

# TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

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

December 2014

## Negotiations Survey Confirms Member Priorities

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By the November 13th deadline, nearly 1,000 members had responded to the TAAAC Negotiations Survey. Overall, the survey provided few surprises. The need for better salaries, step recovery, and workload relief shouted from both the survey items and the 240 comments and suggestions, every one of which was read and considered.

Once funneled into articulable lawful bargaining topics, then reviewed by the TAAAC's Negotiating Team; the survey provoked a total of 24 topics for presentation to the Board's team. The parties exchanged their topics on Thursday, November 20th.

TAAAC topics generally revolved around salary (including steps) and other matters related to compensation, workload, planning time, reduction of duties and meetings, and length of work year. The Board's team brought some topics related to salary and other compensation as well, along with some topics related to leave, employer prerogatives, experience credit, and some administrative matters. While the teams shared some common topics, there was significance distance between their respective positions.

To avoid leaving some survey respondents to suspect their suggestions were ignored, some comments should be made regarding suggestions and recommendations that did not make it to the bargaining table. Generally, they would include illegal topics, topics that are negotiated jointly, and some suggestion topics that would be detrimental to the educators TAAAC represents.

1. Suggestions related to healthcare were not presented. Issues related to Healthcare, including Vision and Dental, are deferred to a joint healthcare committee composed of representatives from the Board and two representatives from each TAAAC, AEL, SAAAAC, and AFSCME Local 1693.
2. Matters related to the school calendar or maximum class sizes did not make it to the table. Both matters are precluded from collective bargaining by Maryland law [Education Article, Section 6-408(c)3].
3. Suggestions that are to the direct detriment of or local educators did not make it to the table such as; eliminate tenure, move to five-year renewable contracts, or replace steps with merit pay (especially considering the condition of our still-under-construction rating system).

The parties meet again on December 8th.



**Richard Benfer**

Recently I had the opportunity, along with Bill Jones, Executive Director of TAAAC, to attend a portion of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education Retreat. The Board of Education asked TAAAC along with AEL, SAAAAC, and AFSCME to attend the retreat and offer some commentary about the upcoming bargaining season. The forum included the above mentioned groups; the Board of Education members, Superintendent, and selected staff members involved in the negotiations processes. The forum was open to the public.

Much of the discussion revolved around one particular topic that emerged which is the ubiquitous lack of funding. The TAAAC team described how Unit 1 members are behind surrounding jurisdictions in terms of pay. One example shared put one particular step here in Anne Arundel up against the same step in Montgomery County. The difference was about \$26,000. The days of serving in one school system your entire career are over. More and more the millennials among our ranks step out of the traditional way employment works and tend to take control of their own employment

## COMMENTARY

opportunities. These disparities around the salary schedule lead to folks taking their experience credit and going elsewhere.

*“Educators shape the future and it is time to roll up our sleeves, get out to our elected officials, and educate them about the top notch education students receive in our schools.”*

The Association of Educational Leaders (AEL) emphasized recruiting and retaining the most qualified educators so that they come to our county and stay. The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) described the lack of funding and how it has impacted the service employees. The Secretaries & Assistants Association of Anne Arundel County (SAAAAC) emphasized that steps are very important and are not just a given, but a reward to employees for “longevity and loyalty.”

Changing the conversation about the Board of Education budget from “what it costs!” to “what the investment is” will be very important going into this FY16 budget cycle. People need to understand that the Board of Education presents a budget that fulfills the needs of the system to move us forward.

The past successes we have built were on shoestring budgets that also have had repercussions on the backs of employees. No one disputes the importance of strong curriculum and instruction choices for kids in the classroom. Making those decisions is what we do best. Being fully funded to do our jobs spells success for not only students but for the educators as well. We can no longer “Stack um Deep and Teach um Cheap.” Educator working conditions are our Students’ learning conditions. It is time for the county government to realize that they should not be focused on how much things cost, but the investment that is being made and the return that will be realized.

The County Executive Elect Steve Schuh has said he wants to give the Board of Education what it needs. I for one am very happy to hear that. What that means to me is that the county executive elect is prepared to fund the Board of Education budget in full as it will ultimately be presented. This will allow the Board of Education to fulfill its obligation to the citizens of our county to provide quality educators to deliver top notch curriculum and instruction to the students we serve. The Board of Education knows what it needs to run our successful school system, so I am glad to hear the “soon to be” decision-maker making the commitment to our Public Schools in Anne Arundel County.

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and Managing Editor  
Roxanne L. Beach, Editor

# From Contentia this month . . . *Contract Changes Affecting Elementary School Teachers*

## The Good News

You are probably not aware of the following changes to the Negotiated Agreement. They should be added to the 3rd paragraph of Article 11 – WORK TIME AND WORK LOAD: Section C – Planning Time:

1. **Administrators will limit the number of meetings where administratively possible to afford elementary teachers optimal time for planning.**

Your FAC should have ongoing discussions with your administration with the goal in mind of increasing planning time whenever possible. Stress the elimination of meetings whenever possible.

