



TAAAC ACTION REPORT



Your Professional Organization

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

March 2012

Anne Arundel County's Self-Inflicted Wounding

Economic times for teachers and public employees here on the west bank of the Chesapeake are getting worse, not better. Half of Anne Arundel County's revenue required to maintain sufficient numbers of competent educators and other employees come from property taxes. Now, after three years of flat revenues, furloughs, position cuts, and class size increases, the economy shows some signs of growth.

Signs of growth would be good news, but such good news is tempered here by an artificial cap on property tax that never (that's correct, NEVER) allows the county to increase property tax revenue collection by any rate higher than the rate of inflation, and sometimes not even that.

Every parent, student, public employee, businessman and citizen should be frightened by what the current revenue restriction is doing to Anne Arundel County. Attempts by elected officials to hide the growing problem by raiding reserves, digging into employees' pockets and stealing money from education cannot continue indefinitely. Reserves eventually run dry. Students no longer succeed. Emergency calls are answered too late to help. Employees are eventually impoverished.

The revenue restriction in its current form is a formula for failure. The last few years have been evidence enough. We can retain some restriction on public spending without suffering from the chokehold on services locked in by the current charter provision.

It's time to stop scraping for crumbs and bring back the type of education, employment, and quality of life we had not so long ago.

Visit www.taaaconline.org for more information and to sign or circulate a petition to modify the referenced to something reasonable without gouging homeowners, stealing from employees, or cheating students.

“History is a great teacher. Now everyone knows that the labor movement did not diminish the strength of the nation but enlarged it. By raising the living standards of millions, labor miraculously created a market for industry and lifted the whole nation to undreamed of levels of production. Those who attack labor forget these simple truths, but history remembers them.”

-Martin Luther King Jr.





Timothy Mennuti

Cutting employee pay rather than raising revenue to pay for essential services is a magic act that politicians use. The story you most often hear is – Well if you would just cut expenses everything would be alright. The reality is actually something else. In 2011 the average monthly social security check was \$1,177. Many of these people use food banks, split medicines to make them last and try to stay warm. These people don't have anything left to cut and they can't "save" themselves out of their current economic situation.

A similar situation is true for county employees. In essence, the county is "taxing" employees to fund services that the county refuses to bill residents for. Make no mistake about it, what the county is doing is pure Socialism – the county is "taxing" its employees because it refuses to charge market rates for services. This is neither fair nor economically justifiable.

This, however, is the way that

COMMENTARY

California started with its various propositions. The result when no one wants to pay for services is that very few people can now afford to pay in-state college tuition rates for their children. That means that one of the best public college systems in the country is now in a death spiral.

“In essence, the county is “taxing” employees to fund services that the county refuses to bill residents for.”

In California they closed the pools, charged all children to play sports, changed high school sports to week day afternoon programs, closed senior centers and watched as response times for emergency vehicles continued to escalate.

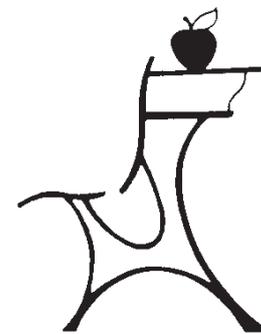
As the situation got worse, business moved out of state, realtors continued to guide families to the "better" school districts, districts which couldn't compete on services lost upper income citizens to the "better" counties (think Howard vs. Anne Arundel County) and services contin-

ued in a death spiral because there wasn't enough money to maintain, much less improve services, and housing prices slid in the worst affected areas.

Sound familiar? There are some things that never change and one of them is – There isn't any free lunch!

The only way that we can help the county be successful and to protect the quality of life for all citizens is to fight the good fight to provide enough revenue to meet the counties needs.

Anything short of that is abdication of our responsibilities. In other words, taxes are the rent we pay for the Chesapeake Bay Lifestyle. Everyone who lives here shares a responsibility to help pay their share.



TAAAC Action Report

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From Contentia this month . . . *ARE YOU FALLING OFF THE TENURE TRACK?*

Timeline for Termination of Non-tenured Unit I Members

If your teaching performance as evidenced by ratings is unsatisfactory or not fully satisfactory, principals have been directed to forward your name to the appropriate regional assistant superintendent by **March 1**.

These recommendations will be reviewed and, if upheld, you will receive a letter **during the month of March** advising you that unless your performance improves significantly, a recommendation to terminate your employment at the close of the school year will be made to the Superintendent.

If your work continues to be unsatisfactory, then **on or before April 20**, Human Resources will advise you in writing that a recommendation for termination will be made to the Superintendent.

You must be notified in writing prior to **May 1** of employment termination.

What Should You Do?

Should you receive a letter in March advising you of possible termination, contact your UniServ Director **immediately**.

Your UniServ Director will discuss your situation with you and advise you of your rights and best course of action. You should have copies of all observations and ratings.

