

LEADERSHIP FORUM

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

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Lilley named MASSP Principal of the Year

by Denise Hofstedt

Last year, after achieving AYP for the second consecutive year, Annapolis High School was removed from the state's watch list. And this spring, AHS Principal Don Lilley was honored for his leadership as 2010 Principal of the Year by the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP).

According to Louise DeJesu, AEL Secretary and Principal of Hilltop Elementary, "It is a well deserved honor. I am thrilled to see him get this recognition after he took on leading Annapolis High in its restructuring and was successful. He took on a lot of responsibility... It was all on his shoulders."

While Lilley carried the load, he is quick to distribute the credit. "It is the staff, the students, the families and the community giving us the support we need to pursue our vision for success," he says.

Lilley, who also won Washington Post Principal of Excellence: Distinguished Educational Leadership Award, 2008-09, attributes the

school's success to building relationships with the broad range of stakeholders. "My vision is to build relationships... so we could get the parents to support what we want to do for the students. We have a pathway but we need to work together" to accomplish our goals.

He says building your relationship with your staff is key. "If you build the relationship with them, they will be there until the end. This is a big job, it can't be done alone. You have to have people with you who support you and share your vision."

Lilley says he has worked to create an environment where if something wasn't working, staff would not be afraid to throw it away [in order to find something that works]. "They need to be able to say, 'Let's figure this out, find some other way to get it done,'" he says.

DeJesu applauds Lilley for selecting a well-balanced team. A staff with a wide mix of talent and opinions might be a problem for some, but not for Lilley. "One of his strengths is that he can work with people with varying points of view and get them to reach a consensus."

AEL Member and Annapolis High Assistant Principal Merlene Clarke says that Lilley is effective at his job because he is the embodiment of situational leadership. "He can be personable or all business, whatever the situation demands. Sometimes he is authoritative and sometimes he steps back and says 'just get it done.'"

Above all else Lilley is known for the respect he shows to others. "He is able to build good relationships with students because he listens to them," says DeJesu. "He deals with them in a polite manner. He is respectful in his interactions with them... kids know when somebody is being sincere -- they are a good read."

According to Clarke, Lilley is all about the kids. "Kids are his business. He will do whatever it takes to make sure students achieve." ■

Upcoming Events

June 21
AEL Annual Membership Meeting and Social

All AEL members are invited

Severn Inn,
Annapolis

4:30 - 6:30 pm

Agenda includes the election of officers and recognition of retiring members

Look for the next issue of Leadership Forum in early September.

'How Do You Pay for It?'

The question AEL members often ask Don Lilley...

According to Lilley... "You have to be creative. You have to put in long hours working with the business community, faith-based organizations, community groups. You get their support and when they call you for help you have to respond because you are going to need them. It takes time and you are going to need to get the resources from somewhere; everyone knows the system doesn't have them.



AEL website
www.aelaacps.org

Looking back: A year as AEL President

“We will work as a team to share your ideas and input during these negotiations so it is critical that you let us know what you are thinking.”

As the first year of my tenure as President ends, I find myself reflecting on what I have learned about the organization, about AACPS and about myself. So much of what I have observed has left me in a quandary. It has also taught me that there are issues bigger than I can handle on my own. I took on the responsibility with the fervor of any new leader. My expectations were that I would build the enthusiasm for professional growth quickly and that there would be a groundswell of activities that would increase the power of our professional status. However, I have modified this view and have come to the conclusion that we will need to take baby steps to accomplish this vision; that I cannot do it on my own and that we will get there eventually. It will take collaboration and teamwork.

In the weeks to come we will have our “Call to Action” meeting where I hope to hear your ideas and to gather your input into the AEL organization. My hopes are that many

*by Sue Errichiello
AEL President*

of you will take this call seriously and find the time in your schedules to join us. I foresee that we will be called to the Board again to renegotiate our contract this year. We will work as a team to share your ideas and input during these negotiations so it is critical that you let us know what you are thinking. We will need a plan of action that will be supported by our members. Cohesiveness will be critical in accomplishing our goals.

I also want to address the insert that you will find regarding the Race to the Top. This is an interesting document that was distributed at a meeting that was held with a MSDE representative and the different bargaining units. The purpose of the meeting was to inform us of the implications of this grant process and to engage our support for the endeavor. I am sure that you have read articles on this initiative and its impact on the teacher evaluations. It will also have implications for us as educational leaders. As it stands now TAAAC has not signed off on the grant application because of the ambiguity of the language related to the connection between data and teacher performance. My suggestion as an organization is to have a dialogue on what we feel is a valuable and fair measurement of performance. It would be appropriate for us to have input on this issue since in the long run we will be asked to produce these evaluations. While this may seem premature to some I feel it would be proactive. We have a great deal to offer in these situations and we need to make our opinions known. Please email me if you have ideas that you would like to share on this [-serrichiello@aacps.org](mailto:serrichiello@aacps.org).

