

## HCEA Gears Up for MST A Push for Pensions



An aggressive Association fight for better pensions made huge gains in 1998.

Catch-up by other states now makes Maryland pensions the worst in the country. MST A's advocacy in 2004 and 2005 educated legislators and got strong support for pension bills, which didn't pass.

**This year's MST A campaign can get Maryland educators the pension we deserve – 60% of average final salary after 30 years. HCEA and MST A need YOUR help to do it!**

There is money in state coffers. Politicians across the spectrum are

talking about the need for better pensions. Pension bills are being drafted NOW. Opponents of a decent pension for educators are going to try to derail our advocacy and commitment in the debate about the particulars. We have to raise our voices to support MST A's pension position now.

**This simple message needs to be sent to legislators by tens of thousands of educators and their supporters — and as soon as possible:**

- “Public school pension benefits in Maryland are the lowest in the entire nation.”
- “I can't afford to live on the current 38 percent retirement benefit.”

- “Leadership can craft a bill that fixes the problem. I support a 60 percent pension benefit.”
- “Mr./Ms. Legislator, please talk to the leaders of the General Assembly. Ask them to include a 60 percent pension benefit in the bill.”

That's it, plain and simple. Go to the HCEA web site and e-mail your legislators NOW! Get your friends and family to do the same. It's time to act! We're fighting for our future.

### Honoring Educators American Education Week

November 13-19

### National ESP Day

Wednesday, November 16

## Panel Draws Lessons on School Climate

At HCEA's October Rep Council Dinner/Training, administrators and HCEA Building Reps from fourteen schools identified as having a positive school climate on the 2005 HCEA Job Satisfaction Survey shared how they keep staff morale high.

Professional, open and honest relationships are central to positive school climate, they agreed. Collaborative decision-making means encouraging staff to share possible and alternative solutions, getting and giving feedback

and explaining decisions. Recognizing and using staff talents (especially among small and perhaps under-represented groups) lets everyone know his/her voice counts.

Words of wisdom for successful schools included: *If you raise a problem, bring a solution to the table, too. Encourage risk-taking. Respect instructional and planning time and the negotiated agreement.*

Participants agreed that the HCEA Job Satisfaction Survey is a valuable snapshot to help staff communicate how they feel and to validate the work of both administrators and staff. The survey helps sustain on-going improvement in positive areas and directs attention where gaps exist, they said. Results are celebrated, just as the



**Panel -** Cheryl White (IES) and Fannie Avery (LoES) facilitate a panel of representatives from Bellows Spring ES, Clemens Crossing ES, Fulton ES, Hammond ES, Hollifield Station ES, Ilbester ES, Lisbon ES, Thunder Hill ES, Glemwood MS, Lime Kilm MS, Mayfield Woods MS, Murray Hill MS, Oakland Mills HS and Wilde Lake HS.

schools celebrate student achievement.

For more information on the Job Satisfaction Survey, an overview of survey results and more on the October panel, visit the HCEA web site.

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# The View from Here

by Ann De Lacy,  
HCEA  
President

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**“I’m appalled [our] pensions rank 53<sup>rd</sup> among 50 states! Our expectation is 60% of our final pay when we retire ... retroactive. We deserve it!”**

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## Convention Combined Work and Play

It’s been a while since I took office and I still find myself feeling guilty every Sunday afternoon for having put off writing lesson plans and grading papers. The habits of thirty-three years are hard to put aside! I’m working hard on getting a better understanding of where we are as an Association and how to help you get what you need to do your job.

I’ve visited nineteen schools – some more than once – over the past four months. I’ve met with, emailed and spoken to members, non-members, administrators, and central office staff. I can’t tell you how thrilled I am to be working with so many intelligent, creative and energetic volunteers in HCEA.

This year HCEA sent 42 delegates to the MSTA Convention, one of the largest groups ever. Prior to the Convention, delegates caucused at Homewood Center to get their stipends and talk about our expectations and the MSTA Convention business process. We caucused again at the Convention Center to plan our voting strategy on New Business Items and Resolutions. (New Business Items are actions taken by the Association on behalf of its members and Resolutions are statements of our position on issues.)

