AT THE TABLE

A BARGAINING BULLETIN

Dear TAAAC Members,

Here's the short version:
Your voices are making a difference! Superintendent Dr. Bedell has clarified that a salary freeze is not his intention, and that compensation remains a priority, but...

We still don't have a salary proposal. AACPS acknowledged that the salary schedule presented last week was not its actual compensation position. However, despite the Article 22 deadline for submitting proposals, AACPS has made no salary or COLA proposal.

We need a better approach to bargaining. Historically, AACPS has delayed meaningful salary negotiations until after the Superintendent's budget proposal. This has been mentioned as though it is a positive sign of a functional process by Dr. Bedell, the BOE, and the AACPS negotiators. We believe compensation should be negotiated at the table, from the start, so we can advocate together for the funding our schools need.

Progress was made! Friday's session was cordial and productive. Both teams collaborated on updating outdated contract language.

We're bargaining for the common good. Competitive compensation, manageable workloads, and adequate resources aren't just about retaining talented educators. They're about ensuring that AACPS students receive the education they deserve, and that the community has schools it deserves.

Take action: We encourage you to reply—with collegiality and clarity—to the email that Superintendent Bedell sent us all on Wednesday night. President Dent mentioned during last week's Board of Education meeting that Superintendent Dr. Bedell was out on bereavement leave. If you find it appropriate, take a moment to offer your condolences. Your reply can also:

- Thank him for clarifying that a salary freeze is not his intention.
- Ask for specifics. When will an AACPS salary proposal reach the bargaining table?
- Ask for his partnership in advocating for the funding needed to retain excellent educators and strengthen AACPS for future generations—and beginning by making a compensation proposal before his budget proposal is public, not after.

Please carbon copy us at taaac@mseanea.org.
Yours in solidarity,
The TAAAC Bargaining Team

Here's the longer version:
Your voices are being heard, and this week's bargaining session showed why your engagement matters.

Following last week's concerns about AACPS's lack of a compensation proposal, Superintendent Dr. Bedell sent out an email to Unit I employees to clarify the Board's position on compensation. On Friday, both bargaining teams returned to the table for a session that was generally cordial and productive.

The biggest development: AACPS clarified that the single page of the existing salary schedule presented last week was not intended to represent the Board of Education's position on compensation. The district indicated that a more substantive financial response will come later in negotiations.

We welcome that clarification. However, this means that the Board of Education has missed the contractual deadline outlined in Article 22 to bring all proposals to the table by the second bargaining session. And the most important question remains:

What exactly is AACPS's salary proposal?

What Happened at the Table

AACPS has presented a salary schedule containing no identified step advancement or COLA. Article 22 requires that proposals be presented by the second bargaining session, so our team has concerns about what this means for members. It is clear from the results of the bargaining survey that there is no single issue more important to TAAAC members in 2026 than pay; accordingly, the lack of an identifiable step or COLA was communicated in our last *At the Table* update.

Superintendent Dr. Bedell subsequently emailed Unit I employees, stating: "Compensation is a priority for me and for our Board of Education, and it is being negotiated at the bargaining table with TAAAC, where it belongs." He also clarified that a salary freeze was not the district's intention.

At Friday's session, the AACPS team reiterated--while presenting their proposed changes--that its salary submission did not reflect the Superintendent's position on compensation. However, no step increase or specific COLA has yet been proposed. This is, to adopt Superintendent Bedell's language, a negotiating ploy--a conscious and

deliberate attempt to continue the status quo, in which negotiations about pay are conducted not at the negotiating table, but via the Superintendent's proposed budget. During the years when this tactic has been used, instead of TAAAC and AACPS uniting to ask for appropriate funding, we have to petition the county executive and county council to meet our requests--often finding that our final COLA is no different than what was initially proposed by the Superintendent.

This week, our teams also briefly discussed contract language regarding healthcare, leave, assignments and transfers, evaluations, and Article 22. Several proposals require further review, including moving the tentative assignment notification date from June 1 to July 15.

Much of the session was spent collaboratively modernizing outdated contract language, updating terminology, and correcting references to AACPS offices and positions that either no longer exist or that have changed. All in, it appears that the teams were able to agree to more changes to the collective bargaining agreement than have been made over the last ten years combined.

The conversation was constructive, and we appreciate the dialogue. We hope to build on that cooperation as we address the substantive issues that matter most to our members and students.

Bargaining for the Common Good

Superintendent Dr. Bedell has expressed his commitment to compensation, and made clear that a salary freeze is not his intention. Unfortunately, his refusal to put a pay proposal on the table is preventing employer and union alike from uniting to bargain for the common good of AACPS: its students, its families, and the communities we serve. When we advocate for competitive compensation, manageable workloads, adequate resources, and improved working conditions, we are also advocating for the learning conditions our students deserve.

Every teacher, student services staffer, or related service provider who can't deliver the instruction and services students need because class sizes and caseloads are so high knows the missed opportunities they are seeing every day. Each experienced educator who leaves AACPS represents more than a vacancy. It means losing institutional knowledge, established relationships, and continuity for students and families. Educators

also contribute to Anne Arundel County's economy as residents, taxpayers, and consumers.

A strong contract is not simply a benefit for today's educators. It is a commitment to tomorrow's students.

We believe that TAAAC, Dr. Bedell, and the Board of Education share a fundamental goal: providing every AACPS student with an excellent public education.

Achieving that goal requires securing the funding necessary to attract talented professionals, retain experienced educators, and provide students with the resources they need to succeed.

Imagine what we could accomplish if TAAAC, AACPS leadership, the Board of Education, and our community spoke with one voice about fully funding our public schools. We may sit on opposite sides of the bargaining table, but we should not be on opposite sides when it comes to the future of AACPS.

Take Action: Ask Superintendent Dr. Bedell to Stand with Us

Last week, you made your voices heard. This week, we need you to continue that work. We do want to acknowledge, as President Dent shared at last week's Board of Education meeting, that Dr. Bedell experienced a loss last week. We extend our sincere condolences to Dr. Bedell, his family, and all those who share in his grief. We understand that the contents of this communication may reach him, as occurred with our previous *At the Table* update, and we want to make clear that our thoughts are with him and his loved ones during this difficult time.

We encourage you to reply—with compassion and clarity--to Superintendent Dr. Bedell's email that he sent on Wednesday night. Please carbon copy us at taaac@mseanea.org. Your reply can:

- Offer your condolences, and acknowledge his recent loss with compassion and respect.
- Thank him for clarifying that a salary freeze is not his intention.
- Ask for specifics. When will an AACPS salary proposal reach the bargaining table?
- Ask for his partnership in advocating for the funding needed to retain excellent educators and strengthen AACPS for future generations.

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Our next bargaining session is October 27th and while there are only a few days between our sessions, many topics drawn from TAAAC member feedback must be negotiated. With that in mind, be on the lookout for another update next week and in the weeks that follow, as Article 22 mandates that all non-compensation topics be negotiated by the end of December.

When we stand together, WE WIN!

Yours in solidarity,
The TAAAC Bargaining Team