As many of you may be aware, the Superintendent’s proposed FY11 operating budget reflects an increase of $45 million over the current year. That constitutes a 4.8% rise, small in comparison to previous budgets but quite large in an economic environment where revenues are shrinking. Nevertheless, Dr. Maxwell should be credited for presenting a budget which reflects the needs of the student population that we all serve. That is his responsibility and that of the appointed members of the Board of Education.

But, as all of you are aware, there is economic hardship all around us. Your TAAAC Negotiating Team is working hard at the bargaining table to find a way to distribute the proposed resources equitably so that the result does not harm standing programs and does not exploit the Unit 1 educators who will live with the result. In a very short time, Unit 1 employees will hopefully be presented with a tentative agreement upon which to cast their votes. The resources for that agreement will need to be funded by County Executive John Leopold. Sadly, forewarning has been issued that we can expect no more than $8.3 million from the county. Moreover, we cannot expect state aid to fill the gap because the state has revenue problems that equal or exceed our own here in Anne Arundel County. So, despite any claims you may hear to the contrary, education funding is not safe, as our lost step and our furloughs illustrated. That fact is that we can expect about half of the county budget to find its way, directly or indirectly, into the school system. When state aid to the county is reduced, the schools are injured.

Therefore, it becomes the collective responsibility of TAAAC leadership and members to make contact with legislators to help them make the right decisions for public education and public educators. Upon our reaching that tentative agreement, it will be helpful for all of us to support our students and our profession by making contacts to Mr. Leopold and the members of the County Council.

Times may be tough, but Anne Arundel has untapped revenues that surrounding counties have been utilizing for many years. We suffer from self-inflicted wounds including the lowest assessment cap in the state, a restrictive property tax revenue cap, and a piggy back tax that has not been touched in decades. It’s time to let our local legislators know that tapping unused revenue sources to a reasonable level will not cost them our vote and that we will support them if they do so. Yet further, it may be time to let them know we may hold them responsible if they do not. As professional educators and advocates for public education, we cannot continue to pretend that the county’s self-imposed revenue limitations are not harmful.

If you have not received notice of a tentative agreement by time of this publication, it is very likely that you’ll receive notice very soon of either a settlement or an impasse.
This year is a so called “off year” election cycle because it isn’t a presidential election year. However, as you read this update, you will soon see that it will be anything but an “off year” for TAAAC. Our local bread and butter is our relationship with our local legislators, and they will be the subject of the upcoming contests. We will be looking for volunteers to serve on screening committees, and later in the year we will be looking for people to serve in campaigns, hand out literature, make phone calls, and all of the other things that need to be done to run a successful campaign. Each and every one of us is a part of the process.

One thing I want to stress is that at the local level, TAAAC has almost complete control over our endorsement process. We are bi-partisan and will interview any candidate or potential candidate who seeks our endorsement. This is important because it means that each and every TAAAC member has a role. You also need to know that absolutely no membership dues or agency fee collections are used for political purposes. All political action activities are funded by FCPE contributions.

While we plan for the future, we are working on a daily basis with this 2010 General Assembly as it works through this 90-day cycle. We need volunteers to come on Monday evenings through mid-April to help educate local legislators on issues important to us. We encourage you to talk with colleagues at your school and to look for our invitations to meet your legislators. Call the TAAAC office for more information.

Remember, every decision made affecting public education is made by a politician or an appointee selected by a politician. And that applies to buying pencils, paying educators, and choosing what subject must be, may be, and cannot be offered. The choice is to either join the election process or risk being victimized by it. Here at TAAAC, we believe that helping to lay the tracks is better than getting run over by the train.

Please see an Association Representative at your school or worksite, visit the TAAAC Website at http://taaac.mseanea.org, or call the TAAAC office for information about volunteering on Monday evenings, joining a candidate interview committee, or just for more information including a detailed summary of the contests in which we expect to be involved.

### TAAAC Minority Affairs - Human Relations Committee Seeks Volunteers and New Committee Members

The TAAAC Minority Affairs - Human Relations Committee is seeking new members for the committee and help in developing new, comprehensive History Bee study guides. The committee meets once per month at the TAAAC office and beverages and snacks are provided. Please join us to help expand our committee and create a challenging format for the students participating in the History Bee competition.
Teachers new to AACPS typically attain tenure with two years of satisfactory teaching performance; however, there are some additional provisions that apply to tenure in the State of Maryland and AACPS. We strongly encourage all non-tenured Unit I members to please take a minute to review this information regarding tenure.

State of Maryland Regulations - (Comar: 13A.07.02.01):

If you were hired prior to January 1, 2008 the Board can deny you tenure by giving notice in writing no later than May 1.

While the probationary period in Maryland is normally two years, that period may be extended for a third year “if the certificated employee does not qualify for tenure at the end of the second year based on established performance evaluation criteria, and the employee demonstrates a strong potential for improvement.” Notification of the extension of the probationary period must be given by May 1. Furthermore, a mentor must be assigned to the employee.

Note: If you were hired after January 1, different rules apply. Please call your UniServ Director for the specifics in your case.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Guidelines

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE & CONDUCT MANAGEMENT,
A Procedural Manual for the Anne Arundel County Public Schools:

“The principal will forward the name and supporting documentation for any probationary teacher who will not be recommended for renewal of contract to the appropriate Director of School Performance by March 1.”

