

TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Your Professional Organization

VOL. 47, NUMBER 6

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

February 2015

Governor Hogan's Budget at First Glance

Governor Hogan has refrained from speaking about specific policy initiatives since winning his election, allowing his first days in office to speak for the type of governor he will be. His FY16 budget proposal on January 22 is telling. He is striving for fiscal austerity and aims to eliminate the entirety of the state's budget deficit in one year, making cuts and transfers that will eliminate \$1.25 billion from the state budget for FY15 and FY16 combined. All we know as of this writing is what the administration has shared during a press conference. Here are some immediate takeaways from what the Hogan Administration has shared about the FY16 budget:

- State aid for education cut by \$143 million. This reduction is achieved by capping the inflation factor on the Thornton formula at 1% and cutting the Geographic Cost of Education Index in half. Even with those cuts, aid for education grows \$45.3 million above FY15 levels – but counties and school districts were counting on nearly \$190 million more this year. The cost to Anne Arundel County Public Schools will be approximately \$9.6 million.
- Public school construction funding is in the capital budget at \$290.7 million; more than \$40 million above the recommended baseline from the Kopp School Construction Commission, and \$15 million above FY15 levels.
- State agency spending reduction of 2% across the board, reducing the budget by \$118 million.
- Medicaid provider rate cuts of \$160 million.
- State employee compensation adjustments totaling \$156 million in cuts.

The General Assembly's Spending Affordability Committee recommended eliminating the budget deficit over two years to help minimize the pain of cuts and reduced spending on vital services and Marylanders' quality of life. Governor Hogan is attempting to eliminate the deficit in just one year.

Governor Hogan's proposal is the first word on the budget, but not the last. The General Assembly will have opportunities to make different decisions when it comes to cuts and adjustments. They are unable to add to the budget unless they can entice the governor to introduce a supplemental budget that amends his current proposal or if the legislature were to pass a revenue increase.



Richard Benfer

With budget woes looming over our heads once again, educators around our county continue to deliver quality instruction to our students on a daily basis. We take pride in knowing that we make a difference each and every day with our students. I believe those sentiments are what have been keeping educators here in Anne Arundel County. That began to change, however, this past August with the hiring of over 700 new educators. That is the largest new group of educators I have seen since beginning my teaching career in 1993.

With the data shared refuting the report out of the Center for School Quality that Anne Arundel educators are in the top rankings for compensation and the countless stories I hear of folks going other places to make more money, it is clear that we are now approaching a crisis situation. One can only hope that the law makers and purse string holders understand this issue as well. We cannot continue to lose our highly qualified workforce to other counties that appear to respect their educators more than Anne Arun-

COMMENTARY

del County does. I keep hearing from politicians that the economy is improving and that will help us reinvest in education. How many students and educators do we lose before that happens?

family or pay a utility bill, or by the demands of the second job needed to make those payments; then time, energy and attention are taken away from planning and delivering quality instruction to enhance student learning.

“We cannot continue to lose our highly qualified workforce to other counties that appear to respect their educators more...”

Students are not assembly line parts. They cannot be tossed out like nuts and bolts and recycled when they do not meet standards. We educate every student that walks through our door. They all have different needs and that requires staffing to meet those needs. The teaching staff has been underfunded for several years now by not being able to hire the number of educators needed to meet the growing student populations, by not providing adequate step increases that are memorialized in contract language, and by not providing adequate COLA's to help keep up with the rising cost of living. Just as students need a hierarchy of needs met before they are able to learn, educators have similar needs. If a teacher is pre-occupied by how he or she is going to feed their own

Anne Arundel County Public Schools is the second largest employer in Anne Arundel County. Educators in our county are highly skilled, dedicated, and highly sought after by other education systems around the state and country. One of the exhibits shared with law makers and others shows the many educators in our system could do much better in terms of pay (from thousands to tens of thousands) than they do here in Anne Arundel. Many of our ranks labeled as “Millennials” have no problem taking advantage of better opportunities elsewhere in our state. All educators in our county work hard and deserve to be recognized by putting competitive pay back in their wallets rather than the annual lip service and “pat on the back.” Likewise, all of our students deserve the recruitment and retention of the most highly qualified teachers, few of whom will spend a career in what's becoming the lowest paying school district in the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Area.