Your conversations will be kept strictly confidential.

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 1 for the 2012 scholarship awards. For more information, contact your school counseling department or call the TAAAC office.

"Ideal teachers are those who use themselves as bridges over which they invite their students to cross, then having facilitated their crossing, joyfully collapse, encouraging them to create bridges of their own."

-- Nikos Kazantzakis

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Latoya Alexander
 Kelly Atkinson
 Holly Beers
 Michelle Goldenberg
 William Hoard
 Paul Keener
 Paige Komsa
 Laura Melendez
 Pamela Meyers
 Jaime Ownby
 Rebecca Padencov
 Kaitlin Schwartzel
 Suzanne Shefska
 Ron Shriner
 Meredith Snow
 Tracy Vallandingham
 Tanja Wheeler
 Heather Yatsuk

TAX PREPARATION

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

Monday, March 12
 2-6 PM

Thursday, March 15
 2-6 PM

Please call the TAAAC office to schedule an appointment (410-224-3330).

Multi-Cultural History Bee 2012

The TAAAC-sponsored Multi-cultural History Bee is scheduled for April 14, 2012 at Annapolis High School. We need teachers to sponsor a group of their students for participation in this very worthwhile event. The competition is limited to elementary students only and the study book has been expanded to offer more challenging questions than ever before! Please consider sponsoring a group of students from your school. As an added bonus, former TAAAC President, Shelia Finlayson, will serve as this year's moderator. Interested sponsors may call the TAAAC office for copies of the study guide. Sponsors are reminded that registration of the participants is due to the TAAAC office no later than close of business (4:00 PM) on March 23, 2012. Come show us how smart your students are!

2012 HersheyPark Tickets

Discounted tickets for are now available at the TAAAC office.

- Regular Admission: \$44.95 (*\$12 savings*) – ages 9-54
- Junior/Senior Admission: \$32.95 (*\$3 savings*) – ages 3-8; 55-69
- Senior Admission: \$21.95 (*\$1 savings*) – ages 70+
 - 2-Day Flex Regular: \$74.50
 - 2-Day Flex Junior/Senior : \$54.00

What's included in a *HersheyPark admission ticket*?

- Over 65 rides and attractions on **110 beautiful acres**
- **12 world-class** roller coasters
- **Over 20** kiddie rides
- 9 water attractions, **including a lazy river and wave pool**
- ZOOAMERICA – **home to 200 animals from the five regions of North America**
- **Award-winning, live entertainment**

Please call the TAAAC office for more information.

Quality Teacher Incentive Credit

If you are a Maryland public school teacher and you paid tuition during the 2011 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 you must subtract 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.

2012 NEA Convention paid volunteer positions available now!

You can earn \$40 a day, meet educators from across the country, visit the nation's capital, and get inspired as you witness the world's largest democratic deliberative body at work as a volunteer at the 2012 NEA Representative Assembly and Convention, June 30-July 5 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

This year's convention is in nearby Washington, D.C., and host committees from neighboring Maryland and Virginia associations will help staff the Representative Assembly floor and NEA convention booths. MSEA volunteers will help operate the delegate-to-main stage communications and work for the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education Give-Away Booth outside the RA hall.

Volunteer basics:

- Volunteers are paid \$40 per day
 - Hours: 8:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
 - Volunteers are reimbursed for parking, tolls, and Metro fares*
 - Morning and afternoon snacks plus lunch are provided
 - Friends and family of MSEA members welcome
- *Lodging expenses not provided for volunteers

Learn more and sign up today! Visit www.marylandeducators.org/neara2012 and look for the NEA RA Volunteer link among the bulleted items.

NOMINATIONS OPEN

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

Nominations will be accepted until the April 4, 2012 ARC 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

NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for the **Sick Leave Bank Approval Committee and AACPS Calendar Committee (Elem.).**

Nominations will be accepted until the May 2, 2012 ARC meeting.

Name _____

Address _____

School _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

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

Sick Leave Bank Approval Committee

AACPS Calendar Committee (Elem.)

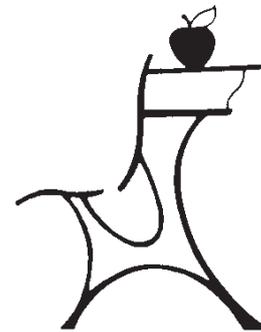
JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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 @ 410-761-7665, 1-888-785-7665 or send an email to: n_navarro@drdpools.com

Tutorrific!

Tutor in homes throughout Howard County (mostly in or near Columbia). You make your own schedule! Please send an email or your resume to Deborah Markowitz at: tutorrific@comcast.net.



Website Notice

TAAAC has moved its web address a number of times over the past few years. Please be reminded that the current address is:

<http://www.taaaconline.org>