

## Back to School Tax Breaks

With the new school year underway, the IRS is reminding educators that saving receipts and keeping good records can help them take advantage of various education-related deductions and credits on their 2007 federal income tax return.

The educator expense deduction allows teachers and other educators to deduct the cost of books, supplies, equipment and software used in the classroom. Eligible educators include those who work at least 900 hours during a school year as a teacher, instructor, counselor, principal or aide.

Worth up to \$250, the educator expense deduction is available, whether or not the educator itemizes their deductions on Schedule A. In tax-year 2005, educators deducted just over \$893 million of these out-of-pocket classroom expenses.

*"Cross the river in a crowd and the crocodile won't eat you."  
Proverb from Madagascar*

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## Association Rep Training



*Attorney Bryan Marshall discusses workers' compensation issues.*



*Jim Whattam, MSTA Attorney, presents "Teaching and Touching."*

September 11 brought reps together for a meeting and training at Ten Oaks Ballroom in Clarksville. UniServ Directors Dan Collins and Mary Jo Neville worked with groups of veteran and new reps to bring them up to speed with information to help them be an effective Association Rep. In addition, MSTA Attorney Jim Whattam wowed the crowd with his presentation on "Teaching and Touching." There was also an effective and well received presentation by attorney Bryan Marshall on Workers' Compensation issues.

## Speak up! State's budget crisis will affect YOU!

There's no doubt about it—the \$1.5 billion state budget deficit is already shaping legislators' view of education funding for the next fiscal year. Whether it's your pension, your classroom or your workload, cuts will affect you. Contact your legislators and Governor O'Malley today! Tell them to maintain the level of commitment promised in the original Thornton plan to keep our students on the right track and protect your negotiated raises and pensions.

It's quick and easy and definitely worth five minutes of your time! Write your own message or send a prewritten one by visiting the MSTA website at [www.mstanea.org](http://www.mstanea.org).



## New ParaEducator Orientation

HCEA President Ann De Lacy meets with over forty new ParaEducators at their training at Faulkner Ridge on August 30.

# The View from Here

by Ann De Lacy,  
HCEA President

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*“...HCEA values each member. We resolve disputes, negotiate contracts and build relationships in order to ensure each of you and the children with whom you work have the tools and resources you need to be successful.”*

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## What it means to be “merged”

During the course of the two-plus years I have served as HCEA President, I have had the opportunity and pleasure of visiting every HCPSS building site at least once. On many other occasions, I have run into HCEA members at community functions, HCEA committee meetings, Board of Education meetings, political events and other gatherings. I have conversed via emails, text messages, and phone conversations with both members and non-members. These interactions are very informative and something I truly enjoy.

A recent encounter shaped the theme of my October message to you. While standing in the hallway during a recent school visit, a member whom I have known for many years reminded me that she would be attending the 2007 MSTA Convention. What struck me most about the conversation was that the member confirmed she would be “representing ESP” at the Convention. My response was something like, “No, you will be representing HCEA as a member who is a paraeducator.”

The HCEA Vice President, Donna Schulze, and HCEA Secretary, Teri Dennison are both paraprofessionals. HCEA Directors Tony Bell, Estelle King, and Pat Pecor are all paraprofessionals. About a third of all of our Building Reps and committee members are paraprofessionals. Our August 2007 membership count from MSTA showed 3,526 certificated members and 954 non-certificated members.

UniServ Staff assignments are based on a caseload of 1,200 members. MSTA assigns 3.4 UniServ Directors to HCEA based on membership count. Dan Collins, is assigned exclusively to our non-certificated staff and Cradlerock school.

What does being “merged” mean? Merged, in our case, means that we represent both certificated and non-certificated employees of Howard County Public Schools. What does it mean to be certificated and non-certificated? If an employee is in the non-certificated unit, he or she is not required to have a teaching certificate to perform his or her job, although they might very well have one. If an employee needs to have a teaching certificate (or license – such as physical therapists) to perform his or her job, as in the case of a teacher, guidance counselor, etc. then that person is assigned to the certificated unit.

