate contract violations at your school, without having to escalate

Represent educators in your building at the Rep Assembly

- Vote on TAAAC actions
- Participate in Training
- Hear bargaining updates from your Negotiations Team

Become a leader in your building

Roles and Responsibilities

- Attend the monthly Rep Assembly
- Host 10-minute meetings in your building to share information from our union
- Support Faculty Advisory Council meetings as a voting member
- Familiarize yourself with our Negotiated Agreement
- Welcome and recruit new colleagues to TAAAC

HOW DO I BECOME A BUILDING REP?

Hold an Election!

Elections are held every June by all TAAAC members during a 10-minute meeting.

Volunteer!

Contact your UniServ Director at
410-224-3330

Learn more about our current Building Reps at:
taaaconline.org/for-members/rep-corner/

BUILDING REP BASICS: Roles of a Building Rep

While the needs of every school and staff are different, below are the basic roles of the building rep, which can and should be delegated amongst a wider building rep team.

CONTRACT ENFORCER

One of the most important duties of a Building Representative is the education of the members in their rights and responsibilities under the negotiated contract. The Building Representative must have a good working knowledge of the negotiated contract. You must know when an educator's complaint can be rectified through the grievance procedure. Complaints overheard in faculty rooms many times result in grievances. It is the Building Representative's responsibility to recognize a grievance and begin working to resolve the issue.

ORGANIZER

As a building rep and leader in your building, you know how to move your colleagues to action. This means recruiting members to attend upcoming events, sign petitions, and of course join the union. By using your 1-1 conversation skills, you are able to help inspire hope amongst your colleagues if you have a building-specific or county-wide issue that needs to be addressed through collective action of your union.

COMMUNICATOR

No local union can function successfully without a highly sophisticated method of communication. As the Building Rep, you are a primary source of information coming from the Rep Assembly meetings, hosting your monthly 10-minute meetings, and facilitating distribution of materials to your Building Action Team (BAT). You also have the task of providing information to the TAAAC Office if there are issues in your building.

Build Your Building Rep Team

Each school is allotted "one Association Representative for one through twenty members and one representative for each additional 20 members or major fraction thereof." That means you can split the responsibilities of the role! Here is one example of how that looks:



BR/FAC Chair

Primary liaison to bring issues from the building-level to TAAAC HQ



Grievance Chair

Helps members file grievances or contact their UniServ Director for support



Building Action Team Chair

Maps the school to best disseminate information amongst members



Social Chair

Facilitates recruitment and plans and school-based union events

BUILDING REP BASICS:

Preparing for Effective Representation

The key to being a successful Building Representative is PREPARATION. How well you know your faculty, the structure and operation of your union, your basic responsibilities, and available resources are all important factors in determining your effectiveness.

KNOW WHOM YOU REPRESENT

It is very important that, at a minimum, you maintain an accurate list of the members and non-members in your building. The BR Chair will receive that list from the TAAAC Office in October of each school year so you can make personal contact with every potential member and update contact information for continuing members. The more you know about each individual staff member in your school, the more effective you can be in representing their needs and interests.

TIP #1:

Map your building to see who eats lunch together, who carpools/ parks close together, if anyone is related, etc.

KNOW HOW TO MAKE A PLAN OF ACTION

Preparing for effective representation includes the development of a plan of action. Below are some of the things you should consider.

- Inform your building principal that you are the Building Representative (face-to-face meeting if possible).
- Make sure each member knows you and understands that you are the person to see concerning professional problems and union affairs. Staff members should know how and when to contact you.
- Communicate on a face-to-face basis as often as possible.

REMEMBER: The most important factor in your plan of action is YOU!

KNOW YOUR UNION

Understanding how decisions are made in your union can ensure members in your school have a voice in the direction we take to make change for our working conditions. Checking a majority of these boxes will make you an effective building rep:

- Know how to find information in the TAAAC Negotiated Agreement and Bylaws to answer member questions
- Attend the monthly rep assembly meetings and report back information to members in your building through 10-minute meetings, by updating your bulletin board, and passing out the monthly TAAAC Action Report
- Communicate regularly with TAAAC elected leaders and staff about issues that arise in your building. Remember: if staff in your school are experiencing something, it's likely an issue at other schools too!

TIP #3:

Ensure members understand that through collective action of members, your union is a vehicle for change in all aspects of your personal and professional life. Whether through member benefits of TAAAC, MSEA, and NEA, or by taking political action to have a voice at the table, your union dues are your buying power.

BUILDING REP BASICS:

Frequently Asked Questions

As a building rep, you are the first point of contact for your members on questions about the contract, committees, issues with admin, etc. By attending the monthly Rep Assembly meeting and reading email updates from the TAAAC President, you should feel equipped to sheppard members who want to get involved with organizing or advocating for issues in your building and throughout the county. Below are resources for who you can go to with questions you may commonly receive from your members!

Sick Leave Bank Questions

Who do I contact about SLB questions? Who can tell me if I'm a member or in the SLB?

Contact the TAAAC Office at 410-224-3330 to get information about SLB membership, drawing from the bank, or specific questions about your situation. The Sick Leave Bank is managed by a group of TAAAC members (active and retired) and AACPS staff.

Contract Questions

Who do I contact if I feel my contract is being violated? Who can help me with a quick contract interpretation question? Who do I contact if I feel retaliated against?

First, check your negotiated agreement, and the annotations written by your UniServ Directors to determine if the question is easily found. If a member suspects a contract violation, begin tracking data, ask colleagues if others are facing similar issues, then contact your UniServ Director by calling the TAAAC Office for support on filing a grievance.

FAC Questions

Who can help me setup my building's Faculty Advisory Council? Who can bring TAAAC staff into my building?

Check the FAC Handbook, as well as the sample workflow and PowerPoint resources at <https://taaaconline.org/fac>. Work with members in your building and your admin to determine the size of the FAC and elect members, then vote as members to invite your UniServ Director to your monthly meeting. TAAAC staff may also enter the building to visit staff at any time that does not disrupt instruction

Committee Questions

Who do I contact to join TAAAC committees? Who can get me involved in political action? Who can I talk to about apple ballot candidates?

The TAAAC President is responsible for appointing committee members. Visit <https://taaaconline.org/for-members/join-a-taaac-committee/> to learn more and submit your name! The Government Relations Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month and will teach members about the Board of Education, County Council/County Executive, and state Delegates/Senators that we lobby for pro-public education policies

How do I get a TAAAC T-Shirt?

Collect the sizes of your members who need shirts, then call the TAAAC Office to have them basketmailed to you directly!