

Why Didn't HCEA Support The Race To The Top Grant?

By Paul Lemle, HCEA President

While the period of consideration for the Race To The Top-district grant is over, the conversations about it are not. Like HCEA, HCAA (representing principals) did not support RTT-D. There were several interrelated issues that impacted HCEA's decision:

- ◆ *Lack of collaboration/insufficient time*—HCEA was not a participant in the writing of the grant. The writers were sequestered and the application itself kept secret until its completion. Because the grant was completed on October 28th, and approved by the Board of Education on October 31st, neither HCEA nor HCAA was able to meet in order to make informed, democratic decisions.
- ◆ *Inappropriate emphasis on standardized tests*—Despite statements to the contrary from the Superintendent and staff, the RTT-D grant required that teacher and principal evaluations be dominated by state mandated standardized tests.
- ◆ *MSDE inflexibility*—MSDE insisted on two things: that student growth be 50% of an educator's evaluation, and that state tests should be 30%. We approached them for flexibility and they steadfastly refused. The Howard County Board of Education was asked by HCEA, with more than a thousand signatures, to withdraw from Race To The Top, and it failed to even discuss the matter.
- ◆ *Consideration of contract*—Simply put, you can't sign something you can't see. We were unable to determine or even discuss who would be required to work nights or provide online support for students, what professional development would be done, and how educators might be provided time and resources.
- ◆ *Inadequate funding*—the Department of Education encouraged applicants to seek other sources of funding, as RTT-D costs more to implement than it awards in grant dollars. There was no windfall or "extra" money to be obtained.

Finally, employees of the school system have the right and responsibility to disagree with their employer on matters of policy. No person should face interference or retaliation for engaging in association activity or exercising the right to free expression. This would be in direct

contradiction with the intellectual and academic freedom we work so hard to create for our students.

Congratulations Ann De Lacy

Congratulations to Ann De Lacy! Ann was elected to the Howard County Board of Education. Ann is a former HCEA President and Howard County teacher. She has a long and decorated history of fighting for greater transparency at the Board of Education, for increased public access to information, and for tailoring education in Howard County to the needs of particular communities.



Help-A-Child Fund

The Help-A-Child Fund has issued over 240 vouchers so far this school year. The number increases each year for students in need of school clothing, shoes, coats, eye exams and glasses.

Help-A-Child operates solely on donations. The constant of the payroll deduction contributions and generous donations received from groups and individuals allows the fund to have a solid income base each school year. On Saturday, September 29th, Second Chance Saloon, in Oakland Mills Village Center, hosted a fundraiser with 10% of the checks donated to the Help-A-Child Fund. Brian Donoughe, Ellicott Mills MS teacher and Help-A-Child president served as guest bartender. A fun time was had by all and it was a great way for the community to support HCPSS students needing a "second chance." Special thanks to Dan Collins, MSEA/HCEA UniServ staff, who generously donated, once again, two nights at his Deep Creek Lake cabin chalet as a raffle prize at HCEA's annual Crab Feast.

We ended the school year in June with an awesome donation of over \$1600 from the 7th Grade Fundraiser at Folly Quarter's Middle School. Unfortunately, there will always be children in our school system that will need a little extra help, but fortunately there are generous people willing to help. Please consider making a tax deductible donation or sign up for payroll deductions. For more information call 410-997-3440.

HCEA Marketplace

General Services

Home Mortgages/Refinancing:

Interest rates and home prices are the lowest in years. Presidential is a Maryland based bank with offices in Columbia. No application fees or appraisal fees for HCEA members. First time home buyer programs. Contact Mitch Lax at 443-812-9319 or mitchlax@presidential.com to discuss your mortgage options.

Columbia - In-Home Licensed Day Care: Small intimate group, 1-on-1 attention. For infants and toddlers. Lic. #13-113166. Call Debby at 410-730-1828.

Tutorrific! Tutor in homes throughout Howard County. You make your own schedule! Please send an email or your resume to Deborah Peled Markowitz at tutorrific@comcast.net.

Mary Kay! Complimentary skin care and color consultation. Host a party and earn FREE products! Visit my website for more information: www.marykay.com/rtowsend. Contact Robin Townsend at rtowsend@marykay.com or 410-591-2122.

BJ's Wholesale Club



Discounts on new or existing membership. Each membership includes a FREE household card.

Deadline: Friday, December 28. Call HCEA at 410-997-3440 for more information.

DRD Pool Management, Inc. is accepting resumes for summer job openings as swimming pool field supervisors and swimming pool managers (full or part time) No Experience Necessary. For more information, email David Watts at dwatts@drdpools.com.

Beth Tfiloh Camps seeks head counselors and instructors of sports, camp craft, singing, nature, art, and swimming. The Owings Mills Day Camp runs Monday-Friday from 9 AM-4 PM for 8 weeks (June 24-August 16). Visit our website at www.btcamps.org or call 410-517-3451. **YOUR CHILD ATTENDS FREE!**

For Sale

Condo for Sale: 2 floor 1,664 sq. ft. "maisonette" condo at the Cove in Wilde Lake. FHA approved with full balcony on each floor. 1st level: foyer, kitchen with family area, powder rm, & living/dining rm. Hardwood floors. 2nd level wall to wall carpet: master bedroom suite. New stacked full size washer & dryer w/steam, vented outside. 2 full baths. Lots of storage. Renovated. Move in condition. Asking price: \$255,000. Virtual tour at: therewardteam.com, MLS # HW7679767. For more info, email owner: Jacklin1@cox.net.

Vacation Rentals

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

Ocean City Condo: Newly redecorated! 2 BR, 2 BA, sleeps 6-8, cath. ceiling, private pool, easy walk to beach and much more! Visit www.vacationrentals.com/vacationrentals/21523.html for photos and more. Discount for HCPSS employees! Call Kecia Little 410-241-9005.

Condo-Outer Banks, NC: For rent last week in July and first week in August. Condo is located right on the beach in the town of Kill Devil Hills. Sleeps four. Full kitchen, cable TV, phone, Jacuzzi, etc. One bedroom, sleeper couch, linens and towels included. Condo amenities- outdoor pool, indoor pool, game room, etc. \$1000 per week. Call Marius at 410-997-3440 or 443-838-3974.

HCEA Legislative Breakfast

Saturday, January 26th
8:30AM-11AM
Homewood Center



For more information or to RSVP contact: Jessica Bernhardt at jbernhardt@mseanea.org or 410-997-3440.

Howard County Education Association

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