HCEA is a merged local and has been merged since 1989. UniServ Director, Dan Collins, was HCEA President when HCEA merged. In 1991, through legislation, HCEA won the ability to negotiate for HCEA ESP. Howard County



Education Association is the largest MSTA merged local in the state of Maryland

The major point of contention in our “Fair Share” negotiations with the elected board of education is their desire to enact a “threshold” on the percentage of HCEA membership in our certificated and non-certificated units. Currently 82% of our certificated unit are members versus 49% of our non-certificated unit. The board would like us to separate the certificated and non-certificated units in respect to Fair Share; accept Fair Share for those within the certificated unit but not those within the non-certificated unit. This would be extremely divisive for our organization.

In conclusion, HCEA values each member. We resolve disputes, negotiate contracts and build relationships in order to ensure each of you and the children with whom you work have the tools and resources you need to be successful. HCEA, MSTA, and NEA can provide opportunities for leadership development, professional advancement, and personal achievement not available through Howard County Public School System. The fact that you are certificated or non-certificated defines your membership category, not who you are.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## MSTA Convention 2007



### Special Events and Convention Highlights

Haven't decided whether or not to attend MSTA's annual convention in Ocean City? Take a look at convention highlights listed below. For a complete schedule of available workshops visit the MSTA web site at [www.mstanea.org](http://www.mstanea.org). Also plan to visit the exhibit hall, member trade show and Apple-a-Day Health Fair! See you in Ocean City!

#### Thursday, October 18th

8–9:30 p.m. President's Reception  
*Celebrate the start of MSTA's Convention 2007 with President Clara Floyd! Sunset Room, Convention Center*

#### Friday, October 19th

7–9 a.m. Local caucuses  
7:30–10 a.m. Delegate registration  
7:30 a.m. General registration begins  
8:30 a.m.–5 p.m. Vendor exhibits, Member Trade Show and Apple-a-Day Health Fair  
8:30 a.m.–5:15 p.m. Professional development workshops

9 a.m.–Noon 1st Session, 140th Representative Assembly

- 9 a.m. Lt. Governor Anthony Brown
- Special guest: NEA Secretary- Treasurer Lily Eskelson
- Great Public Schools campaign event

11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. MSTA Student Member Meeting  
1–3 p.m. Pre-Retirement Workshop  
4:30 p.m.–6 p.m. MSTA Retiree Reception  
6–9:30 p.m. MSTA Party at Seacrets! The hottest nightclub in OC opens its doors for an exclusive MSTA party!

#### Saturday, October 20th

7–9 a.m. Local caucuses  
8–10 a.m. Delegate registration  
7:30 a.m. General registration begins  
8:30 a.m.–1 p.m. Vendor exhibits, Member Trade Show and Apple-a-Day Health Fair  
8:30 a.m.–10:45 p.m. Professional development workshops

9 a.m.–Noon 2nd Session, 140th Representative Assembly

- Author Linda Perlstein and NCLB discussion

Noon–3 p.m. Emerging Leaders Academy  
1:30–4 p.m. 3rd Session, 140th Representative Assembly

## Government Relations Committee

The Government Relations Committee has been meeting to create an action plan for the coming Legislative Session. The Committee is also planning this school year's "Legislative Breakfast," a Q & A session with our elected officials. Date, time and place for the breakfast will be announced soon. Members are urged to attend or submit a question to make sure your voice is heard.

## Instructional and Professional Development Committee

HCEA's IPD Committee has been busy planning trainings for the upcoming school year. The first, "I Can Do It", will be held on Saturday, October 27 at the Homewood Center. Designed for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year teachers and paraeducators, this fast paced training is full of things you didn't learn in college but are vital to classroom success. It is restricted to HCEA members only. To register contact HCEA at 410-997-3440. Also, in the planning stages, is this year's SPARKS training, geared at educators with 1 – 5 years of experience. This will be held on Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at Faulkner Ridge. Mark your calendars now, more information will be available soon!

## Membership Committee

The Membership Committee has been busy recruiting new members at the New Teacher Orientation, the New ParaEducator Orientation and in school buildings across the county. Almost 300 new educators signed up at NTO and another two dozen joined at NPO. Applications are coming in every week from new members. If you have not yet joined HCEA and have questions or need an application, contact us at 410-997-3440.