TAAAC ACTION REPORT

Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County
2521 Riva Road, Suite L7
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(410) 224-3330 (410) 841-6022
(301) 261-8309 FAX (410) 841-5117
www.taaaconline.org

Officers

Richard Benfer, President
Pamela Bukowski, Vice President
Colleen Walker, Secretary-Treasurer

Board of Directors

Russell Leone
Grace Matthews
James Vaughn
Elizabeth Briningger
Sharon Moesel
Jacqueline Lubniewski
Diana Peckham
Jason Fahie
Kristina Korona
Martin Sears

Editors

Bill Jones, Executive Director
and Managing Editor
Roxanne L. Beach, Editor

From Contentia this month . . . *WORKERS' COMPENSATION*

If you are injured on the job, or develop a medical or physical condition as a result of the job, you may be entitled to Workers' Compensation.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. Call TAAAC!
2. Prior to filling out the school's First Report of Injury form, call TAAAC. You will receive some immediate guidance from one of the professional staff and be referred to an experienced and competent Workers' Compensation attorney. This will be the school system's only official report of your injury or condition. It must be accurate and complete.
3. We will discuss your claim and what contract benefits are available to you. We will also send you a packet that will contain the necessary information for you to file an Employee Claim. The Employers First Report does not constitute a claim and does not trigger rights you have under Workers' Compensation law.
4. If you need medical care immediately, visit the emergency room or your own physician. If a supervisor attempts to prevent you from seeking medical attention, immediately call TAAAC to seek advice and guidance. You are free to visit the medical facility of your own choosing. The school system cannot require you to seek medical attention from the facility of their choosing.
5. Keep copies of all reports, medical reports and names & telephone numbers of those you talk to about your case.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Board and Risk Management will be represented by legal counsel and you should also obtain experienced legal representation in order to secure your benefits. All legal fees are statutorily regulated and no attorney should charge a fee for consultation or representation regarding a worker compensation issue. (This is important information to remember for members who choose not to utilize the TAAAC-referred attorney.) Amounts of attorneys' fees are codified and paid out of awards won by the injured employee pursuant to the claim. Fees are never paid from your pocket.

Note: It is not always necessary to file this claim immediately, but should be filed as soon as practical after the incident to protect your rights. Your right to initiate an Employee Claim expires two years from the date of injury.

RED FLAG

If the employer questions your claim, or gives you an indication that it is refused, immediately contact your attorney. Do not give a recorded statement to a representative of your employer or its insurance company.

2015 TAAAC/MSEA Election in Progress

The TAAAC/MSEA election window is now open. TAAAC members who provided their home email should have received an email with directions for voting, links to the candidates' information, and the actual electronic ballot link. The TAAAC and MSEA ballots are merged* together for the election. ***NOTE: Howard County Educators also have a ballot merged with MSEA. They historically have had huge numbers turnout. Let's show Howard what Anne Arundel is made of and beat their turnout!**

When members click the link provided in the email, it takes them to their electronic ballot. Members input their MSEA ID number (embedded in the email) and the last four digits of their Social Security Number as the password. Next members see MSEA's Ballot link first. Here they can vote for offices of MSEA President, MSEA Vice-President, and 4 MSEA Director Seats. Members click on submit, review selections and vote. Then they return to the main page to click on the NEA Ballot link. There, members vote for 1 NEA Director seat, as well as, NEA At-Large Delegates to the NEA Convention. Members click submit, vote, and then return to the main page to click on the "Anne Arundel/Howard" link. There, members vote for NEA Region 4 Delegates. There are six positions. Again click submit, vote and return to the main page where members will click the TAAAC Ballot link. Here members can vote for office of TAAAC Secretary/Treasurer, 5 TAAAC Board of Director seats, and TAAAC Delegates to the NEA Convention. PLEASE VOTE! Members will receive only one email for voting in the elections, rather than two different correspondences.

