

TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

Volume 40, Number 3



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

November 2007

Spotlight on Our Members 2007-08



Name: Lisa Ferrer

School/Subject/Level: Hillsmere Elementary School/ Kindergarten

Number of years teaching: 20

Number of years of TAAAC/Union Membership: 10

What is it about teaching that brings you to school each day?

I come to school every day knowing that it will be an adventure. Even though I am well planned, life as a Kindergarten teacher always brings unexpected lessons.

What teaching/classroom/school tip would you like to share with other members?

Create lessons every day that you are excited to teach. If you find teaching boring, so will your children.

What do you do for stress relief/or keeping yourself positive both in and outside of the classroom/school?

I like to garden and build things to relieve stress. I am the garden lady at school, so I teach the children about taking care of our environment by having them help me plant things. Watching nature grow is very rewarding and positive for my students and me.

What programs offered by TAAAC have you used/found beneficial?

I find the connections with the large organizations MST/NEA very helpful because it provides a very strong base for protecting the needs of Anne Arundel teachers.

What would you like to see TAAAC do for you/our members/students/county?

Maybe we could find more time for teachers across the county to come together in celebration of our county and the good things we are doing for our students.



Timothy Mennuti

This year the long, extended summer allowed November to sneak up on us. I still remember the quick, intense days of August. September and October seemed to meld into a longer August and suddenly it was time for the State Teachers Convention in Ocean City.

The Teachers Convention was truly a highlight for us. We have been organizing and recruiting hard for the past few years. MSTA recognized our efforts by awarding us with the “MSTA MEMBERSHIP AWARD IN ORGANIZING AND DEVELOPMENT.” The award reads “Highest Increase in Market Share Division V.” Division V includes the four largest locals in the State. Each and every one of us should be especially proud of this award because it is recognition of the hard work we have been doing for several years.

Recognition of hard work is something we don’t do often enough. Each and every one of us works hard on a daily basis to help our students achieve. As many of us know, but unfortunately most of the public doesn’t know, “business as usual” is highly unusual. (3396)

COMMENTARY

“TESTED — One American School Struggles to Make the Grade” by Linda Perlstein, is based upon the year she spent at Tyler Heights Elementary School. Ms. Perlstein spoke at the Convention and took several sharp jabs at the workload that teachers consider “normal.” She went on at length to explain just how hard it is to be a teacher today with standardized testing and impossible standards.

“One area that TAAAC is focusing on this year is ‘Creeping Workload.’”

One area that TAAAC is focusing on this year is “*Creeping Workload.*” This is my term for work that just seems to arrive out of thin air. It is usually accompanied by instructions such as “well Riva wants this.” My question is “Who exactly at Riva wants this and what exactly are they going to take off our plates to equal the time we will need to complete this new work?”

I am sick and tired of dealing with overworked teachers who feel they have no option but to leave teaching if they are to have a “normal” life. Enough is enough. On November 14th TAAAC is arranging a picketing opportunity at the Board of Education. We will start marching at 6:30 PM with signs highlighting some of the problems you are fac-

ing. For some it is workload and for some it is PBIS and for others it is dirty schools. Did anyone ever tell you how many Staph infections there were at your school? Did the teachers just exchange rumors because no one told you what was going on? Were any staff/teachers in your building assaulted? Would you even know if they were? Are you getting your referrals back in a timely fashion? Are you aware of the Maryland law regarding what happens when you send a student out of class? If you are in a PBIS school, do you realize that the first few incident reports you file on a student are only recorded and that no action results? Did your school hold an election to see if 80% of the teachers wanted to participate in PBIS?

Keep in mind - TAAAC has no position on PBIS as a plan. We do however, have a problem with schools that attempt to violate our contract: Article 10 Section B page 24 *A student who refuses to obey a reasonable request of a teacher may be excluded from class and shall be retained in the office for the remainder of the instructional period. A serious disciplinary infraction or disruption by a student whom the teacher can no longer control shall be referred to the principal or to another staff member designated by the principal to deal with such a case. Both the teacher and the school administrator shall be involved in the final resolution of such problems.*

(Commentary 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 Ken Baughman, Secretary-Treasurer	Enid Collison-Lee Susie C. Jablinske Sara Silverman Shirley Little Sarah Weller-Bentivegna	Tamara Johnson Michael Barnett Grace Matthews Carol Petrosky Diana Peckham Bill Jones, Executive Director and Managing Editor Roxanne L. Beach, Editor

From Contentia this month . . . *WORK HOURS – CONTROL YOUR DAY*

Your negotiated agreement has some of the strictest restrictions of employee work hours in the state of Maryland. Nonetheless, TAAAC constantly receives complaints about workload, planning time, and work hours. So again, for those of you who have missed it before, here are your work hours: you are required to work 37½ hours a week. During this time you shall receive 470 minutes of planning time per week. Of those 470 minutes, 210 minutes are reserved for individual planning time where you are to be left alone to do the planning for your students. Again, this 210 minutes is not for meetings, co-planning, duties or anything else. It is YOUR time. Own your time, use your time, do not let your employer take your time!

