Your Voices Have Been Heard!

This morning, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education voted 8-1 to increase the Superintendent’s recommended $15.6 million for employee compensation by an additional $7.8 million. Many thanks should go to TAAAC leaders, members, and colleagues who did what was necessary. Their attendance to public hearings, testimony, postcards, emails, and calls to Board members turned the tide.

Two freshman Board members attempted to amend the Superintendent’s budget to the benefit of employees. The first motion came from Terry Gilleland (former student member of the Board and District 32 legislator.) The motion was to add $7.6 million to compensation to pay for a mid-year step for all eligible. That motion was very specific in how the extra money would be spent, and for that reason failed. Maria Sasso followed with one of her own. The Sasso amendment added $7.8 million to the compensation item to return lost steps to employees who have remained in their respective bargaining units since the step freezes began in fiscal year 2009-10. Her stated reason notwithstanding, the discussion made it clear that the actual use of the additional money will be determined by the four bargaining tables.

The Board’s Budget Request is now on County Executive Steve Schuh. Activism will again be critical. Help convince Mr. Schuh to take advantage of this opportunity to be a friend of his public schools and public educators.

We have two opportunities for members to speak directly to the County Executive, and for those who do not want to speak to carry a sign.

The locations and times of the meetings are as follows:

**February 28th at 7:00 PM - Southern Middle School, 5235 Solomons Island Rd, Lothian, MD**

**March 15th at 7:00 PM - Park Elementary School, 201 East 11th Ave, Baltimore, MD**

Please mark your calendar, and RSVP as appropriate to the emails from your TAAAC President.
Leadership of this Association is focused on **ALL** the issues that affect educators and students. From teaching and learning, bargaining, community outreach, political engagement, and member engagement, your Association’s advocacy has made TAAAC a strong organization for 96 years.

Having accurate information is important to maintaining the strength of the Association. TAAAC Leadership understands that members are busy, but “liking” the TAAAC Facebook page and “following” us on Twitter will help keep members up-to-date. When an email comes from the President or Executive Director, be sure to read it. These actions will help YOU, the member, become more knowledgeable about your Association.

Getting more positive public opinion about teacher compensation will help get the salaries back on par. We work diligently at the bargaining table to start the restoration of lost steps. Even though the Board of Education put money in the budget to begin restoration of steps, we are once again at the mercy of the County Executive to get it funded. According to the County Executive’s Education Officer, teachers owe a debt of thanks to the County Executive for funding our step for this year and for putting a one-time $10 million in the healthcare fund. The County Executive has said that the “union needs to pay more” in healthcare costs. This inflammatory rhetoric directed at the teachers’ union is offense to teachers. TAAAC is, after all, a union of teachers, run by teachers, for teachers. Separating the teachers’ union from the teachers who comprise it is wrong-headed. Logical and objective brains know better.

It is difficult to thank the County Executive for funding teacher contracts when they were bargained in good faith. Once the Agreement is ratified, the Board of Education becomes obligated to put money in the budget to fund teacher pay. It is difficult to thank the County Executive for putting $10 million in one-time money into the healthcare fund that is not reoccurring. The non-reoccurring money will become a $10 million hole in FY2018. He essentially has put a small Band-Aid on a gaping wound. It is difficult to thank the County Executive when his Education Officer continues to put up barriers to TAAAC leadership to get a meeting with him. And when our own members work with the County Executive’s Education Officer to the detriment of all TAAAC members, it makes it hard to say “thank you.”

The County Executive talks about our healthcare plan being very rich and our teachers need to pay more. He left out the fact that his own county employees have received 21% to 29% in pay increases since FY2010, while he’s imposed a recession on the school system, whose employees have received just under 11%.

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AACPS typically non-renews dozens of non-tenured teachers each year, meaning that those teachers do not return the following year. If this is their tenure year, teachers being non-renewed are also denied tenure. If you are a non-tenured teacher, it is crucial that you understand the process and timeline.

According to AACPS, our Negotiated Agreement, and COMAR:

- Non-tenured teachers should have their first observation completed by December 1 and their second observation completed by March 1.

- During the month of March, a principal must review with their regional assistant superintendent the names of non-tenured teachers being considered for non-renewal. The regional assistant superintendent must indicate concurrence on the recommendation of the principal.

- Non-renewal recommendations are due to Human Resources by March 31.

- In accordance with the Negotiated Agreement, non-tenured employees whose contracts are being recommended for non-renewal shall receive written warning from the school/worksite administration by April 15. This notice serves as an opportunity for an employee to resign in lieu of being formally non-renewed by the superintendent of schools on or by May 1.

- Even if an employee resigns in lieu of non-renewal, they may still be eligible for unemployment benefits.

- The AACPS Tenure Review Committee will review all recommendations for non-renewal and tenure denial by April 20. Principals must include the following:
  - Current rating professional practices score with narrative comments for each area
  - Previous ratings for second and third year employees
  - Information about mentoring and supports provided such as Right Start Advisor logs and school-based supports
  - Copies of any counseling and disciplinary letters

- By May 1, the superintendent will notify, in writing, each certified employee whose contract will be non-renewed (terminated).

- COMAR requires that a school system must have provided a mentor and additional professional development for any employee not on track to qualify for tenure at any formal evaluation point.

- Teachers who have been recommended for non-renewal are generally coded as “no rehire” by AACPS, meaning that they will never be able to return to AACPS as an employee.

Any TAAAC member who has been told that they are being recommended for non-renewal or will not be recommended for tenure should contact TAAAC immediately.

