

Leadership Forum

The Newsletter of the Association of Educational Leaders, Anne Arundel County

Vol. 2, No. 4
Fall 2004

Making an impact

AP Sue Myers, a determined educational leader

By Denise Hofstedt

Sue Myers is an educational leader who sees the big picture, but never loses her focus on the students.

An assistant principal for only two years, Myers is already appreciated for her leadership talents. "Sue has everything you want in an educational leader," says AEL President Charles Jansky, who has known and worked with Myers over the last 10 years. "She has the ability to see things clearly. She can analyze data. She is good with students and teachers. And she has a gift for dealing with difficult parents."

At Crofton Woods Elementary, where Myers was first assigned as assistant principal, Principal Peter Zimmer also speaks highly of Myers. "She is inclusive, collaborative and leads by example. She is respected for modeling good judgment and she is direct and critical when she needs to be. She is an advocate for all children." Zimmer says Myers is one of the top APs he's seen.

Rivera Beach Elementary Reading Specialist Kathy King, who has known Myers since the two taught 2nd Grade there a decade ago, has always been impressed with Myers willingness to learn new things. "She keeps up with technology and is a bit of an expert," says King. "These days she is studying up on special education. She always takes time to learn."

An Unlikely Educator?

Myers, now an AP at Park Elementary, says she was an unlikely candidate to even enter the field of education. "I never did well in school, I always did just enough to get by," she says. "But I always wanted to be a teacher."

It wasn't until she reached high school that a Northeast High School teacher pushed

her to do her best. "He had high expectations and he wouldn't let me just get by." With the knowledge of how good she could be, Myers attended the University of Maryland and earned an education degree.

"I felt like I could be a strong teacher," she says. "I wanted to be someone who had an impact. I have been fortunate over the years to work with administrators who have had high expectations of me."

As a teacher she found the leadership roles she took on fulfilling. "I really appreciated the whole school improvement process – analyzing data, examining teaching styles...

looking at all the pieces and developing plans for the future," says Myers.

After a brief time as resource teacher, she decided that a role in administration would allow her to have the impact she was looking for and the individual contact with students she craved. So she earned an administration certificate from Goucher College.

"I loved teaching — it was difficult to leave the classroom," says Myers. "I never wanted to leave the kids." But as an administrator, Myers now uses her gift for teaching to help teachers improve their skills. She says she is still able to focus on individual students and give them the attention they need.

The Bottom line

Myers' philosophy is simple: No child



Sue Myers

Happy Holidays



from the
AEL
Board and
staff

Dates to Remember

March 17-19, 2005
MASSP Spring Conference
Ocean City, MD
For more information, visit
www.md-massp.org

April 16-19, 2005
NAESP Conference
Baltimore, MD
For more information, visit
www.maesp.org

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Our work continues

Although we are in a three-year contract, the association continues to address issues as they arise. Among the issues that require our attention on an ongoing basis are:

- **Coordinators.** More than a year ago, coordinators were put on two different job groups for no apparent reason. Rick Kovelant is currently involved in resolving this issue.

- **Health care.** This issue continues to need our vigilance despite our three-year contract and our recent win in court.

- **Grievances** are plentiful and will always require Rick Kovelant's services to represent individual principals.

- **Common ground.** AEL will continue to

search for common ground with the other associations. Health care is an example of such an endeavor.

Your concerns and ideas are important to us. Let us know what concerns you or how we can help. Email us at AEL1998@aol.com.

Thanks to all who submitted their personal email addresses to us for AEL Updates. We will use the list to provide you with news and time-sensitive information. If you would like to be added to the list, send your email to our newsletter editor Denise Hofstedt at dmhofstedt@verizon.net. (If you would like to receive news from us at a "free" email address and need help setting one up, contact Denise at 410-421-5832.) ■

President's Column by Charles Jansky

Sue Myers, from page 1

is the same. "No child learns the same way," says Myers. "As educators we have to be able to recognize the differences."

She comes to school everyday and makes it her goal to provide an environment for children to learn. "Learning is the most valuable thing that you can do in your life," she says. "As educators, we need to reach all students and show them the value of learning. The role of educator is to instill a belief in all children that they can excel. We need to have students believe that in themselves."

No Child Left Behind

Myers says these days the greatest challenge for educators is coming from the accountability inherent in the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. But in the push to keep numbers moving in the right direction, Myers is careful not to neglect the needs of her students. "At our school, we have children in every subgroup," says Myers. "There is not a one program fits all. We are always trying to find programs to help [students] with their diverse needs. But every day we are thinking: Are we going to make AYP? How are we going to meet this child's needs and make him or her feel successful? How are we going to meet this child's

needs and still meet the needs of the other children?"

