

TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

Volume 36, Number 8



Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County, An MST/NEA Affiliate

April 2004

SURVEY SAYS - "FUND EDUCATION"

In the fall, the newspapers covered surveys commissioned by the county that asked taxpayers how they wanted to fund the Anne Arundel County government. None of the surveys spoke to education as a county concern. Since 52% of the county budget went to education in FY2004, the TAAAC leadership felt it necessary to commission our own survey that included questions about education.

In December, Gonzales Research and Marketing Strategies was hired and began the process of preparing our survey. During the week of January 27th through February 3rd, a total of 819 habitual voters were interviewed by telephone. Respondents were selected at random and interviews were balanced throughout the county to reflect election-voting patterns. The margin of error, according to customary statistical standards, is no more than plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for the entire sample.

The results were overwhelmingly in support of public education.

When asked to name the most important issue facing Anne Arundel County government today, a significant majority (30%) indi-

cated they think it's public education, 15% said the economy/jobs, 14% said taxes/budget, and 12% said growth and development. Other responses were crime with a little over 6%, transportation with 6%, the environment with 3.5% and terrorism with over 3%.

"Among those with children in the school system, 62% rate it excellent/good."

Education is the most important issue for nearly all demographic sub-groups included in the survey, and was cited most frequently by young voters (39%), Democrats (34%), women (32%), and those with children currently enrolled in the county's public school system (46%).

Countywide, 93% believe that it is either "very important" (66%) or "somewhat important" (27%) for Anne Arundel's public officials to work on improving education in the county, while only 6% do not think it is important. This high level of importance attached to working to improve public education spans all demographic sub-groups.

Fifty-two percent of county residents rate the overall job performance of the public school system as either "excellent" (11%) or "good" (41%), while 26% rate it "fair," and 8% rate it "poor." Among those with children in the school system, 62% rate it excellent/good.

Respondents were asked, without prompting, to cite what they feel is the number one public education issue. The top five responses given were: teacher salaries (21%), maintaining teacher quality (20%), student discipline (15%), curriculum (12%), and crowded schools (10%). Among those with kids in school, the top responses were curriculum issues, salaries, and teacher quality. **(1680)**

An overwhelming 95% agree — 70% strongly and 25% moderately — that teacher retention and attracting the best teachers is the

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and much more...



Bill Jones

COMMENTARY

Negotiations and Spring Recruitment

TAAAC's bargaining power - or any other type of group - is founded in the size of its membership and in the willingness of that membership to act. And here we are now nearing the point at which we either reach agreement on a contract or we declare impasse. At the time of this writing, there are still three sessions scheduled and I cannot yet be certain whether or not we will find ourselves at impasse. If we do, we will be asking our membership to take part in an eventual job action. (6807)

Local educators who have not yet joined TAAAC have the opportunity to do so now on our spring early enrollment plan. They will enjoy immediate protection of the \$1,000,000 NEA liability coverage, but dues will not be deducted until next school year. There is an application on the back of this newsletter; please take it to a non-member nearby and offer him/her the opportunity to join. They will become immediately insured AND they

will be supporting our bargaining efforts.

TAAAC, the only local organization that struggles to promote the welfare of local public school teachers, media specialists, pupil personnel workers, school psychologists, psychology specialists, and school-based speech therapists, depends upon a fair contribution

“Further, TAAAC is obligated by law to represent and advise every employee in its bargaining unit on issues existing in the Negotiated Agreement.”

from those folks who benefit from its efforts. Over time TAAAC has negotiated protections on educator work time, teaching position, healthcare, salary, and other economic and non-economic items, as well as all of the benefits and protections listed below. None of which would exist if not generated by TAAAC's effort at the bargaining table. Imagine how much different our lives might be without the following:

- ~a limited 191-day work year
- ~a limited 35 1/2 hour workweek [37 1/2 for pupil services persons]
- ~paid personal business leave [annual leave for 12-month employees]
- ~more than 20 other types of paid

- leave for appropriate purposes
- ~sick leave beyond what is provided in state law
- ~a sick leave bank for catastrophic illnesses and injuries
- ~a minimum time for lunch
- ~guarantees for planning time
- ~stipends for extra curricular activities
- ~a 90% employer contribution to health care premiums
- ~extra money for experience credit [steps on the salary scale]
- ~extra money for education [columns on the salary scale]
- ~tuition reimbursement and
- ~term life insurance.

