

# LEADERSHIP FORUM

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

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December 2005

## Superintendent qualities and questions

*AEL members consider questions for the candidates*

With the search for a new superintendent underway, the *AEL Forum* gave members a chance to draft questions for and share their thoughts about the candidates. Here is a selection of member responses.

**If you could ask one question of the superintendent candidates, what would it be?**

“What would the principals that you’re leaving miss the most about you?”

*Wayne Bark, Principal,  
Crofton Elementary*

“Discuss your skill level in working with a diverse population. What in your background would assist you in working effectively with a diverse county population?”

*Jane George, Principal,  
Southgate Elementary*

“How do you plan on working collaboratively with principals on significant instructional issues?”

*Jason Dykstra, Principal,  
Southern High*

“What is your vision for the county reading program? Do you see a need to expand program options and allow other options?”

*Harry Zacharkro, Principal,  
Cape St. Claire Elementary*

“What is your vision for promoting student achievement in reading and mathematics? And how will you support schools to help achieve AYP and exceed expectations?”

*Patrick Bathras, Principal,  
Severn River Middle*

“How do you plan to collaborate with professional staff to ensure the best possible instructional programs for our students? We need someone who will do so with an appropriate combination of top down, bottom up management.”

*Fred Jenkins, Principal,  
Central Middle*

**What qualities would you like to see in the new superintendent?**

“Integrity is number one. Honesty and a sound set of educational values that he/she is not afraid to stand up for and publicly support.”

*Wayne Bark, Principal,  
Crofton Elementary*

“We often hear about teacher pay and teacher workload and we seldom hear anything about administrators’ workload. We are also putting in six or seven days a week and working 13- to 14- hour days. This whole system has worked extremely hard with a lack of necessary resources. What’s going to be coming to help us? We need an overhaul of the workload distribution. We’re burning out really good people quickly.”

*Sharon Stratton, Principal,  
Arundel High*

“You want a person who understands education, instruction and has a clear idea of where we need to be going and a plan to get us there. We need someone who’s willing to deal with our challenges head on.”

*Jason Dykstra, Principal,  
Southern High*

*Continued on page 2*

Happy  
Holidays



from the  
AEL  
Board and  
staff

## Dates to Remember

March 30-April 1,  
2006

**MASSP Spring  
Conference**

Solomons Island,  
MD

*For more  
information, visit  
[www.md-massp.org](http://www.md-massp.org)*

May 11-13, 2006

**MAESP Conference**

Ocean City, MD

*For more  
information, visit  
[www.maesp.org](http://www.maesp.org)*

## Gearing up for the legislative session

**A**fter 21 years in education, 18 of them in Anne Arundel County, it seems strange to introduce myself as, "the new guy". But as the newest member of the AEL Board it certainly fits.

As a special education teacher who has always specialized in working with Intensity V students (students with developmental disabilities, and students with emotional disabilities), I view this as a chance for me to improve my

understanding of the complexities and demands faced by administrators in Anne Arundel County's comprehensive schools. I also see this as an opportunity to help my peers gain greater insights into the issues the administrators of 'alternative schools' face.

Bob Ferguson has also tasked me with the coordination of AEL's Legislative Committee. Over the next few months

I would like to provide the AEL membership with information relative to legislation before the General Assembly this winter. Our State Delegates and State Senators should begin pre-filing bills in mid-December. My goal is to provide you with the information you will need to develop an informed opinion.

In a similar vein, as we

move into the 2006 election cycle, I am making plans to develop a candidate's questionnaire to be distributed to all those seeking office in Anne Arundel County. These questions will be specific to the office being sought, and the candidates' responses will be presented to the AEL membership unedited. My goal would again be to provide the AEL membership with information on how each candidate stands on education issues.

I look forward to the opportunity to get acquainted with all of you over the next two years. If any of you are interested in assisting with the Legislative Committee please feel free to contact me at Central Special Education School, 410-956-5885. ■

by Ric Chesek  
First Vice President

### Attention AEL Members from Don Smith

I am getting membership applications from employees who want to join other organizations. I can only accept applications for people wanting to join AEL since we have already paid or started to pay MASSP, MAESP, ASCD, and MASCD. Also for the information of members of MASCD, they have raised their dues to \$30. There is no change for those on payroll deductions for this year but next year their payroll deductions will go up by .19 per check. We will handle the change from this office. Current members need do nothing.

