

TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

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

January 2007

It's Time Again to Fund

On January 3, 2007, Dr. Maxwell will be presenting his proposed budget to the Board of Education members. For us, that action is the kick-off of the FY08 budget process and another opportunity for us to make the lives of public school students and educators better.

We anticipate that there will be funding in the proposed budget to accommodate our collective bargaining agreement and to address some workload issues, in addition to meeting myriad of other needs involving instruction, operations, maintenance, transportation, and capital improvements. Depending upon whose doing the reporting, it may be that resources are less plentiful and competition for them will be vigorous. We need to show early support for the Education Budget. Important dates are:

- 1/03/07: Supt's Proposed Budget, BOE meeting at 10:00 AM
- 1/09/07: Public Hearing, 7:00 PM, OMHS, Testimony to be delivered by Richard Benfer, TAAAC Vice President. All are invited.
- 1/11/07: Public Hearing, 7:00 PM, 2644 Riva Road. **PLEASE PLAN ON ATTENDING FOR THE TESTIMONY OF TIM MENNUTI, TAAAC PRESIDENT.**
- 2/21/07: BOE Adopts Budget, 7:00 PM Meeting. **PLEASE PLAN ON ATTENDING FOR THE BUDGET ADOPTION PORTION OF THE MEETING.**

There has been some discussion in recent years, at various levels, and for various reasons, on the topic of *unity*. These are the times that unity counts. It is our hope that all members who are available will come out for these events and show their support for a budget that meets the needs of the school system, its employees, its students, and the local community.

Governor-Elect O'Malley's Transition Team

Two people with names familiar to most TAR readers have been appointed to the transition team for Governor-Elect Martin O'Malley. Bill Jones, TAAAC Executive Director, is working with the Department of Housing and Community Development. Specifically, Bill sits on the sub-group addressing matters related to workforce housing. Tim Mennuti, TAAAC President and retired US Navy Commander, has been appointed to the work group addressing the Department of Veterans and Military Affairs.

Visit us on
the Web at
www.mstanea.org/taaac



Lobbying — What does it really mean? In 2006 we “lobbied” for an improvement in teacher retirement benefits. Simply put, we visited all of our legislators and made a case for improving the teacher pension system. Fortunately for us our legislators agreed. Subsequently the Governor agreed and signed our pension improvements into law.

Sounds simple — Unfortunately it is anything but simple. It is both a tough and delicate process. On the one hand we have to convince the legislature that we are nice people who deserve an improved pension, while on the other hand we must convince the legislature that it is really in their own interests to “do the right thing” by teachers.

In 2007 we face an entirely new set of “lobbying challenges.” While we have yet to see the MSTA agenda, we do know that locally we are going to “monitor” the process by which the second year of our three year contract is funded. The process begins with the superintendent, moves to the Board of Education then to the County Executive, and finally to the County Council.

As many of you are aware, teacher retention is a significant challenge in Anne Arundel County. For school year 2005 we had to hire about 1,000 teachers. For school year 2006 we had to hire over 750. Clearly, teacher retention is a significant challenge.

“Our influence as an organization is directly tied to our ability to help our friends.”

While not strictly lobbying, there are several other areas that require our attention. The status of the four period day is up for review. What will happen next? There are significant workload issues which need resolution including class sizes, alternative special examinations, and other issues which have a very direct impact on classroom workload.

From time to time we will come to the membership to ask your support in one direct action or another.

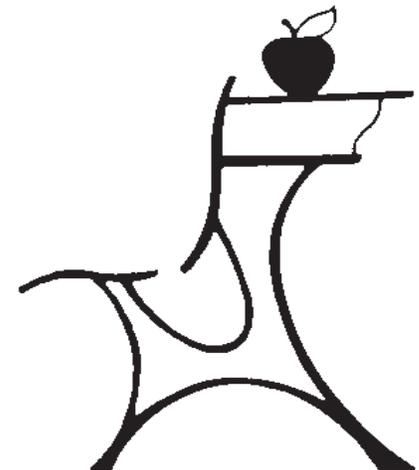
In addition to direct support, we need to build a new lobbying team to carry on the work of Anne and Ron Russell who will be retiring in June 2007.

Our influence as an organization is directly tied to our ability to help our friends. Sometimes we can do this with donations but many times we do it with direct help to campaigns in the form of delivering leaflets, making phone calls, visiting voters.

Please take the time to decide how you can help. Plan on spending at least one Monday night during the legislative session visiting legislators.