I hope you enjoy the last days with your students and teachers. You all have done some fabulous things this year as always. We have so much to be proud of as the leadership of AACPS. Thank you for all your long hours and hard work. You are appreciated. ■

Lilley's lessons

Don Lilley said he has learned a lot as Principal of Annapolis High School. Among the bits of wisdom he has picked up along the way....

Decisionmaking... “You can’t be afraid to make a decision. No matter what, you are going to be accountable, so let it be your decision.”

Students... “Know your students. Learn about your kids quickly. You have to know their needs if you’re going to be successful. We do the 9th Grade Academy/Summer Bridge Program and we stay connected with the staff at the Middle School. We get to know the student even before they come here. Then we have people to watch and monitor them as they go through.... Who should be in more rigorous classes? Who needs help staying in more rigorous classes? You have to identify the ones who are going to need your help early.

Staff... “When you are working with staff, you can’t be afraid to let people know what your expectations are... if you don’t, it will come back to haunt you. Also, be aware of the professional development needs of your staff. You can’t keep throwing people away.” ■

The BOE needs to step up

As we approach the summer vacation, there are many unresolved issues confronting AEL and its members. The most important of all issues appears to be the expectation of funding for the balance of the current contract. This is the final year of a four-year commitment that originally provided for 6% COLAs each year, pay scale adjustments, performance pay, step improvements, and the like. Last year AEL re-negotiated the contract terms and accepted furlough days along with the rest of the bargaining units. In consideration for these concessions the BOE agreed, among other things, to pay the 6% COLA effective July 1, 2010 and put into effect other previously agreed to economic concessions. The BOE request to return to the bargaining table once again to “re-renegotiate” new and improved payment terms that benefit the BOE is not only misplaced but it is dead wrong!

When furlough days were agreed to, the BOE promise of a 6% COLA and other salary compensation terms were also agreed to and accepted by all parties. The short term memory problem the BOE may be having regarding these promises should not become AEL’s problem. Keep in mind there was a contract in place when the concessions were sought. AEL gave up negotiated contract rights in exchange for firm commitments this year. By contrast, TAAAC had no contract to renegotiate and amend as it had no contract at all. How it chose to negotiate a contract was quite different than what AEL was prepared to forego under a binding agreement. In short, by re-negotiating the contract in exchange for the furlough days that were presented, AEL already “took one for the team”. When TAAAC negotiated its contract it was upon fresh ground. As we are now being asked a second time to give up compensation, we must insist the BOE step up to the plate, and pay for the concessions it received from AEL. It doesn’t help the BOE cause when it finds the money to negotiate a substantial pay and benefit increase for the Superintendent who had no ne-

gotiated agreement pending for his renewal term, but in the case of AEL try to relieve themselves of existing negotiated terms and conditions that have been previously revised and agreed to. Keep in mind that salaries are the one aspect of your career that will impact on your post-employment economic condition. What is being negotiated now will be factored into what you receive during your retirement years that in many situations will hopefully equal or exceed your employment years.

It is very critical to the negotiation process that AEL become more visible and more vocal. We will, where necessary, present AEL’s point of view before the BOE, other affiliated and unaffiliated groups and the public as well. If you cannot turn out for a meeting or a rally, you can help out by writing letters to the BOE and the newspaper. The issue is not defending the 6% COLA that was promised, it is making the public aware of the promises made to Unit II employees and broken. It is about reminding the public, but for wasteful and needless expenditures, these contract terms could be honored. It is about the public understanding that the salary and benefits received by others for “their performance” was in reality your performance and that no credit or payment enhancements were given. In the end, it is about responsibility on the part of the BOE to find the means necessary to honor its contractual obligations and our responsibility as a union to see that it does so. ■

by Richard Kovelant,
Executive Director & General Counsel

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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 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.

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AEL ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND SOCIAL

JUNE 21, 2010: 4:30-6:30

The Severn Inn, Annapolis

AEL Bylaws (Article III.B) require annual general membership meetings. June has been a traditional time for such a gathering partly to conduct necessary AEL business but, also, to celebrate the completion of a school year and to recognize members who are retiring and moving on to the next chapter in their lives.

The June 21 setting is the Severn Inn. Refreshments will be provided.