In addition to taking care of business, the Convention focused on MSTA’s *Push for Pensions*. MSTA has developed a plan and a campaign that your delegates are excited about. I’m appalled that Maryland educators’ pensions rank 53<sup>rd</sup> among 50 states! Our expectation is 60% of our final pay when we retire. We want that benefit to be retroactive. HCEA and MSTA are going to keep you up-to-date so we can make this a reality.

Friday morning and Saturday all day, delegates attended four business meetings which included speeches by Doug Duncan and Martin O’Malley and remarks from a representative of Governor Bob Ehrlich. 2006 is an election year and a number of candidates want our endorsement. Your HCEA delegates will represent you in May when MSTA makes its candidate endorsements.

The MSTA Convention is not all about work. Thursday evening before the Convention, delegates networked and partied at the MSTA President’s Reception. Friday afternoon was open for workshops and collecting free-bees at the extensive exhibits. We spent the evening at an “HCEA



*Ann and Bridget Jones, Co-Chair of the HCEA Government Relations Committee, sell raffle tickets for the Fund for Children and Public Education.*

President’s Meet and Greet” or at a buffet and jazz reception, dancing to the tunes of the “Hub Caps.”

We went to the Convention ready to work and play. We came home ready to take care of business and win the pensions we deserve. Get involved and join us!

### What can you do? HCEA’s Plan

- Staff meetings in every school to talk about pensions.
- A *Push for Pensions* poster on bulletin boards in every school.
- A *Push for Pensions* House Party in every school community.
- Staff in each school signed up for MSTA’s Frontline weekly e-mail.
- A Pension Reform Leader in every building.
- A training for Pension Reform Leaders after school on December 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Thousands of signatures on HCEA’s *Push for Pension* petition.
- Monday lobbying visits to Annapolis beginning in January.
- Letters, e-mails, phone calls to legislators NOW!



## MSTA Convention



**Winners** - Cheryl White (IES) and Kirsten Kinley (MRHS) each won \$500 in the Fund for Children and Public Education raffle. The Fund supports candidates who support public education. HCEA Government Relations co-chairs Bridget Jones (PVMS) and Greg Smith (CHS) raised \$400 prior to the Convention and more at the R.A.



**“You Work Hard for the Money”** - HCEA members joined in some musical bi-jinks to rev up Convention delegates for the Push for Pensions. Brian Donoughe (MHMS), Karen Filippelli (OMHS), Cheryl McLeod (HCEA/MSTA staff), Pat Pecor (OMHS), Debra Rambo (PVMS) and Donna Schulze (PLES) danced, played air-guitar or joined the “60% Solution Band Review.”

### “Got your contract?”

If you're an HCEA member, you should have received a copy of your contract (red for teachers, green for ESPs) in September – or immediately after you joined. If you don't have yours, call HCEA.



**Sharing Good Ideas** - Susan Shipp, (left, speech pathologist) contributes an idea that works for her at MSTAs Little Red Schoolhouse in the Convention Exhibit Hall.



**Free-Bees Galore** - Getsamary Baez (EMMS) was among more than 1500 visitors and delegates who took advantage of the huge MSTAs Convention Exhibit Hall.



**MSTA Pension Calculator** – Maxine Salab (WavES) and Teri Dennison (CO) were all smiles when they found out what the MSTAs Push for Pensions does for them. You can find out through the HCEA web site.

## Teacher Contract Means Conference Flexibility

by Colleen Morris

Last year Central Office sent out a memo requiring that all teachers report on the last day of conferences for at least a half day – even if they held conferences on two evenings during the conference period. Denying teachers the flexibility to hold conferences when it would be most convenient for parents – and essentially punishing them for doing so – was an issue that HCEA addressed during negotiations.

New language in Article 18-M of the teachers' Negotiated Agreement for 2005-2007 now reads: “Teachers may not be required to work beyond the contract day during the parent-teacher conference window. However, if a teacher volunteers to work evening conferences (one or two evenings) they will receive an equal amount of time off during the conference window. Teacher participation in evening conferences requires the concurrence of the principal.”

