



TAAAC ACTION REPORT



Your Professional Organization

Volume 46, Number 3



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

November 2013

Anthony Brown Wins MSEA Endorsement

The delegates' votes fell the way of Anthony Brown during last month's MSEA Convention. Here's what MSEA had to say:

MSEA took a major step toward electing pro-public education champions in the 2014 elections when delegates at the 2013 Representative Assembly (RA) endorsed Anthony Brown in the race for Maryland's next governor. Approximately 600 delegates from every county in the state voted on the endorsement after hearing remarks from Brown and fellow candidates Harford County Executive David Craig, Attorney General Doug Gansler, and Delegate Heather Mizeur. Brown's running mate is Ken Ulman, county executive in Howard County.

"Anthony Brown will be a champion for our students and schools," said MSEA President Betty Weller. "I was so impressed watching him engage our locals and members throughout the state during our endorsement process. He listens to us, understands the issues we face, and is excited to partner with us to get things done.

"I'm looking forward to working with him on the campaign trail and on the issues so important to us like equitable school funding, implementing Common Core and teacher evaluations well, and ensuring that students and teachers have the tools and opportunities they need for success."

MSEA's endorsement followed a comprehensive process that included candidate questionnaires, interviews with MSEA's leadership on a wide range of issues affecting Maryland's public schools and students, and a meeting of the 90-member Endorsement Council to consider the different candidates and forward a recommendation to the delegates.

After a thoughtful debate on the second day of the RA, a convincing 71% of the assembly voted to endorse the Brown-Ulman ticket. "I am honored to receive the MSEA endorsement," Brown said. "I will rely heavily on the advice and support of MSEA to both win this election and to make the critical governing decisions to invest in our educators and schools, close the achievement gap, and continue to move Maryland's schools forward."

Visit educatorsforbrown.org to learn more about Anthony Brown's record and vision for Maryland's public schools.





Bill Jones

MOE and Unintended Consequences (Especially here in Anne Arundel)

The Maintenance of Effort (MOE) provision of public education law in Maryland, only recently modified, has been in existence for quite a long time. It was born with a purpose and retains that purpose to this day, at least in theory, but something has gone very wrong in its implementation. More accurately put—in the way the Anne Arundel County government treats it—the purpose of the law was to set a floor of funding for public education. The intent was to ensure that local education agencies receive no less from the local government than the same per pupil funding it received in the prior year. It is a safeguard so that education funding would have to keep up with rising student populations. Because the MOE formula was intended to be a floor, local education agencies had significant histories of providing funding at levels higher than what merely conforming to law would require. That is because *MOE-only* levels of funding are only intended to cover the costs of newly-arriving students. MOE alone is insufficient to cover new demands being imposed by state and federal mandates, program enhancements, or collective bargaining agreements.

For the past half-dozen years, our Anne Arundel County government has treated the minimum lawful

COMMENTARY

appropriation (*that is, the MOE funding floor*) to the schools' operating budget as if it were the target. Schools have been getting no more than the legally mandated minimum, and few times even that required State intervention. The impact has been felt by the Board, its Administration, our students,

than maintain its 2011 effort as a portion of expenditures, schools would have received an additional \$42.2 million.

- General Fund expenditures for the Board of Education increased by \$34.1 million (or 6%) from FY2011 to FY2014. On the other hand, non-BOE expenditures over that same time period increased by \$123.8 million (or 21%)!

- Fund balances were raided to meet expense earlier in our economic turndown, but they have been restored. Unassigned Fund balances grew to \$46,036 million by FY2012 and are estimated at \$38.7 million and \$39.6 million for FY2013 and FY2014, even after huge transfers to Pay-Go funding for capital projects and OPEB reserves.

Through those same years, as non-BOE expenditures grew, fund balances became flush and more long-term projects were paid for in current dollars; *schools* received only what was minimally required, MOE.

To suggest that affordability is the obstacle to funding public education at the appropriate level (as opposed to the minimum) while the portion of the budget allocated to non-education concerns increases, while spending more current discretionary dollars on capital construction, and while finishing fiscal years with large surpluses, is just silly. Our county government, despite its real fiscal challenges, can and should renew the interest in public education it once had and put it into action, not just more rhetoric.

“MOE alone is insufficient to cover new demands being imposed by state and federal mandates, program enhancements, or collective bargaining agreements.”

and virtually every employee who after a multi-year effort to catch up to colleagues in surrounding jurisdictions in their compensation, now find themselves lagging behind by thousands of dollars again. And the realization that it did not and does not have to be that way just inflames the frustration. Below, you will find some information from recent budget years that show schools, students, and teachers have been quite low on the priority list of Anne Arundel County governance. Rhetoric from the Arundel Center notwithstanding, numbers tell the story:

- Education as a portion of general fund expenditures has decreased from 48.4% in FY2011 to 45.2% in FY2014, a drop of 3.2 percentage points, each of which would have been worth over 13.2 million to the school. If the county did no more

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Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County
2521 Riva Road, Suite L 7
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(410) 224-3330 (410) 841-6022
(301) 261-8309 FAX (410) 841-5117
www.taaaconline.org

Officers
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Ken Baughman, Vice President
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From Contentia this month . . . *Just Sayin'* . . .

