Another Budget Battle Begins

Shouldn’t County Executive Neuman Hold a Public Hearing?

On February 19th the Board of Education will adopt its Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request and forward it to the Interim County Executive Laura Neuman. The budget request in its current form is insufficient to address in any significant way the work load issues that occupied a few full days’ worth of work at the bargaining table. Much due to testimony given at the public hearings by our TAAAC President and several brave TAAAC members who stood up and told their stories, we expect there to be some discussion around modifying the budget on or before the meeting on the 19th to make more effort toward workload relief. Even if that happens, any successful effort that requires funding will be subject to cuts by Ms. Neuman, who is expected to provide the AACPS with no more than the minimum lawful allocation – MOE (or, Maintenance of Effort).

There is an oddity in the Anne Arundel County budget process. It is explained below:

- Every December, the AACPS Superintendent presents a budget proposal to the Board of Education.
- Every February, the Board acts on that proposal and often modifies it prior to approval. Before doing so, the Board is obligated to hold two public hearings during which testimony is heard from parents, students, employees, and anyone else who wants to provide input.
- Following final adoption of the request, it goes to the County Executive for action, who will modify the budget as she believes appropriate; and then must present the budget to the County Council by May 1. The County Executive has more unilateral discretionary authority over the budget than any other person, committee, or department.
- Upon receipt the budget the Council may or may not make further modifications, but with some restrictions. The Council typically adopts the final budget by the end of May. But before doing so, the Council is obligated to hold two public hearings.

So, is it not a bit unreasonable that the person holding the most power and authority over the budget is not required to, and does not, hold even one public hearing to receive direct input from citizens and employees? Many emails and/or phone calls requesting such a hearing have been sent to Ms. Neuman. At the time of this writing it is unknown whether a public will be scheduled.

It would be good for our County Executive to hear the testimony that our Board of Education members heard on January 9th.
The roller coaster ride continues. Educators all over our county continue to feel the pinch of workload issues in their daily workday. I have heard from many principals who have found ways to lighten the load for the educators in their building. Having said that, there are still many places where rather than having lightened the load, the load has become heavier. To date the TAAAC workload survey has been taken by 1,461 educators around our county. The following is a snapshot of the highlights. (See the data provided on the bottom right)

This data clearly shows that educators around our county go above and beyond to ensure that our students get the best instruction possible, but at what cost. The cost is members own personal time. Educators are paid to work 37.5 hours per week not including lunch. As we continue to give of ourselves freely without compensation, the more will be piled on our plate.

I have worked closely with the Department of Curriculum and Instruction to be sure that they hear the concerns of educators on the ground in terms of the workload dealing with curriculum writing, research of materials, curriculum implementation, and actual delivery of instruction. To that end, the curriculum and instruction office has offered sub days to the elementary educators to provide extra planning for the delivery of instruction. This would include collaborative efforts with grade level teams, support personnel, principals, and other important stakeholders. The context of the meeting time is intended to be focused around student data analysis, unpacking standards for unit and lesson planning, looking at strategies and resources, and aligning content to formative assessments. The hope is that this format will give educators additional time to fully think through and plan for the delivery of instruction during the actual workday. My hope would be that these days would be scheduled in a way that individual planning time is not compromised.

Additional meetings of the TAAAC Curriculum and Instruction Advisory Cabinet are scheduled to share solutions to issues that are still plaguing our members on a daily basis. I have continued to share concerns with the Superintendent at our monthly meetings and she is concerned as well. Routinely she takes copious notes and follows through quickly. I can only hope that the new superintendent, whomever that may be, will work as closely with us.

### Elementary Educators

- 50% reported having 2-3 preps daily
- 42% reported on average 40-60 minutes of planning per day
- 51% reported that 40+ minutes of daily non student time was directed by someone else
- 52% had less than 40 minutes per day to use to plan for instruction
- 89% are not compensated for missed planning time
- 45% planned 4+ hours per week at home
- 49% spend 3-6 hours per week on planning beyond the workweek
- 39% spend 10+ hours developing and implementing SLO’s
- 40% felt they will spend 10+ hours in the second semester on SLO’s
- 43% worked on SLO activities outside of contractual hours
- 86% are not compensated for missed planning time
- 51% planned 4+ hours per week at home
- 52% spend 3-6 hours per week on planning beyond the workweek
- 32% spent 10+ hours developing and implementing SLO’s
- 36% felt they will spend 10+ hours in the 3rd and 4th marking periods on SLO’s
- 43% worked on SLO activities outside of contractual hours