The office that TAAAC maintains, the staff TAAAC and MSTA employs to provide these services are funded through dues dollars. Educators who are represented by TAAAC but who do not join and do not support TAAAC-initiated actions not only reject some personal and financial protection offered only to members, but they also limit what can be accomplished through bargaining. Further, TAAAC is obligated by law to represent and advise every employee in its bargaining unit on issues existing in the Negotiated Agreement. That takes resources like staff time, facilities use, support staff assistance, office materials and more, none of which come free. If the non-member does not

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TAAAC Action Report

Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County	Officers	Board of Directors	Editors
2521 Riva Road, Suite L 7 Annapolis, Maryland 21401 (410) 224-3330 (410) 841-6022 (301) 261-8309 FAX (410) 841-5117	Sheila M. Finlayson, President Ron Russell, Vice President Kathy Naeseth, Secretary-Treasurer	Donzella Parker Bert Alice Liptak Yolie Marshall Timothy Mennuti	Deborah Cottrell Susie C. Jablinske Richard Benfer Edith M. McDougald Allison Crews Myrtle Link Darlene Murphy Bill Jones, Executive Director and Managing Editor Roxanne L. Vietmeier, Editor

From Contentia this month . . .

SPECIAL EDUCATORS A SPECIAL BREED

Anne Arundel County Public Schools is very fortunate to employ a myriad of talented, well-educated, caring, committed, yet overworked, over regulated, overburdened Special Educators. Here in Contentia- Land we take our hats off to the dedicated educators who work with our most challenging students. They really are a hearty lot. However, in recent years we have registered an alarming increase in the number of frustrated phone calls from Special Educators.

What, might one ask, are their main bones of contention? Well these can be synthesized down to two main areas: PLANNING TIME and PAPERWORK.. To put that more accurately, **NOT ENOUGH PLANNING TIME** and **WAY TOO MUCH PAPERWORK**. There have been a number of grievances filed on behalf of Special Educators who almost NEVER enjoy the amount of planning time guaranteed to them by the Negotiated Agreement. These are generally winnable grievances. But the other half of that is that most Special Educators are so caring, so dedicated, so committed that they know the paperwork has to be done (and most often that means during their limited planning time) and that they are the ones who can do it best. So they just suck it up and do what has to be done. However, this dedication tends to steal precious time from their families, friends, hobbies and other activities outside of work that make life worth living.

Just this past school term, a group of special educators at one of the centers got together and filed a grievance based on lack of planning time. **THEY WON!** And the AACPS is literally paying over \$9,000 for loss planning. Hooray for their Chutzpah!!! And we dare anyone to say that these employees are NOT caring and or committed. It is that very commitment that caused them to say ENOUGH. "I need time to prepare for instructing my students." (6966)

Recently the Special Education Task Force took the bold, ambitious step of comprehensively surveying all county special educators to ascertain what life is like in this county for these employees. The results, while not overly surprising, were very revealing. **THERE IS WAY TOO MUCH PAPERWORK** to comfortably manage and stay on top of. Too many new forms, regulations, tests, and expectations, as well as too many meetings, conferences, increasing case loads, not enough assistants, etc., etc. How is an employee to manage? What should get put on the back burner? What should be the priority? These questions have no easy answers. However, the Negotiated Agreement outlines what the **MINIMUM** amount of planning time should be. Are you close to that? Can you think of ways to get the time you need to **PLAN FOR INSTRUCTION**? We need to hear from educators who are willing to grieve this issue, to stand up for themselves and their students, to say "Give me a Break!" Call the TAAAC office when you feel you have done all you can and still feel overextended.

Not to pour salt on a sore wound but then there is Alt-MSA. We will talk about that next month.