There are two new programs in Math. Instead of having an in-service during the school day I've been directed to take a Webinar. When?... We are expected to live in a house without the foundation or walls built!... I am totally overwhelmed with this new math curriculum. It is all over the place. They give us these things to teach but they are giving us topics that require the students to be fluent in other lessons that should have been taught previously, problem is that it was not in that grade's curriculum last year... We have 2-3 scheduled meetings each week going to the end of our school day. NO time to do all the wonderfulness the meetings are telling us to do... I am ready to quit... staying until 6 or later and we are an early school. Can you spell burnout?... Our principal told us that none of the SLOs the school has come up with have been acceptable. None!... When asked when we would have time to come up with some assessment to even begin this SLO process we were told that we would just have to find the time... The math department is requesting that teachers make sure to watch upwards of four hours worth of webinars on various programs as well as devoting time to plan for a very sparsely put together curriculum... We have been given a guide with resources with no one-to-one correlation to the actual lesson, leaving us on our own to search through and see what fits (unpacking!!!)... Many videos and items I am unable to download at home due to an older computer. I shouldn't be forced to purchase a new one for work purposes????... I feel inadequate due to missing some trainings and not having equitable resources... I am overwhelmed and feel like I cannot catch up... I am super organized and have been team leader for my grade for a number of years and have never had to tread water like this... As soon as one thing gets caught up, another is added to our plate... There are so many new initiatives that 2-3 days a week our individual planning is being taken away which leaves very little time to grade papers or plan on our own or with our grade level teams... SLO's. We don't get it. The information changes every meeting... The math department has sent out to the schools a paper copy of the curriculum to use, BUT you still have to spend hours to click and examine the suggested internet sites to plan your lessons from the curriculum guide... Math is only one subject out of many that elementary teachers teach! Reading à strategies, comprehension, expression, conventions; Writing, Social Studies, Science, Math à computation, concepts, problem solving; Computer lessons, health lessons, and on and on. I personally spent 7 hours one weekend and I REFUSE to do it again!.. Meetings — we have a minimum of two a week on our long days. This year we even had one on back-to-school night—the first time I remember that in an almost 30 year career. Was told there wouldn't be enough meeting days in the month for all the other ones we needed to have if we skipped that one... Only 2 of our 4 teachers are being allowed to go to the mandatory training and then they will train the other 2—but when is that happening??? Let me guess—on my own time. I realize I should refuse but then how do I teach the program??? That Catch 22 comes up all the time... We have to take minutes now and turn them in at our grade group math meeting. I can't help feeling a bit demoralized as if we can't be trusted to have a meeting on our own and discuss what needs to be discussed... BREAKFAST! We now serve it to every child in the classroom adding yet another job to my ever growing list. Now in the mornings while trying to supervise students in the hall, check homework and get the day started right after announcements, I have to check off on a list every student who has taken breakfast from the bin. Last week the cafeteria manager told us it isn't good enough just to check off that a student has taken an item, we must make sure they are taking one of each item whether they want it or not and throw away what they don't want... I really do want to do a good job and I'm not insinuating that some of the new things coming down the pike wouldn't help me do that, but I'm so overwhelmed I can't get a good grasp on anything and feel as if I'm not doing anything well... I can't even begin to list the extra things I used to do for the kids because I wanted to do them and that I no longer have the time or energy to do... Our school is a PYP school so on top of all the things I've already mentioned, we get to write our own curriculum and reflect on all of our units and have additional trainings, bulletin boards, oh and visitors. It leaves me feeling a bit sick to my stomach all the time and I can't sleep!!

These are just a few of the examples of workload problems that elementary teachers have been sharing with us.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Anthony Carter
Aaron Madsen
Kerry McKeldin
William McMillan
Christeen Moore
Lindsey Vanderbeck
Nicole Wirth

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.

October ARC Attendance

The following schools, departments, and affiliates were not represented at the October 2, 2013 Association Representative Council Meeting.

Affiliates – Coaches Association, Counselors, SLAAAC, **Departments** – Riva Road; **Elementary** – Annapolis, Arnold, Belvedere, Benfield, Bodkin, Crofton, Crofton Meadows, Deale, Eastport, Edgewater, Folger McKinsey, Freetown, George Cromwell, Germantown, Glendale/Glendale Level V, Hillsmere, Jacobsville, Lothian, Manor View, Maryland City, Mayo, North Glen, Oakwood, Overlook, Pasadena, Piney Orchard, Rolling Knolls, Severna Park, Shady Side, South Shore, Van Bokkelen, West Meade, Woodside; **Secondary** – Arundel High, Brooklyn Park Mid., Chesapeake Bay Mid. Res. Ctr., Corkran Mid., George Fox Mid., Glen Burnie High, Marley Mid., Old Mill Mid. N., Severn River Mid., South River High, Southern Mid.; **Specials** – Center of Applied Tech. N, Center of Applied Tech. S, Chesapeake Science Point, Infants & Toddlers Program, J. Albert Adams Academy, Mary Moss Academy, Phoenix Academy, Staff Development – Carver.



Anne Arundel Medical Center

PROTECTING YOUR BACK

By Chad Patton, MD MS

If you're like many people, you're all too familiar with back pain.

Keep strong. Prevent back pain by strengthening muscles in your abdomen and lower back.

Position yourself for health. While standing relieve pressure on your lower back by placing one foot forward and keeping your knees slightly bent.

Lift with care. To protect yourself, keep your back straight, bend your knees and lift with your legs.

Aim for health. Extra pounds put a strain on your back. And don't smoke—it raises your risk for back pain.

Know when to get help. Anti-inflammatory medicines can help. Also try alternating heat and cold.

You should see your doctor if:

- Numbness or shooting pain in your legs
- Trouble urinating
- Weakness
- Fever

Chad Patton, MD MS is an orthopaedic spine surgeon with Orthopaedic Sports Medicine Center at Anne Arundel Medicine Center. He is also part of the OrthoTODAY program where he treats acute back and neck pain with same-day appointments. He can be reached at 410.280.4707 or visit www.osmc.net.