

LEADERSHIP FORUM

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

Vol. 5, No. 8
April 2009

Staying in the know... a little of this and that *Bylaws, due process missing in action and negotiations*

In the past, I have directed my newsletter contribution to one specific issue that has developed in the course of my tenure as the Executive Director and General Counsel. In this newsletter, I would like to address several items that I feel warrant your attention and in some cases your action. Allow me this diversion.

Bylaws Discussion

First, for those of you who have read the AEL Bylaws, you would be aware that the position of the President as well as other officers are required to be held by Unit II employees. Over the years there has been merit to this requirement. After all, AEL is an ongoing organization that represents AACPS-employed school-based administrators and educational coordinators.

Perhaps there is an alternate approach that would allow for a former Unit II employee who has decided to retire to serve as an officer, if so elected. There is a lot that can be said for the need to retain experience in these positions so that institutional history can be properly transferred. This is a nonpaying position that requires a great deal of time and effort. Can some of the time commitments be better provided by a recent retiree? If access to the individual is made available and the flow of information continues, what does the Association lose by allowing a former Unit II the opportunity to continue to hold or run for a position post-employment?

Given the excessive drain on a member's time, it may be best to amend the Bylaws to

the permit this practice. In the end, the electorate will decide the best candidate through the election process. All I am suggesting is that the Association does not exclude a former Unit II employee from holding of office.

If you believe there is merit to this approach, please indicate by a "Yes" vote. If you are opposed, indicate by a "No" vote. You can mail these votes to my office at 1957 Valley Road, Annapolis, MD 21401 in a sealed envelope marked "ballot". If there is a majority interest in proceeding, the Bylaws will be

so amended and if not, they will remain the same. Please have your

responses in by April 15, 2009.

Phantom Claims

Second, this is the year of the investigation. Once again, members are being "reassigned" while anonymous complaints from staff for "alleged misconduct" are being investigated. The nature of some of the investigations being conducted, in many cases would have been in the form of a grievance at best and an internal screening inquiry at worst. By allowing, teachers and staff to step outside of the process, the Administration has seen fit to violate the rights of the accused administrators. If you think you are entitled to know the names of those who have accused you of some wrong doing, think again. On a good day you will receive a redacted copy of the report and those who have brought charges will remain nameless. Try defending against these phantoms that with veiled anonymity can make any claim they wish

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by Richard Kovelant,
Executive Director & General Counsel

Dates to Remember

April 15
Bylaws Amendment Ballots Due
to Rick Kovelant
1957 Valley Road,
Annapolis, MD
21401

April 22
AEL Meeting
4:30 pm
South River HS

May 7-9
MAESP Annual Principals' Conference
Ocean City, MD
www.maesp.org

May 20
AEL Meeting
4:30 pm
South River HS



AEL website
www.aelaacps.org

Your best resource just got better

Access to your own secure, reliable email account

**But, make
no mistake, AEL
MUST START
USING its own ex-
clusive, password
secure, internal
email system.**

A massive overhaul of the AEL website is completed and was posted March 20. Part of the overhaul was simply its look. Making the information, buttons, and downloads more intuitively logical and user-friendly was a goal as was creating a vehicle that would establish a secure AEL email tool (see the special insert.) As members surf the site and have recommendations for improving it, please let an officer or Rick or Larry know.

One of the primary reasons for the re-work is the need for a secure, reliable AEL member email system. This is the second attempt to put this communications device together. The first one, set up over a year ago, collapsed under the weight of indifference due to a great extent on the lack of a perceived need and the press of other responsibilities. But, make no mistake, AEL MUST START USING its own exclusive, password secure, internal email system. Here's why...

First, continued reliance on the BOE's system is becoming increasingly problematic. The Board (meaning certain executive staff) can by fiat (and have suggested doing so) ban its email system for "non-BOE" business. The argument that much of what AEL does is in the interests of the school system may not carry much weight

as an argument if this day comes.

Second, particularly when AEL's interests may vary with a BOE position on a given matter or, as is happening with disturbing frequency, BOE initiatives that fly in the face of AEL's contract need immediate, assured, member communication.

Our own internal email system is the only viable means to communicate.

