

TAAAC ACTION REPORT



Your Professional Organization

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

December 2013

TAAAC and MSEA Wrap up Anti-Bullying Tour

As you may be aware, TAAAC and MSEA partnered to bring an Anti-Bullying Assembly to some of our Anne Arundel County Public Schools. TAAAC President Richard Benfer, reached out to schools and those interested in the opportunity replied eagerly. Mr. Tray Chaney, dancer, singer/song writer and actor, joined your TAAAC President Richard Benfer, MSEA President Betty Weller, and MSEA Communication Specialist Debra Garner, on the tour to spread the Anti-Bullying message. Mrs. Garner produced a Pod Cast from many of the assemblies and small roundtable discussions that can be heard on MSEA's website; <http://marylandeducators.org/inside-maryland-schools>.

This fall we had the pleasure to hold assemblies at Pasadena Elementary with Brooklyn Park Elementary as a guest; Central Elementary with Davidsonville Elementary as a guest; and Four Seasons Elementary with South Shore Elementary as a guest. Additionally we traveled to Crofton Middle School, MacArthur Middle School, Old Mill Middle Schools North and South, Central Middle School, Severn River Middle School, and North County High School. We spread the message about taking back the power and standing up against bullying to 5th, 6th, 7th, and 9th graders. All the schools were very welcoming and enthusiastic for the Anti-Bullying message. Students responded in many positive ways with great questions and sharing stories in small groups. At times the stories made it difficult to hold back the tears.

During the assembly students and educators viewed the video put together collaboratively by Tray Chaney and MSEA to spread the positive message about bully prevention. It can be viewed on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTecq9aqB1Y>. After viewing the video, students and educators were treated to a live performance of the Mike Bully rap by Tray Chaney. The response was always excitement and enthusiasm. This was followed by a talk with Debra Garner from MSEA about bullying. She discussed many aspects of bullying from what it is and what it isn't. Cyber-bullying was a topic of discussion as well as "Grace's Law" that went into effect October 1, 2013, that makes it a crime to Cyber-bully someone. Those caught Cyber-bullying face a \$500 fine. Grace's Law is named for a young Howard County high school student, Grace McComas who took her own life after being repeatedly cyber-bullied. The message from the presenters was that we do not want anyone else to be in a similar situation. Mrs. Garner then led the group by offering strategies for "Taking Back the Power" from the bully. Finally the students and staff took the anti-bully pledge and students had an opportunity to ask questions. Educators who want to take the pledge can go to <http://www.nea.org/home/Bullyfree-Take-the-Pledge.html>. NEA will then send you an Anti-Bully poster that you can display in your classroom or work area.

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(Hip Hop Artist and actor, Tray Chaney and TAAAC President Richard Benfer take a moment for the camera in front of a welcome sign created by students at North County High School.)



Richard Benfer

Some Light on the Horizon

Over the past three months many educators across our county have been feeling the pinch from the Common Core State Standards, new curriculum initiatives at various levels of completion, Student Learning Objectives (SLO's), power teacher implementation on the elementary level, and grappling with the demands on their work time. Educators in and out of the classroom have spent countless hours unpacking curriculum, planning lessons with unfound resources, testing students who need more time to grasp concepts, and the list goes on and on. Many of these issues are caused by the implementation of Common Core State Standards without adequate curriculum in place at the start that is easily accessible to the larger audience of those who deliver curriculum using top notch instructional practices on a daily basis.

The curriculum office is making an effort to rectify that situation. Math curriculum documents were printed and distributed. Recently elementary teachers were sent a survey about curriculum and how they can be supported better. Many of our educators responded to the survey with valuable information needed to help remedy issues our educators face. TAAAC

COMMENTARY

had the pleasure of a visit from our Interim Superintendent, Mamie J. Perkins and the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Greg Pilewski at our November Association Rep Council Meeting. Both we very open and shared that they were in attendance to hear our concerns. Mrs. Perkins commented that it is called “work” for a reason. It is how we approach that

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work that makes the difference. She said she understands the concerns about increased workload, and will make every effort to provide relief where ever possible. Many more concerns were shared, and both Mrs. Perkins and Mr. Pilewski took copious notes. Many of our reps commented that it was great to be able to share concerns directly with the superintendent. Mr. Pilewski passed around a sign-up sheet to begin dialogue between the curriculum office and educators implementing the curriculum on the ground. The names selected were forwarded to Mr. Pilewski's office and the Curriculum & Instruction TAAAC Advisory Cabinet will convene soon.

The central office staff, as well as the board of education members have been listening carefully to our stories. Many commented that they didn't realize things were so hard on our educators. Research shows that change takes five to seven years. Having all the changes we are going through at once is not good for quality instruction for our students. It is not good for educator morale. It is even worse for our member's individual health. I will continue to advocate for less “Collaborative Meetings” and more actual “Collaborative Planning Time” in addition to our contractual Individual Planning Time during the student day. Only with the cooperation of all educators in the building will we be able to implement the change and do it well. While there have been steps taken to help alleviate some of the stress created by all the change, there is still a long way to go to see full light on the horizon.



