MSEA Publishes Legislative Priorities

1. Protecting vital investments for our schools, students, and educators

This year, as the Kirwan Commission on Education Finance develops its final recommendations, we will seek full funding under existing state aid for education, including the full inflation factor. MSEA also supports the state keeping its promise to educators by making the full actuarial required pension contribution and the $75 million supplemental payment. MSEA calls on legislators to provide ongoing relief to school boards to address a gap in what is due to cover the normal cost pension payment over the next few years. In the capital budget, MSEA supports expanded school construction funding—$500 million in FY2018—to help address the $4.5 billion in backlogged projects. We will advocate for high standards and protections, including prevailing wage and appropriate building and safety standards.

2. Implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act and creating opportunities for students to learn

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is a once in a decade opportunity to redefine school success so it emphasizes test scores less and focuses on opportunities to learn more. MSEA calls on the General Assembly to prioritize opportunities for students in the development of Maryland’s school accountability model. When schools need extra supports, those improvements should be led by educators, local school boards, and other local stakeholders. We must block efforts to use the federal law to weaken any state laws that would make it easier for for-profit companies and privatization to occur in our schools and districts.

3. Creating a positive and safe school climate

MSEA supports school discipline reforms that prioritize restorative practices, social and emotional learning, and ban suspensions for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students. To accomplish these reforms, we need increased funding and commitments to hire new personnel, including school counselors, school psychologists, pupil personnel workers, and behavior interventionists.

4. Focusing the Kirwan Commission on key student needs

National experts have estimated we will need $3 billion more each year to truly meet the needs of all students. The Kirwan Commission—tasked with examining how the state re-invests in a world-class public education system—will recommend a record investment in K-12 education, as the Thornton Commission did more than a decade ago. It is critical that those additional resources go to filling important resource equity gaps in the schools.

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At its start, the commission took care to send the names of only the most promising candidates. At least two for each vacancy was the mandate, so exactly two were sent. The commission during those years accepted its duty to send only the best two candidates knowing that the Governor was obligated to appoint from that list of nominees provided.

“Senate Bill 131 would modify the current nine-member School Board of eight adults appointed by the Governor and one student, to an eleven-member School Board of seven elected adults, three appointed adults, and one student.”

Then came a change in the commission; many new commissioners, newly adopted bylaws followed only loosely, legal actions pitting commissioner against commissioner, and a new chair turning what was once a quite deliberative body into a bit of a Kangaroo Commission. In the most recent round of nominations, the commission did everything BUT vet candidates for appointment, preferring to send every candidate’s name to the Governor by simple majority vote. That simple majority consisted of the six political appointees of Governor Hogan and the single appointee of County Executive Steve Schuh. The voting block of six political appointees took control of the eleven-member commission and broke it.

Now the Anne Arundel County Delegation is aiming to fix a good process turned not only bad, but also a little silly. I know. I am on it, and I am one of the plaintiffs in the referenced legal action. I sit in a seat appointed by TAAAC and join four other commissioners who hold seats appointed by other community organizations. It is GOOD that our delegation will address it. The Senate Bill might be an effective approach.

Senate Bill 131 would modify the current nine-member School Board of eight adults appointed by the Governor and one student, to an eleven-member School Board of seven elected adults, three appointed adults, and one student.

The elected Board members would be chosen by voters in each of the seven County Council Districts. Candidates would need to reside in the district in which they run. The selection process for the student will remain unchanged. The three appointed members would be selected by a new School Board Appointing Commission. The SBAC would consist of nine members. One member would be designated
Your TAAAC staff spends a considerable amount of time advising and representing members on disciplinary issues. Although the BOE has not put their progressive disciplinary practices in writing, this is the structure that is generally followed as well as your rights and the role of TAAAC:

1) The progressive discipline ladder
   - Counseling letter: This is the lowest level on the progressive discipline ladder and is not defined as a disciplinary action. A counseling letter is subject to appeal and may be removed from your personnel file upon request after three years.
   - Warning letter: A warning letter can be challenged through the grievance process. Unless removed as a result of a grievance settlement, these letters remain in your personnel file forever.
   - Reprimand letter: A reprimand letter can be challenged through the grievance process. Unless removed as a result of a grievance settlement, these letters remain in your personnel file forever.
   - Unpaid suspension: The length of a suspension can vary. A suspension is subject to appeal. Documentation of a suspension will remain in your file forever.
   - Termination: Termination is also subject to appeal.

