

TAAAC ACTION REPORT



Your Professional Organization

Volume 42, Number 3



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

November 2009

Fiscal Year 2009 Closes with a Surprise

With fiscal year 2010 well underway and our first negotiation session for fiscal year 2011 scheduled for November 5th, it might come as a surprise that we may not be done with FY09. Those of you who followed the updates as we reached settlement with our current contract will recall the topic of *health care*. Based upon estimates provided to the negotiators of both teams, there was a relatively small health care fund balance of approximately \$4.5 million projected to close fiscal year 2009. It was feared that the relatively small fund balance would be an insufficient cushion to face a large excess of expenses over revenue in FY10, and we might exhaust it before all of FY10 claims could be paid. This concern was a primary contributing factor to our eventual (and reluctant) agreement to concede furlough days. The number of furloughs that eventually made it into the Negotiated Agreement was up to three, with a clear understanding at the bargaining table that if less were less necessary, less would be imposed.

On October 21 we learned from an exhibit prepared for that evening's meeting of the Board of Education, and posted on BoardDocs for public view, that the AACPS fared very well in FY09. The system had to dig into the health care fund balance by a mere half-million and finished the year with a fund balance of \$16.4 million, \$12 million more than what was projected. That means the AACPS has \$12 million of unanticipated revenue for FY10 easily enough to reduce the number of furlough days. Further, the operating fund closed with a \$15.2 million balance with more than \$5 million left in the category of *Instructional Salaries*. Obviously, we have an issue to address. And, we have already begun to address it.

At the time of this writing, a meeting is scheduled between the leaders of the four unions doing business in the AACPS and the superintendent and his staff on November 3. But since this matter was pulled off the meeting agenda on October 21 and the exhibit is no longer posted on BoardDocs for public view, we no longer know how much money we will be discussing. We have been told that staff would be taking a second look at the numbers – an explanation that leaves much to conjecture.

More will be forthcoming.

“Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.”

-Theodore Roosevelt

COMMENTARY



Timothy Mennuti

Dear Colleagues,

November is frequently “stop and breath” month. The first burst of the school year now leads to a short break at Thanksgiving followed by another short break at Christmas before we begin the January push.

As I review what TAAAC has done since August, I always look to see how this year’s start compares with that of previous years.

Throughout this period we have had calls about school air quality. While many of them have been resolved, there are still far too many which seem to carry over year to year because of systemic problems.

The issue of PBIS has surfaced several times and we have to remind teachers that for a school to “choose” to use PBIS, there needs to be an 80% approval by the staff. That should involve either the Faculty Council and/or some type of secret election. If you are in a school in which PBIS was imposed, please call us.

Another area which consumes our time is the issue of School Violence. We sent out one copy of the TAAAC Incident Report for your use in the October ARC Bags. If you didn’t get

your copy, please let us know and we will send you a replacement. You are free to make as many copies as you want. If any incident happens at your school that you think we should know about, please call and then send in an Incident Report.

“Article 10, Student Control and Discipline, Section E. Student information (Page 24 of the contract) – Unit I members shall be informed on a need-to-know basis concerning pupils with disabilities or a history of serious overt behavior that would endanger the safety of themselves and others in the classroom.”

This fall has seen a continuation of an unwelcomed trend of early elementary students involved in teacher assaults. We are tracking several such incidents in which teachers and other staff were bitten or scratched – sometimes on more than one occasion.

Because the BOE now uses SASI to file all referrals, it has become even more important that you make a copy of any and all referrals you write. I have had far too many calls from school-based staff complaining about “lost referral forms.” Unfortunately, even if we get the referrals back, there is no guarantee that the information was ever entered in the SASI data base.

When a new student suddenly appears in your class and you learn that he/she was a county transfer, it is fair to

assume that there is a “story” involved in that transfer.

If there is even a hint that the transfer involved violent activities at a previous school, you may have a right to know the circumstances of the transfer:

Article 10, Student Control and Discipline, Section E. Student information (Page 24 of the contract) – Unit I members shall be informed on a need-to-know basis concerning pupils with disabilities or a history of serious overt behavior that would endanger the safety of themselves and others in the classroom.

If for any reason your request for information is refused, please call the TAAAC office.

We continue to monitor class size and work load issues. We are watching Power Teacher carefully to be certain that you are receiving the training needed to use this new system successfully. The issue of class size, especially at the middle school level, continues to be a major concern. Please continue to send us your stories about “Why the Fire Marshall Should Visit My Classroom.”

We all continue to defend teachers on a daily basis. Our UniServ Directors are our first line of defense. If you have a problem, please call the TAAAC office. The only time that I get unhappy is when I hear of a problem too late to do anything. When you call, you are *not bothering* us. The only reason we are here is to help our members.

