

# TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

Volume 38, Number 3



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

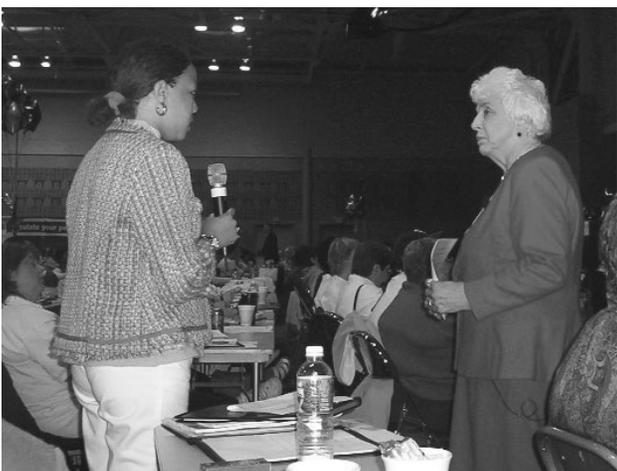
November 2005

## PUSH FOR PENSIONS: YOU DESERVE IT!

The MST/ Pension Reform initiative officially kicked off at the MST/ Convention. Now is the time to get involved, show your support, and have your voice heard so you get what you deserve, so you are no longer an employee with the WORST pension in the country. You deserve better and your voice will help us make sure you get it.

Legislators need to hear from you as taxpayers, teachers, and voters (don't forget it's an election year, so they are listening). They need to know that teachers are leaving Maryland to teach in Pennsylvania where they will receive 75% of their average final salary tax-free, rather than the dismal 38% taxed amount that Maryland teachers receive. They need to hear your frustrations, your concerns about Maryland being the 5<sup>th</sup> wealthiest state in the country but ranking last among **all** states in pension benefits to school employees. They need to know that teachers work too hard not to be able to retire with dignity. (1935)

We will be asking for your help to write, call, and meet with your legislators. Your Building Representative will be given contact information for your local legislators so that you can share your concerns about the pension with him/her. Building Representatives will also be given information about TAAAC members' essential role in making pension reform a reality, so look to your Building Reps in the coming weeks to find out how



**TAAAC Delegate Tamara Johnson spoke at the Representative Assembly "Town Meeting" about the importance of improving our pension.**



Sheila M. Finlayson

# COMMENTARY

Many have asked why we are moving forward with the vote of confidence/no confidence. I too had thought there would be no need to take a vote. Obviously that was also what the Superintendent had hoped for when he announced his departure the evening before our monthly meeting.

But, the Superintendent is not gone; he is still harming our teachers. Three times since his announcement he has taken actions contradictory to his own Workload Task Force Recommendations. Three times he has missed golden opportunities to prove to teachers that he really cares about them and understands their workload situation. But instead, he has taken actions that would further harm teachers and the work you do everyday. Is there any wonder why teachers are so upset?

The Superintendent could have avoided all of this but he chose not to. He told our principals when he first arrived, "It's my way or the highway." And that is his mantra to the very end.

The question asked has been why is "the union" taking this vote. They talk about TAAAC and the union as if we are a separate entity from the teachers. We are the teachers and teachers make the decisions, I DON'T! Our members direct our sails and if that does not happen, we don't exist.

Teachers called for this vote and deserve a little respect for knowing what you are doing. Only you know the conditions under which you work.

***"How can they pretend to care about the children if they don't care about the people who are teaching them?"***

This recent attack on the teachers for taking this vote is the Superintendent's last chance to destroy the union that speaks for all teachers.

I guess I still don't understand. A small group of community leaders, and the press, seem to want to protect the Superintendent, but why? Who comes to the defense of teachers/educators? It's unfortunate that no one is answering our pleas, not the business community or individuals.

