

The View from Here



**By Ann De Lacy
HCEA President**

Happy Holidays, everyone! The 2010/2011 School Year is halfway over and, in a few (what may seem very long) weeks, we'll all be able to take a breather from work and (maybe) relax during Winter Break.

Hopefully, your Building Reps have been keeping you up to speed on the tough fights we are facing this year with the State's

efforts to shift the costs of our pensions to the local governments and our battle with Dr. Grasmick and the State Board of Education over Maryland's Race to the Top Grant award.

Those of you who have been around for a couple of decades can remember when cost shifting occurred with Social Security which was once funded by the State of Maryland. Our contracts were broken and funding for public education was significantly diminished. One thing I find very interesting about this effort is that nothing has been mentioned about either cutting or shifting the costs of the pensions of State Legislators or judges...I wonder why?

The same Dr. Grasmick who insisted that Maryland have the smallest student subgroups in the United States under "No Child Left Behind," now wants to mandate to local school systems that 50% of all certificated staff evaluations be based on student growth. Thirty percent will be based on an MSDE assessment and twenty percent from the local school system assessments. The Education Reform Act of 2010 clearly spells out the process for developing teacher and principal evaluations. The Act gives full authority to local school systems and their employee representatives to create their own effective evaluation system and determine

100% of the evaluation criteria, not 70% as Dr. Grasmick and the State Board of Education maintains. Please contact Donna Hill Staton, a Howard County citizen who serves on the MSDE Board, at 410-767-0467, and let her know how you feel about this decision.

Thank goodness I have some very good news to report. During a meeting on November 22, 2010 with Marius Ambrose, Linda Wise, Mamie Perkins, Terry Alban, Ray Brown and me in attendance, Dr. Cousin announced that HCEA and HCPSS will work together in equal partnership in developing an evaluation model for the "teachers" within our certificated bargaining unit. We can also celebrate the fact that those part-time employees who were forced to take full-time positions because they were afraid of losing health care benefits will be given priority over new-hires for part-time job openings for which they are qualified.

You will be able to learn a great deal more information about these and other issues at our HCEA Legislative Breakfast on Saturday, January 22, 2011 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Linden Hall which is located in Dorsey Hall. All elected officials in Howard County will be formally invited to this event.

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Holiday Giving – Help-A-Child

This year difficult economic times are hitting families hard. If you are able to make a charitable donation, we urge you to consider making a contribution that will make a difference here in our own community, the Help-A-Child Fund. The Fund is a joint charitable project of the HCPSS Pupil Personnel Workers and HCEA and is often the last resort for many students here in Howard County. With no administrative costs, 100% of all donations go directly to students in need.

To make a contribution, send your tax deductible contribution payable to Help-A-Child to HCEA via the pony or mail to 5082 Dorsey Hall Drive, Suite 102, Ellicott City. For additional information call HCEA at 410-997-3440.

TURN Conference

The TURN (Teacher Union Reform Network) Conference was held in San Antonio, Texas this past September. President Ann De Lacy, Teacher Heather Smith, and UniServ Director Sarah Johnson attended. Among the presenters was Joe Anderson, US Department of Education, who was asked tough questions by Union Representatives from around the Country about Race to the Top, and how classroom teachers became the “targets” in Public Education reform. Mr. Anderson acknowledged that the Public Education System is broken, and promised to take back

the concerns he heard regarding teacher evaluations to U.S. Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan. He further acknowledged the representatives’ frustration with the Administration’s silence over the negative messages being sent regarding Public Education and Educators by films like Waiting for Superman, and indicated that the NEA and AFT had clearly sent the message to the President that he should no longer be silent on this issue.

The Conference also focused on different methods for teacher mentoring and evaluations being used across the Country. The most successful models are those that are negotiated between the school system and the union with joint oversight and continual monitoring. The next meeting will be held in January, at which time some of the successful models from the Northeast Region will be further explored and discussed.

Legislative Breakfast

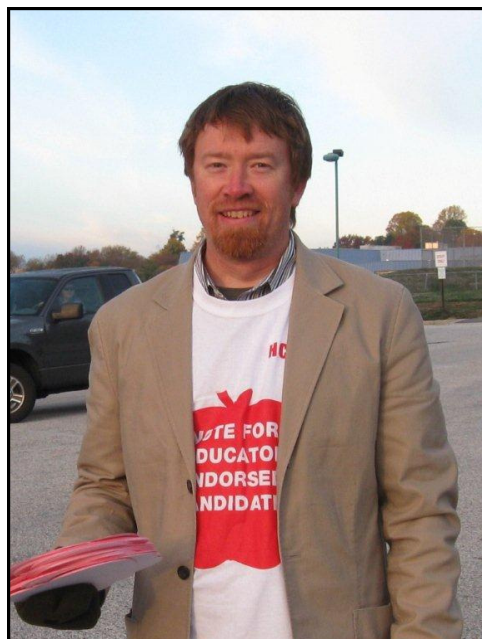
The annual HCEA Legislative Breakfast will be held at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 22nd at Linden Hall. According to GR Chair Paul Lemle this year’s event is more important than ever. “With our pensions on the chopping block and the details of Race to the Top still to be worked out, we need to make sure our elected officials hear our member’s concerns. It’s critical that they talk with the people actually in the school houses in every capacity to get a clear picture of how their actions will impact the classroom and our members.”

To RSVP to the Legislative Breakfast contact Jamie Fowler at jfowler@mseanea.org or call 410-997-3440.