The best way to know what is going on is to be part of the action. The best way to be part of the action is to volunteer for a Monday night lobbying session.

If you have any questions, please ask your building representative. If they need additional information, please ask them to call the TAAAC office.



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 Diana Peckham Bill Jones, Executive Director and Managing Editor Roxanne L. Beach, Editor

From Contentia this month . . . *Professional, amateurs, or volunteers...*

In the *Negotiated Agreement between TAAAC and the Board of Education*, each teacher is guaranteed a minimum of 210 individual planning minutes a week during the student school day. Individual planning time is exactly what it says it is: time for each individual teacher to plan for his/her instruction. This planning time is not to be used for team meetings, content meetings, conferences, IEP meetings, or anything other than individual planning.

The 210 individual planning minutes for elementary school teachers are to be in blocks of no less than 30 minutes and for high school teachers in blocks of no less than 40 consecutive minutes. The Negotiated Agreement further stipulates that there will be a minimum total of 470 planning minutes within the teacher work week (to include both individual and group planning). These additional planning minutes scheduled into the teacher workday can be used for group planning, content area planning, meeting with school and county resource people in order to plan for instruction, etc.

As you are all well aware, the teacher work week was extended by two hours this year. That additional two hours should be ample time for any other meetings, parent conferences, etc. Each time you voluntarily give away your planning time by agreeing to have meetings, each time you voluntarily agree to stay in meetings or past the end of your duty day, you directly impact TAAAC's ability to negotiate compensation for that extra time. After all, in an era of scarce resources, what employer would pay employees who are willing to work for free?

It is only in asserting your rights that the contract can be enforced. The next time your administrator suggests everyone should stay after the duty day for a meeting, don't be afraid to say no. You cannot be disciplined for refusing to volunteer extra hours to the school system. Additionally, you should not expect or accept less than the minimum individual planning time within a week. The word *professional* is thrown about frequently, often in the effort to coerce us to work for free. We all need to be reminded of what the word actually means. By definition, the label *professional* distinguishes us as people who have acquired rare and valuable skills and knowledge for which we are paid to use and apply.

Upcoming Events

- January 8- Special Ed Task Force, 4:30 PM, TAAAC
- January 9- Public Budget Hearing, 7:00 PM, Old Mill High
- January 10- TAAAC Board of Directors, 4:30 PM, TAAAC
- January 11- Public Budget Hearing, 7:00 PM, 2644 Riva Road
- January 17- BOE meeting, 7:00 PM, 2644 Riva Road
- January 18- Membership Committee, 4:30 PM, TAAAC
- February 7- BOE meeting, 10:00 AM, 2644 Riva Road
- February 7- ARC Meeting, 5:00 PM, Severn River Middle

Have a
healthy,
wonderful
New Year!

Budget Process in Brief

Happy New Year. The old is out and the new is in. The various government agencies run on their own schedules but the outcomes are none the less important to us.

As the Superintendent works on his propose budget, we are, in effect, looking over his shoulder.

The process for us to receive the second year of our negotiated raise is both simple and complex.

Step by step - The Superintendent and his staff decide which programs they want to fund. They examine past records and determine where they need to make improvements. Once they make their decision, the Superintendent's budget is sent to the Board of Education for approval. The eight members of the Board have several options. In the end, however, they are responsible for forwarding their agreed upon budget to the County Executive for his approval.

While the Board has been building their budget for the school system, the County Executive has been following a similar process in devel-

oping his budget which he must then send to the County Council.

One of the things that the County Executive has to consider is just how he intends to raise the money needed to fund the budget. Because the county has a tax cap, each county executive has to make a decision as to exactly how he wants to raise the money needed to cover his proposed expenses.

Once he is satisfied with what his staff has done, he must then send the budget on to the County Council for their approval.

As an organization, we follow all steps in this process. The system used for negotiating our contract has us negotiating with a unit which cannot raise money on its own. All agreements are subject to funding by the County Executive and the County Council.

We are in the first year of a multi year contract. Previous contracts were for a year only because TAAAC refused to agree to certain demands.

Principals and politicians have told us that the combination of the new pay scales and the new retirement multiplier led to a much better retention situation for fall 2006.

As most of you remember, in fall 2005 we had to hire about 1,000 teachers. This meant that about one in five teachers decided to go someplace else to work.

