

# TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

Volume 45, Number 7

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

March 2013

## Right to Work Legislation in Maryland?

House Bill 318 is currently under consideration by the Maryland General Assembly. If passed, and odds are stacked against it, representation fees (also called “agency” or “fairshare” fees) of the type we have in the Anne Arundel County Public Schools will become illegal. There are thirty-seven sponsors and co-sponsors.

Before more of the impact of the bill is mentioned, everyone should understand that *Right to Work* (or RTW) legislation is a misnomer. Proponents of right to work legislation like the term because it makes them appear on the side of angels. After all, who could oppose the right to be employed. But the so-called right to work laws have little to do with the right to work. Rather, they are intended to prevent the entry of an employee organization into the workplace or weaken employee organizations that may already be present. In their least harmful form they prohibit *union shops* (workplaces in which employees must join their employee organization and pay dues as a condition of employment) and *agency shops* (workplaces in which employees can refuse to join, but must pay that portion of membership dues that support the maintenance of the contract from which they benefit; hence the often used term, *fairshare fee*). At worst, they prohibit *exclusivity*, the right of employees to select and join an organization who will advocate on their behalf.

Freeriders (employees who contribute nothing to the employee organization while experiencing the benefits and protections provided to them) hurt. They drain resources, put upward pressure on the members’ dues, and weaken the organization’s influence at the bargaining table, in the Council Chambers, and at the State House. All of this results in election of less labor friendly politicians, weaker contracts, and more laws and regulations harmful to working people. But they made the lives of employERs easier. Make no mistake...those few freeriders that remain in your schools and work sites have their hands in your pockets and purses.

Like all RTW legislation, HB318 encourages freeridership (or *freeriding*, if you prefer). Freeriders weaken unions and other employee organizations, like our own teachers association. Sponsors of RTW legislation are consistently opposed to other employee related concerns such as livable wages (or even *minimum wage*, due process in the workplace, unemployment insurance, family and medical leave, ...etc.) Consequently, they are not the type of legislators that receive a lot of support from employee organizations. Employee organizations far more often endorse and support the opponents to RTW types, who therefore have a vested interest and some level of enjoyment in seeing the influence of employee organizations diminish.

Of the thirty-seven sponsors, five are in our own Anne Arundel County delegation and one is already campaigning to be our next County Executive. Our state affiliate has already taken a position to *oppose* HB318 and by the time this edition is distributed, TAAAC will likely have done the same.



**Richard Benfer**

**Teacher Evaluation**

The state teacher/principal evaluation system being field tested at several schools has come under fire not only here in Anne Arundel County but by many jurisdictions across the state. Members from the various field test schools report that the required work to satisfy the Student Learning Outcome (SLO) portion of the evaluation is both reflective in nature and time consuming. Additionally, AACPS and TAAAC agreed on a Local Model. This model is now being piloted in a few other schools. The data to be collected is important so that problems can be fleshed out before the evaluation system takes effect. As current State Law dictates, this will take effect in the fall of 2013.

While teacher planning time has many demands placed on it, the new evaluation system will also require non-student work time to write meaningful objectives, create pre and post tests, collect data, analyze that data, and report out results. I do not believe there are many educators that would say that reflective teaching isn't important. The problem will be to ensure there is time in the schedule to permit teachers to complete everything asked of them.

With 50% of the evaluation being derived from professional practices

# COMMENTARY

within the Teaching and Learning Cycle and 25% coming from the SLO's, the final 25% seems to be contentious with educators and to the powers that be. When the joint committee (Board/TAAAC) for teacher evaluation sent in the Local model that we agreed to, MSDE did not accept or reject the proposal, but sent back a portion to be modified to meet MSDE standards. Of course the law is interpreted several ways. TAAAC and MSEA

*“TAAAC and MSEA believe that the joint committee came to an agreement thus satisfied state law.”*

believe that the joint committee came to an agreement thus satisfied State Law. The Board believes they need approval from MSDE although no mention of approval from MSDE is mentioned in the law. So the last 25% of the elementary/middle school portion has been modified for the second time. This was done explicitly to avoid the very flawed State Model. The final 25% is called the School Wide Index. For educators not directly assigned to teach MSA, the School Wide Index will be used to determine a score for student growth. At this point in time, literally, the SWI for Elementary/Middle Schools is as follows: MSA achievement is 20%; MSA Gap Reduction is 5%; and Attendance will be determined once they determine how it affects

the final rating. The translation here is – it may or may not be used. However, for the Grade Level Index for the educators directly assigned to a grade level that gives the MSA test, the scores are taken from the grade level only. In summary, teachers who give the test are evaluated using a Grade Level Index and all others are evaluated using the School Wide Index.