Once again this year TAAAC will award a luncheon to the schools with the highest percentage of members voting in four divisions. One each in High School, Middle School, Elementary School, and Special Center. We encourage members to review the candidates in the January **TAAAC Action Report**, MSEA's January **Action Line**, and those profiles online on the TAAAC and MSEA websites in preparation for voting.

If members do not receive an electronic ballot, they can go to the TAAAC website www.taaaconline.org where a link to the ballot will be available until February 20, 2015. Members will need their membership # which can be found in the mailing address of your MSEA Action Line Magazine, on a list of members in your school that will be provided to your TAAAC rep, or by calling/emailing TAAAC or MSEA. Balloting closes on February 20, 2015 regardless a members' 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 your association a stronger presence at MSEA and NEA Conventions and ultimately more input into state and national policies of the union.

Having this streamlined process should make voting in the TAAAC/MSEA Governance elections hassle free right from the comfort of a member's desktop or handheld device.

Congratulations to the following TAAAC Members who are Semi-Finalists for Anne Arundel County Teacher of the Year:

Arthur Murphy, Annapolis High School
Meredith Claborn, Broadneck Elementary School
Amanda Talbot, Linthicum Elementary School
Bethany Ann Husak, Marley Middle School
Christine McCallister, Meade Middle School
Jennie Merrill, Severna Park Elementary School
Iris Crankfield, South River High School
Rachael Morrison, Southern High School
Kimberly Mason, Windsor Farm Elementary School

Quality Teacher Incentive Credit

Maryland public school teachers who paid tuition during the 2014 tax year for graduate-level courses to maintain certification may be entitled to an income tax credit on their Maryland return 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.

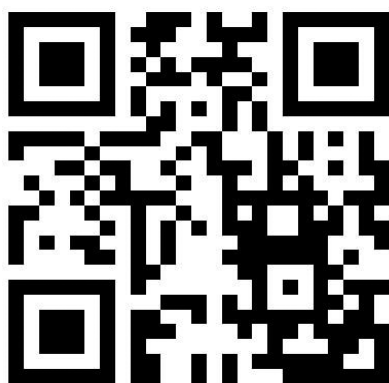
Claiming the credit

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.

Link up with TAAAC on Social Media



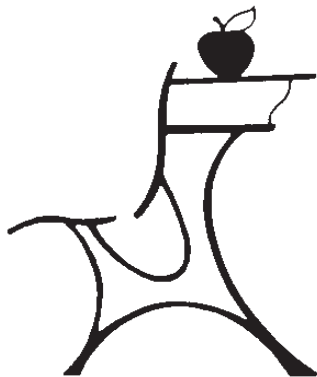
Please scan the code to follow us on Twitter



Please scan the code and Like us on Facebook

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Brandon Achey
Heidi Anderson
Kelly Borrer
Kristen Bradshaw
Amy Canterbury
Jasmine Floyd
Tara Gibbs
Sharon Green
Bade Hanna
Jessica Huls
Don Kerr
Meghan Kulzer
Giuseppe Luciani
Russell Morrissey
Kimberly Perillo
Vicki Petersen
Heather Powell
Kyle Prescott
Toni Sharer
Jessica Szcawinski
Anneliese Toolan-Miller
James Turek
Annemarie Turner
Laura Ward
Kyle Wilhite
Carrie Will
Juliane Williams
Elizabeth Wingard



TAAAC Meeting Calendar

February 2015

January 26 – February 20 – TAAAC/MSEA VOTE ONLINE!

February 2 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC Office

February 2 – Government Relations Lobbying – 5:00 PM @ Stan & Joe's, West St.

February 3 – TAAAC Executive Team @ TAAAC Office

February 4 – Daytime Board of Education Meeting – 10:00 AM @ BOE

February 4 – ARC – 5:00 PM @ Severna Park Middle

February 4 – Middle School Concerns – Following ARC meeting @ SRMS

February 9 – TAAAC/BOE Negotiations @ TAAAC Office

February 9 – Government Relations – Lobbying – 5:00 PM @ Stan & Joe's, West St.

