Keep the Promise

Governor O’Malley’s budget: School funding cuts, major pension overhaul proposed

During Gov. O’Malley’s administration, our schools have been shielded from the effects of the recession better than many others. But in his proposed budget today (January 21, 2011), the knife came out for education.

With school funding cut by nearly $100 million and proposals to increase educators’ contributions and decrease their benefits, it’s time to urge legislators to keep their promises of fully funding education and providing educators with a secure retirement.

While recognizing the efforts that Gov. O’Malley has made during his administration to shield our schools from the effects of the recession, the Maryland State Education Association is deeply disappointed about the recommendations made in his budget, which represent a step backwards for our students and will challenge Maryland’s ability to recruit and retain excellent educators for our children.

“The governor’s budget underfunds education by nearly $100 million, and breaking that funding promise will threaten our ability to keep class sizes manageable, provide new textbooks and materials for our students, and maintain valuable extracurricular activities, let alone prevent layoffs,” said MSEA President Clara Floyd.

Educators are also deeply concerned about the significant cuts proposed to their retirement security.

“Such proposals would seriously jeopardize our ability to attract into our classrooms the educators that we need to keep moving Maryland forward,” said Floyd.

“We urge legislators to keep their promises to educators, parents, and children so that together, we can keep Maryland’s schools #1.”

(Reprinted from Frontline, 1/21/2011)

Mark your calendars for...

Monday, March 14, 2011
Maryland Educators March on Annapolis
Urge Lawmakers to Keep the Promise.
Finally, a conclusion to negotiations for Fiscal Year 2011 has arrived. TAAAC’s ratification vote on January 6 passed by a comfortable margin with some protest votes. On the evening of January 19, ratification by the Board of Education was successful by a margin of 8-1, with the sole nay coming from board member Victor Bernson. This is the same Board member that voted nay on the original agreement with the words, “not only no, but hell no!” This time around there was no reference to the netherworld. Rather, Mr. Bernson characterized it as irresponsible, assess its cost as grossly excessive, chided the union as deceitful, criticized educators for keeping a defined benefit pension and insisted that teachers should be paying more toward their health care. Most notable for readers of this newsletter who have suffered furlough days, lost pay increases and experience steps for two consecutive years, is that Mr. Berson asserts that no meaningful concessions have been made.

So, the negative remarks being out of the way, let’s look objectively at the outcome of the settlement which by the way could not have occurred without the cooperation of the more reasonable minds on the Board or without the concerted efforts made by TAAAC members who participated in the job actions. Only three bargaining units of MSEA affiliates received an across-the-board increase (COLA) in Fiscal Year 2011. Our 1.25% stands as the second highest. Anne Arundel was one of the fourteen not to receive increases. Only two received both a step and a COLA. Two of our larger and historically better paid neighbors, Prince George and Montgomery, received neither a COLA nor step. The sad fact is that revenues from property and income taxes are down. Combined, they are the two primary sources of funding upon which locals depend on to run schools, law enforcement, emergency services, and other quality of life programs.

The mediation was a success, maybe not one that has us all dancing in circles but a success nonetheless as we compare to our colleagues elsewhere in the state. The sad fact is that we may be doing all over again in the face of revenue projections threatening scarce resources again in Fiscal Year 2012. Collectively, we (meaning TAAAC leadership, members, colleagues, parents and even free-riders) need to do a better job giving our elected officials in the county council chambers and the state legislature the motivation to do what’s necessary to raise the necessary revenue to meet reasonable and necessary expenditures.

As the state of Texas is learning, we can’t persist in balancing budgets by raiding public reserve funds, and injuring public services, public programs, public employees, public educators, and public school students, and pretend that we’re still serving the public.

“...we can’t persist in balancing budgets by raiding public reserve funds, and injuring public services, public programs, public employees, public educators, and public school students, and pretend that we’re still serving the public.”
From Contentia this month . . . We can’t help you if we don’t know you’re in trouble . . .

Did you receive a plan of action that you believe was undeserved? Did you get observed and feel the write-up unfairly characterized your efforts? Did you receive a rating that was way off the mark? Did you get a counseling letter that you believe was unwarranted? Did you receive a reprimand that you feel was undeserved?

Did you call your UniServ Director?

Members often keep these problems to themselves for many reasons. When you share your misfortunes with others at your workplace you have no control of what will be shared with others. What you should do in these cases is call your MSEA UniServ Director at TAAAC. Your call and subsequent discussion is confidential. Your UniServ Director is an expert in dealing with these issues and will advise you as to your options. Your principal will not know you called nor will anyone at the Board unless you and your UniServ Director agree on further action.

Weingarten Rights

You have the right to request union representation whenever an administrator wants to question you regarding a matter that may ultimately result in your being disciplined, suspended or terminated.

If you are called in for such questioning, please respond to your administrator with the following statement:

“If this discussion may lead to my being disciplined or terminated, I request that my MSEA UniServ Director be present. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions.”

Then immediately call TAAAC!

