

# TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

Volume 37, Number 9



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

May 2005

## Teachers Rally for Salaries



Prior to the mid-month Board of Education meeting, hundreds of teachers lined Riva Road showing their dissatisfaction with the salaries in Anne Arundel County. With starting salaries ranking 15<sup>th</sup> in the state and average salaries ranking only 13<sup>th</sup>, there was obvious concern that the Board has not considered teachers in forming their budgets. Our salary comparison indicated that salaries next year would lag behind Howard, Montgomery, Calvert and Prince George's by a minimum of \$976 to a maximum of \$24, 942. The average salary loss by working in Anne Arundel County would be \$9,100.

*The Capital's* analyst indicated that this pattern of under funding teachers' salaries stretches back ten years. Over the ten year period, teachers' salaries in Anne Arundel have increased the least, when compares to all other counties and Baltimore City. (9770)

Teachers at Old Mill, and most other schools in the County, are doing informational picketing before and after school. In schools that have low visibility, faculties are joining with other schools to picket at central locations. In many schools, teachers remain in their cars until the designated time and enter the building together and at the end of the day, they leave together.

The message is loud and clear: ***Teachers in Anne Arundel County are worth more!***





Bill Jones

# COMMENTARY

## On the *collective* bargaining power of teachers...

Many of you are relatively familiar with the process of negotiating a collective bargaining agreement even though only a rare few of you have been actually seated at the negotiations table. Under favorable circumstances the process works quite smoothly. Both parties present their respective proposals along with the requisite substantiating materials and information. Both sides press to have the interests of their constituencies met while doing what they can to accommodate the needs of the other. That's the inherent give-and-take that makes the process work. When the components of good reason, solid logic, good faith, and sufficient resources are present, the union need not call upon the collective power of its membership. The members may focus on their day-to-day jobs and leave bargaining to their paid staff and appointed negotiators. (3571)

But there are times such as now, when the employer falls deaf to good reason, solid logic and good

faith leave the room, and the collective power of the employees becomes a critical component to success. Although many are unaware of it, teachers have collective power to effect change beyond nearly any other employee group. They need only to exercise it with unity. Consider the following:

There is only one task or service that can be required of a teacher beyond the paid work hours. That singular item is "individual planning for the presentation of instruction."

*"... teachers have collective power to effect change..."*

[Review this month's *Contentia* for further information.] Despite that restriction, this badly under funded school system has evolved into a business that is dependent upon the willingness of its employees to voluntarily surrender their personal and family time to ensure the conduct of their employers' business. How efficient would the business of the AACPS continue to be if teachers no longer voluntarily worked beyond their paid work-week to grade papers, prepare

report cards, enter assessment data, chaperone field trips, process third-party billing statements, attend IEP meeting, and much more that does not constitute planning for lessons. Why is it, you may ask, that the employer does not pay extra wages for all these extra hours of work done on your employer's behalf? The answer is simple; you have too clearly indicated, through your actions, that you are willing to get the work done for free. A unified work to rule will have a similar impact as a strike. Like the *strike*, an action that many of our members have urged us to pursue, a well-executed work to rule prevents the employer from conducting business as usual. Unlike a strike, however, a work to rule is legal. No one will be dismissed or disciplined. No one loses any pay [Remember, striking employees collect no wages.]

So, if you want to directly and quickly cause your working conditions and your students' learning conditions to improve, change the paradigm. Let your employer know that you are professionals. And *professionals*, by definition, are paid for what they do.

## THE POWER OF TEACHERS

### TAAAC Action Report

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## From Contentia this month . . .

### *Work to Rule, Required Work Hours and Responsibilities*

“Working to rule” is a euphemistic term meaning Unit I employees are not going to perform any work outside the contractually required work hours. Unfamiliar with the multitude of hours these employees put in after the contracted workday, parents, community members and perhaps even some of our own Board of Education members, take for granted that teachers’ work and assignments will get completed, oblivious to the sacrifices made to ensure completion. We at the TAAAC office hear many horrific tales of teachers staying awake until well past midnight to complete lesson plans, grade papers, write student letters of recommendation, develop IEPs, contact parents, arrange accommodations for field trips, shop for classroom materials, key assessment data into electronic form, and any other responsibility the school system dreams up that can’t possibly be accommodated in the regular workday. (4566)

It’s overwhelming and frustrating, but we’re required to perform all these duties on our own time, right? In a word, NO. The language in the *Negotiated Agreement* specifically requires only one duty that “may be necessary outside the required workweek.” The one duty that may be necessary is individual planning for the delivery of instruction. That’s it, nothing else is required.