The teacher will receive a letter during the month of March from the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction advising that unless performance significantly improves, a recommendation to terminate services at the close of the school year will be made to the Superintendent.

If the teacher’s work continues to be unsatisfactory, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction will advise the teacher in writing on or before April 19 that a recommendation be made to the Superintendent for termination.

Foundation to Help Local Students

One of TAAAC’s functions is to assist local students in continuing their education. TAAAC does so through its Foundation for Educational Excellence which gives competitive scholarships to college bound young people.

The Foundation provides at least five scholarships to local public high school students each year which are funded by members, outside donors, and occasional fundraising events. In addition, there are two memorial scholarships funded through direct donations: the Robin Coleman Award for Science and Technology, and the Samuel and Bessie Chao Memorial Book Award. Applications are distributed through all public high school counselors.

The forms were sent out on February 3 for the 2010 scholarship awards. For more information, contact your school counseling department or call the TAAAC office.

The Foundation’s Children’s Fund provides prescription glasses and warm clothing to local public school children in need. Grant request must be made by a TAAAC member. To make a grant request or for more information about making a contribution, please call the TAAAC office.
TAAAC Board Candidates

President

This election is about the future. We are working to make Anne Arundel County as good a place to teach as it already is to be a student.

As president, I’ve worked hard to increase membership and defend our rights.

I request your help in allowing me to complete these goals. Please vote for me for President.

Thanks.

Tim Mennuti

Vice President

I have been an active member in TAAAC as a building rep, MSEA/NEA delegate, and B.O.D. I currently serve as Vice-President, on the bargaining team, co-chair of nominating committee, liaison to county council of PTA, and credentials & IPD committees. I will continue to use a cadre of skills to represent and articulate all your concerns. Your support is appreciated to help move forward toward better working conditions and improved salaries during these tough economic times.

Richard Benfer

Board of Directors

In my initial year as a member of the Board of Directors, I have contributed to chairing the PAC fund and participated in numerous trainings and events. Although we are a great association, we still have much work ahead. I plan to continue making TAAAC a better and stronger organization.

Colleen Benda

In these difficult times, we need leaders who will continuously advocate for TAAAC members. I have served on local, state and national boards for the Junior Chamber of Commerce and know that I can utilize all of my resources to make a difference for every member of our association.

Teri-Lynn Koch
As a TAAAC member for 11 years and representative for 3 years, I have learned the importance of being organized, dependable, and approachable. I am passionate about representing the educators of AACPS and promise to make fair and equitable decisions to further the goals of all our great educators.

Grace Matthews

A vote for Grace brings over 30 years of education experience-(workshops, conventions, committee member) plus a push for fair and equitable pay, working hours, working conditions, and your retirement.

As, I have done and will continue to address devastating issues that affect you the educator.

Thanks for your vote.

I am seeking re-election to the Board of Directors. I want to continue the commitment of getting members trained for Leadership opportunities, which will enhance the growth of our organization, and support teacher advocacy. I am currently involved in association activities including:

- C.A.R.E. Trainer
- IPD Committee Co-Chair
- Labor Management Committee

Anthony Rezendes

Please re-elect me to the Board of directors.

I am a problem solver & good listener.

Active:

- board of directors
- building rep
- Membership, Credentials, Nominating, Special Events, Elementary Concerns Committees
- Helped with New Teacher Orientation & TAAAC picnic

I look forward to continuing to work with, and for the members of our association for my 3rd consecutive term on the Board of Directors. My TAAAC leadership experience includes: Negotiations Team, Membership Co-Chair, Member of Credentials and Nominating Committees, New Teacher Orientation, School Building Representative, Delegate at TAAAC/MSEA/NEA Conventions.

Sarah Weller-Bentivegna
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.

NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for the Credentials and Nominating Committees. Nomination forms will be accepted until the Wednesday, April 7, 2010 Association Representative Council meeting.

Name ________________________________________
Address ______________________________________
School ________________________________________
Phone (H) ____________________ (S) ______________

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

☐ Credentials Committee
☐ Nominating Committee

You may be entitled to a MD income tax refund...

Do you have unreimbursed graduate school tuition?

Your contract provides for reimbursement for a maximum of six (6) credits of approved coursework per school year. The reimbursement rate is up to $250 per semester hour based upon actual tuition fees.

However, if you pay more than $250 per semester hour, or you complete more than (6) graduate-level courses in a school year to maintain certification, you may be entitled to an income tax credit on your Maryland income tax return.

You may claim a credit for 100 percent of the unreimbursed amount of tuition paid, or $1,500, whichever is less. A credit of up to $3,000 is allowed on a joint return if each spouse qualifies for the credit. The credit is determined on a calendar year, not school year, basis.

To qualify for the credit, you must:

• Be employed by the board of education in any of Maryland’s 23 counties or Baltimore City.
• Serve as a classroom teacher in a public school.
• Hold a standard professional certificate or an advanced professional certificate.
• Have completed one or more graduate-level courses with a grade of B or better.
• The courses taken must be required to maintain certification and the cost of the courses must exceed any amount reimbursed by the county.

The credit can be claimed on Maryland forms 502, 505 or 515. It is not available on short Form 503.

This is a Maryland tax credit, not just a reduction in taxable income. In simple terms, this is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in taxes. And, if you have not claimed your eligible incentive credit on your past taxes, you probably should consider filing an amended Maryland State Tax Return. Please consult your financial advisor.