Several counties have had their evaluation systems rejected by the Maryland State Department of Education. The U.S. Department of Education and MSDE are busy trying to fix what is wrong with schools on the backs of the classroom teacher. It is like they are trying to change an “Art into a Science.” Teaching is an Art and students are not widgets that come out of a mechanized mold perfectly each time. Educators are on the hot seat to deliver top notch instruction without many of the resources they need. In our county we have great ideas for curriculum that are being implemented from the grassroots level. Never has there been so much to do with so little resources to do it. In addition, the planning time needed to implement such programs as the Primary Years Program (PYP) is not adequate. Educators need more time to plan and prepare than ever before. Many are faced with having their planning time filled with meetings that have little to do with planning for instruction. Many resources suggested in the programs have inadequate internet links that are not accessible on their desktops at school. Many are forced to do the research that curriculum specialists

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## TAAAC Action Report

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## **From Contentia this month . . . *Your Rights and Responsibilities for Student Discipline***

At TAAAC we often get calls regarding the lack of follow through for teacher discipline referrals. We are told that referrals “disappear” and are never followed up by administration. Students are sent out from class for gross insubordination and are sent right back by administration or security. What can be done? The answer for teachers is to enforce the rules that are already on the books; Article 10 of the Negotiated Agreement:

*“Unit I members shall have the authority and shall exercise the responsibility for the control of pupils...the member will have support from the principal or appropriate administrator in the reasonable disciplining of the student. (Article 10, A)”*

*“A student who refuses to obey a reasonable request of a teacher may be excluded from class and shall be retained in the office for the remainder of the instructional period. (Article 10, B)”*

*“If a student’s disruptive behavior results in action less than suspension, the principal shall confer with the teacher who referred the student to the principal before returning the student to the teacher’s classroom. (COMAR, 13A.08.01.11.B.6)”*

To summarize, as Unit I members you have the right to exclude a student from class and the administration is obligated to follow up with you before returning the student to your classroom after the day of the referral. The meaning of the word “confer” is communication by any means, telephone, electronic or in person.

The discipline assigned by the administration is at their discretion; they don’t have to suspend or assign a punishment other than following the guidelines above. However, by insisting that the above procedures are followed, there is certainly an expectation that the referral itself will be processed and not “put in the drawer.”

The professional judgment of the Unit I employee must be respected. However, there are some hints that will help your referrals to be dealt with in a professional manner:

1. Be specific and detailed. Writing “classroom disruption” at the top of a referral and expecting much action is not realistic. Take the time to give both the background (“It was the sixth time he had thrown a pencil across the room”) and specifics of the event that occurred. The more detail you put on your referral, the more likely you are to have a professional response.
2. Note any contacts and other means you have attempted with the student prior to the referral.
3. Ask for administrative contact before return to classroom; remind them you know the rules.

**TAAAC wishes to congratulate the following members who attained National Board Recertification. They were inadvertently left off of last month’s list. TAAAC regrets the omission.**

Dessolene Davis, Chesapeake Bay Middle School  
 Lisa Engstrom, Severna Park Middle School  
 Molly K. Sause, Severn River Middle School  
 Julie Steimel, Old Mill Middle School North and South

# 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.

## FEBRUARY ARC ATTENDANCE

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

**Affiliates** — Coaches Association, Counselors, EBOTA, SLAAAC; **Departments** — Riva Road;  
**Elementary** — Annapolis, Arnold, Cape St. Claire, Crofton, Crofton Meadows, Eastport, Glen Burnie Park, Glendale/Glendale Level V, Hillsmere, Jones, Lothian, Maryland City, North Glen, Oakwood, Odenton, Overlook, Pershing Hill, Rolling Knolls, Seven Oaks, Severna Park, South Shore, Van Bokkelen, West Meade, Woodside; **Secondary** — Annapolis Mid., Glen Burnie Sr., Res. Ctr. @ Annapolis Mid., Marley Mid., Meade Mid., Northeast Sr., Old Mill Mid. N., South River Sr., Southern Mid.; **Specials** — Chesapeake Science Point, Infants & Toddlers Program, Mary E. Moss Academy, Monarch Academy, Staff Development - Carver.