Again, thanks to the strict restrictions in the TAAAC Negotiated Agreement, the only two things that can be required of you past the 37½ hour work week are: ONE Back-to-School night per year and individual planning for your students. All other meetings and tasks necessary to complete your job must be included within your negotiated hours. This includes contacting parents, writing interims and progress reports, preparing report cards, parent conferences, responding to email, observation conferences, and ratings conferences, etc.

Further, each day you are provided with a duty free lunch. That duty-free lunch is actually an unpaid period of time, not included in your 37½ hour work week. It is to be the same number of minutes that the students get for lunch. Because this is **unpaid** time, your employer has no claim on it. So every time you give up your duty-free lunch to work with students, make phone calls, have students serve detentions, etc., you are actually voluntarily extending your work week. (8533)

The only way that TAAAC can help you enforce these rights that we have worked hard to negotiate for you is if you call us when there is a violation. TAAAC has been successful in all grievances regarding illegal extension of the work week. Until you as individuals or as groups of members say NO to the continued illegal extension of your work week, the problem will continue. Call your TAAAC Rep. if you have any questions or concerns about your work week.

(Commentary continued from page 2)

The language is clear. Unfortunately the implementation is anything but uniform. In some schools PBIS is a useful tool which helps teachers manage their classrooms. In those schools referrals go down because the plan is being implemented as it was meant to be. Unfortunately in some other schools, PBIS is being used as a blunt instrument to coerce teachers into believing that they are some how failures if they can't both teach and handle major disruptions at the same time. In this type of school referrals are down because the administration is cooking the books by refusing to accept referrals. *We want to hear from any*

teacher who has had a referral refused by administration for any reason. We also want to hear from any school in which the principal restricts or rations referrals. For the record – You can write a referral on anything. The term referral refers to the action, not the medium upon which it is written. If you don't have a "referral form," write the info. on a plain piece of paper and submit it (make copies for your records). If you don't hear back in a reasonable time, let us know. We urge you to keep a copy of all referrals. If you so desire, please send a copy to TAAAC with the student's name and other identifying information blacked out. (7278)

"Creeping Workload" is the major issue with which we are dealing this fall. Teachers are uniformly angry about the amount of "extra" work that seems to be creeping in on a daily basis.

Now is the time to let the administration know just how angry you are about "creeping workload." Encourage a delegation from your school/worksites to make signs/banners that explain your situation. We will march with these signs at Riva Road from 6:30 to 7 PM. We also encourage those of you who can stay, to make a presentation to the Board of Education.

(Commentary continued on page 6)

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 Angelique R. Zorc

(Commentary continued from page 3)

Their meeting starts at 7 PM and the public participation portion starts soon thereafter. Consider making a presentation. Remember – numbers matter. High turnout sends a clearer and louder message. It would also be good to have something to identify your school or work site. **(6605)**

See you on
 November 14th
 at 6:30 PM



Volunteer Coordinators Needed

The Minority Affairs-Human Relations Committee of TAAAC is currently in search of members to become volunteer coordinators for the 17th ANNUAL MULTI-CULTURAL HISTORY BEE. At this event elementary and middle school students compete for prizes by demonstrating their knowledge of contributions made by multi-cultural Americans. The event will be held on Saturday, February 2, 2008 at 9:30 AM at Annapolis High School. Those interested should call Mike Meredith at the TAAAC office: 410-224-3330, or email mmeredith@mstanea.org.

TAX PREPARATION

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

Monday, February 25	1 PM – 7 PM
Thursday, February 28	1 PM – 7 PM
Tuesday, March 4	2 PM – 7 PM
Thursday, March 6	2 PM – 7 PM
Monday, March 10	2 PM – 7 PM
Thursday, March 13	2 PM – 7 PM

Please call the TAAAC office to schedule an appointment.

Have you spotted the last four digits of your phone number?

Please call the TAAAC office to claim your prize!

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