Yet Another Obstacle to Adequate Public School Funding

On December 15th, Gov. Hogan proposed doubling funding for the BOOST program, his Trump-like initiative that sends taxpayer money from public schools to private schools.

MSEA President Betty Weller, a middle school science teacher, released the following statement:

"According to independent experts, Maryland’s public schools currently have $2.9 billion less than what they need to help every child succeed. Our kids rely on strong neighborhood public schools to prepare them for a college education and stable career—and we have a moral obligation to fill those equity gaps.

That’s why Maryland educators are deeply frustrated by Gov. Hogan’s proposal to drain twice as many resources from our public schools to subsidize private schools. The governor’s alliance with President-elect Donald Trump—who has proposed the idea of using $20 billion in taxpayer money for private school vouchers—on privatizing our public schools should be alarming to every Marylander who believes in the importance of public education.

We urge the General Assembly to eliminate the wasteful BOOST program—which has already taken $5 million from public schools to subsidize private religious schools—and stand squarely on the side of our public schools.”
I never imagined I would see the level of member engagement that we saw in the past year. Having served TAAAC as a Rep, Committee Chair, Director, Vice-President, and now President I have encouraged activism from members for years. TAAAC members across the county began to realize the power that they have. With renewed spirit for activism, we need to keep up the charge to “RAISE ANNE ARUNDEL.”

Our Association is only as strong as the size of its membership and the willingness of the membership to act. At this point in time we have many activated members, but there are still members sitting on the sidelines watching to see what happens next. We need the sideliners to wake up and join in, be present, and tell their story.

Many of our members, parents, and students have written to the Superintendent, School Board, County Executive, and County Council. Even our students have spoken out very articulately to share their vision for their schools and educators. The parents have also stepped up their game. One parent created PROFITS (Parents Rallying Officials for Increased Teacher Salaries). The past work-to-rule activities and grade-ins also made an impact and #beyondthebell was born. This high level of activism is still needed and we need every available member out at the Board of Education Budget Hearings on Tuesday, January 10, 2017 at Old Mill High, and Thursday, January 12, 2017 at the Board of Education Building on Riva Rd.

As the Superintendent laid out his budget on December 21, he spoke about the importance of our students’ and teachers’ welfare and how they are intertwined. With a budget that only covers the cost of a step increment (a bargained in good faith, contractual obligation of the Board) it is not enough to address teachers’ welfare. Without additional monies to begin catching up our teachers to where they were promised they would be, it is tough to address the welfare of students when you are wondering how you will pay your mortgage, electric bill, or put food on the table for your own family. This makes it hard to support the Superintendent’s budget as is.

The healthcare fund has become a crisis in our county. A few years back TAAAC and the Board worked on plan design changes that saved the health care fund $30 million. As county officials were slashing fees and taxes they looked at that fund balance as a place to pull money to pay employees. In a sense, part of your contribution in healthcare was moved to support the contractual obligations of the board. Now the pot has been raided twice and our healthcare fund balance has tanked. The requested monies last year were not provided, but instead a onetime $10 million allocation was added to the healthcare fund. At this point, without an infusion of new money from the county, the Board of Education may not be able to pay health care bills, perhaps by the end of this school year.

The County Executive’s education liaison feels that teachers owe the County Executive a debt of thanks for funding this year’s step and putting the $10 million in the healthcare fund. She feels TAAAC is not reminding teachers that they have a very good healthcare plan — that teachers should pay more for their healthcare even though that would cause a pay cut and not improve their situation. Unfortunately, those who do not teach do not live in our reality.