2) Investigations
   - Except for a counseling letter, all other disciplinary actions require a pre-disciplinary meeting with you. You are entitled to representation at any and all pre-disciplinary meetings.
   - Sometimes allegations of employee misconduct are investigated by the AACPS Office of Investigations. You are entitled to representation during any investigative meeting you are directed to attend.
   - If the allegations of misconduct involve a student, you may be subject to an investigation by Child Protective Services (CPS). You are entitled to representation during any investigative meeting you are directed to attend with CPS.
   - If the allegations of misconduct involve a criminal act, the police or other law enforcement agencies may be involved. Once again, you are entitled to representation during any investigative meeting you are directed to attend with the police or any law enforcement agency.
   - An administrator may direct you to submit a written statement describing an event. Albeit you should do so in a timely fashion as directed by your administrator, you should review your statement with your TAAAC UniServ Director prior to submitting it.

3) Appeals and rebuttals
   - You have the right to attach a rebuttal to any counseling letter or disciplinary document placed in your file. There are not time limits on submitting a rebuttal.
   - Grievance and appeals are governed by strict time restrictions. All appropriate appeals and grievances must be written and filed soon after any disciplinary action is taken.

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with students who need the most help. MSEA will strive to build support for dedicated funding streams for proven strategies like universal pre-kindergarten, community schools, smaller class sizes, high-quality new educator mentoring, and competitive, professional salaries for both teachers and educational support professionals.

Other legislative issues that draw attention and action by MSEA and TAAAC include:

• Reducing mandated standardized testing and increasing time to learn.
• Rejecting vouchers and other plans that send state dollars to private schools.
• Supporting coalition efforts to provide earned sick and paid family leave.
• Defending and strengthening Maryland’s charter school law.

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4) Representation

• You have the right to representation at a meeting that is disciplinary or could lead to disciplinary action against you.
• You do not have the right to representation during non-disciplinary meetings.
• If you are unclear on the purpose of a meeting you’ve been directed to attend, ask for an explanation. Be explicit – “Is this meeting disciplinary in nature, or could it lead to disciplinary action against me?”
• There is no harm in asking for your TAAAC representative to attend a non-disciplinary meeting with you. Sometimes you simply need someone to sit next to you for support.

Finally, you should consult your TAAAC UniServ Director throughout any of the actions as described above. Contact TAAAC immediately as soon as you believe any type of disciplinary investigation may be initiated involving you.

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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 seven 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 Computer Science and/ or 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 1 for the 2017 scholarship awards. For more information, contact your school counseling department or call the TAAAC office.

by each of the following eight organizations; TAAAC, Association of Educational Leaders, county wide Chamber of Commerce, the Community College Board of Trustees, local branch of the NAAACP, Case de Maryland, Special Education Citizens’ Advisory Committee, and County Council of PTA’s. The ninth seat would rotate designees of the five regional Chambers of Commerce that reside in Anne Arundel County.

There may be other proposed pieces of legislation to consider along with amendments offered to this, but this appears to be a strong start to necessary reform.
ATTENTION!
Are You Paying Too Much?

If your employment status has changed and you have an annual salary under $42,179 and/or are working .5 or less, please contact the TAAAC office so that your membership dues can be adjusted accordingly.

What Does Tenure Mean?
In Maryland, tenure is granted to teachers who successfully complete a probationary period of three years with the same school system.

During the probationary period, a teacher’s contract may be non-renewed for any reason—or no reason—if notice is provided by May 1 of any of the first three years. If a probationary teacher would like to resign, notice must also be given by May 1 of any year.

