

# Work-to-Rule Toolkit

## HOW TO TAKE THE DIFFICULT STEP

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It is a very difficult thing to work-to-rule. The immense pride you feel in supporting your students and their families is one TAAAC knows you take very seriously. However, that dedication should be recognized in the form of increased compensation for all you do that takes away from **your own family**.

The County Executive does not recognize your efforts. He has the money but we have the votes. Letting parents know how dissatisfied you are with his leadership through a work-to-rule action is one of the best ways to accomplish our goals.

Believe us; if there was a red button we could press here at TAAAC to get you the respect you deserve, we would press it. However, it really comes down to this:

***Mr. Schuh has the money, but we have the votes.***

Steps short of Work-to-Rule you should take:

- 1) **Contact the County Executive** – Please let him know how important your respect is. The more people he hears from, the better chance he will listen. Every email and phone call is a vote.
- 2) **Contact the County Council** – Please see enclosed map and consider contacting your Representative. If you don't live in the county, perhaps contact anyway and let them know you can't afford to live here because of the lack of respect.
- 3) **Contact the School Board** – Stem the rising tide of new programs until teachers can be treated fairly and with the respect they deserve. Encourage them to do so.
- 4) **Hold Informational Picketing** – Holding up signs or handing out information regarding your lack of respect from the County Executive can be very effective, even if you decide not to work-to-rule.
- 5) **Attend Events when TAAAC Asks** – The County Executive and County Council should see a sea of people when we ask you to come. Twenty people are just annoying. Five hundred is a display.

- 6) **Write letters to the Editor** – There should be a letter in *The Capital* nearly every day from a parent or educator protesting school employee’s treatment. It should not and cannot die down after a week or two. This drumbeat must be steady all through the budget and negotiation cycle.
- 7) **Sign-up Genius** – Look for a “Sign-up Genius” in your inbox to sign up for events throughout the rest of the year.

Steps along with Work-to-Rule you should take:

- 1) **Contact the PTA** – Without parental support, this movement will fall on deaf ears. Please find enclosed in the PowerPoint a sample letter to send to PTA in coordination with your work-to-rule.
- 2) **Grade-to-Rule** – The grading policy sets a minimum of 9 grades per quarter. Stick to it. Grade in school. If it takes longer to get stuff back to kids, so be it.
- 3) **Don’t Attend Functions** – No book fairs, sporting events, fundraisers, movie nights, etc.
- 4) **Return emails and phone calls during school day** – If it takes a bit longer to get back to folks, explain the reasons why.

If you decide to Work-to-Rule

- 1) **Tell TAAAC** – We want to be there to support you from day one. Please let your UniServ Representative know your start date and time.
- 2) **Tell the PTA** – See enclosed sample letter
- 3) **Consider informing The Capital Newspaper** – The education reporter is Cindy Huang; phone 410-280-5942
- 4) **Get a Consensus** – We are happy to come explain what Work-to-Rule does and doesn’t mean. Have a meeting and take a vote.
- 5) **Communicate with Administration** - We have had administrators show up and support the action. Include them in the conversation.
- 6) **Cautionary note:** Do not engage in conversations with students regarding the work-to-rule or any job action underway while at school. If a student initiates a conversation or asks questions, simply state that educators are not at liberty to discuss it while at school.

County Executive Steve Schuh: [exschu00@aacounty.org](mailto:exschu00@aacounty.org)

County Council members:

Peter Smith [peter.smith@aacounty.org](mailto:peter.smith@aacounty.org);

John Grass [John.grasso@aacounty.org](mailto:John.grasso@aacounty.org);

Derek Fink [dfink@aacounty.org](mailto:dfink@aacounty.org);

Andrew Pruski [ccprus00@aacounty.org](mailto:ccprus00@aacounty.org);

Michael Peroutka [ccpero33@aacounty.org](mailto:ccpero33@aacounty.org);

Christopher Trumbauer [ctrumbauer@aacounty.org](mailto:ctrumbauer@aacounty.org);

Jerry Walker [jerry.walker@aacounty.org](mailto:jerry.walker@aacounty.org)

