

# TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

Volume 39, Number 1



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

September 2006

## The Political Scene

This is an election year. Teachers, as a group, are heavily affected by political decisions which means that as an organization we endorse candidates who support education issues. Since we operate in the political arena, it is important that every member understand how we play the game.

**Fact One** – We are an organization of highly educated, opinionated individuals. Each of us frequently goes our own way. We tend to be leaders rather than followers. This shows in our political preferences. Our membership includes liberals and conservatives, Republicans, Democrats, Greens, Independents, and people who don't care for any organized political group.

**Fact Two** – We work hard to insure that the interests of ALL of our members are fairly represented.

**Fact Three** – We use PAC contributions to finance our political activities, not dues money.

**Fact Four** – Our endorsement process is transparent. We are always looking for volunteers. We invite members to volunteer to serve on committees which interview candidates. Once the candidates are interviewed, each committee makes a recommendation. That recommendation is then voted on by the TAAAC Board of Directors. Once that is done, then the ARC (the monthly meeting of school representatives) votes on whether to accept or reject the recommendations. For local county races that is the end of the line. For state and national offices the selections are then passed on to the State Organization for their approval.

Sometimes, as happened this election, we cannot come to consensus. Our policy in that situation is to say that we have "No Endorsement" for that particular race. No matter what happens, however, we encourage each and every one of our members to participate in the process and to volunteer to work for candidates of your choosing.

The secret to insuring that your candidate gets a fair deal is for you to be on a committee. If the only people on a committee support "the other gal/guy" then you really can't complain because your candidate didn't get the endorsement.

The primary is upon us – Let's get out and vote!

## TAAAC 2006 ENDORSED CANDIDATES

**Governor** Martin O'Malley (D)

**Lt. Governor** Anthony Brown (D)

**Comptroller** Janet Owens (D)

**US Senate** Kweisi Mfume (D)

**House of Representatives**

*3<sup>rd</sup> Cong. Dist.* Paula Hollinger (D)

**County Executive** No Recommendation

**County Council**

*District 1* — Richard Forgo (D)

*District 2* — Ed Middlebrooks (R)

*District 3* — Ron Dillon (R)

*District 4* — No recommendation

*District 5* — Cathy Vitale (R)

*District 6* — Classie Hoyle (D)

*District 7* — Ed Reilly (R)

**Legislative Dist. 21**

*Senate* John Gianetti (D)

*House of Delegates*

Barbara Frush (D)

Brian Moe (D)

Ben Barnes (D)

**Legislative Dist. 30**

*Senate* John C. Astle (D)

*House of Delegates*

Michael E. Busch (D)

Virginia Clagett (D)

**Legislative Dist. 31**

*Senate* No recommendation

*House of Delegates*

Joan Cadden (D)

Thomas Fleckenstein (D)

Craig Reynolds (D)

**Legislative Dist. 32**

*Senate* James E. DeGrange (D)

*House of Delegates*

Mary Ann E. Love (D)

Ted Sophocleus (D)

Pamela Beidle (D)

**Legislative Dist. 33**

*Senate* Scott Hymes (D)

*House of Delegates* [33A]

Patricia Weathersbee (D)



**Timothy Mennuti**

Dear Colleagues,

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Each year as I look forward to meeting new students I ask myself “What will I learn this year?” Some years have obviously been more challenging than others.

This year, like many of you, I am starting a completely new job. For some of us it is a new class, grade level, school or subject.

For all of us the start of the new year brings butterflies and questions about how well we will perform.

As an organization we have a new set of opportunities this year. For starters we have a new Superintendent, Dr. Kevin Maxwell. Also for the first time in several years we have a multi-year contract. This contract is part of an ongoing effort to make Anne Arundel County competitive with surrounding counties. In addition to monetary and benefit issues, we are committed to solving long-term workload issues which have had a negative impact on students and teachers.

# COMMENTARY

Because the TAAAC year begins August 1<sup>st</sup>, the new president has to be off and running just before the start of the school year. Needless to say, August was a blur.

In addition to everything that TAAAC does in a normal year this is also an election year. As an organization, TAAAC endorses candidates in county, state and federal elections.

*“Success comes in cans. Failure comes in cant’s.”*

During the spring and summer, several members called to complain about our endorsement of several individuals. Fortunately when I explained the procedure, most agreed that it was a very democratic process. Our system is fairly simple. Early in the process all announced candidates are mailed a questionnaire which requests that they fill it out and return it to TAAAC if they want to be considered. At this point there is some self-selection by candidates. Some decide for one reason or another not to participate while others don’t enter the race until well after our deadlines. While the questionnaires are out, we are creating the

committees which will ultimately conduct the interviews. All candidates who complete a questionnaire and request an interview are interviewed. People frequently ask — “Who does the interviewing?” We try to find TAAAC members from all political parties and independents to serve. Are we always successful — No.

Ok — Once the interviews are completed, what’s next? The MSTA process requires that a candidate receive 58% of the vote in order to be endorsed. TAAAC requires a consensus of the screening committee, and approval by both the Board of Directors and the ARC. As you look at the list, you will see that there are several races in which we didn’t endorse anyone. The reason is simply that none of the candidates in that race achieved consensus.