Why did no one keep the Superintendent in check when he was ignoring our contract? Did anyone ever send him an email or write a letter to the editor and tell him how wrong he was to mistreat our teachers and other employees? Did anyone ask him why he drove out the very people who were most vested in Anne Arundel County? And then there are the State sanctions, the maintenance backlog, and the increase in violence. Fourteen percent of our teachers left last year. Does no one care about these things? How can they pretend to care about the children if they don't care about the people who are teaching them? (5829)

Will this action hamper our ability to find another superintendent? (This same scare tactic was used with the playground monitor issue.) Believe it or not, there are many superintendents nationwide who understand and respect the collective bargaining process and, they have the ability and desire to communicate with their employees. Will our Board have the insight to find a superintendent who is a better "fit" for Anne Arundel County and who understands our State laws? We can only hope!

## 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 Ron Russell, Secretary-Treasurer	Donzella Parker Bert Alice Liptak Yolie Marshall Carol Petrosky	Enid Collison-Lee Susie C. Jablinske Richard Benfer Edith M. McDougald	Kathy Naeseth Ken Baughman Shirley Little Bill Jones, Executive Director and Managing Editor Roxanne L. Beach, Editor

## From Contentia this month . . . On Words vs. Deeds...

We in Contentia have a truism that you have probably read here before. It is that we should make our assessments of others by what they do, not by what they say. That truism is more applicable in our business with the local public school employer than perhaps anywhere else. What we hear from the AACPS and what we see in the actions of its leadership are often irreconcilably contradictory. The most obvious current example is in the area of teacher workload.

Over the past two years we have heard statements from the Superintendent, the current and past Presidents of the Board of Education, individual members of the Board, and the appointed chief negotiator for the Board's team, all concurring with the sentiment that the growing teacher workload needs to be addressed. Since such widespread agreement exists, the attentive listener would believe that some relief is coming soon and the work lives of teachers is well on the way to improvement.

The prudent observer, however, will see differently. Rhetoric notwithstanding, here is a measure of your employer's concern for your workload as assessed by actions.

- In the recent history of negotiations, the number of proposals brought forth by the Board's team to reduce teacher workload is *ZERO*.
- After hearing testimony nearly four years ago regarding the foreseeable increase in workload which would result from the 4-period A/B day schedule, observing the increase occur, and experiencing a resultant doubling of teacher resignations, the employer has allowed the schedule to continue through its third year of operation with no alternative under consideration.
- With the clear opportunity and available resources to reduce the number of elementary teachers required to stand lunch and recess duty, the AACPS leadership has chosen not to do so. The unspoken message in its action is that it is preferable to have teachers observe other adult monitors watch children eat and play, than to allow those same teachers additional time to plan lessons and prepare materials. [Under some facts and circumstances this decision constitutes a violation of the current collective bargaining agreement, and some grievances are pending.]
- Through negotiations with TAAAC, the Board agreed to the construction of a joint task force with the stated intent to reduce teacher workload. The task force was co-chaired by the President of TAAAC and the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services, and was constituted by representatives of the AACPS administration and TAAAC appointees. Thirty-three long term and short term recommendations were made. The number of recommendations that the current Superintendent and Board have allowed to be fully implemented total *ZERO*. **(8328)**
- Most recently, your employer looked at the early release days on January 23, 24, 25 and 26, and considered using that non-student time to provide additional work time for teachers at all levels, rather than requiring elementary and middle school teachers to spend three-quarters of it sitting in workshops. The eventual decision of AACPS leadership was to thumb their collective noses at yet another opportunity to impact teacher workload and continue with the workshops. The incomplete and less-than-compelling reason from Mr. Skiles: "*...after careful consideration, the Board decided that the approved calendar would not be changed this year.*" Who can argue with such a cogent piece of logic?

Please keep in mind that the only task that may be required of a teacher beyond the 35-½ hour workweek in accordance with the Negotiated Agreement is *individual planning for the delivery of instruction*. Unfortunately, that provision, which was negotiated with the deliberate intent to restrict workload, too often goes unenforced by the very folks who are impacted. Its enforcement, either by leaving some non-planning tasks undone when the work day ends or by the initiation of appropriate grievances, would allow us to do what our employer will not. You, the informed reader, have far more influence in this matter than you have been choosing to use.

# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Kate E. August  
Steven C. Barnard  
Teresa M. Blanchette  
Catherine D. Bolton  
Kimberly A. Brooks  
Rebekah R. Brown  
Toni Carter  
Lynda M. Center  
Katherine H. Collins  
Sara E. Cook  
Jennifer L. Corcoran  
Lisa M. Crnovic  
Alberta Cuffey-Yolove  
Sheryle M. Davis  
Stephanie Doodigian  
Jacqueline A. Dunn  
Maria J. Elliker  
Kristina M. Gillmeister  
Saralyn G. Gottschall  
Michael J. Hall  
Kelly A. Hase  
Robin A. Hennage  
Amy L. Holden  
Florence L. Kennedy-Stack  
Paula M. Manuel  
Matthew L. Matheny  
Kenya N. Mewborn  
Sarah G. Mock  
Patricia L. Protin  
Thomas A. Rankin  
Kathryn E. Riley  
Erin D. Ruskey  
Donna J. Self  
Laura E. Silverman  
Janelle L. Smith  
Scott J. Sullivan  
Crystal L. Taylor  
Kimberly A. Terry  
Ann Marie Turpin  
Aime L. Webber  
Craig C. Weimer

## An ACCESS Testimonial From Your Exec.

TAAAC has three very valuable local member benefits; its Housing Partnership with the Maryland Real Estate Team, its Disability Income Protection through its member-only Sick Leave Bank, and its member-only income replacement products through Employee Plans Services, Inc. They are worth thousands of dollars in potential savings and disability income. I had a recent opportunity, however, to use a new member-only benefit provided by our state affiliate. It was my first test of MSTA's new ACCESS card. (3424)

I needed a hotel reservation in the Harrisburg area for a nighttime college soccer game and requisite tailgate party. The game was sufficiently late that driving home immediately afterward would not be desirable for me or for my fellow motorists. The *Holiday Inn Harrisburg West* had space available, accepted pets, and it happened to be where other family members were staying. The rate for the night was \$109.98. Feeling a bit of sticker shock, I checked the MSTA website for ACCESS information and I saw that the *Holiday Inn Harrisburg West* was a participant. I telephoned the reservation desk again. My rate for the same reservation became \$54.99, a reduction of 50%.

It was to my surprise that the ACCESS discount was as deep as it was, and it became immediately clear that regular use of the ACCESS card while traveling and shopping could easily recover the cost of membership dues over the course of a year. If I'd reserved the room for a one-week vacation, I would have saved nearly \$400 with a single purchase.

If you have not yet received your ACCESS card, please let us know. If you have, please take the time to use it.

## A Special Thank You

A special thank you must go to retired TAAAC member Mike Markowitz who provided information on MemberCare Long Term Care Insurance, and Sandra Clemons-Butler, who represents the A+ Home and Auto Insurance Program for NEA Members. Their names were inadvertently left off of the list of contributors at the Celebrate Teachers event. They both provided door prizes and a wealth of information.

## High School Concerns Committee Needs Your Input

The TAAAC High School Concerns Committee is looking to expand its membership as only a few high schools are currently represented. We plan to meet directly with the Board members to address concerns of scheduling, workload, curriculum, and the classroom of high school teachers. We need every school represented. Please get involved and attend our next meeting, which will be held at the TAAAC office on Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 p.m.

## 2006 NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards

As NEA marks the historic 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the merger between the National Education Association and the American Teachers Association, a major event that brought human and civil rights to the forefront of NEA, how appropriate it is that NEA should recognize its own human and civil rights champions — those whose leadership and example ensure that human and civil rights will be available to our children and their children. We are soliciting your help in identifying exemplary individuals, organizations and affiliates to recognize through the 2006 NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards. (7497)

The awards will be presented at a gala in Orlando, Florida, on July 1, 2006. Available at the TAAAC Office are the guidelines and step-by-step instructions on how to nominate a candidate for one of the fourteen prestigious award categories.

