

AEL Leadership Forum

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 3

JUNE 2015

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 21

**AEL Executive
Board Meeting,
5pm**

AEL HQ,
2521 Riva Road,
Suite L-2, Annapolis

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Newsletter now!

Let us know if you would prefer to get your newsletter via email and we will add you to the electronic distribution list. Get your newsletter in a flash and help the environment (and our printing budget).

Email Bob at Leafman65@gmail.com, to request the electronic version of the newsletter. Be sure to include your name. Thanks.

Thanks for all you do

By Will Myers, AEL President

Let me begin by thanking everyone who was able to attend our end of the year Social. I am sorry the date was in conflict with so many of our member's other commitments. In the future, we are considering moving our annual social to follow the first day of the Leadership Conference. This may work better for most of our membership.

AEL was able to honor eight of our retirees and conduct a small business meeting. At the business meeting, a vote was taken to increase our bi-weekly dues by \$1.25. The proposal would have passed unanimously, but for one ab-

stention. The increase will take effect July 1, 2015. Negotiations and workload were also discussed. Both of these topics have been major concerns throughout the year. Although little progress has been made, we continue to talk with the Board members and members of the County Council through the

negotiation process.

I know we sometimes ask ourselves does anyone know what we do. Well, let me

share with you an excerpt from Rocco Ferretti's letter to AEL.

"As you know after 40 years I have decided to retire, effective June 30th. I

leave knowing that I have



Bev Saunders was thanked by Will Myers for all her years of service to Anne Arundel County.

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Good faith negotiations?

By Rick Kovelant, AEL Executive Director and General Counsel

Maryland law requires that the Board of Education and AEL, as the recognized representative of Unit II employees, negotiate in good faith wages, hours and working conditions. While the only requirement is the parties

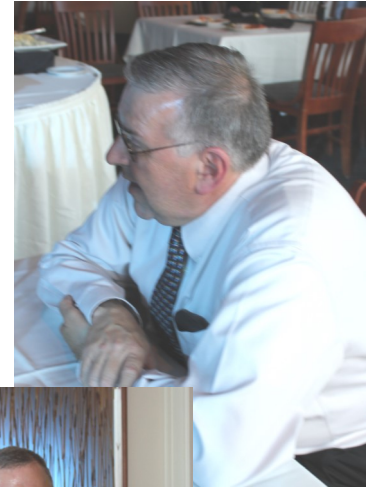
negotiate in "good faith", there are no guidelines as to how that requirement is to be met. Presumably, the parties will design and participate in a process that will achieve that result. Unfortunately, the current process

has failed and unless the BOE and AEL can come to some agreement on the methodology to be employed, the substance of our discussions at a bargaining

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Spring Social & Annual Meeting

AEL honored its retiring members for their many years of service at the Annual Meeting on May 14. Members had a chance to network with their peers.



AEL honors retirees

AEL had the opportunity to honor eight of its retiring members at the Annual Meeting in May. Those honored were:

Andy Adams, Frank Drazen, Rocco Ferretti, Nancy Galetsky, Tess Johnson, Gail Lee, Alan Samonisky, Beverly Saunders and Veronica Williams

For all you do....

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worked with so many talented and outstanding colleagues. The public just has no clue what a school principal does (and neither do many people at the BOE – but that’s just my opinion). They don’t know that people like **Louise DeJesu** are buying shoes, book bags, clothes and paying medical bills for her students. They don’t know that we receive phone calls and emails 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They don’t know that our family vacations are interrupted because we are served with a divorce subpoena for one of our students. They don’t know that we too cry when a student is fighting a serious illness or dies. They don’t know that we feel like a failure when we suspend a student, because we know the best place for a young child is in our school. The public doesn’t know that we miss many of our own children’s special events because we are attending the special events of our students. They don’t know that in these aggressive times we would take a bullet for any one of our stu-

dents if a hostile situation were to arise. The public doesn’t realize the number of times we have to dig out a teacher or other staff member, when they make a dumb move. The public doesn’t realize that when we get a 2% raise, and then have to pay 2% more for our health benefits, that we actually took a cut in pay. Without AEL, school administrators would be little more than a “Whipping Boy” for the decision makers above us.