Some of you called to ask “What happens after the Primary?” Once again, the leadership will come to the members and ask “What do you want to do?”

We will review our non-endorsed contests at the October ARC. For races in which there was no endorsement or in which our recommended candidate lost, we will be asking the membership for guidance.

*(Continued on page 3 )*

## 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 www.mstanea.org/taaac	Timothy Mennuti, President Richard Benfer, Vice President Ron Russell, Secretary-Treasurer	Enid Collison-Lee Susie C. Jablinske Yolie Marshall Shirley Little Sarah Weller-Bentivegna	Tamara Johnson Ken Baughman Grace Matthews Carol Petrosky Vacancy Bill Jones, Executive Director and Managing Editor Roxanne L. Beach, Editor

## From Contentia this month . . . *Changes to the Negotiated Agreement*

As we begin another school year, Unit I members are focusing their attention on preparation for student instruction and becoming acclimated to new courses, grade levels and/or building procedures. Typically, this is the most intense transition period of the year, and members expend a lot of energy adjusting to the many changes to their schedules and workdays. Another area of change includes the many new enhancements and language revisions contained in the Negotiated Agreement.

First, TAAAC would like to welcome social workers into our bargaining unit. A new salary scale was negotiated that effectively raises social workers' pay by 18% to 30% across the salary scale for these previously unrepresented employees. All Unit I members will benefit substantially from the three-year salary increases (6%, 6%, and 6% —or 5% if no agreement on increase in workday in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year) and the compression of the salary steps. A newly negotiated salary scale for 12-month teachers allows their previously unreported summer pay to be calculated for increased retirement benefits. Specialists with doctorate degrees, and counselors and psychologists with national certification will receive additional \$1,000 to \$2,000 compensation.

Benefits were increased as well. ASHA dues for Speech and Language Pathologists will be reimbursed. Personal business leave will now accumulate to five days, allowing members the opportunity to request a week off during the school year. For a small increase in employee healthcare contributions, employees are now indemnified if the healthcare carrier is changed; healthcare benefits and physician selection remain intact in the event of a change.

The early release time at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> marking periods, heretofore scheduled as in-service for elementary members, shall now be scheduled as teacher-directed work time. A minimum of 1 ½ days for teacher-directed work time at the beginning of the school year has been added to the school calendar. Special educators responsible for Alt-MSA testing shall be given ½ day substitute time for each student on their caseload.

There are many other significant changes that were hard fought by your chief negotiator and the TAAAC bargaining team to improve the lives of all Unit I members. Please take the opportunity to read the Negotiated Agreement when you receive your copy. As always, if questions regarding the meaning or interpretation of the Negotiated Agreement arise, contact your TAAAC staff representative for clarification. Best wishes to all for a successful year!

*(Continued from page 2)*

Welcome International Teachers

This year we welcome 16 teachers from the Republic of the Philippines to our county. Each of these teachers decided that he/she wanted to have the opportunity to broaden their skills by teaching in the United States. We were fortunate that they choose to come to Anne Arundel County. I was fortunate early in my Navy career to live and work in the Philippines

for two years. As you get to know our guests, please be aware that they are truly "half way around the world." The Philippines is twelve time zones ahead of the east coast. While our teachers are teaching, their families are sleeping. They are a fine addition to a school system which now has students who speak at least 47 languages other than English.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't thank Sheila Finlayson for

her hard work these past four years. Rather than simply repeat what many of us already know, I would simply ask that you read or re-read her final Commentary in the June TAR.

Let us focus for a moment on her charge to the membership –

"Success comes in cans. Failure comes in cant's."

Let's all have a truly great year.

## NOMINATIONS OPEN

The Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for a vacancy on the **TAAAC Board of Directors (one-year term)**. Nominations will be accepted until the October 4 Association Representative Council Meeting.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

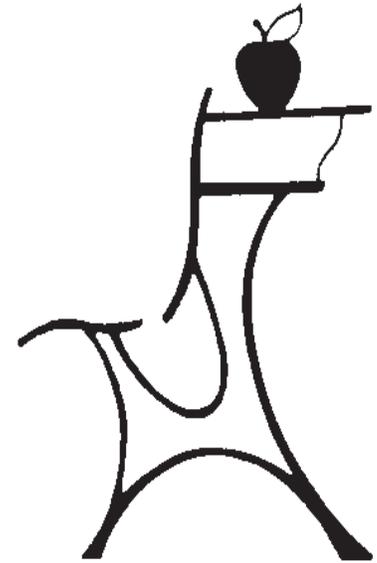
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (S) \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Board of Director**



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

## 2006-07 Tutor Pool Listing

Please complete the following form if you would like to be included in the **2006-07 TAAAC Tutor Pool Listing**. Forms must be completed each year. The availability of this list is announced on the radio in the fall. We also notify all Anne Arundel County public schools and libraries. For more information, please call the TAAAC office.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (S) \_\_\_\_\_

Tutoring Levels: Elem. \_\_\_\_\_ Mid. \_\_\_\_\_ Sec. \_\_\_\_\_ Spec. Ed. \_\_\_\_\_ Misc. \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to tutor in the following subject area(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Days Available \_\_\_\_\_

Times Available \_\_\_\_\_

Fee \_\_\_\_\_

# Check your paystubs!

While most of our 12-month employees have seen the dollar amounts change during the summer, our 10-month colleagues will not see the result of recent negotiations until September 13. When that date comes, everyone should check their gross salaries and healthcare premium contributions, and compare them to a stub from last year.