(continued on page 7)
Administrators are required to notify you if they call you into a meeting that might lead to discipline…don’t go into any disciplinary meeting without representation…check to be sure you have the correct number of minutes per week for individual planning time and group/collaborative planning time…contact your administrator or UniServ Director before you begin an action that might arguably violate board policy or be regarded as unprofessional…if a student turns in an assignment that might trigger socially unacceptable reactions confer with your administrator before grading or returning it to the student…be careful using sarcasm with students…don’t use any language that can be construed as unprofessional…keep your political thoughts and leanings to yourself when dealing with students…use social media appropriately…any item placed on the internet stays on the internet…do not “friend” students or parents…when emailing or texting a student always copy the parent…never denigrate your administrator, your employer, or fellow employees on social media nor anywhere else…discussions that “stay between us” usually stray beyond you…use school computer technology appropriately…do not leave school during your planning period without express permission from your administrator…keep count of you students and be aware of their actions at all times; students elope, hide, and disappear regularly, and the educator always pays a steep price when the student goes missing…you have a right to confidentiality in disciplinary actions…parent conferences shall be scheduled by mutual agreement between the Unit I member and other persons involved…if you are required to take a split class or cover a class during your planning time, be sure to request compensatory time…always submit required paperwork in a timely manner…you have the legal right to refer students when appropriate…always keep the bottom copy (gold) of the four-part referral form…the administrator shall confer with teacher regarding disciplinary action before return to class…planning for the delivery of instruction is the only required activity outside of the negotiated work week…your work week is 37 ½ hours exclusive of lunch…your lunch is duty-free, non-paid, at least 25 minutes in length, and must be scheduled during the times that the cafeteria is open to serve students…you are required to attend only one evening activity during the school year…duties not contributing directly to learning shall not exceed 20 minutes per day during the student day unless the FAC and principal have determined a different arrangement…there is no dress code for Unit I members but obviously certain clothing items could be considered inappropriate…you can wear jeans…SLOs contribute to 50% of your rating; they are extremely important…contact your UniServ Director if you have concerns regarding an observation or rating whether for substance, timeliness, or procedure…grievances can only be filed for contract violations…grievances must be filed within 15 school days of knowledge of the violation…use the DL and mailboxes in your building appropriately…make use of flexible spending accounts…follow recertification timelines…use your Faculty Advisory Council as a positive tool to solve problems…never transport students in your personal vehicle…whenever you are responsible for collecting and disseminating money for a school event be certain you have the proper forms, training, oversight, and administrative permission to proceed…it is not your responsibility to call substitutes…sick leave of more than three consecutive days requires a note from your doc…Unit I members shall be informed on a “need-to-know” basis concerning students with disabilities or a history of serious overt behaviors that would endanger safety…in middle and high schools the 50% minimum grade for which a student made a “good faith” effort is determined by the teacher…board regulation that if a student does no work on assignment or assessment the teacher shall give a grade of zero…check out Board Regulation II-RA—Grading…you may resign from your position during the school year without reprisal with 30 days written notice…non-tenured teachers wishing not to return for the following year must send in their letter of resignation no later than May 1st…

Contact your UniServ Director whenever you have a concern…discussions are strictly confidential.

From Contentia this month . . . Thoughts for the New Year that might save you some grief:
I am running for a seat on the Board of Directors. I continue to learn, become more active, and be a voice for the teachers. I am on the negotiating team, and many committees. I have grown while a Director, and know there is so much more I can do.

Jackie Lubniewski

I ask for your support so that I can continue my efforts to help TAAAC better use technology to improve member communication and engagement. I want to continue to push our organization forward by asking sometimes difficult questions and facilitating follow through on the issues most important to members.

Robin Beers

Currently I serve as the building representative at MacArthur Middle School. This term I would like the opportunity to serve as a Board member for TAAAC. Please select me, Reba Miller, to serve as a new Board member for TAAAC.

Reba Miller

I am running for Board of Directors for the first time to being a voice for ALL members, especially for those that are traditionally underrepresented by our current leadership. Given my diverse background, I am committed to bringing new perspectives and ideas that will serve to make TAAAC stronger than ever!

Karina Colón

I am a 20 year AACPS veteran and am honored to serve as a member of TAAAC’s board of directors. It is my earnest desire to continue to represent you on the board. I hope that I can continue to work on your behalf to bring respect to our profession.

Kate Snyder

The work of improving our schools and our quality of life is never done. My focus is on supporting you and our important job of educating our students. Our association is about you and our students, and I want to continue with moving education forward for all. Thank you.

Tamara Thumbtzen
Candidate for Secretary/Treasurer

It’s your money, it’s our association. In my work as your secretary-treasurer, I strive to make sure both are working for us. I have been involved in decision making that has shaped where our money does the most good for the most members. As we continue to advocate for better conditions, it is also important to make sure our association maintains its strong financial health. That has been, and will always be my goal as long as you entrust me to serve our members. I humbly ask for your support for re-election as secretary-treasurer.