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From Contentia this month . . . *Know your contract and your rights...*

Personnel Files – Your personnel files both in Human Resources and in your school office are available for your viewing. No favorable entry can be placed in your file without your knowledge. (Art.2.G)

Personal Business – Personal business leave normally needs 24 hours in advance for approval and the member does not have to state a reason for the leave unless there are unforeseen or exceptional circumstances. (Art.8.A)

Referral of Severe Cases – A serious disciplinary infraction by a student whom the teacher can no longer control should be referred to the administration. (Art.10.B) The administrator shall confer (or consult) with the teacher before returning the student to the teacher’s classroom. (Comar 13A.08.01.11.C(6)) Referrable offenses are listed on the back of the four-part referral form that should be available in your school. Keep your copy.

Required Work Hours – Your required work hours are 37.5 hours per week not including your duty-free, non-paid no less than 25 minute lunch. Beyond those hours you are only contractually responsible “for individual planning for the delivery of instruction.” (Art.11.A&B)

Planning Time – Minimum of 210 minutes individual planning scheduled during the *student day*, in blocks of no less than 30 minutes for elementary and 40 minutes for secondary. An additional 200 minutes of group planning must be provided. (Art.11.C)

Evening Activities – Unit members are required to attend Back-to-School Night or one such similar evening activity each school year as determined by the principal. (Art.11.F)

Non-professional Duties – Individually assigned non-professional duties will not exceed 20 minutes per day unless a different arrangement is agreed to by the principal and FAC. Student arrival, departure, and transition between classes is not included. (Art.14.A)

Divided Classes – When an uncovered vacancy causes a class of students to be divided among teachers for the entire school day, receiving teachers will receive one hour of compensatory time. (Art.14.A) *New*

Calling Substitutes – Teachers are not required to call substitutes or arrange coverage for their duties when out. (Art.15.A.)

Formal Observations – The observer must give notice at least five duty days notice prior to conducting a formal observation. (Art.16.B.1) *New*

Observation Conferences/Written Reports – The post-observation conference for a formal observation shall be held within 5 duty days and the written evaluation shall follow within 10 school days. (Art.16.B.2) *New*

Collaborative Achievement Plan – A Collaborative Achievement Plan may be instituted whenever a supervisor or administrator articulates a performance concern. The plan should be mutually developed. (Art.16.B.3) *New*

Department Chairpersons – Evaluation Process – The involvement of department chairpersons in the evaluation process must be supported by two-thirds affirmative vote of the department. (Art.16.B.4) *New*

Ratings – Ratings must be received by the unit member prior to the last day for teachers. (Art.16.C) *New*

Non-tenured Non-renewal – Non-tenured employees whose contracts are being recommended for non-renewal shall receive written warning by April 15. (Art.16.C) *New*

Rating Requirements – Each rating shall consist of at least two classroom observations of at least 30 consecutive minutes and at least a month apart. One of the observations must be formal (scheduled). (Art.16.C.1.a)

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Mr. Tray Chaney is now spending time shooting a new movie which will keep him busy during the winter months. We are hoping to get some more of his time in the spring if, and when, he becomes available.

TAAAC would like to thank all the educators from teachers to counselors to assistant principals, and principals who opened up their school so that the Anti-Bullying message could be shared.

TAAAC Representatives at Parent Involvement Conference

Your TAAAC leadership attended the Anne Arundel County Parent Involvement Conference on November 16, 2013. This event was sponsored by the Anne Arundel County Public Schools office of Schools and Family Partnerships. TAAAC Director Russell Leone (*TAAAC liaison to the Anne Arundel County Council of PTA's*) was on hand to answer questions and provide information to parents about how to contact tutors from the TAAAC tutoring pool. It was a great event and there was positive feedback from parents in attendance. Great job Russell!



President Benfer Speaks before the Anne Arundel Delegation

On Tuesday, November 19, 2013, President Benfer spoke before the Anne Arundel County Delegation to the General Assembly. The message focused on the 2010 legislation passed to make student growth a component of teacher/principal evaluation. This was enacted to help secure "Race to the Top" money from the US Department of Education. Many stories of fallout that have started to occur have been in the media recently. A most notable speech came from a high school student, Ethan Young, from Knoxville, TN who eloquently expressed his viewpoint on common core state standards and teacher evaluation. I strongly recommend that you view it. The web address is provided here. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PprP5TCZBRI#t=91> The same promises made by "No Child Left Behind" were made through "Race to the Top." The teacher evaluation portion we are faced with essentially leaves out the educator as a practitioner as they sift through piles of paperwork to complete a dog and pony show for their evaluation. Student Learning Objectives, affectionately known as SLO's, have begun to erode planning time for the delivery of instruction from educators.

Additionally, President Benfer spoke about the importance to lift the sunset provision of the Public Labor Relations Board. The Public Labor Relations Board provision in the law is set to expire and education unions around the state would like to see the law continue indefinitely. This would ensure fairness in terms of how disputes are handled. Stay tuned for more on these issues.