Tenure and Due Process
When a teacher achieves tenure, they are guaranteed “due process” protections, but that doesn’t mean they can’t be dismissed. Due process is the minimum procedural requirements that a school district must satisfy when dismissing a tenured teacher.

At a due process hearing, a superintendent must prove the charges against the teacher, and the teacher has an opportunity to present and cross-examine witnesses in response. For those who are MSEA members, an MSEA attorney who is an expert in education and labor law provides representation during all events giving rise to the charge(s). If an incident occurs that you feel may require such advocacy and/or representation, your first step is always to contact your school association representative and your MSEA UniServ representative.

Tenure Portability
The 2010 Education Reform Act, which changed the probationary period for tenure from two to three years, also made tenure portable from one Maryland county to another. Now tenured teachers can carry their established tenure with them between counties if they have a satisfactory performance evaluation and there is a break in service of no more than one year. Then, so long as the teacher meets the new district's performance standards at the end of the first year, tenure may be granted in the new county.

Questions? Contact your MSEA UniServ Director or MSEA’s Center for Legal Affairs.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Amy Addison
Jennifer Allemand
Camille Brownbill
Trevor Bryden
Jessica Colborn
William Dean
Brandie Farmer
Jose Flores
Hannah Floyd
Courtney Fox
Kristin Groom
Chelsie Herr
Joseph Lustgarten
Viktor Lyubenov
Taylor Martin
Elise Mohler
Maya Outing
Anna Patterson
Laura Schlabach
Lisa Schmidt
Julianne Seals
Nashonda Sherrod
Sharon Simpson
Megan Sowinski
Jamie Wilder
Leslie Zuercher-Sublett

The TAAAC Representative Assembly took positions at its January Meeting to endorse candidates in the MSEA and NEA elections. Robin Beers (left) was endorsed for the MSEA Board of Directors. Rowena Shurn (right) was endorsed for the NEA Director Position. Congratulations on your endorsements and good luck.

TAAAC Congratulates Karina Colón on her election to fill a vacancy on the TAAAC Board of Directors. Karina will be liaison to the South River Feeder. We look forward to working with Karina.

TAX PREPARATION

Bob Pellicoro, who has served TAAAC members for the past 28 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 2016 Income Tax Returns preparation. Please call the TAAAC office to schedule an appointment for one of the following dates:

March 16, 2016 – 10 AM – 6 PM
March 20, 2016 – 10 AM – 6 PM
March 21, 2016 – 10 AM – 6 PM

Involving students in real environmental problems, specifically, the ongoing destruction of Monarch butterflies’ habitat, resulting in a precipitous decline of the Monarchs population through Habitat Restoration, Hands-on Learning, & Cultural Exchange.

Contact:
Kelly Lawhorn
Program Coordinator
(240) 997 – 5185
Kelly@monarchsisterschools.org

Connecting Students to Nature and Imagination.
www.monarchsisterschools.org
NOMINATIONS OPEN

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

Nominations will be accepted until the April 5, 2017 ARC 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

JOB 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

NOW HIRING: Pool Supervisors - Summer 2017

Anchor Aquatics is a locally family owned company offering the highest quality commercial swimming pool management and service. Anchor has been providing quality service since 1969 and has an outstanding reputation for safe, clean aquatic environments. We pride ourselves in being approachable, responsive, and welcoming. Anchor values their customers and employees and our goal is to provide the highest quality service to clients while maintaining a friendly working atmosphere for employees.

• Friendly atmosphere
• Professional, supportive work environment
• Free pool operator, lifeguard, management, and customer service training
• Competitive Pay
• Outdoor work environment
• Expanded portfolio and network

NOW INTERVIEWING: Contact Kate Bjorke for an interview at kate@anchoraquatics.com or (410)956-0744.

Apply online at www.anchoraquatics.com.
Specializing in retirement planning, investment planning, education planning, tax strategies, and insurance needs.

I invite you to call me at (410) 480-0007 or email at William.bush@lpl.com to schedule a free, no-obligation consultation and discover how I can help you pursue your financial goals.