### Secondary Educators

- 50% reported 2-3 preps daily
- 42% reported on average 40-60 minutes of planning per day
- 51% reported that 40+ minutes of daily non student time was directed by someone else
- 52% had less than 40 minutes per day to use to plan for instruction
- 89% are not compensated for missed planning time
- 45% planned 4+ hours per week at home
- 49% spend 3-6 hours per week on planning beyond the workweek
- 39% spend 10+ hours developing and implementing SLO’s
- 40% felt they will spend 10+ hours in the second semester on SLO’s
- 43% worked on SLO activities outside of contractual hours
- 86% are not compensated for missed planning time
- 51% planned 4+ hours per week at home
- 52% spend 3-6 hours per week on planning beyond the workweek
- 39% spend 10+ hours developing and implementing SLO’s
- 40% felt they will spend 10+ hours in the second semester on SLO’s
- 43% worked on SLO activities outside of contractual hours
Sisyphus was the Corinthian King punished for his sins by being compelled to roll an immense rock up a hill, only to have the rock roll back down, at which point the cycle would repeat itself forever. Does that sound familiar?

The workload issue is our “Sisyphus.” There is no time to do what needs to be done. Invaluable time with your own families is sacrificed trying to “push the rock” up the hill. In all fairness, it doesn’t stop at teachers. Related service providers and school administrators struggle similarly.

Something must and can be done. TAAAC’s local president and our school superintendent are working collaboratively to find ways to reduce the load a bit or at least find more time to complete it. They have managed some successes. But progress is slow. In addition, work time has occupied the majority of negotiating hours throughout this year’s sessions. We should not allow the efforts to stop there.

One of the frequent complaints we hear from members about issues is:

“Why don’t you (TAAAC) do something?”

We are doing something, but we need your help.

TAAAC has filed a workload grievance. However, we desperately need more grievants from all levels and job descriptions.

Admittedly, there is some ambiguity in the phrase individual planning for the delivery of instruction. Planning a lesson qualifies by definition. Collecting information that informs that planning probably qualifies. But there are activities that clearly do not qualify and therefore cannot be required beyond paid hours. That would include:

- meetings of any type
- collecting, analyzing, or manipulating any data that is not directly related to planning (Completing MMSR documents would be an example)
- answering emails or telephone calls
- report cards, interim reports, or progress sheets
- making entries for Parent Connect
- preparing a professional or student portfolio
- writing student recommendations
- writing personal goals
- writing curriculum
- attending high school (or any other) graduation
- more, more, more

TAAAC’s elected leadership and its staff is ready, willing, able, and a tad anxious to make some headway before too many good and conscientious educators recognize that there are other ways to earn a living, a situation which is already starting to manifest.

For progress to be made, members must provide the information. There is an instrument to do so at www.taaaconline.org. TAAAC is asking members to go there and download either version of the Timekeeper and use it to capture the amount of unpaid time that you are required to work in activities that do not constitute individual planning for the delivery of instruction. Please forward the results to TAAAC. It is time to do something about the rock. Just ask Sisyphus.
This year brings TAAAC into the electronic balloting age. For months President Benfer has been lobbying for the use of the AACPS email system for voting purposes. The process is slow and arduous. Howard County (HCEA) and Prince Georges County (PGCEA) use their school systems email accounts for balloting purposes already. Not being able to use the AACPS system at this point has motivated TAAAC to collect home emails from members across the county. The push started in October when President Benfer asked Association Representatives to collect members’ home emails at their schools. The hard work of reps is appreciated as the collection process could not have been achieved without their hard work.

We were able to add to the home emails we have in the MSEA IMS system, NEA Lyris system, and Mail Chimp. These three systems are ways that the associations on the national, state, and local level communicate with members. The only issue is that the systems do not talk to each other. This makes communication difficult because the electronic balloting process uses the MSEA IMS system, TAAAC uses the Lyris system and President Benfer uses Mail Chimp. While MSEA is investing in a new system where all systems will eventually talk to each other, we are not there yet.