Anne Arundel Medical Center

Did you know there are few or no symptoms in the early stages of lung cancer? If you are between the ages of 55 and 79 and are a current or former smoker you may qualify for the Lung Screening Program at Anne Arundel Medical Center in Annapolis. You should get a lung screening if you are a current smoker, quit in the past 15 years and have at least a 30 pack year* history. Recent studies show low-dose CT scans are very effective at finding lung abnormalities and detecting cancers early.

To find out if you are eligible for a lung screening, call 443-481-5838 or register online at askAAMC.org/lungscreening<<http://askAAMC.org/lungscreening>>.

If you are a smoker and want to quit, we are here to help. Anne Arundel Medical Center offers courses and individual counseling to stop smoking. To learn more, register for a smoking cessation class. Visit AAMCevents.com<<http://AAMCevents.com>> (keyword: smoke free)

*Average number of packs per day multiplied by number of years smoked equals your pack years.

Ex: 1 pack a day x 30 years = 30 pack years

TAAAC's Housing Program Has Something for Everyone

Check out the deals for Anne Arundel County teachers and the exclusive benefits reserved for TAAAC members only. You will receive discounts on all aspects of buying, selling, renting or maintaining a home from multiple companies. In addition to **buying, selling and renting**, our program with the Maryland Residential Experts Team (MRET) provides exclusive discounts and services to TAAAC members nearly everything related to housing, such as:

- Refinancing
- Home Inspections
- Pest Control
- Mold Remediation
- Discounted Mortgage Rates
- Financial Planning
- Moving and Storage

They also hold free seminars on the topics of Credit, Home Buying and Investment.

Check out the entire array of benefits offered by visiting <http://www.taaaconline.org/home-savings-mdret.html>, or email info@mret.com to have information sent. There is a staff of four representatives who would be happy to assist. Much like our TAAAC UniServ staff, their areas of responsibility are divided by feeder system.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Renee Audia
Alexandra Barrett
Michele Bodine
Conrad Buchheister
Annie Foster
Brittany Garlington
Muriel Giroux
Cheryle Johnson
Robert Kazlauski
Charlene Kelly
Denise McClellan
Heather Newman
Gregory Norris
Nancy Schenck
Mark Stockett
Catherine Teodosio
Candace Zavitsky

ATTENTION! Are You Paying Too Much

If your employment status has changed and you have an annual salary under \$41,504 and/or are working .6 or less, please contact the TAAAC office so that your membership dues can be adjusted accordingly.



MISSION POSSIBLE WINNERS

*Included is the percentage of growth of members on payroll deduction for
The Fund for Children and Public Education*

Division 1 – High School – Annapolis High – 11% Growth

Janine Horn, Sharon Moesel, Martin Noga
Shanita Spencer, Gail Tucker

Division 2 – Middle School – Bates Middle – 16% Growth

Jim Burns, Robert Connerton, Deborah McNeely, Zachary Zoller

Division 3 – Special Centers – Ferndale Early Learning Center – 43% Growth

Nancy May, Kristen Clark

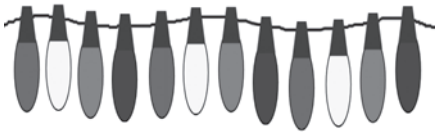
Division 4 – Elementary – Belvedere Elementary – 47% Growth

Kaitlin Paul, Stephanie Sullivan

Job Opportunities

Spend Summer in the Sun

DRD Pool Service, Inc. is accepting resumes for summer job openings as swimming pool managers (Full or Part Time). No Experience Necessary. For more information, email Noelle Navarro at:
 n_navarro@drdpools.com



Happy Holidays!

NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for **President, Vice President, Board of Directors, and NEA Delegates.**

Nomination forms must be received at the TAAAC office by 5 PM on Tuesday, January 14, 2014.

Name _____

Address _____

School _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

Email _____

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

- President**
- Vice President**
- Board of Director**
- NEA Delegate**

[Have you been a delegate before? YES or NO]

November ARC Attendance

The following schools, departments, and affiliates were not represented at the November 6, 2013 Association Representative Council Meeting.

Affiliates – Coaches Association, Counselors, SLAAAC, Social Workers; **Departments** – Riva Road; **Elementary** – Annapolis, Arnold, Bodkin, Crofton, Crofton Meadows, Davidsonville, Deale, Eastport, Ferndale Early Childhood Ctr., Germantown, Glen Burnie Park, Glendale/Glendale Level V, Hillsmere, Jacobsville, Lothian, Maryland City, North Glen, Oakwood, Odenton, Overlook, Pasadena, Piney Orchard, Riviera Beach, Rolling Knolls, Seven Oaks, Severn, South Shore, Tyler Heights, Van Bokkelen, West Meade, Woodside; **Secondary** – Arundel High, Corkran Middle, Glen Burnie High, Marley Middle, Old Mill Middle N., Severna Park Middle, South River High; **Specials** – Arlington Echo, Center of Applied Tech. N., Center of Applied Tech. S, Chesapeake Science Point, Infants & Toddlers Program, J. Albert Adams Academy, Phoenix Academy, Staff Development – Carver.