Third, AEL must put in place an alternative to the BOE's internal "pony" mail. It is a matter of timeliness, security and cost. The Newsletter you are now reading comes out only four times a year. We need a means to communicate spontaneously as events happen—not wait until the next Newsletter. Even our monthly legislative newsletter, *The Advocate*, can fail the timeliness test.

Fourth, "need to know" information should not be held hostage to a single, semi-public communications channel. There are times AEL needs an "eyes only" contact. Email can do that for us.

Finally, copies of virtually anything cost more than electronic copies. An AEL member email system, user friendly and consciously USED by members, would reduce Association operating costs rather significantly. ■

by Larry Lorton,
AEL Administrator

AEL Polo Shirt

The Association is now offering AEL polo shirts. The shirts, from Pro Celebrity, are navy blue with white embroidery (Association of Educational Leaders). They are 100% fully combed cotton 2-ply pique, with three pearl buttons and an opened hemmed bottom with side vents and dropped tail. To order, complete the form below and send it with payment (checks payable to AEL) to: AEL, P.O. Box 74, Severna Park, MD 21146

AEL Polo Shirt Order Form

Name _____

School _____ Phone: _____

Shirt Size: (Circle one)

Cost: \$26.00 each

Women's: X-Small Small Medium Large Extra Large

Men's: Small Medium Large Extra Large XXL

AEL needs you!!

by Louise DeJesu, AEL Secretary and Larry Lorton, AEL Administrator

The AEL bylaws specify annual election of officers to be held “on or around June 1” (Article IV.C). Historically, elections are held by secret ballot at AEL’s annual meeting each spring usually scheduled around the last day of school in June. All members in good standing are eligible to run for office. Details about this year’s Annual Meeting will be sent to every member later this spring. The following AEL leadership positions are up for election this year:

- President
- 1st Vice-President
- 2nd Vice-President
- Directors-at-Large (2 positions)

The officers and directors, both at-large and representative, constitute AEL’s leadership team, collectively called the Executive Board. The Executive Board conducts all Association

business. Meetings are held once per month starting around 4:30 pm, rarely lasting more than 90 minutes.

Everyone understands the feelings of reluctance to add to an already full plate. There are no easy jobs in public education. However, AEL members enjoy a competitive income and a host of benefits, protections and both personal and professional supports because of the dedication and commitment of fellow members and colleagues. AEL needs members to step up to the plate and keep it going. AEL needs you!!

For details about the positions and requirements and to submit names for nomination please contact:

Louise DeJesu (Principal, Hilltop ES),
Nominating Committee Chair, (410-222-6409)

or

Larry Lorton, AEL Administrator, (410-647-5847). ■

However, AEL members enjoy a competitive income and a host of benefits, protections and both personal and professional supports because of the dedication and commitment of fellow members and colleagues.

Kovelant ...

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without potential consequence. It is even more shocking to learn that your superiors not only permit this process but participate in the same as does the Office of Investigation.

It would also stretch your imagination to learn that your case is freely discussed among your peers and supervisors well before there is any resolution. So much for personnel privacy. If you are fortunate enough to have no action taken against you, don’t count on ever learning who brought the charges forth or ever knowing what was offered as the “so called” evidence. If you are less fortunate and face a pre-disciplinary conference, you still remain in the dark as the report you receive shortly before the hearing is sanitized to protect the accusers. Mounting any legitimate defense is not in the cards. Due

process is not a recognized concept at AACPS. I would have thought you could learn this concept in a first year civics class. If you want due process, or need to learn about how it works in AACPS perhaps the Student Manual will offer some guidance. After all, students seem to have gotten the correct memo on this topic.

A Return to the Table

On a final note, AEL has been asked to return to the table to discuss compensation issues in light of these financial times. All groups who are under contract have been requested to return to the bargaining table. While, funding may be questionable, it is premature to extract any bargaining concessions until the County Council and the Executive have struck their budget. Can anyone say stimulus package? ■

The Association of Educational Leaders

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Association of Educational Leaders

Officers, Board and Staff

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Will Myers, <i>1st Vice President '07-'09</i>	410.956.5600
Charles Jansky, <i>2nd Vice President '07-'09</i>	410.437.0464
Louise DeJesu, <i>Secretary '06-'08</i>	410.222.6409
Barry Fader, <i>Treasurer '06-'08</i>	410.222.1660
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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 Denise Hofstedt at 410.421.5832 (fax) or dmhofstedt@verizon.net. ■