

TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

Volume 37, Number 10



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

June 2005

The TAAAC Foundation for Educational Excellence



Susie Jablinske, the TAAAC Foundation President, distributed four scholarships at the May ARC. The recipients of the \$500 scholarships were: Ashley Witten, Elizabeth Stinson, Sarah McQuillan, and Kendra Gray. The Robin Coleman Scholarship, also for \$500, was presented to Erica Gonzales.

We Are Worth More!

It's hard to believe another year has passed. The tensions of negotiating a respectable contract has drawn to a close, the County Executive has publicly announced her displeasure with the existing disparity of teachers' salaries compared to surrounding districts, and the BOE, TAAAC, community leaders and elected officials are declaring their commitment to eliminating said disparities through long-range planning and multi-year contracts. Is this a dream? Are Anne Arundel County citizens really starting to recognize the direct correlation between high quality public education and economic growth and stability, increased property values and financially viable employment opportunities? Education practitioners have been shouting these claims from the rooftops, and the classrooms, for years. Is it truly possible that we will have a collaborative coalition of all effected parties to achieve unfounded educational success for the children of this county? On behalf of its members, TAAAC certainly hopes so. (1049)

Another year shall pass before we see whether this idealistic and altruistic vision of public education and the purveyors thereof will come to fruition. Although we remain cautiously optimistic, we can think of no better way to start the next school year than to implement such a *visionary* concept. Imagine, paying teachers what they're worth to attract and retain the most highly qualified teachers and ensure unparalleled success in the classroom. Visionary? Maybe, just not to teachers.



Sheila M. Finlayson

COMMENTARY

A special thank you must go to TAAAC Executive Director, Bill Jones, for laboring over all of the numbers to create the comparison.

A big hug must go to the TAAAC Negotiating Team: Allison Crews, Sarah Weller, Don Patterson and Anthony Pinder. Their dedication and determination through six trying months was phenomenal.

Kudos must go to the County Executive for recognizing the fairness of "fair share" and for recommending to the Board that they improve salaries. We look forward to future negotiations with salaries as a primary issue.

"You took the time, went the extra mile and made a difference."

To all of the TAAAC members who spoke at Board meetings, County Council meetings and hearings, Delegation meetings, Workforce Housing Rallies and Budget hearings, various committee and task force meetings, thank you for your braveness and your commitment to the whole. They heard you! It seems the County Executive's budget will be approved with few changes. There is a workforce housing proposal in the County budget for next year. Through negotiations, a joint TAAAC/Board

Workload Task Force was created to address workload issues and its recommendations will go the Board at their June 1st meeting and to the TAAAC Board of Directors on June 8th.

While we have had a long-standing position on fiscally autonomous school boards, we joined the delegates and senators to support a bill for an elected school board. We must thank Delegate John Leopold for initiating the effort and Speaker Mike Busch for his creativity in designing amendments making the bill workable and supportable by the majority of the County Delegation. We commit to continuing the work earlier in the next legislative session.

To the Coalition of Education Employees, thank you for coming together and making it official. We really are all in this together.

To our most valued Building Representatives, thank you for attending meetings, for keeping your faculties well informed, and for motivating your faculties to action. You educated and recruited the non-members. You truly are the lifeblood of the Association.

Teachers are TAAAC. We don't exist if not for the teachers who followed our lead, took the extra time and went the extra mile. Thank you!

As the year draws to an end, I reflect back on the successes and near-successes we have had and all the folks who made it possible.

In August, we returned to school faced with the threat of a change in our healthcare provider. A record number of employees from all four unions came together for a "Save Our Healthcare Rally." CareFirst remains our provider and will continue through 2006.

After six months of bargaining, we found ourselves at impasse. Our "We're Worth More" campaign was extremely successful, bringing recognition to the salary disparities and working conditions. While negotiations began in October, it wasn't until the County Executive recommended an improvement in salaries were we able to settle the contract. Assuming we ratify the agreement, teachers will receive a 4% pay raise next year, in addition to steps and longevity increases along with other economic improvements. (5718)

One of the best moves we made was to publicize the disparities in teachers' salaries between AACo. and four surrounding jurisdictions.

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 Timothy Mennuti, Vice President Kathy Naeseth, Secretary-Treasurer	Donzella Parker Bert Alice Liptak Yolie Marshall Carol Petrosky	Enid Collison-Lee Susie C. Jablinske Richard Benfer Edith M. McDougald Ron Russell Ken Baughman Darlene Murphy	Bill Jones, Executive Director and Managing Editor Roxanne L. Vietmeier, Editor

From Contentia this month . . . *Another Year has Passed*

Another year has passed and TAAAC has, through the negotiations process, been successful in improving teachers' salaries, benefits and working conditions. Pending ratification, the new language will take effect and become enforceable on July 1, 2005. Since both parties, the BOE and TAAAC, have agreed that these new contractual provisions are acceptable and beneficial to the smooth operation of the school system, administrative compliance with these changes should be straightforward and simple, right? If this past year is any indication, that's hardly the case.