February 10 – Nominating Committee @ TAAAC Office

February 10 – Minority Affairs/HCR – 5:00 PM @ TAAAC

February 11 – TAAAC BOD – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office

February 16 – President's Day Holiday Observed, School Closed

February 17 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC Office

February 18 – TAAAC Executive Team @ TAAAC Office

February 18 – Daytime Board of Education Meeting – 10:00 AM @ BOE

February 19 – TAAAC ASI @ TAAAC Office

February 19 – Mills-King Award Dinner – Firemark Building in Millersville @ 6:00 PM

February 23 – Government Relations – Lobbying – 5:00 PM @ Stan & Joe's, West St.

February 23 – Public Relations – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office

February 25 – High School Concerns Committee – 3:30 PM @ TAAAC Office

February 25 – Instructional Professional Development Committee – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office

February 26 – TAAAC Wellness Task Force – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office

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 4 for the 2015 scholarship awards. For more information, contact your school counseling department or call the TAAAC office.

NOMINATIONS OPEN

The Nominating Committee is currently accepting nominations for the Credentials and Nominating Committees. Nominations will be accepted until the April 8 Association Representative Meeting.

Name _____

Address _____

School _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

Personal Email _____

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

- Credentials Committee
- Nominating Committee

We insist that labor is entitled to as much respect as property. But our workers with hand and brain deserve more than respect for their labor. They deserve practical protection in the opportunity to use their labor at a return adequate to support them at a decent and constantly rising standard of living, and to accumulate a margin of security against the inevitable vicissitudes of life.

*President Franklin D. Roosevelt, fireside chat,
1936*

TAX PREPARATION

Bob Pellicoro, who has served TAAAC members for the past 26 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 2014 Income Tax Returns preparation.

Please call the TAAAC office to schedule an appointment for one of the following dates:

**March 9, 2015 – 10 AM – 5 PM
March 11, 2015 – 10 AM – 5 PM
March 16, 2015 – 10 AM – 5 PM**

Public School Teacher of the Year Nominee

The list of nominees for Public School Teacher of the Year published in the January TAAAC Action Report was short one nominee. Jean Melton-Koch, TAAAC member at Bates Middle School, was also nominated. **Well done Ms. Melton-Koch.**

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)

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

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 tutorific@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

January ARC Attendance

The following schools, departments, and affiliates were not represented at the January 7, 2015 Association Representative Council Meeting.

Affiliates – Counselors, EBOTA, Reading Teachers, SLAAAC; **Departments** – Riva Road; **Elementary** – Annapolis, Arnold, Bodkin, Broadneck, Brock Bridge, C & I Resource Ctr. @ Point Pleasant, Cape St. Claire, Community Based Sers., Crofton, Crofton Meadows, Davidsonville, Deale, Eastport, Folger McKinsey, Fort Smallwood, Freetown, Georgetown East, Germantown, Glen Burnie Park, Glendale Annex, Glendale/Glendale Level V, Hillsmere, Jacobsville, Jessup, Jones, Lake Shore, Lothian, Manor View, Marley, Millersville, Nantucket, North Glen, Oakwood, Overlook, Pasadena, Piney Orchard, Point Pleasant, Rolling Knolls, Severna Park, South Shore, Tracey's, Van Bokkelen, West Meade, Windsor Farm, Woodside; **Secondary** – Brooklyn Park Middle, Central Middle, Chesapeake Bay Middle Resource Ctr., Chesapeake Senior, Corkran Middle, Glen Burnie Senior, Meade Senior, Northeast Senior, Old Mill Middle N., South River Senior, Southern Middle, Southern Senior; **Specials** – Arlington Echo, Center of Applied Tech. N., Center of Applied Tech. S., Chesapeake Science Point, Infants & Toddlers Program, J. Albert Adams Academy, Marley Glen Special, Mary E. Moss Academy, Monarch Academy Glen Burnie, Monarch - Laurel, Phoenix Academy, **Staff Development** – Carver.