TAAAC Leadership Election Results are...

President and Vice-President

President
Sheila M. Finlayson

Vice-President
Tim Mennuti

Board of Directors

Ken Baughman
Alice Liptak
Edith McDougald
Carol Petrosky
Donzella Parker Bert

Congratulations!

If you are interested in joining these and other Board Members please fill out the nominating form on page 7 and return it to the TAAAC office.

(Continued from page 1)

number one priority. Eighty-seven percent (55% strongly and 32% moderately) agree that more teachers need to be hired to reduce class sizes at county high schools.

Anne Arundel residents place a high premium on their quality of life: 79% rate it as either excellent (21%) or good (58%), while 18% rate it fair, and only 1% rate it poor. And while the majority, 64%, believe things in the county have stayed the same over the past three years, a greater number feel that things have gotten worse (23%) than feel that things have gotten better (14%).

When asked if it was better for county government to cut programs or find revenue to fund services, 27% picked cutting programs, while 67% said that the county should find the revenue. A majority in every sub-group thinks the better approach for county government to take is to find revenue sources to maintain existing programs, as opposed to cutting back on existing programs. **(2725)**

Respondents were read a list of ways to generate new revenue for the county and asked if they would favor or oppose it as a method for Anne Arundel County government to maintain current levels of service. For raising the BWI parking fee from 60 cents to \$1, 66% favored, 31% opposed and 3% had no answer. When given the option of a 5% boat slip tax, 60% favored, 35% opposed and 5% had no answer. For an 8% cell phone tax, 46% favored it, 49% opposed it and 5% had no answer. On an amusement tax, 44% favored it, 53% opposed it and 4% had no answer.

“An overwhelming 95% agree — 70% strongly and 25% moderately — that teacher retention and attracting the best teachers is the number one priority.”

In an attempt to measure voter tolerance for an increase in the local income tax rate, voters were asked if they would be willing to have the county income tax rate raised in order for Anne Arundel County government to maintain current levels of service. Three levels were tested: increasing the current rate from 2.56% to 3.20% (costing the average household approximately \$300 per year), increasing to 2.88% (costing the average household approximately \$150 per year), and increasing to 2.72% (costing the average household approximately \$75 per year). The results indicated a strong willingness among county voters (56%) to fund the services at the lowest rate of increase, 2.72%.

As time rolls around to begin our requests for contributions to The Fund for Children and Public Education, we were eager to find out how much weight our endorsements are given. Respondents were asked to indicate whether an endorsement from a particular organization would make them more likely to support a candidate, less likely to support a candidate, or would have no real affect on how they would vote. TAAAC remains the dominant political organization in the county with 41% saying a TAAAC endorse-

ment makes them more likely to support a candidate. The Firefighters came in second with 39%, the Fraternal Order of Police with 33% and the Capital-Gazette with 18%.

Our survey also addressed the approval rating of the County Executive and all of the County Council members.

The results are quite extensive and gives us a clear picture of the desires of the voters. Our results are broken down by councilmanic district, as well as age, party registration, and voters with children in public schools. If you would like copies of the report for lobbying purposed, call the TAAAC office.

(Commentary continued from page 2)

pay, who does? As you have probably guessed, the members do. Let's get more of our non-members to contribute to the work that's done for them. Use the enrollment form on the last page to recruit a current non-member and help lower your own dues expense.

Welcome New Members

Russell A. Bly
Susan L. Dillon
Nicole C. Henfey
Debra E. Lambert
Eileen M. Reiner
Faith A. Ward
Anna K. Worsham

TAAAC Continues to Celebrate Dr. Seuss' Birthday

**TAAAC President
Sheila Finlayson and RAA
Representatives celebrate
Dr. Seuss' Birthday
by presenting Dr. Seuss books
to the first child born at
Anne Arundel
Medical Center.**



Students Read 122,684 Books in RAA Contest

Read Across America started in 1998 as a way to get kids excited about reading. This celebration of the birthday of Dr. Seuss has become the nation's largest reading event, culminating each year on or near his birthday, March 2. This marks the 100th birthday of Dr. Seuss.