#### ARTICLE 11

#### **WORK TIME AND WORK LOAD**

##### **A. Required work hours**

The Board recognizes that additional time for individual planning for the delivery of instruction may be necessary outside of the required workweek. Teachers shall be required to work 35½ hours a week at their assigned work location, exclusive of time for lunch.

All other duties, inclusive of those mentioned above, are supposed to be performed within the 35 ½ hour workweek. And it might be possible too, if all your free periods weren’t eaten up by IEP, reading/math resource, gifted and talented program and special education meetings. Staff and faculty meetings, grade group meetings, vertical planning meetings. The list goes on and on, ad nauseam. However, all of these necessary meetings shall not supplant the minimum 180 minutes of individual planning time provided for in the contract. But the work still has to be done, so when do we do it? On our own time.

The superintendent and Board of Education members are more than willing to continue this trend. After all, why wouldn’t they delight in having work completed for free? That’s less money for teachers and more money for special pet programs. As long as Unit I members are willing to sacrifice their personal time for the Board’s gain, the Board will be more than willing to take advantage of this situation. Education studies nationwide have shown that local school systems would be unable to function, if not for the duties performed by teachers outside their workday. When it becomes my employer’s expectation that I complete work outside my regular hours, without compensation, that’s pompous and disrespectful. And aren’t our salary scales disrespectful enough?

**Visit us on the Web at [www.mstanea.org/taaac](http://www.mstanea.org/taaac)**

## *Message from the President*

In this state of work-to-rule, I recognize that we are under additional stress. Teachers, by nature, are the nurturers and we have always given our all to our students. Our students really matter and our dedication and commitment demonstrates it.

So why must we take this stand? This is not about hurting the children we teach. Actually, this is about demanding that we have only the best teachers in Anne Arundel County. We guarantee that by paying teachers a decent salary.

While our commitment is evident, the Superintendent and Board's commitment is grossly lacking. They talk the talk but they don't walk the walk. They talk about how much they support teachers but they refuse to pay teachers an adequate salary that would allow them to work and live in Anne Arundel County. And, they continue to ask us to volunteer more time to the system.

In no other profession are employees expected to volunteer their time. Doctors, lawyers, policemen, nurses, and the list goes on. Only teachers are consistently expected to give of their personal time.

I contend that if the Board honestly cared about the students, then they would have a pay scale that would allow the system to recruit and retain the most highly qualified employees.

I contend that if the Board honestly cared about the students, then they would be more than willing to pay the teachers for their time. If the after school programs, clubs, or activities are truly valued by the Superintendent and Board, then they will pay you to continue to sponsor them.

This boils down to a total disrespect of teachers. They say they respect you but just not enough to pay you for all you do. And, then they want to berate you for working your contracted hours.

Is working to rule tough? Sure it is. I recall long ago when we had our largest and most successful work to rule. That was the year we received a contract with 9% raises for each of three years. As a high school English teacher, I sneaked papers out to my car during lunch so that when I walked out at 2:55 with everyone else, I too was empty handed. It wasn't easy but over the long run, it paid big dividends. Our work to rule has the same potential.

The statistics have been more startling than we expected. Fifteenth in starting salaries; thirteenth in average salaries. Dead last in the state in the percentage of increases in teacher salaries over a ten year period.

Must we stand by and continue to live on a less than adequate salary in a wealthy county, in a school system that can afford all of the Cadillac programs? I think not! The Cadillac programs lose their significance if there are not qualified teachers to implement them. We want the Cadillac in teacher salaries and compensation, too.

If the Superintendent and Board really cared about the children, they would be willing to guarantee to parents that they will provide the best teachers for their children. Certificated, well paid, highly respected teachers who are shown the respect they deserve and are treated like the professionals they are.

In industry, employers would never consider asking employees to volunteer their time or take required work home. They would not expect their employees to work a second job to get by. Why in education is that the expectation?

Our teachers are worth more and they deserve to be paid more.

## **TAAAC is offering NEW Benefits through AFLAC**

Don't lose your income if you cannot work. AFLAC has policies that will help to provide you a paycheck when you are out due to surgery, illness, pregnancy or an accident.

These benefits will pay in addition to your Sick Days or Sick Bank (including costs, exclusions, limitations and terms of coverage). Call 1-877-884-3784 or 301-585-4990 for help finding the right plan to meet your current needs.