Russell Leone

The Elephant at the Bargaining Table – Healthcare

For those who may not already know, our AACPS healthcare plan is self-insured. Unlike fully-insured plans in which the insurer pays medical claims expenses directly and thereby assumes the risk of unexpected claims’ costs, our insurance provider does not pay the costs of medical or prescription claims. Rather, our contracted provider, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, is paid to provide us with a network of participating physicians and certain related administrative services. Actual claims expenses are paid by an internal service fund (our healthcare fund) maintained by the AACPS and funded by contributions from the employer, premiums from active employees in all six units and retirees, along with some minor amounts from other sources including reimbursements from Medicare. By self-insuring, the AACPS experiences some savings but also assumes the risks of unanticipated spikes in expenses, or more applicable to the current situation, reductions in revenue needed to pay those claims.

Back in 2011, the AACPS was anticipating the healthcare fund having a solvency issue on the near horizon. The four employee bargaining agents (TAAAC, AEL, AFSCME 1693, and SAAAAC) began bargaining jointly on healthcare plans, and made some changes to make healthcare less expensive without simply digging deeper into employee pockets. The solvency threat was not only mitigated, but the effort contributed to a growing fund balance (or surplus) in the healthcare fund. Peaking at a little over $38 million, officials over at the county government began to treat it as a revenue source and not only slowed the growth, but began to shrink by diverting funds that would have otherwise been allocated. Resultantly, the employer has been paying a smaller share of healthcare expenses.

Employer/Employee Share as % of Total Expenses

(Continued on page 6)
(Continued from page 5)

In FY2015, the County Executive (Laura Neuman) reduced the Board’s healthcare request by $6 million. The County Council cut it by another $10.7 million, for a net $16.7 million reduction. (Although, it must be acknowledged that $8.3 million of the Council’s reduction went into compensation for AACPS employees.)

In FY2016, following the $16.7 million reduction, a mere $2.4 million was restored.

Facing another solvency crisis on the horizon in FY17 brought on by the one-two punch of lower allocations and of healthcare cost increases, the Board requests a $20 million allocation to the healthcare fund. The County Executive (Steve Schuh) zeroed out the $20 million, and replaced it with a $10 million nonrecurring here-to-day-gone-tomorrow bandage.

According to very optimistic projections (perhaps unreasonably optimistic) the once flush healthcare fund balance will finish this year with sufficient funds to cover about one-fifth of one day of claims expenses.

Several months of joint negotiations have failed to produce a satisfactory resolution. A request for the determination of an impasse by the Public School Labor Relations Board was denied late in November. Consequently, more bargaining dates and more work will be necessary.

News will follow when there is news to report.
The step increment gained in a good faith contractual obligation of the Board is what is promised to employees. The $10 million “one-time” contribution to the board of education healthcare fund is not reoccurring. Therefore, we are already $10 million in the hole with MOE requiring only $6 million in new funding next year.

Nearly every district around Anne Arundel County is catching up employees with restored steps. Eighteen counties received their steps and some received double steps to catch up from losses during the recession. Baltimore County recently settled a 3-year contract to include the annual step increment (a bargained in good faith, contractual obligation of their board) and a 1% COLA each of the three years. Even if they pay a little more in healthcare costs it doesn’t erode their take home pay.

The advocacy begins now by encouraging the Superintendent and the Board of Education to show more effort to go beyond funding the step increment (a bargained in good faith, contractual obligation of the Board) to include additional funds to provide relief for teachers. This will show a good faith effort to employees who have remained loyal to the school system, and give incentive to newer educators to our system to remain employed here in Anne Arundel County. To do less is to continue the revolving door of educators indefinitely. Look for the links to write to our school officials on our webpage www.taaaconline.org and remember to come out to the public hearings.

Don’t renew or sign up at the store or online
Renew or sign up through TAAAC and save!
PLUS – BJ’s will donate $5 of your membership fee back to the TAAAC Foundation for Educational Excellence!!

Get $15 off our $50.00 Annual Membership Fee = pay $35.00 (or)
Get $25 off our $100.00 Annual Rewards Membership Fee = pay $75.00
Receive (1) Month FREE = get 13 Months
Receive a FREE Second Household Card = get 2 cards

Renew ahead of time and 13 months will be added to your current membership at the discounted rate – it will not overlap!