Thank you for all that you have done for me. Deep down in my heart I know that any accomplishments I’ve achieved, any awards I’ve won and the positive recognition that I receive has been the result of a unified, strong and honest professional

association standing behind me. Please let everyone know that I have GREATLY appreciated their support.”

Rocco’s words are inspirational to all of us. We are all committed to the best interests of the students and staffs under



our leadership. Please believe AEL appreciates your support and your AEL leadership will work tirelessly to seek fair compensation and recognition for the work we all do. It is and will continue to be an uphill battle. However, a battle worth fighting. Thank you for all you do.

AEL members enjoy catching up with colleagues during the Spring Social.

AEL Mission Statement

The Association of Educational Leaders exists to ensure all Unit II employees are fairly and equitably treated in the course of their employment.

We commit to accomplishing this mission on behalf of Unit II employees by ensuring:

1. Adherence to our Negotiated Agreement.
2. All Unit II employees are adequately and equitably compensated for their responsibilities and work load.
3. Personal and professional needs shall be respected.
4. Fair, consistent and equitable practices shall be adhered to when dealing with hiring promotions, assignments and evaluations.
5. Fair, consistent, equitable practices in dealing with matters relating to discipline and conflict resolution.
6. Fair, consistent, equitable practices in resolving school and community conflicts.

Quality education requires investment

AEL's Nelson Horine's address to the County Council



Nelson Horine

For the record my name is Nelson Horine. I am a long time resident of Anne Arundel County, a 46-year employee of

Anne Arundel County Public Schools, the Principal of Anne Arundel Evening High School, and First Vice President of the Association of Educational Leaders. AEL represents over

300 school administrators and program coordinators.

AEL is committed to providing the finest educational delivery system for the county's school children. This commitment was eloquently stated by Ms. Stacey Korbelak, President of the Board of Education, in her response to the County Executive's proposed budget, "While we

are all aware of the fiscal issues that exist in our county, we simply can't be a world class school system that attracts families and business if we are only funding our operating budget at the level minimally required by law. We teach our **students** to go above and beyond each and every day. It's time for our **local government** to follow the lead of our neighboring **jurisdictions** and do the same."

In theory, the budget is a result of a collaborative effort between the employee unions, and the Superintendent working with all divisions within the school system. The Board of Education further modifies the Superintendent's requests to ensure that the budget presented to the County Executive not only reflects the negotiated compensation and, guarantees that the system will continue to maintain a high standard of achievement. This negotiation process is negated and becomes meaningless

when the school budget arrived at through this process is summarily rejected.

Last year I came before you with similar concerns when the economy had slumped and that full funding was not a possibility. We understood the fiscal shortfalls. Now the economy is on the upswing and with rising costs there needs to be the realization that it is time to get back to the business of spending wisely to insure a sound educational system. Maintaining the status quo can no longer be the answer. The value of the educational service we provide cannot be lost while our County Executive continues the trend of underfunding requested and negotiated budgets. Nowhere in the private sector can you deliver an improved product or service by maintaining the same level of funding year after year and expect the services to improve.

The County Executive has

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Good faith negotiations...

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table will be to no avail. Let me explain.

During the current negotiation process, the parties should exchange proposals in a timely manner so they can be discussed and evaluated by each other prior to meeting to negotiate a result. Current practice by the BOE is to introduce proposed topics at the last possible moment or at the table with an expectation of a response. There is no possibility of a meaningful dialogue when the recipient of a last minute proposal is expected to react. This tactic causes undue delay in reaching any agreement.