# **WORK TO RULE**

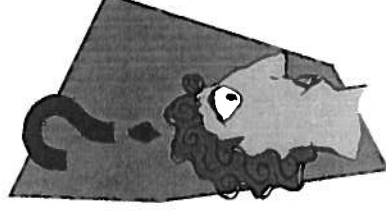
**A Brief Tutorial for Unit I Members**

# What is work to rule?



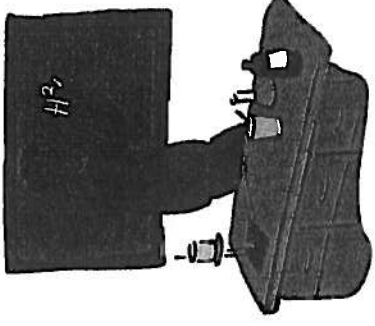
- *Work to rule* is a unified occupational action in which teachers do no more than the professional responsibilities required in the Negotiated Agreement and Board of Education policies.
- *Work to rule* includes Unit I members following all safety regulations and procedures they might otherwise ignore.
- *Work to rule* is an alternative to strikes or job slow-downs. Simply abiding by and adhering to workplace rules and procedures is less likely to result in disciplinary action for Unit I members.

# Why work to rule?



- To educate shareholders (parents, students, community) about the excessive amount of free time regularly donated by teachers for no compensation (the BOE is well aware of this donation of time and are willing to take full advantage thereof)
- To stop contributing personal time to an unsympathetic BOE and school system.
- To remind the BOE and school system of the limitation on Unit I members' contractual responsibilities and obligations.
- To gain support of shareholders – eventually resulting in increased pressure on the BOE to work with TAAAC to achieve mutually agreeable resolutions.
- To disrupt the “normal” educational and instructional processes (Unit I members working well beyond paid work hours) and restrict uncompensated student support and activities.
- To exercise our right to strictly adhere to the terms of the Negotiated Agreement – the only legal job action available to us under the MD collective bargaining law.

# Who works to rule?



- All Unit I members.
- All employees with a collective bargaining agreement.
- All employees unhappy or frustrated with an uncooperative, unsympathetic, or unreasonable employer.

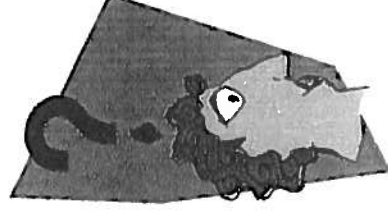
# When to work to rule?



- The Association (TAAAC) will organize the start of the work to rule effort when it is apparent the BOE has no inclination to work collaboratively to resolve issues or disputes.
- Unit I members should organize by school (or feeder district) to determine collective actions – street-side protests, times to enter or leave the building en masse, poster-making activities, etc..
- Every day! The work to rule effort is only as effective as the number of participants and the consistency of the participants.
- Until the desired effect has been achieved – parent pressure on the BOE, community support, elected legislators support, etc..



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# How to work to rule?

## (Do's and Don'ts)



- *Work to rule* means Unit I members perform their normal duties during the paid teacher workday, but volunteer no additional time except to plan for the delivery of instruction in accordance with the *Negotiated Agreement*
- **DO** honor paid extra-curricular contracts.
- **DO** have the PTA representative explain to the PTA (Booster Club, CAC, etc.) what working to rule is and why we are doing it.
- **DO** contact your TAAAC UniServ Director if you have committed to after-school activities to determine your rights and obligations.
- **DO** support each other with ideas or materials which require no unpaid time.
- **DO** continue to meet all contractual requirements and instructional obligations.
- **DO** enjoy the quality time you will now have to spend with family and friends since you will no longer be spending all of your time at work.
- **DO** call TAAAC with additional questions.

# How to work to rule?

## (Do's and Don'ts)



- **DON'T** provide services or have professional contact with students before or after the paid workday – including, make-up exams, tutoring, conferences.
- **DON'T** provide services or have professional contact with parents (or guardians) before or after the paid workday – conferences and phone calls should be made during the paid workday. If contacts cannot be made within the workday, the contacts will have to wait until the following day (if time allows).
- **DON'T** allow special events to extend your workday or workweek. Field days, field trips, science fairs, concerts, recitals, math nights, etc. All such events should be scheduled during the regular workday or workweek; except those activities for which an extra-curricular contract exists.
- **DON'T** participate in illegal activities such as “sick-outs”, work slow downs, vandalism, inappropriate communications, etc..
- **DON'T** use instructional time to discuss teacher working-to-rule activities.
- **DON'T** use personal time to enter data (TIENET, grades, etc.).

October 13, 2015

Dear PTSA,

The purpose of this letter is to communicate the reasons behind Meade High School faculty's decision to implement a work-to-rule policy. In light of the County Executive's ongoing refusal to fairly compensate its educators despite increasingly demanding workloads, we believe this action is imperative if we are to uphold the integrity of our profession as we strive to provide quality education to your children.