TAAAC Action Report

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From Contentia this month . . . *Observations and Ratings*

Teachers are starting to call in with observation questions, so here are some helpful reminders about the observation and rating process for teachers as provided in the current collective bargaining agreement and by Maryland State Department of Education Regulations. Non-tenured teachers should be rated twice per year and should receive their first rating in December. Tenured teachers on a Standard Professional Certificate are rated at least once per year. Teachers holding Advanced Professional Certificates are rated the first year of the certificate, and the third or fourth year of the certificate based on birth year. For example, teachers born in odd years, are rated in odd years. Those born in even years, are rated in even years. Remember that even if it is not your rating year, administrators do have the right to observe teachers at any time.

Observations can be formal or informal. A formal observation is scheduled in advance, may require a formal lesson plan, a conference within two days following the observations and a written observation report within five days. An informal observation may be unannounced and requires no formal lesson plan and there are no explicit time limits for conferences or reports. In either formal or informal observations, feedback to the teacher is necessary or the event will not constitute an observation as defined in MSDE regulations.

If there are things in the report that are in dispute, the teacher can and should write a rebuttal and have it attached to the report. Signing the report only indicates receipt, not agreement. In the event of a less than satisfactory rating, both the rating and the observations upon which it was based may be subject of a meaningful appeal.

A rating must be based on a minimum of two observations that have occurred at least thirty days apart and at least 30 minutes in duration. Observations should also take place at different times during the day to create a bigger picture of the observee's teaching as a whole. The primary authority for doing teacher ratings is the school principal. Teachers assigned to multiple schools should be rated by the principal of the base school with input from administrators in the others. If you are assigned to more than one school, all administrators must have input into your rating. Also, if you receive an unsatisfactory rating, more than one administrator must have completed observations of your teaching. Department Chairpersons have no input into ratings, except in the case of Annapolis High School. In all other schools, the Department Chairpersons should not be observing other teachers or providing any written or verbal input into teachers' ratings.

If at any time you have any questions regarding an observation report or a rating, contact your TAAAC UniServ Director to answer your questions.

Student Load Contest

Last month's class size contest is being followed up by another. But this one will be based upon members' total student loads. The prizes (checks for \$25) will be distributed to the two members in each category who have the highest load of total students. The categories are:

- Secondary School Teacher/Core Subject Area
- Secondary School Teacher/Encore Subject Area
- Elementary School Teacher/pre-K-5
- Elementary School Teacher/Specials
- Elementary School Guidance
- Secondary School Guidance

Entries should be called in or e-mailed to Cindy Turner (cturner@mseanea.org) and must contain the entrant's name, school, subject area/grade level and number of total students assigned. The deadline for submission will be the December 2nd Association Representative Council meeting.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Caitlyn Andersen
 Donna Bagley
 Alyssa Bell Booghier
 Sarah Brong
 Luann Bulisco
 Amber Cardascia
 Diana Christadore
 Kristen Coyle
 Irene DeHan
 Robert Dix
 Peggy Dombrauskas
 Christina Erickson-Perdomo
 Maurianna Huck
 Diana Leonard
 Erica McCauley
 Mollie McElwain
 Celeste Nunez
 Kevin Pound
 Jennifer Robertson
 Curtney Sabol
 Rori Selleck
 Christine Shaughnessy
 Gail Thompson
 Amy Wise

TAX PREPARATION

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

Monday, February 22	1-7 PM
Thursday, February 25	1-7 PM
Tuesday, March 2	1-7 PM
Monday, March 8	2-7 PM
Thursday, March 11	2-7 PM

Please call the TAAAC office to schedule an appointment.

A New MOU

To prevent 12-month Unit 1 employees from losing annual leave due to the reduction in available duty days caused by furloughs, we negotiated the following memorandum of understanding.

*Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County
 And the
 Board of Education of Anne Arundel County*

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

As a result of the September 22, 2009 meeting, both parties agree to the following exception to the Negotiated Agreement between the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County and the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County:

For FY 2010 Unit I employees will be permitted to carry-over an additional (three) 3 days (the amount of furlough days charged) to their regular carry-over limit for the year as outlined in Article 8 I of the Negotiated Agreement.

ARTICLE 8 **OTHER LEAVES**

Annual Leave

4. *If, at the end of any fiscal year (June 30), a Unit I member has any unused annual leave from the previous fiscal year the member may carry over a maximum of thirteen (13) days of such unused leave to provide a maximum of thirty-nine (39) days of annual leave at the beginning of any fiscal year. Not more than thirty-nine (39) consecutive days of annual leave may be taken during any 12 month period. Unused annual leave which would be lost because of this limitation on carry-over shall be converted to accumulated sick leave, provided, however, that there may not be an annual creditable accumulation of more than fifteen (15) sick leave days.*

Exception: In the last year of employment prior to retirement a Unit I member may carry over eighteen (18) days of unused annual leave to provide a maximum of forty-four (44) days at the end of the member's last full fiscal year of employment.