Each year the TAAAC Read Across America Committee (RAA) sponsors a contest to challenge the students to see who reads the most. This year the contest was extremely successful with AACPS students reading a total of 122, 684 books. Forty-two schools participated: thirty-two elementary schools, seven middle schools and one high school. *(7148)*

Congratulations go out to the thirty-two schools that met the challenge of reading 100 books per grade level or department. Broadneck Elementary, with a student population of 649, read the most books with 11,047. Chesapeake Bay Middle was the winner in the middle school group with 2,312 books read. The winners, students and teachers, each received gift cards and a certificate of participation.

Congratulations to the following schools who met the challenge!

Elementary Schools- Arnold, Belle Grove, Broadneck, Cape St. Claire, Central Special, Davidsonville, Deale, Eastport, Four Seasons, Ft. Smallwood, High Point, Hillsmere, Jacobsville, Lake Shore, Linthicum, Maryland City, Marley Glen, Mayo, Oak Hill, Overlook, Park, Rippling Woods, Ruth Eason, West Annapolis, West Meade, Windsor Farm

Middle Schools- Chesapeake Middle, Corkran Middle, Crofton Middle, George Fox Middle, Lindale Middle

High School- Severna Park High School

I Go Workin' after Midnight

(to the tune of Patsy Cline's "I Go Out Walkin' After Midnight")

I go on workin' after midnight
I don't see moonlight or get a chance to play
I'm, always workin' until midnight
For no extra pay!

We work on weekends and in the evenings
Well that's just our way of saying we love kids
We're always workin' up til midnight
But of debt we're never rid!

We work our part time job on weekends
Teaching duties never end
Even when that school bell rings
And for those of you with children
Who want to go to college
Better start them with their first jobs at 3!

We go on workin' after midnight
We're committed to challenge and inspire
Our kids learning, but even more
Give them a chance at their dreams.

But year by year we shrink in number
To feed the growing hunger
And be paid what we are worth
Too many good ones leave the profession
Even though by most confessions
We impact kids more than those who give them birth!

We'll go on workin' after midnight
We're dedicated and we'll help our kids succeed
But time is here now, for us no longer be workin' for free!

Charlotte Turpin
President NCEA

S.E.T.F. SURVEYS SPECIAL EDUCATORS

The TAAAC **Special Education Task Force**, in response to growing frustrations universally expressed by county special educators, took a bold step this winter to find out the source of their disquiet. For the first time in nearly ten years the Task Force developed and distributed a six page comprehensive survey to all county Special Educators. It took the Task Force several meetings to develop a survey that they felt would touch on every aspect of Special Educators' expectations, duties, instructional issues and paperwork, just to name a few of the areas.

When the survey was finally compiled, there were a total of 84 questions. The Task Force received over 300 completed surveys and many pages of written statements, clarifying the respondent's answers to some of the questions. The number of completed responses (bubble sheets) and detailed narratives were very gratifying to the Task Force and highlighted the need for this type of data gathering.

After tallying the responses and creating a report, the Task Force then invited the Special Education Director and three of the Area Directors to meet with them to discuss the survey and brainstorm ways to utilize the data.

This meeting took place on March 1st at the TAAAC office. Task Force members and the representatives from the Central Office all felt that the meeting was very productive and the survey was a good way of gauging the thoughts and concerns of those who responded. According to Diane Black, Special Education Director, "We will continue to collaborate with local and state officials to identify ways to reduce paperwork, revise the requirements of the Alt-MSA and address staffing needs." Mrs. Black also encourages individual special educators to share their personal concerns with their principals, area directors, coordinators and also with her. May problems experienced by Special Educators should also be brought to the attention of your UniServ Director.

The Task Force wishes to hardily thank all who responded and also to assure them their issues are being heard.

Here are a few of the highlights of the survey:

~The majority of Special Educators are veterans of more than 5 years in this county.

~There are at least 6% of teachers teaching Special Ed who are not certified in Special Education.

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Participate In This Unique Professional Development Opportunity!