2. **Principals and FACs will collaboratively consider departmentalizing to assist in managing elementary teacher workload. If a collaborative determination cannot be made, assistance may be sought from the appropriate supervisor or designee.**

Eliminating the number of preparations that a teacher has will obviously lessen the workload; departmentalization works to this goal. While departmentalization in every elementary school at every grade level may not be administratively possible nor even desirable, in many instances it will favorably impact workload.

It is not too early for discussions to be initiated regarding scheduling for departmentalization for next year. In some situations changes could even be made at mid-year. Many elementary schools have already experienced a positive impact on workload and learning by departmentalizing.

3. **AACPS with TAAAC involvement shall examine and implement best practices to improve the utilization of elementary school planning time.**

TAAAC must take the lead to encourage AACPS to focus on elementary planning time. Increasing elementary school planning time and implementing best practices has been an ongoing topic of bargaining, but much work needs to be done. Unfortunately, it is very much a monetary issue.

## The Bad News

These addendums to the Negotiated Agreement come with the caveat that they are not subject to the grievance process.

That said, much can still be accomplished if we have the appropriate conversations.

## **TAAAC Board of Directors asks the President to Form New Task Force**

At TAAAC's November Board of Directors meeting the Board asked President Benfer to form a new Task Force to look into the counseling needs of Educators. Many of our colleagues are under pressures from many aspects of their job and home life. Juggling these day-to-day pressures at times can be difficult. The task force will be charged with researching resources for educators to access when they are feeling overwhelmed with all the new demands being placed on them on a daily basis. If you are interested in being a part of this Task Force, please email President Benfer at [rbenfer@mseanea.org](mailto:rbenfer@mseanea.org). More detailed information will be provided to the Task Force Members once they are selected.

# Board of Education Appeals Public School Labor Relations Board Decision

Last month TAAAC filed a Request to Resolve a Dispute as to Negotiability with the Public School Labor Relations Board [*TAAAC v. BOE of AA Co. (PSLRB Case No. N2015-02)*]. TAAAC was hoping that the PSLRB would reverse a previous Maryland State Board of Education decision regarding disciplinary actions against public school educators. The standing MSBOE opinion characterized disciplinary actions such as written warnings and reprimands as a matter of *education policy* rather than a *condition of employment*, thereby by making related matters illegal for collective bargaining. The result of the opinion was that the just *cause* provisions in the Negotiated Agreement became unenforceable and disputes on disciplinary actions were no longer subject to grievance or arbitration. Based upon the MSBOE decision public school employers across Maryland became free to discipline employees with or without cause. Accused educators were stripped of the opportunity for a fair and objective review of such actions.

On October 28th, the PSLRB determined the matter in TAAAC’s favor and reversed the standing MSBOE decision. For a short time AACPS educators and their colleagues elsewhere in Maryland retrieved their right to a fair and impartial review of any disputed disciplinary actions.

On November 11th, our local Board of Education filed a Petition for Judicial Review to the Circuit Court of Anne Arundel County. Obviously, it is our hope that the PSLRB decision will survive the review. TAAAC members will be updated as the matter is processed.

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The Board of Education President, Stacy Korbela, has made it very clear that she sees TAAAC and the other union counterparts as partners in the process and is dedicated to having an open dialog to discuss issues when appropriate. Educators shape the future and it is time to roll up our sleeves, get out to our elected officials, and educate them about the top notch education students receive in our schools. Remember that education in Anne Arundel County and all of Maryland is top notch not in spite of our dedicated educators and support professionals, but prescribed due to their unwavering dedication to the 80,000 students we serve.



## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### Spend Summer in the Sun

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

### Tutorrific!

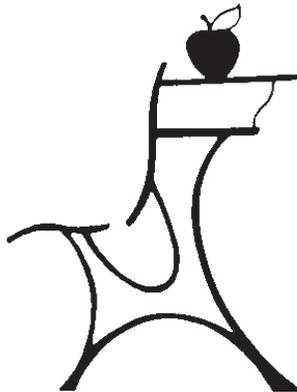
Tutor in homes throughout Howard County (Elkridge, Columbia, etc.) A great way to make extra money! Make your own schedule. Please send an email and/or resume to Deborah Markowitz at [tu-torific@comcast.net](mailto:tu-torific@comcast.net)

### Anchor’s The Way!

Anchor Aquatics is training and hiring for summer 2015 for the positions of Pool Manager, Area Supervisor, Lifeguard and Pool Operator for Annapolis and surrounding areas. Attend our Open House on Saturday, January 3 from 10 am – 2 pm at 605 Admiral Drive, Annapolis 21401. You can apply, interview and get a **prize**. Ask about our FREE Training (\$350 value). Contact 410-956-0744 or go online at [www.anchoraquatics.com](http://www.anchoraquatics.com)

