

HCEA Welcomes New Teachers

By Joe Staub, HCEA President

The Howard County Education Association is once again co-sponsoring the Howard County Public School System's New Teacher Orientation during the week of August 12, 2002. As HCEA President, I want to welcome you to the Howard County School System on behalf of the four thousand members of your "Teachers' Union." HCEA will provide a luncheon for all new teachers on Wednesday, in the Long Reach High School Cafeteria.

HCEA leaders, staff and members will be available throughout New Teacher Orientation to answer questions you may have about your Association. This special issue of our HCEA **Works** Newsletter is designed to provide you with an introduction to HCEA. I want to extend a personal invitation to you, not only to join HCEA, but also to become an activist in the professional organization that represents you as an employee of the Howard County Public School System.

What does the Union do for me? Why should I join HCEA?

As HCEA President, these are the two questions I hear most frequently from non-members. Certainly it is important that you have a sense of what you receive for your dues paid to HCEA, the Maryland State Teachers Association (MSTA) and the National Education Association (NEA). As a member of our "United Education Profession" you belong to the local, state and national organizations, and receive services and benefits from each. Since all three are very much integrated (the

UniServ Directors working at HCEA are MSTA employees whose salaries are paid in part by a grant from NEA) the following answer to those questions applies to HCEA/MSTA/NEA.

Your Voice on Educational Issues

Under Maryland law, HCEA is the sole legal representative of teachers and non-supervisory educational support professionals in Howard County. HCEA represents its members on Board of Education committees and with groups such as the County PTA Council and Chamber of Commerce. HCEA works closely with the County Executive and County Council to secure funding for negotiated agreements. MSTA and NEA work to further positions supported and voted on by our members at their annual conventions.

HCEA's system of Building Representatives and Committees provide you with an opportunity to participate in the work of the organization. You can become a leader in your building by representing your colleagues on the Rep Council. You can contribute to HCEA's work for its members by serving on one of the many Association Committees--contact us for a list of Committees and their duties.

Contract Negotiations and Enforcement

HCEA negotiates the contract for all non-supervisory certificated employees of the Howard County Public School System, as well as non-certificated professionals including assis-

tants, secretaries, and other clerical personnel. Only HCEA members have input and vote on contract proposals. Our new, three-year contract which went into effect July 1 will provide significant increases for you in the next two years—an increment (or step increase) plus four percent next year, and increment plus six percent the following year. HCEA's work in supporting and electing a County Executive and Council which is responsive to our requests has been critical to this success.

HCEA's negotiated Health Care Benefits are among the best in the state, and we have been successful in controlling cost increases in recent years. Both teachers and ESP contracts provide for Sick Leave Banks to protect our members against major illnesses or accidents.

Protection and Legal Advice

The NEA \$1 Million Liability Insurance Coverage protects you against all workplace lawsuits; this coverage is

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significantly more comprehensive than any “add-on” to your homeowners insurance. Should you require legal representation in any work-related civil or criminal suit, services are provided by MSTA Staff Attorneys who are experts on education law and outside criminal attorneys who specialize in education related cases.

The HCEA/MSTA UniServ Directors representing Howard County are available on a full-time basis to enforce the contracts with the Board of Education. Their efforts extend well beyond the terms of the contract to include a variety of problems that arise in the workplace.

Member Benefits Programs

HCEA’s monthly Newsletters—HCEA Works and Marketplace provide current information about Association business and financial/discount programs available only to HCEA members; MSTA ActionLine and NEA Today provide information about state and national issues.

HCEA Member Benefits Program provides discounts through United Buying Service, BJs Wholesale Club, California Casualty Insurance, Mortgage Associates, Long & Foster Real Estate and numerous other local businesses. HCEA’s Member Benefits Program includes several companies which pro-

vide assistance in all retirement and personal financial decisions.

The MSTA Attorney Referral Program offers discounts on non-job related legal services. NEA Member Benefits provides Life Insurance to all members at no cost. Other NEA programs include the MBNA credit card, NEA’s professional resource library, and financial services.