This language was bargained collaboratively to meet the needs of teachers, parents and administrators. It formalized the arrangement that had been working before the infamous memo was disseminated. Teachers now have the option of reporting during the conference window as scheduled with no evening conferences, holding one evening conference and reporting for a half day on the Wednesday of the conference period, or holding two evening conferences and not reporting at all on that Wednesday.

HCEA urges principals and staff to work together to develop a schedule that considers the interests of both teachers and parents while working to meet the needs of the students. Please call HCEA if you have any questions or concerns.

## Dates to Remember:

**Call HCEA for information.**

### GR Committee Legislative Breakfast

Saturday, November 19

### Pension Reform Leader Training

Monday, December 12

Homewood Center, 4:15-5:15 PM

## Overtime Pay Required

When September's transition to the new SMS increased clerical staff workload, HCPSS issued a memo to administrators, underscoring the school system's responsibility to pay support employees for all hours worked, as required by the Fair Labor Standards Act. If your workload means that work can't be completed during work hours, approach your administrator. Ask whether you should finish the work after your normal work day. If you don't get approval, leave the work for another day. Support employees, if you've worked hours for which you haven't been paid, contact HCEA with your documentation.

## You Deserve a Break

As a result of HCEA negotiations, the Superintendent has reissued Circular No. 99 on "Employee Work Breaks," which states: "[Administrators and supervisors] are urged to make efforts to provide reasonable periods of time during the workday for A.M. and P.M. work breaks for secretary/clerical personnel and assistants."

Time to relax for 10-15 minutes, to gather thoughts, take care of personal business, share experiences with colleagues, etc., is necessary and makes an employee more effective. Many schools already provide support professional breaks. If your school doesn't and you need help proposing a solution to your administrators, give HCEA a call.

## IPD Advances Goals

The HCEA Instructional and Professional Development (IPD) Committee is advocating for more effective training, support and mentoring for new employees and for increased HCPSS support for teachers who want to become nationally certified. Chief Academic Officer Sandra Erickson is enthusiastic about expanding collaboration with HCEA IPD. HCPSS Human Resources Department plans to schedule HCEA ParaPro Assessment Test preparation for Title One schools and has expressed support for more HCEA involvement in school-based training for ESPs. Contact co-chairs Maleeta Kitchen (teacher, RBES) and Pat Pecor (IA, OMHS) for more information on committee activities.

## Membership Passes 4300

HCEA membership has passed the 4300 mark and is growing every day. HCEA's goal for this school year is to have three out of every four HCPSS employees represented by the Association as Association members. Ten schools have already reached the goal of 75% HCEA membership (80% teacher and 60% ESP). Congratulations to GES, JHES, SFES, TSES, THES, Waterloo ES, MWMS, WLMS, WLHS, Cedar Lane and Interpreters.

## HCPSS May Say "Go Home!"

Marius Ambrose, HCEA/MSTA staff, reported to the September Rep Council that HCPSS Trespassing Committee is considering setting hours beyond which schools would be closed to staff (with exceptions for night custodial crews). "If you're at school working at 8 PM, HCEA is concerned about your safety and your workload," Marius said. Your HCEA Building Rep(s) will keep you informed about this and other developments, which are discussed at Rep Council.

## Student Vote on Board?

HCEA staff, Board of Directors and Rep Council discussed the issue of voting rights for the student member of the county Board of Education with student leaders in November. HCEA leaders shared their concerns about legislation language with the students and at a public hearing. HCEA strongly supports inclusion of the student perspective in Board deliberations, but is concerned that the proposed legislation could result in student involvement in discussions and decisions that involve and affect HCPSS employees. President DeLacy also pointed out that "an additional vote by someone not elected by the citizenry would change the voting balance on the Board and dilute the weight of adult votes." She urged HCEA members to contact Board of Education members to share their opinions on this matter.

## Hurricane Response

Clarksville ES was recognized by the Maryland State Department of Education for its fund drive to aid hurricane victims. Congrats to HCEA members Irina Suknova and Laura Walters who worked hard on the drive. Cheryl White (IES) delivered supplies to the Gulf Coast for her church. (See [www.hceanea.org](http://www.hceanea.org).) Thanks to all HCEA members for their generosity!

  
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