As we move through this budget cycle, we will call on the membership to attend both Board of Education and County Council meetings. It is important for our appointed and elected officials to understand that improvements in teacher retention are strongly tied to funding years two and three of our negotiated agreement.

We will keep you up-to-date as this process proceeds. Please be aware that we are only as strong as the efforts of our collective membership. If, for some reason, you are asked to participate in one TAAAC event or the other, please don't hesitate to join with your fellow professionals to make our concerns public.

"Find a spot in the school where you can enjoy absolute solitude for at least five minutes a day. Quietude is an elixir. A daily dose will help you feel better and teach better."

*-From the book 501 Tips for Teachers
by Robert D. Ramsey, Ed.D.*

Classroom Direct Joins the NEA Member Benefits Consumer Discount Program

NEA Member Benefits will be expanding our line of consumer discount products for NEA members through a new partnership with Classroom Direct, a deep discount education superstore located in Birmingham, AL. Classroom Direct stocks thousands of innovative classroom materials and learning tools for educators.

This new pilot program will enable NEA members to obtain an additional 10 percent off Classroom Direct's already low warehouse prices. NEA members also receive free shipping on orders of any size, with the exception of orders shipped directly from manufacturers. Most orders are processed within 24 hours for three-day delivery.

The new relationship enhances the NEA Member Benefits Consumer Discounts program, which already includes books, music and DVDs, cellular telephones and service, car rentals, magazine subscriptions, vacation tour packages, and long-distance telephone service.

NEA members will be able to access Classroom Direct through the NEA Member Benefits Web Site at www.neamb.com/discount/classroom.jsp. They may also call toll free, 1-800-248-9171, providing the discount code listed on the Web page.

Association Leadership Opportunities...

TAAAC has several standing and ad hoc committees. Each has its own purpose and value, but all provide an opportunity for both personal development and leadership. Currently, TAAAC is in need of assistance for the following committees:

Special Events, the group who will be running the annual back-to-school event, *Celebrate Teaching*, in August along with any other activities the committee believes would be enjoyed by TAAAC members.

Government Relations, the group that lobbied successfully for our recent pension enhancement of 2006 and TAAAC's successful fairshare bill of 2004. Educators who join this committee generally return annually because the work is intriguing and the results are visible.

Membership, the folks whose task it is to find ways to recruit and retain members, the lifeblood of any employee organization.

Instruction and Professional Development, while committee's title may be self-explanatory, it will be the task of this group to research, prepare, and present professional development programs which will benefit the entire bargaining unit and funded, at least partially, by a portion of TAAAC's local fairshare fees in accordance with the law.

Anyone who may be interested in participating in any of these efforts, should call or e-mail Tim Mennuti at the TAAAC office.

“Ask students for their opinions-often! Kids are often told; they are seldom asked. They’ll feel good that you cared what they think, and you’ll pick up some valuable insights and ideas in the process.”

*-From the book 501 Tips for Teachers
by Robert D. Ramsey, Ed.D.*

NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for **Secretary-Treasurer, Board of Directors, NEA Delegates, and MSTA “Fund for Children and Public Education” Representative.**

Nomination forms are due at the TAAAC office by 5:30 p.m. on January 16, 2007.

Name _____

Home Address _____

School _____

Phone (H) _____ (S) _____

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

- Secretary-Treasurer
- Board of Director
- NEA Delegate

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Ann Allam
Atoussa N. Davis
Craig W. Drenning
Marissa A. Gonzalez
Jessica R. Hale
Jonathan Hall
Julie T. Hall
Linsey B. Haughton
Michael Hill
Irene M. Hudson
Robin D. Jones
Anne Kramer
Kimberly J. Lucado
Michael Moore
Rosetta F. Morris
Jody C. Ratti
Tara L. Shapleigh
Lefevre E. Tessa
Jennifer L. Whitley

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Spend Summer in the Sun

DRD Pool Service Inc. is accepting applications for summer job openings as swimming pool field supervisors and swimming pool managers. No Experience Necessary — Free Training. For more information, call Noelle Navarro at 410-923-7665, 1-888-785-7665 or email to:

n_navarro@drdpools.com

TAX PREPARATION

R. J. Pellicoro & Associates is now accepting appointments for tax preparation at the TAAAC office on the following dates:

Monday, February 19	8 AM — 2 PM
Thursday, February 20	2 PM — 7 PM
Tuesday, February 27	2 PM — 7 PM
Thursday, March 8	3 PM — 7 PM
Monday, March 12	3 PM — 7 PM