A variety of Professional Development and Leadership Workshops are offered by HCEA and MSTA. Grants from MSTA and NEA provide support for HCEA for technology purchases, part-time office assistance, and leadership training programs.

Programs and Services Provided by the Howard County Education Association

- ↑ Contract negotiations and enforcement for all non-supervisory, certificated employees of the Howard County Public School System
- ↑ Representation on Howard County Public School System committees that develop recommendations on issues related to schools
- ↑ Full-time UniServ staff to assist you with problems in the workplace
- ↑ Building Level Representatives to assist you at your work site and keep you informed of issues affecting your work environment
- ↑ Sick Leave Bank provides protection in cases of extended absences due to illness or injury
- ↑ Legal services from MSTA Staff Attorneys who are experts on education law; advice and representation in all work-related cases
- ↑ \$1 Million Liability Insurance Coverage to protect you against all workplace lawsuits
- ↑ Local lobbying efforts to help ensure the passage of pro-education legislation
- ↑ Monthly Newsletters—HCEA “Works” and “Marketplace” provide current information about Association business and financial/discount programs available only to HCEA members; MSTA “ActionLine” and NEA “Today” provide information about state and national issues
- ↑ HCEA Member Benefits Program provides discounts through United Buying Service, BJs Wholesale Club, California Casualty Insurance, Sandy Spring Mortgage, Long & Foster Real Estate and numerous other local businesses
- ↑ Attorney Referral Program offering discounts on non-job related legal services
- ↑ Financial planning service available from HCEA Business Partnerships provides assistance in all retirement and personal financial decisions
- ↑ Professional Development and Leadership Workshops offered by HCEA and MSTA

Know Your Contract Rights

By Marius Ambrose, MSTA/HCEA UniServ Director

MSTA UniServ staff members receive many calls at the HCEA office concerning a myriad of issues that are occurring in buildings throughout the school system. As you begin your career with the Howard County Public Schools, you should be familiar with the following contractual rights that you have. A new, three-year contract between HCEA and the Board of Education went into effect on July 1 of this year. Some of the important provisions of the contract are described below.

Article IV Personal and Academic Freedom.

This Article provides that **teachers have primary responsibility for assigning student grades**. No student's grade shall be changed without a conference between the student's teacher and the administrator. After the conference, the teacher will be notified, in writing, of the administrator's decision. This language is new in this year's contract. (Paragraph D)

Article V Evaluation.

If an Administrator or Central Office Supervisor observes you, the observation must be on the proper form and **you must receive a copy of the observation form within five school days after it is made**. Either party may request a post-observation conference. This means that the observation should not be placed in your mailbox, but rather it should be handed to you at the conference.

Your signature on the observation does not mean that you agree with the content of the observation, but simply that you have received it. **You may attach a response to any observation, whether it is satisfactory or not**. There is no time limit for you to have your attachment added to the observation. In the event of an unsatisfactory observation, it is suggested that you contact HCEA to receive advice to ensure that your end of the year evaluation is satisfactory. (Paragraph D)

Article IX Classroom Control.

When, in the judgment of a teacher, a student is by his/her behavior seriously disrupting your instructional program to the detriment of other students, you may temporarily, with notification to the principal, exclude the student from the classroom and refer him/her to the principal. The student should not return to the classroom until the teacher is satisfied that proper remedial action has been taken, or until the teacher has had a formal conference with and a written or verbal response from the principal or assistant principal to the dis-

ciplinary referral. (Paragraph A)

Prior to September 30 of each school year, each school Principal must call a meeting of all faculty to develop, modify and/or implement a discipline policy for that school year, "with the involvement of all members of the faculty and administration." **This meeting is your opportunity to provide input concerning discipline at your work site**. A written copy of the school disciplinary procedure should be provided to all faculty and staff. (Paragraph D)

Article XV Sick and Bereavement Leave.