2010 Election Activity

Under the leadership of HCEA President Ann De Lacy and Government Relations Chair Paul Lemle, HCEA was part of the political landscape in 2010. Incumbent Association supported candidates were able to withstand strong challenges and were returned to office. In a very tight school board race, two of our four recommended candidates were elected.

Members supported election day efforts in many ways: interviewing candidates, contributing to the Fund for Children and Public Education and working at more than 30 polls on election day! Thank you to everyone who helped out with a donation of time or money! Your efforts paid off!!



Government Relations Chair Paul Lemle distributes Apple Ballots at Wilde Lake High School on Election Day.

SPARKS!

In October HCEA held its first SPARKS event in Annapolis. Seven participants attended the two day event at MSEA headquarters. They heard from HCEA President Ann De Lacy and several members of the MSEA team. They learned about classroom management and the importance of political action; they learned about legal issues and member benefits; they learned about each other and themselves.

One of the biggest surprises reported was how interesting political action was; another favorite part was that everyone was treated equally – teachers and paraeducators! When asked what was particularly worthwhile comments included meeting the staff, information about my contract and legal issues, and visiting the

State House. The only negative? It wasn't long enough!! Everyone wished there could have been more time!

SPARKS is open to any HCEA member who has been employed in education for five years or less. We will soon start planning for our 2011–2012 training so if you think you would like to join us or want to recommend a colleague contact UniServ Director Mary Jo Neville at mjneville@mseane.org.

Welcome Sarah Johnson!

MSEA UniServ Director Sarah Johnson has recently joined HCEA full time. Sarah comes to us with a wealth of experience, having been a secondary special education and English teacher in Wicomico County for 10 years and serving the Wicomico County Education Association as a build-

ing rep, membership chairperson, and Vice President. Sarah joined MSEA as a consultant in 1998 helping to organize ESP on the Eastern Shore. She then became a UniServ Director assigned to Montgomery County for four years, and most recently a UniServ Director in Anne Arundel County for five years. Sarah will be working with secondary staff and is the liaison for the Professional Development and Membership Committees. Sarah has jumped right in, recently conducting a successful workshop for Association Reps. She lives in Germantown with her husband, Chris and 12 year old daughter, Taylor. Welcome to HCEA, Sarah!

Advocacy Reminders

As first semester winds down, there are some important reminders for deadlines according to your Negotiated Agreements. For tenured teachers, if this is your formal evaluation year, you should have one observation prior to the end of first semester. Non-tenured teachers, you should be observed twice before the end of first semester. Observation Reports must be received within five school days of the observation. ESP members, if observed, your post observation conference must be requested and occur within five duty days of the observation. If any employee receives an Observation Report that they disagree with, you have the right to write a rebuttal to that report and have it attached in your file. If you have any questions regarding your rights, please contact your UniServ Director.



Sparks 2010 participants; from left: Stacey Weinberg (front), Mike Fletcher, Sheila Ebron, Patricia Garrett-Taylor, Heather Smith, Ketura Hearn, and Shatema Hill.

HCEA Marketplace

General Services

Life Coaching for Educators: Do you find yourself wishing you were using your time more wisely? Do you wish that you enjoyed life more? Life coaching can help. I am a certified Life Coach and a teacher. I can truly relate to your needs. Call or email Nellie Hill to set up a free sample session at nthill@me.com or 410-733-4226. Spirit adventures; helping educators find their passion both inside and outside the classroom.

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 by e-mail mitchlax@presidential.com to discuss your mortgage options.

Tutorrific! Tutor in homes throughout Howard County. A great way to make extra money! Please send an email or your resume to Deborah Peled Markowitz at tutorrific@comcast.net.

"To-Do List" piling up? Need help???? Contact JM Frederick, LLC for handyman services. MHIC Licensed #97185, #125996. Insured, and Workers Comp. Residential and Commercial Services available. Office: 410-750-7473 or email jm.frederick.llc@gmail.com. Servicing Howard and nearby counties. Emergency services as available.

Thinking about remodeling your current home? Adding an addition, finishing a basement, adding a deck or garage? Thinking about building new? Contact The CAD Studio for a FREE Consultation online at

www.thecadstudiodesign.com or 240-994-9554. MHIC #92007.

Vacation Rentals

North Ocean City, MD: Plan your summer now! 4 BR, 2 bath single family home on 140th street. Home has cable TV, wireless internet, large deck, outside shower, fully equipped kitchen, etc. Discount to HCEA members from \$1750 to \$1275. Call Pam 410-381-8593 or email pam_vogel@hcpss.org.

Deep Creek Lake: 3 BR lake chalet, sleeps 10. Fully furnished, close to restaurants, activities and State Parks. Discount to Ho Co employees! Winter, spring, summer and fall great place to relax and enjoy the outdoors! Contact Chuck at 410-979-4958 or Candy at 410-530-1265.

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 410-465-5190.

Outer Banks NC Condo: Never too early to plan your summer vacation. Located right on beach in the town of Kill Devil Hills. Full kitchen, cable TV, phone, jacuzzi, etc. One bedroom, sleeper couch,

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sleeps four, linens and towels included. \$925/wk. Available weeks (Sunday-Sunday), July 24-31 and July 31-August 7. Rent for two weeks \$900/wk. Call Marius at 410-997-3440.



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Dates to Remember:

Call HCEA to register for events.

Job Satisfaction Survey in Buildings

Wednesday, December 22

Winter Break

December 24-January 2

HCEA Nominations Open at Rep Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 11
4PM

Homewood Center

MSEA Open House

Wednesday, January 12
Annapolis

Legislative Breakfast

Saturday, January 22
8:30AM
Linden Hall