Score NBPTS candidate responses and earn \$125 per day.

(Scoring sessions typically run from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, although Saturday scoring may be necessary. Lunch will be provided. NBPTS does not reimburse for travel or lodging expenses.)

Qualifications:

~Baccalaureate degree

~Valid teaching license/certificate (or valid state license as a school counselor if applying to assess the ECYA/School Counseling certificate), if required by the state

~Three years of teaching experience (or school counseling experience if applying to assess the ECYA/School Counseling certificate) in a pre-K through 12 setting

~Currently be teaching at least half-time in the certificate area you are applying to assess (or working at least half-time as a school counselor if applying to assess the ECYA/School Counseling certificate) or be a National Board Certified Teacher® in the certificate area

~Not be a current or non-achieving candidate for National Board Certification®

~Successful completion of assessor training (provided by NBPTS)

SUMMER 2004, THE FOLLOWING CERTIFICATES WILL BE SCORED IN BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Adolescence and Young Adulthood/MATHEMATICS (Alg)

July 12 – July 23

Early Adolescence/MATHEMATICS

July 12 – July 30

Early Adolescence/SCIENCE

July 12 – July 23

Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/

EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS SPECIALIST (MM)

July 12 – July 30

Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (Gen)

July 26 – Aug 6

Early and Middle Childhood/LITERACY:

READING-LANGUAGE ARTS

July 19 – Aug 6

Call 1-800-22TEACH or access www.mbpts.org to apply as an assessor or for more information.

*Information subject to change. Check NBPTS Web site for updates.

(SETF Survey Continued from page 6)

~Almost 70% of respondents have either a Masters or Masters Equivalency.

The majority of respondents report that they rarely have adequate time for completing Medicaid forms, writing IEP's, student testing and screening, completing SSIS forms and writing reports.

Over 2/3 of respondents report that they are not getting 180 minutes of uninterrupted planning time.

Over 88% of respondents feel that periodic meetings for Special Education teachers are important.

Any Special Educator who would like more information about the results of the survey should please contact Marsha Meekins at Mmeekins@mstanea.org, any member of the Special Education Task Force or call the TAAAC office.

TAAAC Changes Election Timeline

In an effort to conform to the MSTA timeline, TAAAC elections for MSTA delegates will **now** be held in the spring. A nomination form is available in this edition of the TAR. Elections will be held at the June ARC.

The MSTA Convention will be held in Ocean City on October 15th and 16th, 2004.

MARCH ARC ATTENDANCE

The following schools, departments, and affiliates were represented at the March 3, 2004 Association Representative Council meeting:

Elementary - Annapolis, Arnold, Belle Grove, Benfield, Bodkin, Broadneck, Brooklyn Park, Cape St. Claire, Central, Crofton, Crofton Meadows, Crofton Woods, Eastport, Folger McKinsey, Fort Smallwood, Four Seasons, Freetown, Germantown, Glen Burnie Park, Glendale, Hillsmere, Jessup, Linthicum, Marley, Meade Heights, Oakwood, Odenton, Park, Pasadena, Point Pleasant, Quarterfield, Ridgeway, Rolling Knolls, Severn, Shady Side, Solley, Southgate, Sunset, Tyler Heights, West Annapolis, West Meade, Windsor Farm – **Secondary** – Annapolis Middle, Annapolis Senior, Broadneck Senior, Brooklyn Park Middle, Central Middle, Chesapeake Senior, Crofton Middle, George Fox Middle, Lindale Middle, MacArthur Middle, Magothy River Middle, Meade Senior, Old Mill Middle North, Old Mill Middle South, Old Mill Senior, Severn River Middle, Severna Park Middle, Severna Park Senior, South River Senior – **Special** – Center of Applied Tech. South, Central Special, Marley Glen, Mary E. Moss Academy, Ruth P. Eason – **Affiliate** – Counselors, EBOTA, EMAAAC, PPW's, Psychologists – **Department** – PPW's, Psychologists

The Mills-King Award Ceremony 2004

The Mills-King Award Ceremony was a wonderful, well-attended success this year, honoring six exemplary individuals for their contributions to Human Relations in the field of education. All six nominees for this celebrated award received a brief biography presented to the audience by TAAAC President, Sheila Finlayson. The judges from the TAAAC Human Relations Committee deliberated over a difficult decision to choose one winner, but consensus was reached, naming Dr. Shirley May Little as the 2004 recipient of the Mills-King Award for Excellence in Human Relations in Education. Dr. Little has been teaching in Anne Arundel County for thirty years, with her most recent eleven years at Annapolis High School. Her civic and community contributions are extensive and lengthy, and prove too numerous to list here.