## Candidates, from page 1

"...A strong instructional background and strong leadership skills."

*Jane George, Principal,  
Southgate Elementary*

"We definitely need a strong instructional leader and someone who works with leaders that surround him or her. We need someone who is open to input for improvement from all the stakeholders."

*Patrick Bathras, Principal,  
Severn River Middle*

"We need someone with good human relations skills... someone who is approachable by administrators and the like... someone who will listen. He or she does not have to agree with me, but values what I have to say. I hope the

person doesn't see the need for more change. We've had enough change lately. We need the opportunity to work on what we have.

*Bob Kanach, Principal,  
Lothian Elementary*

"We should be looking for someone who reaches out to the community... someone who reaches out to his/her staff... someone who is abreast of the current literature on best practices, but is confident enough to admit that he or she doesn't have all the answers... someone who can delegate and is willing to rely on the expertise within our system... someone who carefully weighs input and who values and believes in investing in human resources."

*Fred Jenkins, Principal,  
Central Middle* ■

## Comments on the Salary Review Committee Report

I recently had the chance to address the Board of Education concerning the Salary Review Committee report. Mindful of the Board's – and to some degree the staff's – inclination to base compensation on performance criteria, I felt compelled to let the Board know a unified salary scale, performance-based pay and discriminatory pay practices were not items AEL could support or condone. I hope you all have a good holiday and that you carefully read my presentation so you can be informed as to our position on these issues.

“...As you know our union represents principals, assistant principals, and educational coordinators. AEL was invited to serve on the Salary Survey Committee and as such participated along with other interest groups in the development of the report you received from Mr. Nourse. At the outset, I would like to recognize the time and effort that Mr. Nourse, his staff and committee members devoted to this analysis. There are however issues AEL believes still warrant attention, emphasis and focus.

First, AEL believes unjustified weight was given to the issue of recruitment. While well intentioned, the methodologies suggested, do not properly take into account the experience factor and retention of trained and experienced administrators. AEL appreciates the fact that the Board must continue to attract new talent in these areas, but it is of equal importance to stem the tide of attrition among administrators who are leaving in mid career for other jurisdictions or finding little or no incentive to stay beyond 30 years in any system.

Second, the report discusses an approach where administrators would be compensated on the basis of their assignment as an elementary, middle or secondary principal or assistant principal in these categories. As I requested, the report noted that AEL is opposed to a one-size-fits-all scale. Until all schools have equal administrative staffing levels and substantially the same enrollment and substantially the same teachers, staff, etc., the compensation and locations in job

groups based on these titles alone cannot be the criteria. Thus, this is not an option AEL can find acceptable.

Third, salary scales, step increments, salary scale compressions are all part and parcel of the generic topic of “wages” that are the subject of the collective bargaining process. While AEL obviously supports the recognition that salaries need to be brought into line, the report merely provides alternative methodologies that may be accepted or rejected in the course of our negotiations.

Fourth, it is clear that past compensation practices have placed these bargaining groups behind the curve and the cost of catching up to

by Richard Kovelant,  
Executive Director & General Counsel

the realities of the market place will not be easy or inexpensive. COLA's have become confused with pay

raises and even in this area, the system is behind. The fix however, can only get greater and the pain more severe for all concerned. How the compensation can be fixed, how pay differentials are maintained between bargaining groups, and when relief can be expected will be the focus of our negotiations. Moreover, once the problems are corrected the correction will have to be maintained or we will be having these discussions in the future.

Finally, the uncontrolled and unilateral pay increases provided to some members of this organization and the unauthorized compensation given to others in the form of consulting contracts and perks has only undermined the integrity of the system and lowered the credibility of this body to really try and solve the problems identified by this committee. If this report becomes just a shelf document, no further action is taken to rectify the situation that exists, and past pay practices for selected individuals continue, then the committee's work was of no value.

I choose to believe this won't be the case and that a fair and equitable method of compensation will be the subject of appropriate negotiations and that this committee provided a valuable service.” ■

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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, send your submission to: Don Smith at 410.349.1764 (fax) or Denise Hofstedt at 410.421.5832 (fax), dmhofstedt@verizon.net.