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used to do on a full time basis. The curriculum folks we have now are under similar circumstances as the classroom teachers because there are too few of them to get the overwhelming amount of research and planning completed. Somehow we need to have full time curriculum specialists' teams that actually write realistic curriculum outlines with suggested pacing and activities. The classroom teacher can then take that framework and pick and choose what is best for his/her students. More time then can be devoted to actually implementing the curriculum and instruction.

All this can only help in terms of preparing for evaluations that are fair, reflective, and relevant. More time is needed to make sure that teachers are provided clear, concise professional development around the topic of Student Learning Outcomes. I was pleased to see that the Office of Curriculum and Instruction is taking the lead by planning the upcoming Common Core Conference scheduled for April 20, 2013 at Old Mill High School. The training is being offered at professional pay at our hourly per diem rate for the four-hour attendance. More exposure to the SLO process will help our

members have a clearer understanding of what is expected of them. We work tirelessly to plan relevant, rigorous lessons that engage students at higher levels. The field test and pilot process of the teacher evaluation system needs to be worked through as diligently by curriculum folks as it is by our educators.

This is the latest information at the time of publication. Because AACPS is field testing, everything is fluid. Nothing is set in stone; however, the characterization of the process is like building a jumbo jet in mid flight. Let's hope we can avoid a terrible crash.

## The 2013 Mills-King Award

The 2013 Mills-King Award Ceremony was an inspirational, well-attended success this year, honoring exemplary individuals for their contributions to Human Relations in the field of education. All nine nominees for this celebrated award received a brief biography presented to the audience by TAAAC President, Richard Benfer. Nominees this year included: Krystina Bennett, Gloria Brown, Denise Drenning, Victoria Dundics, Allsion Ellis, Raymond Gerald, Classie Hoyle, Jamie Mierzwa, and Debra Petr. The judges from the TAAAC Human Relations Committee deliberated over a difficult decision to choose one recipient, but consensus was reached, naming Classie Hoyle as the 2013 recipient of the Mills-King Award for Excellence in Human Relations in Education.

Beautiful choral renditions of "Lift E'vry Voice" and "Make a Difference" were performed by the Mills-Parole Elementary School chorus and conducted by TAAAC member Amy Miller.

This year's keynote speaker was a distinguished member of the Annapolis City Council, Alderwoman Shelia Finlayson. Her spirited speech truly inspired the hearts and educated minds of all in attendance.

Congratulations to Dr. Classie Hoyle and all the nominees for their tireless commitment to human relations through community service and education!



Mills-King Award Winner Dr. Classie Hoyle  
with TAAAC President Richard Benfer



## NOMINATIONS OPEN

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

Nomination forms must be received at the TAAAC office by 5:30 PM on Wednesday, April 3, 2013.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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 **Sick Leave Bank** and **AACPS Calendar (Elem.)**.

Nomination forms must be received at the TAAAC office by 5:30 PM on Wednesday, May 1, 2013.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Sick Leave Bank**

**AACPS Calendar (Elem.)**

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- Ruzzel Castaneda
- Aaron Courtney
- Michelle Davis
- Bernadette Gallagher
- Elizabeth Heist
- Walter Lucke
- Yihua Magoulas
- Jason Miller
- Terry Nelson
- Laura Nixon
- Jenni Puig
- Melissa Rueff
- Erin Ryan
- Andrea Torres
- Heather Wilkinson

## Weingarten Rights

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

If called in for such questioning, please respond, "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 call TAAAC!**

## TAX PREPARATION

Bob Pellicoro, who has served TAAAC members for the past 25 years is easing into retirement from tax preparation. In order to give member clients time to make other arrangements he will accommodate his long-time TAAAC clients for their 2012 Income Tax Returns preparation. Please call the TAAAC office to schedule an appointment for one of the following dates:

- March 11, 2013 – 10 AM – 6 PM
- March 13, 2013 – 10 AM – 6 PM