### Challenged School Update

During a recent negotiating session, a discussion concerning school identified as “challenged” took place. Some of the negotiators from both sides indicated some surprise that the list of identified school has diminished a bit from 2015-16. Currently, only three middle schools and two high schools are recognized as “challenged.” The entire list as follows: **Elementary Schools** — Mills-Parole, Maryland City, Belle Grove, Tyler Heights, Rippling Woods, Van Bokkelen, Georgetown, North Glen, Marley, Glen Burnie, Eastport, Hilltop; **Middle Schools** — Marley, Meade, Corkran; **High Schools** — Meade, Glen Burnie. Over all, the list shrunk from 28 to 17.
Quality Teacher Incentive Credit

Maryland public school teachers who paid tuition during the 2016 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.

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Our local political climate is turning only slightly better, but that is due to all the pressure that you and members like you, as well as parents and students have put on the elected officials through letters, phone calls, and emails. This momentum must continue so that we can see more progress in the future. We cannot settle for peace offerings. We must endure to make certain that the right folks, who are pro public education advocates, are elected to office in 2018. Our voice must continue to be loud and clear and we cannot be sidetracked by small attempts by the funding authority to keep us quiet.

TAAAC members recently came out to the first of two budget hearings hosted by the County Executive at Southern Middle School. Members clearly showed that they are interested in the school budget and a record crowd was on hand. Thank you to all members who were able to join us. If you weren’t able to come out on February 28th, please mark your calendar for March 15th at Park Elementary, at 7PM for the second “almost” public hearing on the budget.

Until we see actions that do not harm public educators, we cannot rest. YOU ARE TAAAC. We can only make a difference as a UNITED front. A divided Association is weak and benefits only those who seek to injure us.

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.
A WORD FROM MSEA’S LEGAL TEAM

Who needs to know what when? Your health is your business.

It may be that you lose some of your privacy at work when using your employer’s email, desk, filing cabinet, or classroom, but when it comes to your health and your medical information, your right to privacy is not debatable—yet, it continues to be an issue for Maryland educators. Follow the tips below to keep your health your business.

Submitting a medical note

- Submit any medical notes required for sick leave directly to your local board of education ADA/FMLA* compliance officer, not to your principal.
- A medical note should simply state that you were under a doctor’s care during the relevant time period. If extended leave is involved, your doctor should complete the necessary FMLA forms.
- Documentation needed to verify accommodations should also go directly to the ADA officer, not your principal.

What about fitness for duty exams?

When a local board of education directs an employee to a fitness for duty exam, the doctor’s office often requires the employee to sign a broad release that gives the doctor access to your complete medical history and allows the doctor to share that information with your employer. Remember these three things:

1. An overly broad release is likely in violation of the ADA, which prohibits disability-related inquiries that are not job related.
2. An overly broad release also violates the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), which prohibits employers from collecting genetic information, such as family medical history.
3. DO NOT sign an overly broad medical release for your employer. Call your UniServ director—the law strictly regulates an employer’s right to medical information.

If you are pressured or required to release a medical note to your principal or to sign releases giving access to your medical records, your local affiliate and MSEA will take action to protect your right to privacy.

*Americans with Disabilities/Family Medical Leave Act

Questions? Contact your MSEA UniServ Director or MSEA’s Center for Legal Affairs. For more information, visit marylandeducators.org/LegalAid.

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

TAAAC Events Calendar

March 2017

1 – Daytime Board of Education Meeting – 10:00 AM @ BOE
1 – ARC – 5:00 PM @ Severna Park Middle
1 – Middle School Concerns Committee – Following ARC
6 – Government Relations Lobby Night – 5:00 PM @ Harry Browne’s
7 – Nominating Committee – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
8 – High School Concerns – 3:40 PM @ TAAAC Office
9 – Phone Banking – 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM @ TAAAC Office
10 – Negotiations Session
13 – Sick Leave Bank @ TAAAC Office
13 – Government Relations Lobby Night – 5:00 PM @ Harry Browne’s
14 – Elementary Concerns – 4:30 PM @ George Cromwell Elementary
15 – County Executive Budget Hearing – 6:30 PM @ Park Elementary
15 – TAAAC Executive Team @ TAAAC Office
16 – TAAAC ASI @ TAAAC Office
16 – Mills King Award Banquet
20 – Special Ed Task Force – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
20 – Government Relations Lobby Night – 5:00 PM @ Harry Browne’s
22 – Negotiations Session
22 – IPD – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
25 – AACPS EdCamp - Carver
27 – TAAAC BOD – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
27 – Government Relations Lobby Night – 5:00 PM @ Harry Browne’s
28 – Special Events – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office
29 – TAAAC BOD – 4:30 PM @ TAAAC Office

Visit www.taaaconline.org
Pay Days 1st, 15th, & 29th
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Steven Akers
Jessica Berstein
Shane Conrad
Carol Cook
Ashley Crossland
Esperanza Domizio
Kendyl Gardner
Jordan Katz
Patricia Kenny
Linda Knisely
Jennifer Mermod
Courtney Rose
Rachel Seamans
Jessica Thompson
Kaitlin Vezina
Sherise Webb

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.

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 – 4:30 PM
March 20, 2016 – 10 AM – 4:30 PM
March 21, 2016 – 10 AM – 4:30 PM
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

NOMINATIONS OPEN

The TAAAC Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for the Sick Leave Bank Approval Committee and AACPS Calendar Committee (Secondary).

Nominations will be accepted until the May 3, 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):

☐ Sick Leave Bank Approval Committee
☐ AACPS Calendar Committee (Secondary)

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