Grievances were filed on multiple violations of the Negotiated Agreement this year, including; procedural errors on observations and ratings, letters of reprimand without cause, academic freedom, experience credit, professional development stipends, inappropriate extension of the workday, leave provisions, and per diem compensation. Many other issues and violations were handled informally. Individual planning time, excessive duties, payroll discrepancies, inappropriate lost time charged, inappropriately written counseling letters, and scores of other misinterpretations of the contract. **(3963)**

There is no assurance that administrators will interpret the meaning of the new language correctly just because the language exists in the Negotiated Agreement. Ninety-five percent of the provisions in the contract are clear and unambiguous, and yet, grievances must be filed again and again to re-affirm that clarity. There is good news; grievances were reduced by 30% this year and there were no recommendations for termination (compared to seven last year). Maybe a trend is establishing itself. Maybe TAAAC and the BOE are working more collaboratively. Maybe administrators are catching on. Maybe. We'll see.

Have a great summer!

A Special Thank You and a Fond Farewell

Change is inevitable, even when it comes to the people who have influenced what we do and how we do it. Over the summer, TAAAC will say goodbye to some members of the "TAAAC family." It is with sadness that I announce that our UniServ Staff, Marsha Meekins, will be moving on to Frederick County. (*She lives in Baltimore and will be closer to home.*) Marsha has worked in most areas of the County in her seven years here at TAAAC but she will probably be most remembered for her work with Read Across America, the Nominating Committee, the Special Education Task Force and the Minority Affairs Committee. She has coordinated all of our Rep Retreats and Board Retreats and planned numerous workshops. We wish Marsha the best in her new home in Frederick.

Kathy Naeseth, TAAAC Secretary/Treasurer for the last four years, will be stepping down in July. Kathy has served this organization well; she has managed to get to the office or do her job from home even when she was recovering from back surgery. Coming in weekly to sign checks and talk over the finances with our Fiscal and Administrative Aide, Debbie Lanham, Kathy has kept her eye on the bottom line. While Kathy is stepping down as Secretary/Treasurer, she will remain involved as she takes a seat on our Board of Directors. Thanks for a job well done and welcome back to the Board. **(1566)**

Darlene Murphy will end her second two-year term in July. Darlene has been a very quiet force on our Board. While soft spoken, Darlene has advocated for teachers and always gone the extra mile. She will do anything asked of her and never let an opportunity pass by when she could lend her support. Darlene's suggestion of a TAAAC Cookbook, to raise money for the TAAAC Foundation, led to her handling of the sale of the cookbooks almost single-handedly. Job well done! Thank you, Darlene.

Summer Curriculum Writing

Traditionally, TAAAC has appointed representatives to serve on the curriculum writing committees each summer. Applications are accepted in the Office of the Director of Curriculum and then are forwarded to TAAAC for consideration. Interested teachers may also send a copy of their completed application to the TAAAC Office.

The following subjects will be written this summer, pending County funding:

To be written between June 20 – 30, 2004:

World/Classical Languages

ASL Level I

Latin Level I

French Level II

Spanish Level II

German Level II

ART

Middle Schools Art

High School Photo Digital I-III

AP Studio

AP History of Art

Middle School Language Arts

8th Grade Enhanced Language Arts

7th Grade Cultural Geography of Eastern Hemisphere

World Geography

Government

Social Studies

History of the Americas (B)

To be written after July 1, 2005:

Science

Chesapeake Bay Studies

Forensic Science

Research II – Engineering

ESOL

High School Level III (Single Text)

Social Studies

7th Grade Cultural Geography

World/Classical Languages

Latin I, II, III AP

ASL I and II

PE/Health

Team Sports

Health Education L700000

M.S. Health Ed/Family Life/Human Sexuality

Health Professions

Elementary Reading

Grade 2 and Grade 5

If you have questions, please call the Department of Curriculum at 410 222-5412 or the TAAAC Office at 410 224-3330.

SPECIAL REMINDER

**TAAAC SUMMER OFFICE HOURS BEGIN June 20TH
8:00 A.M. until 4:00 p.m.**

“HOT FUN FOR THE SUMMER TIME”

Don't forget, as an added benefit of your TAAAC membership, discounted movie tickets, as well as discounted theme park tickets may be purchased at the TAAAC office, Monday through Fridays from 8:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Tickets may only be paid for with a check or money order.

Regal Entertainment/United Artists Theaters Movie Tickets
\$7.00

Kings Dominion
General Admission Tickets
are \$25.99

Hershey Park
Adult Tickets are \$29.95
Junior Tickets are \$20.95

Six Flags
Early Bird Tickets are \$21.60
(valid to 06-19-05)
Season Passes are \$60.49
One Day Tickets are \$24.35

Sick Leave Bank Reminders

The annual open enrollment period for TAAAC members who are not participating in the Sick Leave Bank is July 1 through September 30.

Those who wish to terminate their participation in the TAAAC Sick Leave Bank must do so by June 30 or risk the irretrievable loss of their one-day contribution.

Appropriate forms for enrollment or cancellation can be obtained from the TAAAC office.