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Kathy Atkins  
Ashley Behringer  
Eugene Dorestal  
Lenora Fox  
Melissa Gilroy  
Denise Goepel  
Candice Hines-Cross  
Susan Malone  
Nichole Sampson  
Mary B. Smith  
Wayne VanEngen



## TAAAC Meeting Calendar

### DECEMBER

December 3 – ARC – 5:00 PM @ Severna Park Middle  
December 3 – Middle School Concerns – Following ARC meeting @ SPMS  
December 6 – TAAAC Minority Affairs Committee – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC  
December 8 – TAAAC/BOE Negotiations @ TAAAC  
December 8 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC  
December 8 – Common Core Cadre – Chat, Chew, & Brew – 4:30 PM @ MSEA Headquarters  
December 10 – TAAAC BOD – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC  
December 15 – Government Relations – 4:45 PM @ TAAAC  
December 17 – TAAAC/BOE Negotiations @ TAAAC  
December 17 – High School Concerns Committee – 3:30 PM @ TAAAC  
December 17 – TAAAC Executive Team @ TAAAC  
December 18 – TAAAC ASI @ TAAAC  
December 22 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC  
December 22 – Public Relations – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC  
December 24 – January 2 – Winter Break – TAAAC Office Closed

## November ARC Attendance

The following schools, departments, and affiliates were not represented at the November 5, 2014 Association Representative Council Meeting.

**Affiliates** – Counselors, EMAAAC, Reading Teachers, SLAAAC, Social Workers; **Departments** – PSY, Riva Road; **Elementary** – Arnold, Bodkin, Brock Bridge, Brooklyn Park, C & I Resource Ctr. @ Pt. Pleasant, Community Based Servs. @ Pt. Pleasant, Crofton, Davidsonville, Deale, Folger McKinsey, Fort Smallwood, Freetown, Georgetown East, Glen Burnie Park, Glendale Annex, Glendale/Glendale Level V, High Point, Hillsmere, Jacobsville, Jessup, Lake Shore, Lothian, Manor View, Marley, Millersville, Nantucket, North Glen, Oakwood, Pasadena, Pershing Hill, Piney Orchard, Rolling Knolls, Seven Oaks, Severn, Severna Park, Shady Side, Shipley's Choice, South Shore, Sunset, Tyler Heights, Van Bokkelen, West Annapolis, West Meade, Windsor Farm, Woodside; **Secondary** – Arundel High, Brooklyn Park Middle, Chesapeake Bay Middle Resource Ctr., Corkran Middle, Glen Burnie High, Old Mill Middle N., Severna Park Middle, South River, Southern Middle, Southern High; **Specials** – Arlington Echo, Center of Applied Tech. N., Center of Applied Tech. S., Chesapeake Science Pt., Infants & Toddlers, Marley Glen Special, Mary E. Moss Academy, Monarch Academy Glen Burnie, Monarch Laurel, Phoenix Academy, Staff Development – Carver.

## 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. If called in for a meeting only to find that it is your conduct or performance (other than routine job counseling) that is the focus of questioning or discussion, ask to suspend the meeting long enough to get Union representation.

If faced with such circumstances and required to remain in the meeting but denied the right to representation, you are under no obligation to speak. Simply take notes...

**Then call TAAAC!**

*NLRB v. WEINGARTEN, INC., 420 U.S. 251 (1975)*

## NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for Secretary-Treasurer, Board of Directors, and NEA Delegates. Nomination forms must be received at the TAAAC office by 5 PM on Tuesday, December 9, 2014.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

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

Personal Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

- Secretary-Treasurer
- Board of Director
- NEA Delegate

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

## SLO/Common Core Corner

Join us December 8 at MSEA Headquarters for a Chat, Chew and Brew with our local SLO & Common Core Cadres. We would like to chat about SLO & Common Core implementation successes and challenges here at the local level. The Cadres will also offer a differentiated presentation on Common Core with information tailored to the elementary and intermediate/secondary levels. Topics will include Common Core “Best of the Best” resources for educators and parents. Follow up information from both sessions will be available after the presentations on the TAAAC website, under CC/SLO Tab.

## HERSHEYPARK CHRISTMAS CANDYLANE

Hersheypark is decorated for Christmas with over 2 million lights, live reindeer, Santa, and more. Your admission ticket includes admission into the Park – all rides and entertainment. Tickets available for all Ages (3+) for \$9.85 (\$3 savings)

Hershey Sweet Lights is about 1 mile from Hersheypark, a drive-thru holiday lights show awaits. Hershey Sweet Lights Car: Sun-Thurs: \$18 – Fri-Sat: \$23 (\$2 savings)

Purchase online at <http://tinyurl.com/anne2014> and enter promo code: 14895