Candidates for Secretary – Treasurer

I am running for the office of Secretary – Treasurer. I have been an educator in for 33 years and active in the association. The office that I am seeking is one of great accountability. I have done my best to make sure that TAAAC is sound in financial matters. You have trusted me as your Secretary-Treasurer in the past. Please support me again.

Ken Baughman

My financial background with funds of several community organizations, six years as your elected member of TAAAC Board of Directors with duties including budget decisions, and my thirty-seven years as an English teacher prepared me for the challenge of becoming Secretary Treasurer. As TAAAC building representative, Faculty Council Secretary, MSEA convention participant, and NEA delegate, I demonstrated commitment to my colleagues’ welfare and advocacy. I oppose evaluations and salaries based on test scores, complicated certification trends, and unprofessional increased workload. Teachers should be involved in decision-making and maintain a strong identity in the political process during these harsh economic times.

Shirley Little
Candidates for the Board of Directors

Pam Bukowski

I have completed my first Board of Directors’ term for TAAAC, serving on several key committees and teams, advocating for you and bringing your concerns forward. I would be honored to continue to serve you in our continual battle for Truth, Justice and the American Way. Collectively, we are Superman.

Teri-Lynn Koch

I have served as your Parliamentarian for the past year and attended the NEA Conventions as a delegate. I have the experience to listen, learn and lead TAAAC as we try to make our lives as educators better for us now and in the future. I can make a difference!

Diana Peckham

In these challenging times we need to stand and to work together. As an active member of the Board of Directors, multiple committees, and an NEA delegate, I advocate strongly and passionately for us and our profession. Your vote will allow me to continue that work on your behalf. Thank you.

Tami Thumtzen-Johnson

I enjoy being an active member representing you and would like to continue. I was the teacher contact for a county council candidate, member of the negotiations team for Annapolis High teachers, active member of both the Minority Affairs and Membership Committees, asking for your vote. Thank you.
Quality Teacher Incentive Credit

If you are a Maryland public school teacher and you paid tuition during the 2010 tax year for graduate-level courses to maintain certification, you may be entitled to an income tax credit on your Maryland 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.

Qualification

To qualify for the credit, you must:

• Currently hold a standard professional certificate or an advanced professional certificate.
• Be employed by a county/city board of education in Maryland.
• Teach in a public school and receive a satisfactory performance evaluation for teaching.
• Successfully complete the graduate courses with a grade of B or better.
• Have not been fully reimbursed for these expenses. Only the unreimbursed portion qualified for the credit.

The courses taken must be required to maintain certification and the cost of the courses must exceed any amount reimbursed by AACPS.

Claiming the credit

To claim the credit:

• Complete Part C of Form 502CR.
• File Form 502CR with your Maryland return.

The credit can be claimed on Maryland forms 502, 505 or 515. It is not available on short Form 503.
If the credit exceeds your tax liability, the unused credit may not be carried forward to any other tax year.
You may be eligible to claim tax credits from previous years. Please discuss this with your tax advisor.

“Hard work, dedication and desire don’t guarantee you a thing, but without them you don’t stand a chance.”

-Pat Riley
TAX PREPARATION

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

- Monday, February 28, 1-7 PM
- Thursday, March 3, 1-7 PM
- Monday, March 7, 2-7 PM
- Thursday, March 10, 2-7 PM
- Wednesday, March 16, 1-7 PM

To schedule an appointment, please call the TAAAC office.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- Annamarie Basile
- William Bell
- Caroline Binnendijk
- Kalie Borries
- Nicole Clark
- Elaine Czarnecki
- Augustus Dickens
- Claire Garrett
- Amanda Gollmer
- Kimberly Hunter
- Sherma Jackson
- Lee McCloskey
- Timothy Smith
- Jayme Weaver
- Catherine Weiss

NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for the Credentials and Nominating Committees.

Nomination forms will be accepted until the Wednesday, April 6, 2011 Association Representative Council meeting.

Name __________________________________________
Address _________________________________________
_________________________________________________
School ___________________________________________________________________
Phone (H) ___________________ (W) ________________

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

☐ Credentials Committee
☐ Nominating Committee

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

DIRECTOR OF SUMMER CAMP: Private club located in Anne Arundel County is looking for an organized leader to oversee a Summer Camp Program of 200 attendees.

Camp runs from June 27 through July 29th. For more detailed information including complete job description, please call 443.637.3775 or email sriley@gibbonisland.com.

Spend your summer enjoying the beautiful outdoors

DRD Pool Service is accepting resumes and CVs for summer job openings as Field Supervisors and Pool Managers (Full and Part Time positions available). No experience required. For more information, please call Noelle Navarro at (410)-761-7665 or email n.navarro@drdpools.com

Beth Tfiloh Camps seeks head counselors and instructors of sports, campcraft, singing, nature, art, and swimming. The Owings Mills day camp runs Monday-Friday from 9 AM-4 PM for 8 weeks (June 20-August 12). Visit our website at www.btcamps.org or phone 410-517-3451. YOUR CHILD ATTENDS FREE!

We are a day camp in Baltimore County that hires over 100 teachers each summer.