## Save the Date!

HCEA will again be sponsoring a SPARKS training for HCEA members with 5 years or less in education. This school year it will be offered on Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at Faulkner Ridge. More information will be sent out soon and will be available on the HCEA web page, [www.hceanea.org](http://www.hceanea.org). Plan ahead, you don't want to miss this exciting opportunity!!



If you haven't joined HCEA yet, this issue of HCEA WORKS is the last one you will receive this year. To join, visit the HCEA web site at [www.hceanea.org](http://www.hceanea.org) (click on "Join Now!"), talk to your HCEA Building Rep or give HCEA a call at 410-997-3440.

## Dates to Remember:

Call HCEA to register for events..

### MSTA Representative Assembly & Convention Workshops

October 19th and October 20th  
Ocean City Convention Center

### I Can Do It Training

October 27  
Homewood Center

### Last Day to Sign Up for ESP Sick Leave Bank

October 31

### Daylight Savings Time Ends

November 4

### National Education Support Professionals' Day

November 14

### American Education Week

November 11 - 17

## NEA Member Benefits

NEA Member Benefits helps to make members' lives better by leveraging the Association's group purchasing power to provide members with high quality investment, insurance, credit, discount purchases and consumer services. These member-only programs offer prospective members an additional reason to join the Association and current members an incentive to retain their Association membership.

The NEAMB Corporation is a subsidiary of the NEA, established to develop, implement and administer NEA Member Benefits programs and services. No dues dollars are used in any way, including marketing and direct mailing, for any of the NEAMB programs. They are all self supporting. For more information on the various discounts you can receive, visit [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com).

## HCEA Marketplace

### For Sale

**Condo for Sale in Ellicott City:** 2 BR, 1 BA, top floor, balcony, fireplace, minutes from Routes 29 & 100, new A/C & Heating Unit, new washer/dryer, new hot water heater, new garbage disposal. Sits in a safe, beautiful, established neighborhood. Call (410) 262-4817.

### General Services

**Landscaping:** It's time to prepare for fall and winter. Let us do your yard work for you so you can do just that. We can take care of all your lawn care needs. Cutting, trimming, planting, edging, mulching, etc. Excellent work and fair prices. References available upon request. CLC Lisa Sanchez or landscapingbyalfredo@hotmail.com

**Bring the Spa Home!** Host a Sensaria Spa Experience and earn free products while being pampered with your friends. Call Liz at 443-610-9160 for more info or to book a party, or visit [www.mysensaria.com/lizhughes](http://www.mysensaria.com/lizhughes)

### Columbia - In-Home Licensed Day Care:

Small intimate group, 1-on-1 attention for infants and toddlers. Lic. #13-113166 Call Debby @ (301) 854-3527.

### Entertainment 08 Books

now available for \$25.00

### Rentals

**Apartment in Arbutus** for Rent 1 Bedroom, W/D, no smoking, no pets. \$750.00 monthly plus utilities. Call 443-250-6214

### Vacation Rentals

**Woods Resort - Hedgesville, WV** (90 miles from Baltimore & Washington) Private House for Rent - Available for weekend or weekly rentals. 3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths, Fireplace, AC, Cable/TV/VCR, Fully Equipped Kitchen, Sunroom and Deck nestled in a beautiful wooded area. Golfing, swimming (indoor & outdoor), tennis, biking, hiking are all available. Sleeps 6. Call 410-465-4087.

**Deep Creek Lake** - 5 bedrm. log cabin chalet; fully furnished; all amenities included; minutes from WISP Ski resort; 30% discount to HCEA members; weekend or weekly rental. Call Dan @ 410-465-5190.

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*HCEA President Ann De Lacy visited with elected officials at the Howard County Democratic Central Committee's Labor Day picnic. Pictured from left are County Executive Ken Ulman, 7th Congressional District Representative Elijah Cummings, Ann De Lacy, 3rd Congressional District Representative John Sarbanes.*

*"Only those who dare to fail greatly  
can ever achieve greatly."*

*Robert F. Kennedy*

### Howard County Education Association

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