If the presentation of a proposal is claimed to be based on an area of the law that requires a change in contract language, it must be supported by the referenced legal basis. Simply stating the law or COMAR requires the new language is unacceptable. Clearly, the law is subject to interpretation and as a result necessitates a dialogue to insure that we are meeting, or perhaps may not be required to meet, what is represented to be the applicable legal premise. The identification of the legal authority should be provided in advance of the bargaining session so the parties can be better prepared to address the issue.

Rejection of a proposal should be accompanied by a rational

explanation. While the parties need not agree that the reasons given are appropriate, simply one side baldly stating that the proposal is rejected or that current language should remain (akin to saying no) is not negotiating at all. There is nowhere to go once a “no” is given.



Rick Kovelant

The decision to negotiate certain contract language with all unions works well when universal benefits are being discussed. For example, health care benefits being offered on a school system wide basis should be discussed collectively. Conversely, multi-participant negotiations are inappropriate when issues are unique to one bargaining group as opposed to another. The identification of which items are negotiable in a collective manner should itself be decided by negotiations and not by the unilateral decision of either party.

Perhaps the largest problem impacting the negotiation process is the current recognition that fiscal items that are

agreed to between the parties are contingent upon the funding by County Government. After weeks and months of negotiations culminating in

agreed upon compensation, the County Council and/or the County Executive, who were not involved in the process, can essentially “veto” the same. The current re-

course is to renegotiate the issue with the BOE. The trend over the last several years is to fund what has been identified as “Maintenance of Effort”. By so doing, compensation has remained stagnant, negotiated pay increases have been scratched and the process involved in arriving at a fair and equitable agreement has been rendered meaningless.

There is some hope that a joint task force, comprised of union representatives, the BOE and the County Council, will meet and attempt to design a more productive collective bargaining process. Perhaps we can finally define exactly what the term “negotiating in good faith” means, at least I hope so.

“By so doing, compensation has remained stagnant, negotiated pay increases have been scratched and the process involved in arriving at a fair and equitable agreement has been rendered meaningless.”

Rick Kovelant

Will achievements like these become a thing of the past if our county and state governments fail to make the necessary investment in our school system?

County high schools among region's top

In May, Anne Arundel County was put on the map when several of its high schools were recognized with two national rankings.

Five county high schools were ranked in the top 50 in the region when it comes to preparing their students for the rigors of college, according to a recent survey by *The Washington Post*. The newspaper's Most Challenging High Schools Index is an annual barometer of the efforts made by schools to provide a rigorous academic environment and prepare students for college-level coursework and exams.

The widely-accepted, nationally-recognized Challenge Index formula takes into account Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and other college-level exams given to graduating seniors; average SAT score; percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-priced school meals; and extracurricular opportunities.

Among county schools, **South River** led the pack at 14th on the 170-school regional list. **Severna Park** was second at No. 27, followed by **Annapolis** (30), **Broadneck** (40), **Old Mill** (46), **Arundel** (58), **Southern** (60), **North County**

(72), **Chesapeake** (99), **Glen Burnie** (116), **Meade** (122), and **Northeast** (127).

In the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings of the best 50 high schools in Maryland, **Severna Park** came in at No. 10. **Arundel** was the next county school on the list at No. 21, followed by **Old Mill** (36), and **Annapolis** (37). **North County**, which landed at No. 52, is the only other county high school ranked in the report.

U.S. News used a three-step process to rank more than 21,000 schools across the nation.

Quality education...

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made it clear that he feels that the requested funding was too much. *I truly believe that the tax payers here this evening disagree.*

With new additional demands, goals, and objectives, many of which are state- and federally-mandated but without a fiscal component, your teachers and administrators are increasingly required to do more for our nearly 78,000 students. The burden falls on teachers and administrators whose compensation for what they do, not only has not kept pace with inflation but has actually lost the value of their flat lined compensation by working more hours for less.