Nicholas Barnett, student and son of Human Relations Committee Chairperson, Michael Barnett, provided piano selections, while Edith McDougald, TAAAC Board of Directors member, sang a lovely, crowd-pleasing vocal selection. This year's keynote speaker was the 2003 Mills-King Award recipient, Carolyn Anderson, who was accompanied by her husband and proud parents.

Congratulations to Dr. Shirley Little and all the nominees for their tireless commitment to human relations through community service and education!

Nominees:

Shirley May Little	Wendy K. Slaughter
Lauren Breland	Joni Daugard
Classie Gillis Hoyle	Renee Waters

NEWS FLASH:

New Information on

BJ's INNER CIRCLE Memberships for TAAAC Members:

BJ'S Wholesale Club is announcing a special promotion for the months of April, May and June 2004 for TAAAC *members*.

A regular membership to the wholesale club normally costs \$40.00 for 12 months. However, TAAAC members will only pay a fee of \$35.00 for 15 months, **with a free second card**. In addition to receiving the discounted membership fee, BJ's will forward a \$10.00 gift coupon to all new or returning club members.

New four part **INNER CIRCLE Membership Applications** can be obtained from the office. TAAAC members may call to have an application sent home, or can stop by to pick up and fill out in the office. Once an application has been completed and sent to the TAAAC office with a check, the back copy can be immediately used as a temporary membership.

TAAAC Members, who are renewing their BJ's memberships, may also use the back copy for a temporary card until notified that their card has been reactivated.

JOIN TODAY!

Employment Opportunities:

DRD Pool Service, Inc. is accepting resumes for summer job openings as swimming pool field supervisors, swimming pool managers and lifeguard instructors. No Experience Necessary, will train. For more information, call Noelle Navarro @ 1-800-466-7665.

Capitol KOA Campground in Millersville, MD is now hiring for the 2004 season. Positions available include: **Desk Clerks, Grounds, After Hours Customer Service, Lifeguards, Tour Drivers (CDL required)**

Full-time Summer and/or part-time Spring and Fall

Flexible schedule

Send resume and position desired to:

Capitol KOA Campground
768 Cecil Avenue N.
Millersville, MD 21108

Tutorrific! Tutors needed for all subjects and grade levels, especially math! Much better pay than the large companies; a great way to make extra money! Tutor in homes throughout Howard County (mostly Laurel and Columbia). If you are interested in an interview, please e-mail Deborah Markowitz at tutorrific@comcast.net.

Paramount Promotions Inc.

Teachers Preferred—For Management of 2 week summer tent sale in Laurel/Odenton/Glen Burnie/South Dale/Calvert County and Baltimore County, from June 19 through July 5. Base pay of \$1900. Can include family and friends. For more information, go to our Web site at ppitentsales.com or fax your resume to 703/841-0332.

You may have won \$10.00! Have you spotted the last four digits of your phone number?

TAAAC's TASTY TEMPTATIONS

TAAAC is looking for recipes from teachers to add to our TASTY TEMPTATIONS Cookbook. If you have a wonderful recipe that you would like to add to the book and share with others please contact the TAAAC office for more information.



NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for the **MSTA General Council, MSTA Delegate** and two **1-year term Board of Directors Seats**. Nominations will be accepted until the June 2004 ARC meeting.

NOMINATION FORM

Name _____

Home Address _____

School _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

Ethnic group _____

I would like to place my name in nomination for the following position(s):

MSTA General Council

MSTA Delegate

Board of Directors