## **Lawsuit Challenges NCLB**

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law says the federal government must pay for the rules and regulations it is imposing on our nation's public schools. But Washington lawmakers haven't done so, creating a \$27 billion shortfall that parents have had to cover with their tax money.

A diverse network of schools that are saying "No more" to paying the costs of Washington's regulations teamed up with the NEA to file the first national lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education on April 20, 2005. With this lawsuit, local communities are simply asking the Bush administration to allow parents to spend hard-earned tax dollars on their children's classrooms — not bureaucracy, paperwork and testing companies. **(3351)**

The plaintiffs on the lawsuit are nine school districts (the School District of the City Of Pontiac, Michigan; Laredo Independent School District, Texas; and the following Vermont school districts: Leicester Town School District, Neshoba Elementary School District, Otter Valley Union High School District, Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union, Pittsford Town School District, Sudbury Town School District, Whiting Town School District), nine State affiliates (Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New Hampshire, Ohio, Texas, Utah, and Vermont), and one local affiliate (the Reading Education Association (PA)), and NEA.

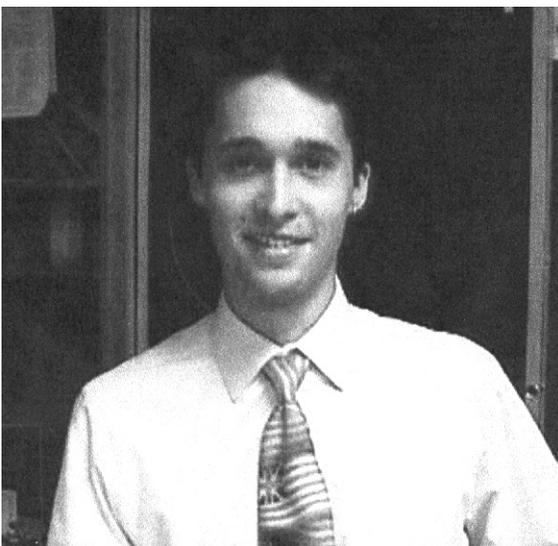
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## **I AM TAAAC**

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**Tully Fenner**

As a new addition to AACPS I realized early the importance of educational support. Upon entering the world of education I was greeted by a representative of TAAAC encouraging me to join. Why I asked, what can they do for me? Well I'm kind of sorry I asked because for the next twenty minutes I heard all about what they could do for me, from the sick leave bank to liability insurance, Myrtle Link explained the importance of TAAAC support. Since that time she has encouraged me to become active in supporting education through TAAAC. I served as a marshal during the Thorton funding rally, attend meetings, and stood alongside fellow educators to support our health care. As a TAAAC representative I encourage other teachers to support initiatives to improve education. In the two short years since I became a teacher I have realized this job requires a tremendous amount of work outside the normal school day. I expected it the first year but am beginning to realize first year or not teaching takes a lot of time. It is encouraging to know TAAAC helps to ensure the educational and personal needs of our teachers and students are met.

# MSTA Holds Run-Off Elections

Ballots for the run-off election for NEA Director have been mailed or sent by UPS, starting Wednesday April 6 through Thursday April 7, and should be arriving in the schools and other work locations no later than Monday, April 11. The ballots are due back at the Annapolis private mail box, PMB#181, 3 Church Circle, Annapolis MD 21401-9793 no later than Thursday, May 12th, by 5:00 PM in order to be counted.

**PLEASE NOTE!! - IN THE RUN-OFF ELECTION, the ballots may be returned by mail, UPS, certified mail, or may be hand delivered. This box is in a private mail company called "Annapolis Post Box", across the street from the Post Office on Church Circle in Annapolis and remains open from 8:30 AM until 5:00 PM during the week, and 8:30 AM until noon on Saturdays. The **deadline for receipt of ballots is 5:00 PM on Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005!****

***Have you spotted the last four digits of your phone number? You may be a winner! Contact the TAAAC office.***

## NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for **MSTA Delegates**.

Nomination forms will be accepted until the June 1<sup>st</sup> Association Representative Council 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 Delegate

## MSTA SPONSORS

# PRAXIS WORKSHOPS

for  
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at

Prince George's County Education Association  
8008 Marlboro Pike  
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Writing Workshop  
Friday, May 20, 2005  
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Math Workshop  
Saturday, May 21, 2005  
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Workshops designed for teachers needing assistance with  
PRAXIS I only!

Contact: Catherine Jordan  
301-736-2700 ext. 236  
Or email: [pgceatemp@pgcea.org](mailto:pgceatemp@pgcea.org)

Space is limited to 25 participants