The Work of an AP

As an AP, Myers devours any special education-related information she finds. As part of her school's special education team, Myers works hard to share her knowledge of special education with classroom teachers. She often finds herself bridging the communication gap between special education teachers and general education teachers.

A surmountable challenge faced by APs is continually being assigned to different schools. "Moving school to school is tough," says Myers. "You have to start all over every time. I've been lucky, the administrators I have worked with have made my transitions smooth." She says while moving is a challenge, it keeps the work interesting. "The responsibilities are not much different from school to school, but different schools with different populations offer a different focus. It's exciting and invigorating. I am learning all the time."

According to Zimmer, this may be only the beginning for Myers. "I look to see Sue doing whatever she wishes to do – she will achieve whatever she sets out to do... any goal. She is determined and she has the tools and capabilities to achieve any goal she sets for herself." ■

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Health care providers update

For those of you that have been following the war over health care providers, I am proud to announce that the first battle has been won. By a unanimous vote of the Board of Education (alright there was one abstention), all bids for a new health care provider were rejected and the Board authorized negotiations to occur for a one-year extension of current health care coverage by CareFirst.

This change in heart was due, in large part, to the opposition to the change exhibited by AEL, TAAAC, AFSCME and SAAAAC, who opposed the change and, under their current contracts, would not supply the requisite consent. The organized advertisement, rally and speeches to a packed house demonstrated that solidarity does work. Many thanks to those of you who attended the rally and provided your support. To those of you who did not feel the need to get involved, you need to reexamine your priorities. This was a turning point for the public sector unions in this county and sent a message to the Board that we can and should be heard.

Unfortunately, the war over this issue is far from over. United, whose bid was rejected, has instituted suit to force the Board to award them the contract for health care coverage and administration. This case is pending in the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County. Although AEL was not named as a party to this litigation, it felt it had no choice but to intervene in this matter. This is a fancy legal term for saying we don't believe either United or the Board can protect our interests and that we need to be a party to this litigation to insure a decision reached by this Court will not impair AEL's rights. AEL was instrumental in taking the lead on this issue. TAAAC has elected to intervene as well as Care First. To further protect our interests AEL filed a complaint against the Board asking the court to force the Board to honor our current contract and provide the designated Care First coverage.

On Tues., Oct. 19, 2004 United filed and presented a bid protest before the Board. United argued that it was the legitimate bid winner, the Board has no authority to cancel bids, the Board has no ability to negotiate and sign an extension

of the CareFirst Agreement, and that the unions' efforts to prevent any award without their concurrence, per the contract language in their negotiated agreements, is an improper delegation of the Board's authority. While at the time I am writing this article no decision has been reached by the Board, it is anticipated and hoped that the bid protest will be rejected.

If the bid protest is rejected, there may be an appeal by United to the State Board of Education and an effort initiated to have the court enjoin (fancy word for stop) the Board from awarding CareFirst an extension of the contract. A ruling along these lines would be a disaster. It is critical that these matters conclude quickly as the coverage will, absent an agreement, terminate in December.

This entire mess could have been easily avoided if the Board had simply read the Negotiated Agreement and recognized that our concurrence was necessary and appropriate. We fought hard for the right to be a partner in the determination of a health care provider and/or administrator. Our contract provides for this. We even suggested, during the course of negotiations, that health care be negotiated between all bargaining groups at one time. This concept was rejected by the Board. The efforts undertaken by upper administration to try to short circuit this participation has brought us to this unfortunate point.

As you can see, this matter is far from resolved. As the carriers and the Board line up to resolve this matter, our interests must be protected. While we were not involved in the creation of the current legal problem, we will surely be among the victims if we don't continue the fight. At this point the Executive Board is asking for your patience and support in what we believe will be a most difficult struggle. In the end we are committed to providing the very best for our membership and will do our utmost to secure and enforce the benefits we negotiated and agreed to in the course of the collective bargaining arena. In short, stay tuned!!! ■

A Message from Richard Kovelant,
Executive Director & General Counsel

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The Association of Educational Leaders

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Story ideas and Letters to the Editor welcomed

We encourage members to use this newsletter to share their opinions and ideas. If you would like to express your thoughts on an issue (i.e., "climate surveys") or a time saving tip or a creative solution to a common problem, please send your submission to: Don Smith at 410.349.1764 (fax) or Denise Hofstedt at 410.421.5832 (fax), dmhofstedt@verizon.net.