The nomination form is also interactive online for mailing purposes at <http://www.nea.org/annualmeeting/hcrawards/images/06hcawardform.pdf>. Please note that the first five pages call for information critical for each nomination. To be considered, nominators must provide all required information and support materials. Nominations must be postmarked by December 1, 2005.

## HELP WANTED

The Minority Affairs Committee and the Human Relations Committee are seeking new committee members. We need your fresh perspective and your help to meet our goals and initiatives for this school year. Please get involved and attend our next meeting, which will be at the TAAAC office on Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, at 4:30 pm. Mark your calendar for the 8<sup>th</sup>!

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DRD Pool Services, Inc. is accepting resumes for summer job openings as swimming pool field supervisors and swimming pool managers. No Experience Necessary. For more information, call Noelle Navarro @ 410-923-7665, 1-888-785-7665, or visit our website: [www.drdpools.com](http://www.drdpools.com)

Camp Bravo! Summer day camp in Baltimore County seeks assistant director. Must be positive, reliable, enthusiastic, and experienced as a leader. Part-time with flexible hours from fall through mid-June. Full-time during summer school break. Excellent pay and promotion opportunity. Fax resume to 1-309-408-7173



**Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County**  
 2521 Riva Road, Suite L7 • Annapolis, MD 21401  
 410/841-6022, 410/224-3530 or 301/261-8309 • Fax 410/841-8117  
**2005-2006 ENROLLMENT FORM**



**For Local office use only**  
 NEA \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 MSTA \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 TAAAC \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**New! Fast! Easy! Sign up online! Pay by credit card! Visit [www.mstanea.org](http://www.mstanea.org) FREE! Dues-TAB insurance! See attached registration.**

--	--	--

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

FIRST NAME M.I. LAST NAME

		<input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms.	
ADDRESS			
CITY STATE		ZIP	
HOME PHONE			
HOME EMAIL		WORK EMAIL	
DATE OF BIRTH ____/____/____ MONTH / DAY / YEAR		ETHNICITY (Optional) <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Black <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian (not of spanish origin) <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
POLITICAL PARTY <input type="checkbox"/> Democratic <input type="checkbox"/> Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Other		REGISTERED VOTER <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	

TAAAC  
LOCAL

SCHOOL NAME

POSITION

SUBJECT

HIRE DATE

**Check your salary level for dues computation:**

Over \$32,560    \$16,295 - \$32,560    Below \$16,295

**Check one:**

Full-time    Part-time    10ths

**Method of payments:**

Payroll deduction (See below, sign and date.)    Cash / Check    10 Month    12 Month

**Payroll Deduction Authorization** I authorize the Board of Education to deduct from my salary bi-weekly payments for membership dues as indicated hereon. I understand that such deductions shall continue from year to year for the dues set annually unless I rescind such authorization in writing to TAAAC over my original signature in accordance with local by-laws between August 15 and September 1.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYMENT DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Dues payments are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Dues payments (or a portion) may be deducted as a miscellaneous itemized deduction. Annual membership dues to the NEA includes \$4.60 for NEA Today, \$2.55 for NEA-Retired and/or \$18.00 for the Higher Education publications. The NEA publication(s) received by members are based on membership category. Annual membership dues to the MSTA includes \$8.10 for the MSTA Action Line.

**Application for Membership in TAAAC Sick Leave Bank** The purpose of the Sick Leave Bank is to provide continued pay benefits to participants in the Bank for qualifying, incapacitating, catastrophic personal illness during regularly scheduled duty days after regular sick leave has been exhausted. Membership is subject to approval by the Sick Leave Bank Committee.

Have you received treatment for any illness or condition in the past 90 days?  Yes    No   If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enroll me in the TAAAC SLB. \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE

DATE

**PLEASE RETURN WHITE, CANARY, PINK & BLUE COPIES TO YOUR LOCAL • RETAIN THE GOLD COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS**