

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**December 3**

**AEL Executive  
Board Meeting,  
5pm**

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

**January 21**

**AEL Executive  
Board Meeting,  
5pm**

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

**February 18**

**AEL Executive  
Board Meeting,  
5pm**

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

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## Administrators cry foul

*By Will Myers, AEL President*

The Association of Educational Leaders represents all Principals, Assistant Principals, Coordinators and Special Assistants. We are the building level leadership group charged with the task of assuring that the highest quality education possible is offered to our children.

After an exhausting set of negotiations over a nine-month period, a tentative agreement was reached. The agreement contained a pilot program for an additional number of professional days for building level administrators and a 1.25% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

The agreement was presented to the negotiating Board Members at the November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. After representatives from the Board's

team and AEL offered statements regarding the negotiations process, a vote was called. Before the vote was taken, Board Member, Ms. Julie Hummer, read a prepared statement which expressed her disappointment with AEL's decision to keep Challenge Pay for its membership (see page 7).

Apparently, Ms. Hummer felt the decision would cause division between administrators and their teaching staffs at Challenged Schools. As such, she voted to reject the agreement. Our contract was approved by an 8-1 margin. If only that was the end of the story.

For the sake of transparency, I believe the full story needs to be told. Stipends for challenged schools have been a negotiated item between AEL, SAAAAC, AF-SCME, and TAAAC since its



initial design. The stipends were a means by which the school system attracted many of the best and brightest teachers and administrators to work in challenged schools in order to increase test scores and stop high rates of teacher turnover.

During this year's negotiations, AEL was told many

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*“Where did the money come from to fund their extra .75%? What were they asked to sacrifice in order to defer the cost of their COLA?”*

## Administrators cry foul...

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times that there would only be a 1.25% COLA available for all school employees. A one-percent increase was granted by the County Executive and the .25% was the result of the County's permission to permit the Board to underfund its contribution to the health care reserve for all school employees. This was the bottom line in our talks for many months.

As school opened, a new proposal was presented by the Board's team. AEL could increase the COLA to 2% by giving up the stipend money for challenged schools. The money given up would defer the cost of the additional .75%. AEL's Membership overwhelmingly rejected this offer. There was a huge showing of solidarity in support of our colleagues at challenged schools. As a result, we settled for a 1.25% COLA as we were repeatedly told there was no money in the budget to increase compensation without sacrifice.

As TAAAC, SAAAAC, and AFSCME chose to end the pay discrepancy between challenged and non-challenged schools and receive a 2% COLA, AEL prepared to accept the consequences of its vote and receive a 1.25% COLA.

To our dismay, shortly after approving AEL's contract, the Board unanimously approved a 2% COLA and an extra day of leave for all Unit V and VI employees. Unit VI includes the executive staff, who are among the highest paid employees in the school system. There is a question which needs answered: Where did the money come from to fund their extra .75%? What were they asked to sacrifice in order to defer the cost of their COLA? Ms. Hummer's statement alluded to a divisiveness between administrators and teachers created by our contract vote. This may be true, however, it will not be between the administration and faculty at challenged schools. It will be between the administrators of Anne Arundel County Public Schools and the Board of Education.

***To see the full text of the Negotiated Agreement, visit the AEL website at [aelaacps.org](http://aelaacps.org).***

# A sad day indeed

By Rick Kovelant, AEL Executive Director and General Counsel

While negotiations have concluded and the contract terms have been ratified and approved by the Board and AEL, it is clear that we lost far more than what was gained. I am not, however, referring to compensation or the other contract terms. Rather, our loss is one of trust; trust in both the process and frankly in those with whom we negotiate. In this newsletter, Will and Nelson have clearly articulated the facts and circumstances that led up to the agreement reached. While other employees fared better than AEL in terms of their compensation, **ALL BARGAINING GROUPS** were deceived and frankly, lied to concerning available compensation. The sacrifice of the Challenged School stipend by TAAAC, SAAAAC and AF-SCME was based on the representation that at the end of the day, there was no further funding available beyond the 1.25% COLA offered. In the case of AEL, the negotiating team was repeatedly told that the only funding available to **ALL EMPLOYEES** was 1.25%. AEL was asked to sacrifice the Challenged Schools stipend if it wanted to receive an additional .75%. AEL, believing that no further funding was available to any school employee, overwhelmingly declined. Those sitting across from us at the negotiating table knew that the budget

was built around Unit V and Unit VI receiving a 2% COLA without any concession and never disclosed the same. **IN FACT, THE ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOE NEGOTIATING TEAM** knew they would be the recipients of this undisclosed sum and there would be no price to pay for the same.

The issue is not about the compensation; it is clearly about honesty and integrity, neither of which was exhibited at the bargaining table or in any private or public discussions with members of the Board. How can you, BOE and your representatives tell us with straight faces that there were no, and I mean no, funds available to pay additional compensation beyond the 1.25% that was being offered to **ALL EMPLOYEES** when you knew there were funds built into the budget to pay Unit VI upper management and Unit V professional support the additional COLA? How can you now expect AEL, or for that matter any union, to trust the information provided to them in the course of negotiations? The past practice had always been to honestly defend a bargaining position, not dishonestly conceal and misrepresent information or to provide inaccurate and misleading responses and frankly, fabricate facts to

achieve a result. Was the negotiating team bargaining for the system or for its own personal gain? Cheating to win a point would not be tolerated among students. Can we now expect less from those in charge of their education? Shame on the Board and its negotiating team for compromising the bar-

***The issue is not about the compensation; it is clearly about honesty and integrity, neither of which was exhibited at the bargaining table or in any private or public discussions with members of the Board.***

gaining procedure and further destroying an already broken process. Shame on the Board Member who erroneously believes AEL has somehow subverted a plan to eliminate Challenged Schools stipends and cause dissent between staff and administrators because AEL members would not accept the BOE offer to earn more money by selling out colleagues. A sad day indeed! Where do we go from here? AEL will develop the path to

# We played the game

*By Nelson Horine, AEL First Vice President*

AEL played the negotiation game. For nearly a full school year we negotiated in good faith to agree to a contract that represented the best interests of all Unit II employees. In the be-



**AEL Member Phil Elliott (AP, Annapolis High) talks to Nelson Horine at the Fall Social in November.**

ginning, the Superintendent requested in the budget that he submitted to the Board of Education funds for a 2% COLA for all school system employees. The budget request was approved by the Board of Education and was submitted to the County Executive who rejected the requested COLA and re-

turned the budget with a 1% COLA. The County Council opened the way for the Board of Education to add to that amount .25% by underfunding the health care reserve to fund a 1.25% COLA for all employees. We continued to negotiate through this entire period as did other bargaining agents with little positive outcome. We accepted that there was no money available in the meager Board of Education budget for the original 2% COLA that the Super-

intendent and the Board had requested from the County. It now appears that the 2% was there all along and available to fund only the Unit V and Unit VI employees and no other employees unless they were willing to give up their stipend for Challenged School placement. TAAAC went to mediation and reached a decision that result-

ed in the teachers receiving the 2% but only if monies paid to teachers who worked in Challenged Schools was given up to support .75% on top of

***Every member of Unit V and Unit VI should be ashamed and our Board of Education should not only be ashamed, but embarrassed.***

the 1.25%. SAAAAC and AFSME agreed to similar contract language without mediation to provide their employees with 2% again after giving up extra pay for those employees who worked in the most difficult and challenging schools in the school system. The AEL negotiating team saw this and asked all Unit II employees whether or not they wished to do this as well. They did not. By a huge margin the employees represented by AEL supported their colleagues in schools that meet challenged school crite-

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# We played the game...

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ria, and did not want to fund an extra .75% at the expense of their own. We played the game.

After repeatedly asking if there was money in the Board of Education coffers to fund even a 1.75% COLA for the school system's Principals, Assistant Principals, and Coordinators and being told that unequivocally the answer was "no," we coalesced and agreed to a contract with a 1.25% COLA. We did not sacrifice anything on the part of the employees we represent and in good faith bargained with those who manage the school system as it now turns out believing their representation there were no further funds available. We played the game.

Then on November 18, 2015, the roof fell in. In a sad display of greed and disrespect the Board of Education by a 9-0 vote GAVE those employees who do not have to bargain, Unit V and Unit VI, not only a 2% COLA but a "free" leave day. After months and months of bargaining and giving up funds for those who

worked in Challenged Schools, and in the case of AEL accepting the 1.25% that the County Executive and the County Council felt was adequate, we settled. Then those who in many cases make the most, the executives of the school system, took for themselves the most . . . 2% — without losing anything. Every member of Unit V and

***"It is inconceivable that so little regard can be given for those who work in our schools, with our children, while walking off with the most after telling everyone through their chief negotiator that there was absolutely no money."***

Unit VI should be ashamed and our Board of Education should not only be ashamed, but embarrassed. It is inconceivable that so little regard can be given for those who work in our schools, with our children, while walking off with the most after telling everyone through their chief negotiator that there was absolutely no money. While many employees in Unit V make well under \$100,000 many of

those employees in Unit VI make well in excess of \$150,000 a year without ever having any direct contact with the children of Anne Arundel County.

AEL played the game as did all of the members of Unit I, III and IV. The Board of Education on behalf of Units V and VI did not. If it had, these two units

would have been given the 1.25% — the amount that our county government allowed and the maximum amount that AEL was told was available. How sad that those who played a fair game of negotiations in good faith bargaining LOST to the executives who, while always saying it is about the kids, have shown that it is really about them.

We played the game!



# The season of thanks

## Members share their thoughts on thankfulness

*"I'm thankful that after 20 years I still enjoy getting up each morning and look forward to going to work."*

*Barry Gruber*

**Carole L. Janesko**, Principal  
*West Meade Early Education Center*

I am thankful for my family and friends, my position as principal of a wonderful school with great teachers and my health. I am thankful for the AEL negotiating team who are working so hard to elevate our profession and I am thankful for such a super boss and outstanding colleagues.

**Barry R. Gruber**, Principal  
*Manor View Elementary School*

I'm thankful that after 20 years I still enjoy getting up each morning and look forward to going to work. I'm fortunate to work with talented, compassionate and dedicated individuals. The Manor View team makes my job a pleasure. I have a RAS who sets high expectations and continuously works to develop and build my skills as an administrator. The days and weeks go by quickly, and each

day is a new adventure. On a personal note, I'm grateful for the many friends I have, the roof over my head, the support of my parents, someone to love, and two beagles to snuggle with on cold nights. Life is good!

**Kathleen Panagopoulos**, Principal  
*Belvedere Elementary*

I would say that this time of year I am thankful for:

- The support of many wonderful colleagues;
- A hard-working staff who care about doing their best for children;
- The opportunity to be a principal and lead school improvement initiatives;
- Good health and the freedom to pursue one's dreams;
- Thanksgiving break – having time to rest and enjoy family!

## Welcome new members

**Dorothy Arida**, Coordinator

**John Birus**, P, Quarterfield Elementary

**Vimarys Caya**, AP Meade High

**Erica Garren**, AP Arundel Middle

**Heather Garris**, AP VanBokkelen Elementary

**Megan Lewis**, AP North County High

**Luis Lima**, Coordinator, Math

**Kelly McVey**, AP North County High

**Kim Moses**, AP Annapolis High

**Johnny Nash**, P Lindale Middle

**John Panitz**, AP Phoenix Academy

**Andrea Roche**, AP, Windsor Farm Elementary

**Greg Ryan**, AP Arundel High

**Amy Shadowsky**, AP, Freetown Elementary

**Rebecca Williams**, AP Solley Elementary



# Statement by School Board Member Julie Hummer

Note: On November 18th AEL's proposed contract was presented to the Board for approval. Before a vote was taken Ms. Julie Hummer, Board member, read the statement below. Her vote was "no." AEL is preparing a response to issues surrounding the contract.

## November 18 Statement by Julie Hummer

Last month, the Board of Education ratified the contract with TAACC, the teacher's union, after months of negotiation. Teachers were awarded a 2% cost of living increase, and the extra stipends for teachers at 22 so-called challenge schools were eliminated to fund the overall increase for all teachers. Subsequently, we have also ratified contracts with our support staff unions that also eliminate the challenge stipends and award a 2% increase.

Teachers believe they deserve more than a 2% increase, and I don't disagree with them. Teachers at the challenge schools are

understandably frustrated that they are losing income under this agreement. Teachers and schools have sought to bring attention to the lack of raises and the lack of respect they feel they receive for their hard work. A number of schools, especially at the former challenge schools, have elected to work to rule, working strictly to contracts, to bring attention to the extra work they give to students.

These teachers have spoken out eloquently in person, via email, and through parents and students about their passion for their profession and the frustration they feel regarding salaries and workload. I share their frustration.

The principal's union, AEL, voted to accept a 1.25% cost of living increase for all its members and to keep the challenge school stipends for its members at the 22 challenge schools. Principals certainly have the right to vote for their own best interests in terms of compensation. However, given the current of unhappiness and dissatisfaction among teachers, particularly at the challenge schools, I am surprised that the

school leadership would choose to keep its extra bonuses while its staff does not.

The challenge school funds were created initially to recognize the extra work that certain high needs schools requires and to serve as an incentive for staff to remain at those schools, thus reducing staff turnover. While the teachers and other staff still have the same challenges and issues to face each day, they will no longer receive extra pay, yet their leadership will. If I were a teacher at these schools, I would find this grossly unfair – and I would also question the commitment of my school leadership to the instructional team.

As a whole we have an amazing group of administrators in Anne Arundel County, and the principals at these 22 schools are some of our finest. I believe, however, that AEL members have made a poor decision in choosing to separate themselves financially from their teachers. For that reason, I am voting no to the ratification of the AEL contract.

## 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.

The Association of Educational Leaders  
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**2015-16 AEL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/BOARD/STAFF**

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

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