Most of us will see 10% or more in gross salary increases, with some being significantly higher. That is a result of not only the 6% increase, but factored in are negotiated steps and a collapsing of the longevities to get our hard working members to the higher end of the scale in less years. We have worked hard to explain the advantage of the compaction and the overall value of the 3-year salary package. The dollar-amount increases in you first payday of the year will support what we have been saying. Most who do not see such an increase this year, will see it in the next step of reducing the number of steps in the scale, which will occur this coming July 1.

Further, unless you've changed your plan or your coverage, you should see no increase in your premium share. Through negotiations, we have put off any necessary healthcare increases until January 1 when the new plan year begins.

Delaying the effective date of the increase effectively saves our members half of the annual cost increase. And, the effective date for premium changes will remain in mid-year for the remainder of the 3-year agreement. Remember also, that there will be no premium share increase at all in either of the coming two years if our negotiated salary package is not funded.

Our negotiators and leaders are proud of this new multi-year contract. As the school year begins, it has kept its standing as the best agreement in the state and we will continue to strive to improve it.

Help us get there. If you are a member, recruit a colleague. If you are still letting others pay your share, it's time for you to pitch in and support the program from which you are benefiting. An enrollment form is on the back cover.

## TAAAC's Bi-Weekly Dues Deductions Reduced

To reduce the bi-weekly burden on all Unit 1 employees who receive salary on a 26-payday per year schedule, TAAAC dues will be deducted from 26 instead of 20. This marks a change in the deduction schedule for all members except 10-month employees who remain in the 22-payday schedule and 12-month employees who have been accustomed to 26 deductions. The new frequency reduces the amount of each deduction by about 27% AND stabilizes the deduction amount so educators who join after the start of the school year are not penalized by higher bi-weekly dues.

## Webmaster Wanted

TAAAC's own Michelle Moore of CATS has been maintaining our website. She has been doing a fine job of using the site to keep our members current of TAAAC's activities and offerings. Unfortunately for TAAAC, Michelle has resigned the position. We are now in need of part time help to maintain the site. Compensation is negotiable.



**Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County**  
 2521 Riva Road, Suite L7 • Annapolis, MD 21401  
 410/841-6022, 410/224-3330 or 301/261-8309 • Fax 410/841-5117  
**2006-2007 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.

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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		ETHNICITY (Optional)	
_____ / _____ / _____ MONTH      DAY      YEAR		<input type="checkbox"/> Black <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian (not of spanish origin) <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-Ethnic <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
POLITICAL PARTY			REGISTERED VOTER
<input type="checkbox"/> Democratic <input type="checkbox"/> Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Other			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

TAAAC \_\_\_\_\_  
 LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL NAME \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
 HIRE DATE

**Check your salary level for dues computation:**  
 Over \$32,854    \$16,427 - \$32,854    Below \$16,427

**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 _____
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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 \$4.65 for NEA Today, \$2.60 for NEA-Retired and/or \$19.00 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 \_\_\_\_\_

**Voluntary Contribution Authorization for Fund for Children and Public Education** I hereby authorize the following contribution:

PAYROLL DEDUCTION PER PAY PERIOD  \$15,  \$10,  \$5,  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00 SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

The NEA, MSTA and applicable LOCAL Fund for Children and Public Education collect voluntary contributions from Association members and use those contributions for political purposes, including but not limited to, making contributions to and expenditures on behalf of friends of public education who are candidates for federal, state and local offices. Contributions to the Fund for Children and Public Education are voluntary, making a contribution is neither a condition of employment nor membership in the Association, and members have the right to refuse to contribute without suffering any reprisal. Although the NEA, MSTA, and LOCAL Fund for Children and Public Education requests an annual contribution of \$1.00 per paycheck this is only a suggestion. Any member may contribute more or less than the suggested amount or may contribute nothing at all, without it affecting his or her membership status, right of benefits in NEA or any of its Associations.

I understand that I am making a joint contribution to the Fund for Children and Public Education and that one third of my contribution will go to the NEA FCPE, one third to MSTA FCPE, and, if applicable, one third to the local FCPE.

Contributions or gifts to the NEA, MSTA, and LOCAL Fund for Children and Public Education are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect the name, mailing address, occupation, and the name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year. Federal law prohibits the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education from receiving donations from persons other than members of the NEA and its affiliates, and their immediate families. All donations from persons other than members of NEA and its affiliates and their immediate families will be returned forthwith.