At any rate, we raised our home email collection numbers to 58%. The next wave came with President Benfer directly emailing members through the AACPS email system requesting home emails. He is the only person in the TAAAC office who has access to AACPS email. This labor intensive process was repeated another time and now we are up to 73% home emails.

The election window is now open. MSEA elections began January 27, 2014. You should have received an email with directions for voting and links to the candidates and ballot. Today, February 5, 2014 @ 7:00PM the TAAAC election Ballot will go live. If you provided your home email when requested you will receive an email with your election ballot sometime after 7:00PM. We encourage you to review the candidates in this Action Report and those profiles online. Then vote! If you do not receive an electronic ballot, you can go to the TAAAC website www.taaaconline.org where a link to the ballot is available. You will need your membership # which can be found in the mailing address of your MSEA Action Line Magazine. Balloting closes on February 28, 2014 regardless of your method of voting.

The ultimate outcome of online voting is to increase the number of people voting thus giving members more of a voice. On the state and national levels, increasing the numbers of members voting gives our association a stronger presence at MSEA and NEA Conventions and ultimately more input into state and national policies of the union.

TAAAC will continue to push for access to AACPS email system as part of the campaign to streamline communications with members.
Candidate for President

Richard Benfer

What an honor and a privilege it has been serving as TAAAC President. I will continue serving the interests of the association vigorously. Challenges we have faced with Common Core Standards, new curriculum, teacher evaluation and SLO’s have been many. Salaries, benefits, and workload issues continue to be priorities. My hope is to continue a collaborative effort with the central office in solving the problems we have faced. I will advocate for equity in planning time for all. Your stories will be heard by the BOE, County Executive, County Council, and other Legislators as long as I am President.

Candidates for Vice President

Pam Bukowski

I have a voice—very helpful as a speech/language pathologist. With my voice, I have been able to advocate for all educators as a TAAAC Board member. I participate in several task forces. I serve Anne Arundel County as a member of several educational, community/outreach, faith-based, and civic organizations. I am active in the PTA at the local and county levels. I have an ear too. I have been trained as a mediator and use my skills daily. With my voice and my ear, I will continue to advocate for you with your vote as the next TAAAC Vice-President.

Russell Leone

Collectively we are experiencing workload issues as we struggle to balance Common Core, SLOs, and adjust to our new evaluations. I also understand the diversity of conditions that exists among our members at different work locations. Working on local and state committees and with national organizations, I strive to ensure our needs and concerns are heard and valued by those making decisions affecting us. I continue to be passionate about representing the educators of AACPS. As a board member, I have been proud to be a voice for our great educators. Please elect me to be your new Vice-President.

Candidates for Board of Directors

Betsy Brininger

After 28 years as a non-profit executive, I returned to teaching 10 years ago. While teaching at a Title I school, I have supported colleagues as building rep, MSEA & NEA delegate, and on the Board. My passion continues to be giving a voice to educators, and regaining respect for our profession.

Jason Fahie

As a veteran educator I am aware of the many issues we face each day. I am seeking office as one of your TAAAC Directors to aid in preserving the profession and our livelihood. I ask that during our elections you support me with a vote of confidence. Thank you.

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.
Candidates for Board of Directors

Kristine Korona

I am an IB Coordinator at Meade High and long-time union activist. I served one term on TAAAC’s Board and currently serve on multiple committees. Given the current political climate, I believe TAAAC must strongly advocate for reduced teacher workloads, competitive compensation, and other policies that treat teachers as professionals.

Reba Miller

Education as a profession needs to be respected. Respect looks like fair pay, good benefits and a voice on the board that addresses everyone’s issues. I, Reba Miller, seek your vote to join me in the fight to regain fair pay and our position in society as a respected profession.

Sharon Moesel

As Faculty Chair at Annapolis HS, I say what needs to be said, do what needs to be done. I negotiate when I can, fight when I must. I do whatever is necessary to advocate successfully for my students and my colleagues. This I promise to do for you too.

Marty Sears

I am running for my second term on the Board of Directors. The previous two years I was able to more fully understand and appreciate the role of TAAAC. I had the opportunity to attend conventions and training seminars that have helped me help you to make AACPS great.

Shanita Spencer

Working at Annapolis High has shown me the importance of stepping up to mentor, to represent and to assist teachers in recognizing the implications of policies and procedures that result from being uninformed. Understanding these implications extend beyond our county and requires involvement at the highest policy levels.