A primary concern is the county's refusal to honor the step increase schedule that we were led to believe was firmly in place and therefore a factor considered when we accepted our positions with Anne Arundel County Public Schools. We were not told that these step increases were subject to the decisions of a County Executive who consistently allocates only the state-mandated minimum level of funding to our school system. Even when he dared to exceed it, there were strings attached to keep any of it from local educators. It is indeed unconscionable that the county continues to advertise this step schedule on its website and in recruitment of new teachers, knowing that they had only one and a half step increases since 2009 ended. The proposed contract demonstrates the county's continued resolve not to honor step increases; as a result, we can expect to see the continuation of 30% faculty turnover as well as the placement of long term substitutes since we cannot attract highly qualified teachers to fill the vacancies.

A work-to-rule action simply means that we will continue to work but will do so strictly within the hours required by our contract. Specifically, we will work the following hours:

Monday 6:55 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday 6:55 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday 6:55 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Thursday 6:55 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Friday 6:55 a.m. – 2:10 p.m.

Implementing a work-to-rule policy compels us to make thoughtful decisions about volunteering away personal and family time above what is required. The planning time allotted by our existing contract is insufficient to meet the excessive workload demands that have piled up over the course of the past several years. As a result, educators have been expected to use their personal and family time to meet the needs of our students. Some of the services typically performed by teachers above and beyond contract hours that will likely be affected are: after school extra help and tutoring; chaperoning special events such as homecoming dances, and sponsoring after-school clubs.

Many of us have had to take second jobs to compensate for the lack of salary increases while living in one of the most expensive areas of the country. Others feel the need to transfer to teaching positions in neighboring counties or leave the career altogether causing turnover rates to vastly exceed that of other school systems. These desperate actions do not benefit our student population. We are professionals who care not only about our students as people but as learners deserving of quality instruction. The stress of our finances coupled with workloads that exceed 50+ hours per week, puts students' education at risk. Therefore, at a minimum, we are compelled to express our frustration and dissatisfaction by adhering to a work-to-rule policy.

In the meantime, we are inviting you to show your support for your children's educators to be fairly and equitably compensated by contacting County Executive Steve Schuh with copies to the county council members. Email addresses are attached. We sincerely appreciate your support.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Meade High School Faculty

Title: **Staff Conduct -- Distribution of  
Materials and Oral Communications  
to or through Students**

Policy Code: **800.04A**  
Cross Reference:

Adopted: (10-5-94)

Revised:

Page: 1

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- I. During a duty day and within a public school, employees and employee organizations (as that term is defined in sections 6-401(b) and 6-501 (c) of the Education Articles of the Annotated Code of Maryland) may not distribute to students, give to students for intended distribution by the students to others, or convey orally to students any materials or information relating to any employee disputes or employee organization disputes with the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools, or any part of the school system administration.
  - II. Employees may not use time during the school day to discuss with students any employee disputes or employee organization disputes with the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools, or any part of the school system administration, unless the discussion is part of a planned curricular activity directly related to the course being taught.
  - III. A violation of this policy will be considered misconduct and insubordination. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions which may include written reprimand, suspension, or termination of employment, depending on the severity of the offense.

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State Law:  
State Reg.:  
Federal Law:

Adm. Reg.:  
Neg. Agr.:  
Other Citation:



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October 22, 2015

To: Bill Jones

From: Kristy K. Anderson

RE: Work to Rule

You have expressed concerns about possible disciplinary action for a teacher's role or participation in a work to rule.

TAAAC/MSEA/NEA were created to mobilize workplace employees—to increase individual power by many acting as one. Collective actions like working to rule, appearing at board of education budget meetings, contacting county and state lawmakers, and networking with community organizations are proven to make a difference. Change, however, requires collective action through a recognized body, such as TAAAC.

Successful work to rule campaigns require commitment, communication, and courage. While TAAAC can provide specific information, here's a basic guide on dos and don'ts:

- Adhere to the contract. Attend all required meetings, but nothing more.
- If you have already committed to a voluntary activity, decline requests to do so by administration.
- If you have already committed to an activity verbally or by signing a contract, ask to be released from the duty. If you are not released, report to the activity.
- If you perform a certain voluntary activity year after year, without a specific agreement, immediately inform the administration before the activity begins that you will not perform the activity for that year.
- If an administrator directs you to perform an otherwise voluntary activity, perform the activity and *immediately* contact your union.
- Finally, and most importantly, do not engage or involve students in a work to rule action. To involve students through a simple conversation whether in the hall or during class time may be deemed disruptive to the work place and subject to disciplinary action.

As educators, time is valuable. If done correctly, collective action, like working to rule, can be a powerful tool for TAAAC's negotiations team at the bargaining table.

If there are more specific questions, please let me know.