



Welcome New Educators, and Seasoned Veterans!



It is a new school year, and I hope you are rested and ready. You make Howard County's public schools the best in Maryland, and perhaps the best in the United States. Day in, day out, you will make the superhuman effort to educate every child to the same high standard. This does not happen by accident. Similarly, our salaries and benefits don't happen by accident—we negotiate for them. The work of the Howard County Education Association is critical, and WE NEED YOU! My hope is that you will consider volunteering for some of the many opportunities here. When you've finished reading

it, please send this flyer with your information back to HCEA (you can use regular mail or the pony to "HCEA").

There are, of course, reasons why you might not want to be more involved with the Association. Perhaps you are feeling the pinch of a down economy. Maybe you'd like to see greater consideration of conservative office-seekers. Maybe the collection and dissemination of information haven't been effective for you. All of these concerns are real, and warrant discussion. But that's an opt-in situation, not the reverse: you need to weigh in and be active in shaping your union.

For me, being a voting member of the group that bargains my salary and working conditions is critically important, and it's like voting in public elections. I want my voice heard, and that's why I participate. The choices, unfortunately, are stark. One can either be involved in the organization that represents them, or be shut out of important processes that shape our collective future as public educators.

Also, there's a bit of serious misinformation in the news--the NEA did NOT raise dues \$10 to give a large donation to President Obama's re-election campaign. (We'd be talking about \$30 million, and it's illegal to do so.) The dues increase is real, but it goes into a fund to combat anti-union efforts like those in Wisconsin, Ohio, and Alabama. Most everyone saw the protests in Madison as the governor stripped public sector employees of their right to bargain, but did you know that our colleagues in Alabama lost their right to collect dues by payroll deduction? This is a step towards removing unions from public life, and it threatens all of us. The NEA's Legislative Crisis Fund puts staff in these states to help oppose anti-union, anti-educator, and anti-public education politics.

It isn't, of course, a world of "us vs. them," but our world is largely shaped by the forces of political action. I'm not willing to leave these decisions to someone else, and I hope you won't be, either.

Paul Lemle
HCEA President

Sick Leave Bank — Enroll Now!

All certificated and support staff are eligible to join the sick leave banks, which can provide you with

leave in the event of an incapacitating illness or injury. Deadlines are fast approaching: October 1 for certificated staff and October 31 for ESP.

To join the bank or volunteer at HCEA by joining the Leave Bank committee, contact Denise Palmisano, 410-997-3440, or email dpalmisano@hceanea.org.

Volunteer on an HCEA Committee

HCEA needs you—members are the muscle of the Association. The work of negotiating our contract, lobbying elected officials, and recruitment simply cannot be done without your help.

To volunteer for an HCEA committee, please circle one (or more), below:

Name: _____

School: _____

Bylaws: makes suggested improvements to HCEA's governing documents

Budget: develops the annual budget for the Association.

Contract: identifies possible improvements in contract language, develops strategy for negotiations.
Subcommittees: Teachers, ESP.

Elections: runs internal elections for officers, directors, and convention delegates

Government Relations: conducts the political activities of the Association (fundraising, campaigning, and direct lobbying).

Membership: recruits new members, provides member benefit information to existing members
Subcommittees: Minority Affairs, Human/Civil Rights, Community Outreach/PR

Professional Development: uses Association resources to offer professional development opportunities to members. Will work with HCPSS this year to improve offerings for support personnel.

Sick Leave Bank: assists with applications for sick leave

Subcommittees: Teachers, ESP.

For more information, contact: Maleeta Kitchen, Running Brook ES, maleeta_kitchen@hcpss.org.

HCPSS Policy Review Committees

When the school board reviews its policies, it asks stakeholder groups like HCEA for input. We will appoint at least one member to each committee. To read the current policies, visit www.boarddocs.com. Meeting dates will be forwarded to you as soon as they become available. Contact: Paul Lemle, paul.lemle@gmail.com. Deadline to join: September 2.

To volunteer for a policy committee, please circle one (or more), below:

Name: _____

School: _____

- 2000 School Board Governance
- 2020 Policy Development and Adoption
- 3010 Emergency Closing of Schools
- 4030 Accountability of School Activity Funds
- 5120 Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases
- 6050 Naming or Renaming of School Buildings
- 8020 Grading and Reporting: High School
- 8090 Non-School Hour Participation Requirements for Elementary and Secondary Curricular Programs
- 9070 Academic Eligibility for High School Extracurricular Activities
- 9250 Weapons
- 10030 Participation in Contests

PAC Fund

The Fund for Children and Public Education is how we give financial support to pro-public education candidates running for political office. Dues can NOT be used for this purpose. Every dollar we give must be a voluntary contribution from you or your immediate family. It is critically important that we support people who will support us when we need it.

What you can do to help: give to the fund, ask your colleagues to give at a 5-minute meeting (we'll help!)

Contact: Laura MyNaugh, Triadelphia Ridge ES, laura_mynaugh@hcpss.org.

**MSEA
Convention**



Want to decide on the official policies of the 71,000 member Maryland State Education Association? Come to Ocean City the weekend of October 21-22. We'll elect 40 delegates (and pay their hotel/travel expenses), plus provide a bus for about 50 more to attend during the day on Friday.

What you can do to sign up: fill out and return (deadline: September 9)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, ZIP: _____
Email address: _____
School: _____
Job title: _____
Employee ID#: _____

I'm interested in serving as a delegate: Y N

I'd be a first-time delegate: Y N
(or)

I'm interested in the bus/day trip: Y N

Contact: Paul Lemle, 410-997-3440,
paul.lemle@gmail.com.

**Negotiations—Share Your Priorities
With the Team.**

Last year's negotiations began with a proposal from HCPSS to reduce educator pay by four work days (furloughs). Obviously, this was unacceptable to us. The eventual settlement was for educators to receive a half "increment," an average raise of 1%. In truth, most of us will see a small reduction in pay because of the Maryland General Assembly's decision to increase our pension contributions by 2%.

This year's negotiations will be focused on the salary scales and two articles (one chosen by HCEA, one chosen by HCPSS) in each contract. We will be lobbying the Howard County Council to budget more than the minimum "maintenance of effort" under Maryland law—having competitive salaries allows Howard County schools to attract and retain YOU, the best educators in the state.

Please let us know your priorities by ranking the following items 1-4 with 1 being your highest priority and 4 your lowest.

- _____ Step/Increment
(salary increase from current placement to next "step," moving closer to the top of the scale)
- _____ COLA
(a cost of living adjustment based on your current salary)
- _____ Compressing the Salary Scale
(reaching the highest pay earlier)
- _____ Other:

Since one additional article may be opened, please attach paper to list any contract improvements that would help you be more successful in your job. What you can do to help: join the HCEA contract committee, or its PR/crisis team! Contact: Colleen Morris, Guilford ES, colleen_morris@hcpss.org.


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