Congratulations

TAAAC Members
AACS Teacher of the Year
Semi-Finalists

Rebecca Bittman - North County High
Julie Ciotola - Glendale Elem.
Rachel Fitzgerald - Marley Middle
Susan Grieve - Folger McKinsey Elem.
Christina Houstian - Broadneck High
Jessica Howell - Manor View Elem.
Stacy Kearns - Corkran Middle
Dianne Lloyd - Davidsonville Elem.
Suzanne MacLeod - Linthicum Elem.
Robert Mauro - Lindale Middle
Amy Mueller - Marley Elementary
Susan M. Sheehy - Millersville Elem.
Jennifer Swiech - Meade Middle
Stacey Walczak - Seven Oaks Elem.
Brad Wray - Arundel High
January ARC Attendance

The following schools, departments, and affiliates were not represented at the January 8, 2014 Association Representative Council Meeting.

**Affiliates** – Coaches Association, Counselors, SLAAAC, Social Workers; **Departments** – Riva Road; **Elementary** – Annapolis, Arnold, Belle Grove, Bodkin, Broadneck, Brock Bridge, Brooklyn Park, Crofton, Crofton Meadows, Davidsonville, Deale, Eastport, Edgewater, Fort Smallwood, Germantown, Glendale/Glendale Level V, Hillsmere, Linthicum, Lothian, Manor View, Comm. Based @ Point Pleasant, Marley, Mayo, Meade Heights, Millersville, Mills-Parole, North Glen, Oakwood, Overlook, Piney Orchard, Rolling Knolls, Seven Oaks, Severn, Severna Park, South Shore, Van Bokkelen, West Meade, Woodside; **Secondary** – Arundel High, Brooklyn Park Middle, C & I Resource Ctr. @ Point Pleasant Annex, Corkran Middle, Glen Burnie High, Marley Middle, Northeast High, Old Mill Middle N, South River High, Southern Middle, Southern High; **Specials** - Center of Applied Tech. S, Chesapeake Science Point, Infants & Toddlers Program, J. Albert Adams Academy, Marley Glen Special, Mary E. Moss Academy, Monarch Academy, Phoenix Academy, Ruth P. Eason, Staff Development – Carver.

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**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 5 for the 2014 scholarship awards. For more information, contact your school counseling department or call the TAAAC office.

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**Your Hip Bone’s Connected to the Back Bone!**

If you’re like many people, you’re familiar with back and hip pain. Having aches and pains for even a short time can interfere with your job and life in general. This is especially true for educators and others on their feet.

Here’s how to stop problems before they start:

Keep muscles strong in your abdomen and lower back, watch your posture when standing and sitting.

If you do develop back or hip pain, pain relievers, heat and cold may provide temporary relief, but you should see your doctor if your pain follows a fall or if you also have:

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

Learn more about symptoms and treatment of the back and hip, such as hip arthroscopy, anterior hip replacements, and less invasive back procedures at a special presentation just for current and former educators: Tuesday, February 18 at 6:30pm. Register at [www.askaamc.org/TAAAC](http://www.askaamc.org/TAAAC) or 443-481-5555.
NOMINATIONS OPEN

The Nominating Committee is currently accepting nominations for the temporary vacancy of Vice President until July 31, 2014.

Nominations will be accepted until the March 5 Association Representative Meeting.

Name ________________________________
Address ______________________________
______________________________________
School _______________________________
Phone (H) ____________________  (W) ____________________
Email ________________________________

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

☐ Vice President

NOMINATIONS OPEN

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

Nominations will be accepted until the April 4 Association Representative Meeting.

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

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

Beth Tfiloh Camps is looking for teachers to be Head Counselors and Instructors of sports, campcraft, singing, nature, art, and swimming. The Owings Mills day camp runs Monday-Friday from 9 AM-4 PM for 8 weeks (June 23-August 15). Visit our website at www.btcamps.org or phone 410-517-3451. YOUR CHILD ATTENDS FREE!

BJ’s Discount for Renewing or Signing up!

Happy New Year - Get $10 off the $50 membership fee or $20 off the $100 Rewards membership fee and 15 months = 3 months FREE! FREE second card is included. Offer ends March 14, 2014.

Renew ahead of time and the 15 months will be added to the end of your current membership. If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity, email the BJ’s rep at jturpin@bjs.com. List TAAAC in the subject line.