QUARTERLY SCHEDULE – (Sept. 1-16) (Dec. 1-16) (Mar. 1-17) (June 1-16)

For application and instructions, contact Joyce Turpin at jturpin@bjs.com
(List “TAAAC” in the subject line)

This is a Special Quarterly Program and it is not available at the store or online. Offer is subject to change.
**TAAAC Events Calendar**

**January 2017**

- 3 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC Office
- 4 – ARC – 5:00 PM @ Severna Park Middle
- 4 – Middle School Concerns Committee – Following ARC
- 5 – Negotiations Session
- 5 – TAAAC/ESOL Meeting – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 10 – BOE Budget Hearing – 6:00 PM @ Old Mill High
- 11 – High School Concerns – 3:40 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 11 – MSEA Legislative Reception – 4:00 PM @ MSEA HQ
- 12 – Membership Committee – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 12 – BOE Budget Hearing – 6:00 PM @ BOE
- 17 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC Office
- 17 – TAAAC FEE Scholarship – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 17 – Elementary Concerns – 4:45 PM @ George Cromwell Elem.
- 17 – Board of Education Budget Workshop – 6:00 PM @ BOE
- 18 – IPD Committee – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 18 – TAAAC Executive Team @ TAAAC Office
- 18 – Daytime Board of Education Meeting – 10:00 AM @ BOE
- 19 – Negotiations Session
- 19 – TAAAC ASI @ TAAAC Office
- 23 – Special Ed Task Force – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 23 – Government Relations Lobby Night – 5:00 PM @ Stan & Joe’s
- 24 – NBCT Pinning Ceremony – 5:00 PM @ Annapolis High
- 25 – TAAAC BOD – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
- 30 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC Office
- 30 – Government Relations Lobby Night – 5:00 PM @ Stan & Joe’s

Visit www.taaaconline.org
Pay Days 4th & 18th

---

**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

---

**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.
Connecting Students to Nature and Imagination.
www.monarchsisterschools.org

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

Maryland Teacher Tutors

We are looking for CERTIFIED TEACHERS
who have a passion and love for seeing
students succeed!

We offer flexible hours and the opportunity
to work near your home with students one-on-one.

Grades K-12

Please visit www.marylandteachertutors.com
for more info and email us if you’re interested!

ClearShark H2O

Inspiring Passion For
Maryland’s Waterways

ClearShark H2O is revitalizing passion to protect Maryland’s waterways, ensuring this precious resource is treasured for years to come. We’re creating engaging opportunities for our youth to connect with Maryland’s waterways by designing experiences that ignite a passion and appreciation for them.

We Educate
Our Youth

We Preserve
Our Waterways

We Support
Our Community

clearsharkh2o.com | info@clearsharkH2O.com

AT&T

FENCES | DECKS | SUNROOMS | SCREENED PORCHES

Visit Our Beautiful New Indoor Showroom & Design Center in Annapolis!

ANNAPOlis
1344 Whitehall Rd
410-757-5511

MILLERSVILLE
882 Veterans Hwy
410-969-4444

To learn more, please visit our website: www.FenceAndDeckConnection.com

TAAAC Action Report
Page 9
Maternity Coverage

- 5 weeks for Normal Pregnancy, 7 Weeks for C-Section
- In addition to Sick Leave and Sick Bank and during the summer (Average $4,000 - $8,000)
- Complications of pregnancy
- Also pays when out of work for Sickness or off the job accident

Suzanne Herrmann
301 – 985 – 2020
suzanne_herrmann@us.aflac.com

Cynthia Eckhardt
301 – 318 – 6559
cynthia.eckhardt@employee-plans.com

---

INTEGRATED FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS, INC.
8850 Columbia 100 Parkway Suite 400 | Columbia, MD 21045
Securities offered through LPL Financial Member FINRA/SIPC

Bill Bush, CFP®, CPA

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.

---

LUXURY 2 AND 3 BEDROOM APARTMENTS

novus ODENTON 315 Nevada Avenue Odenton, Maryland 21113 410.874.2051 NovusOdenton.com

---

LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE

✓ Offering discounted long-term care insurance to TAAAC members and their spouses/partners.
✓ Helping members protect their hard-earned assets.
✓ Giving members a way to remain in control of their healthcare choices.
✓ Providing members with peace-of-mind.

For a no obligation consult and quote, contact:
Michael Markowitz – 410-455-0680
Mike.Markowitz@acsiapartners.com