Directions: *If coming through Annapolis...* turn right at the light at the eastern end of the Naval Academy Bridge over the Severn River and then make a quick right. The driveway to the Severn Inn parking lot is on the left a couple hundred feet.

If coming from the west... heading east on Rt. 50 toward the Bay Bridge take the first exit after crossing the Severn River Bridge and stay right south on old Rt. 450. Take a left at the first light after passing the Navy Memorial. Make a quick right and then left into the Severn Inn parking lot.

If coming from the north... heading south on Ritchie Highway or from the east on 50 or College Parkway get on 450 S toward the Naval Memorial or Academy. Take the first left at the light just before the Academy Bridge, the quick right and then left into the Severn Inn parking lot.

Mark your calendar and join your colleagues and friends.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

A key part of the business meeting is the election of officers for 2010-12. AEL Bylaws call for officers to serve two-year terms. Certain roles are elected in even-numbered years and others in odd-numbered years. Officer positions up for election to serve 2010-12 are:

- 2nd Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Director-at-Large
- Director-at-Large (Open because of a retirement. Will serve through June 30, 2011)

It goes without saying that any organization, especially voluntary professional associations, acquires a good measure of its strength and effectiveness through the commitment of members to assume leadership roles. AEL is no exception. Any member willing to serve in any of the positions up for election can be placed on the ballot by contacting Larry Lorton (fischlort@comcast.net). Nominations are also accepted from the floor at the meeting.

Maryland's Reform Plan & the Race to the Top (RTTT) Grant Proposal

Maryland's public education system is ranked as the nation's best for one simple reason: it does not stand still. Education reform efforts began in the State more than 20 years ago, following a philosophy that viewed high standards and strong accountability for all schools and all students as essential to improving classroom performance. Our State was one of the first to assess students on state learning standards and was at the vanguard of a national movement to strengthen low-performing schools.

As Maryland enters a new decade and its accompanying challenges, the State looks to further improve its schools. Race to the Top (RTTT), the federal government's \$4.3 billion education initiative, provides an excellent opportunity for Maryland to seek federal funds that match Maryland's vision for building upon its school reform efforts. Maryland is using the Race to the Top guidelines as the backdrop for its next wave of reform.

The unprecedented RTTT federal program is aimed at boosting student achievement, closing gaps in achievement between student subgroups, turning around struggling schools, and improving the teacher/principal professions through a highly competitive grant proposal process. Maryland did not receive the No. 1 ranking as the best State system of public education in the nation for the second straight year by being satisfied with the status quo. Consequently, Maryland will move forward with its ongoing vision for school reform with or without the infusion of additional RTTT funds.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has been working with multiple stakeholder groups, including a broad-based steering committee that meets weekly, to help frame the State's RTTT grant proposal. In addition, MSDE will have held over 75 briefings across the State to obtain input from various stakeholders before the June 1, 2010 grant submission deadline.

Maryland's new vision for education

Revise the Maryland State Curriculum PreK-12, assessments and accountability system based on the Common Core Standards to assure that all graduates are college and career ready:

- 1 Adopt Common Core Standards by Summer 2010
- 2 Agree with higher education on college-ready standards
- 3 Revise high school graduation requirements
- 4 4 years of mathematics, including Algebra II
- 5 Develop interdisciplinary STEM curriculum
- 6 Begin work on new assessments based on Common Core Standards (as part of assessment consortia)

Build a statewide technology infrastructure that links all data elements with analytic and instructional tools to monitor and promote student achievement:

- 1 Accelerate and fully implement the longitudinal data system
- 2 Develop online instructional toolkit to support new standards and assessments
- 3 Align data systems with higher education and workforce
- 4 Provide high quality professional development on the access and use of data systems

Redesign the model for the preparation, development, retention, and evaluation of teachers and principals:

- 1 Define effective and highly effective teachers and principals
- 2 Develop teacher and principal evaluation frameworks with student growth being a significant component
- 3 Revise teacher preparation programs to meet the demands of the 21st century
- 4 Develop programs to prepare teachers and principals for the challenges of working in low-achieving schools
- 5 Expand professional development opportunities for teachers and principals
- 6 Link to student achievement
- 7 Revise tenure statutes
- 8 Differentiate compensation for teachers and principals working in chronically low-achieving schools and/or critical shortage areas
- 9 Provide for equitable distribution of teachers and principals to low-achieving schools

Fully implement the innovative Breakthrough Center approach for transforming low-achieving schools and districts:

- 1 Cross-divisional, statewide system of coordinating, brokering, and delivering support for low-achieving schools
- 2 Builds upon Title I program success
- 3 Helps maximize resources in education, business, government, and research centers
- 4 Currently in a limited number of schools and districts