Growing TAAAC's Influence

During the past three years, TAAAC has moved to strengthen its internal management procedures in order to support our future growth. As part of these efforts, a number of our members have participated in TAAAC, MSEA and NEA training programs. These leadership opportunities are designed to provide training and “hands on” opportunities for the leaders of the TAAAC of tomorrow.

Included in these training opportunities have been several opportunities for our members to run for office both locally and at state and national levels. During these elections it has become obvious that we need more training in the “how to” of running campaigns. Not only will these skills be useful for our internal needs, but this skill set will serve our needs to help elect pro-education candidates at the local, state, and federal levels.

TAAAC will have a major opportunity to practice these skills in the upcoming election cycle for delegates to the July 2010 National Convention and the 2010 election for NEA Director. While the NEA Director is a single shot situation, the NEA Delegates election can be a multi-stage process if we plan ahead.

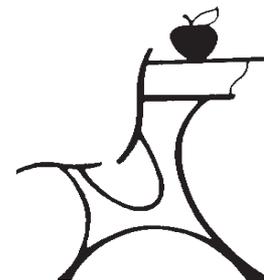
First of all, anyone who wants to go to the July 2010 NEA Convention in July should nominate themselves. The form you need is published in the most recent MSEA Magazine. In addition to nominating yourself for the MSEA election, you should consider running for a TAAAC seat to the convention. The hope is that you will win a seat in one election or the other.

The NEA Director is a separate campaign but the candidates are listed on the same ballot as the NEA Delegates. It has been a number of years since any TAAAC member has won a statewide seat. When TAAAC members appear on the ballot, we have an opportunity to correct that situation. What then do we have to do?

- A. Sign-up to run for NEA Delegate by November 23, 2009. (Check the ActionLine for forms or go on-line at www.mseanea.org). The TAAAC local sign-up will be in early 2010. Sign-up for both.
- B. Ballots will arrive in schools by January 28, 2010 – Schedule an all-member meeting at your school.
- C. Hand out the ballots. Ask your members to cast one vote for TAAAC/SAAAAC members who are running for state and national level seats and offices.
- D. Next, and CRITICAL, all ballots must be mailed back to MSEA to arrive NO LATER than February 26, 2010.
- E. TAAAC will provide more information as the critical dates approach. Please start alerting your members now to the need to register for the state NEA Delegate election. Remember the deadline for registering is November 23, 2009. Be aware that the ballots will arrive around January 28, and must be back to MSEA by February 26. Please do all that you can to get a maximum turnout for this election. If TAAAC members will support TAAAC/SAAAAC candidates, our influence will grow.

“Victory is won not in miles, but in inches. Win a little now, hold your ground, and later win a little more.”

-Louis L'Amour



AACPS Employees –

Taking Care of Our Own

As most readers may be aware, TAAAC is part of a coalition of employee organizations that represent AACPS employees. By name and bargaining unit the member organizations are TAAAC (Unit 1), AEL (Unit 2), AFSCME, Local 1693 (Unit 3), and SAAAC (Unit 4). The Coalition of Educational Employees (CEE) made a determination at its recent meeting to road-test a voluntary intra-unit problem solving effort.

The effort is intended to provide an opportunity to resolve problems that occur between members of different bargaining units before complaints, appeals, or charges are formally filed. Matters related to personal problems, sense of hostile work environment, suspected disparate treatment, and a myriad of other problems may in some cases be more efficiently managed with less disruption to education, without disciplinary action, and without damage to clean personnel folders.

The consensus within the coalition is that some of the red tape can be replaced by a dollop of common sense if we could try to help resolve problems at the lowest level possible. Participation will be confidential and voluntary, and where necessary the coalition may be able to provide a professional mediator.

More will follow as the problem is fleshed out in the next month or two.

Get Informed – Win a Prize

CareFirst is doing a prize drawing for two iPods at the end of the open enrollment period. Anyone who comes to an open enrollment meeting to hear about the Triple Option Plan will be able to fill out a form that will go into a box and two names will be pulled after the last meeting. There are two meetings remaining following the date of this publication. They are:

Nov 9 in the Old Mill High School Media Center
from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Nov 11 at the AACPS Central Office
from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM

If you want to see whether the Triple Option Plan is appropriate for you, now would be a good time to do so.

NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for **President, Vice President, Board of Directors, and NEA Delegate**. Nominations forms must be received at the TAAAC office by 5:30 PM on Tuesday, January 12, 2010.

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

School _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

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

- President
- Vice President
- Board of Directors
- NEA Delegate

(Have you been a delegate before: YES or NO)