New language added to the contract this year provides that "one day of bereavement leave will be allowed for the death of an aunt, uncle, niece or nephew. (Paragraph B)

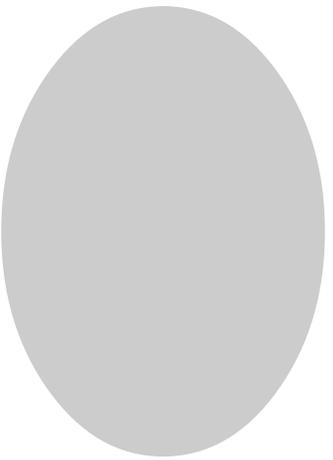
Article XVIII Working Hours and Work Load.

The workday in the Howard County Schools is 7 hours and 35 minutes consecutively. This is the time that the Board is paying you for. (Paragraph A) The actual start and end times for each building are established by the Department of Education each year.

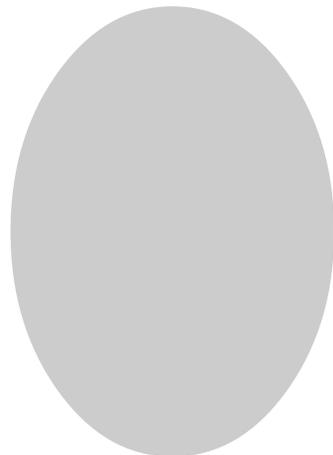
Except in cases of emergency, there shall be only one school-wide faculty meeting per month which may extend no more than one-half (1/2) hour beyond the regular work day. **"Attendance at all other assignments or meetings other than during the regular work day will be at the option of the individual teacher."** This means that when your Principal or Supervisor calls a meeting starting after your workday, it is your option to attend or not. (Paragraph D)

Instructional Leaders and Team Leaders receive a salary supplement for the additional responsibilities involved in those positions. (The stipend is \$1,800 for the current school year and will increase to \$2,000 next year). The stipend is not for additional time beyond the work day—attendance at any meetings either in the building or at the Central Office is optional at the discretion of the teacher involved.

All HCEA members will receive a personal copy of the new, three-year contract in September. If you have questions about the information above, or any other provisions of the contract, please contact Dan Collins or myself at the HCEA office—410-997-3440.



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MSTA/HCEA UniServ Director
Service areas: All Secondary
Teachers and Special Areas



Dan Collins
MSTA/HCEA UniServ Director
Service areas: All Elementary
Teachers and Education Support
Professionals at all levels.

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HCEA Teacher Salary Information, 2002-2005

In the spring of 2002 HCEA members ratified a new contract with the Howard County Board of Education, which will substantially improve teacher salaries over the next two years. The tables below include your salary for the current year, along with the 2004 and 2005 school years. The full scale includes 31 Steps, but the maximum entry step provided for in the contract is Step 16 for individuals with fifteen or more years of service outside the County.

The scale provides for annual increments over the first fifteen steps, and then longevity increases at Step 18, 21, 25 and 31. Also, Step 1 is not negotiated; it is set by the Board of Education. Note that this year Step 1 has been set at the same amount as Step 2 for all degree

levels from Bachelors to Doctorate. This provides a higher (and slightly more competitive) starting salary, while essentially eliminating the step increase, or "increment" between Steps 1 and 2. However, for the 2004 school year, all teachers will receive a four percent increase as well as an increment, if appropriate. The increase for FY2005 is increment plus six percent.

To determine your salary for the next three years, find your appropriate level of experience and degree for each year. For example, a starting teacher with a Bachelor's Degree will earn \$33,160 this year, \$34,487 next year, and \$37,849 in FY2005. Referring to the final chart, "Percentage Change, Current to 2004-

2005" indicates that this represents an increase of 14.1% over the next two years. For an individual starting this year on Step 3 with a Masters Degree, the increase over the next two years will be 21.3%. While your personal increase will vary, the average increase for all teachers will be approximately 18.5% over the next two years.

HCEA is committed to making Howard County's pay scale the best in the state of Maryland. We invite you to join our campaign to win community support for substantial increases in the next contract. Howard County's schools are the best in Maryland—Howard County's educators deserve the best, too.