AEL believes in and is committed to the collective bargaining

process, but while we collectively bargain in good faith with our management as it turns out, it is not our management that controls our contracts. This process has defaulted to the County Government. AEL along with the other school based unions spends an enormous amount of time and energy negotiating a fair and equitable contract as the law requires, but negotiated contracts that are subsequently not funded are not worth the paper they are printed on.

We all have to look toward the future of Anne Arundel County. It appears that our government has abandoned a paradigm of support for education. Maintenance of

Effort clearly demonstrates no effort to have the school system progress, or for that matter even maintain the status quo. School employees, administrators, and teachers alike, have had their compensation, and as a result their value, undercut. The failure of the County Executive to fund the current Board of Education budget request is the deepest cut of all, as it attempts to continue funding at a level that did not meet the needs a year ago, and will meet fewer needs a year later.

Please on behalf of your educators: Please. . .Value us. . . now!!

Thank you very much for your time.

“It appears that our government has abandoned a paradigm of support for education.”

New Officers elected

Welcome to AEL’s new officer and directors who were elected by mail in ballot in April.

2nd Vice President **Amy Hussey** (2015-2017)

Director at Large **Patrick Bathras** (2015-16)

Director at Large **Edie Picken** (2015-16)

Director at Large **Jessica Tickle** (2015-16)

And “thank you” to **Kevin Buckley** for signing on as the Cluster Rep for Glen Burnie.

The Association of Educational Leaders
2521 Riva Rd., Suite L-2
Annapolis, MD 21401



2015-16 AEL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/BOARD/STAFF

Will Myers (2013-15)	President	(P, South River HS)	(o)956-5600	wtmwants@aol.com
Nelson Horine (2013-15)	1st VP	(P, Anne Arundel Evening HS BOE)	(o) 222-5384	linnea.horine@gmail.com
Amy Hussey (2015-17)	2nd VP	(AP, Chesapeake Bay MS)	(o) 437-2400	ahussey@aacps.org
Louise DeJesu (2014-16)	Secretary	(P, Hilltop ES)	(o) 222-6409	louisedejesus@yahoo.com
Paul DeRoo (2014-16)	Treasurer	(P, Bates MS)	(o) 263-0270	pderoo@aacps.org
Patrick Bathras (2015-16)	Director at Large	(P, Severna Park HS)	(o)544-0900	pbathras@aacps.org
Jessica Tickle (2015-16)	Director at Large	(C, Office of Student Data)	(o)222-5153	jtickle@aacps.org
Edie Picken (2015-16)	Director at Large	(AP, South River HS)	(o)956-5900	epicken@aacps.org

REPRESENTATIVE DIRECTORS (14): CLUSTERS/FEEDER SYSTEMS

Mary Poisson	Central Office Representative		(o)222-5440	Terrypoisson7@gmail.com
Patrick Bathras	Cluster Rep (P, Severna Park HS)		(o) 544-0900	pbathras@aacps.org
Edie Picken	Cluster Rep (AP, South River HS)		(o) 956-5600	rag_qb@hotmail.com
Shauna Kauffman	Cluster Rep (P, Arnold ES)		(o) 222-1670	shauna@yahoo.com
Sharon Ferralli	Cluster Rep (P, Four Seasons)		(o)222-6501	sferralli@aol.com
Rebecca Blasingame-White	Cluster Rep (P, Hebron-Harmon ES)		(o)626-9747	mybeckyb@yahoo.com
Troy Herman	Cluster Rep (AP, Meade Middle)		(o)674-2355	gino88@verizon.net
Brent Wescott	Cluster Rep (AP, George Foxx MS)		(o)437-5512	
Kevin Buckley	Cluster Rep (P, Marley MS)		(o)761-0934	

There are several Open Representative Director positions, please contact Bob Ferguson for more information.

STAFF

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Bob Ferguson (Administrator)	(o)410-224-3311 (fax)410-224-3345 (c)443-223-5645; leafman65@gmail.com
Connie Crouch (Executive Secretary)	(o)410-897-0747 or (o)410-224-3311 (f)410-224-3345
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