

AEL Leadership Forum

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 4

APRIL 2016

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 21
**AEL Executive
Board Meeting,**
5pm
AEL HQ,
2521 Riva Road,
Suite L-2, Annapolis

April 28
AEL Spring Social
4:30 pm– 7:30 pm
Hellas', Veterans'
Hwy, Millersville

May 19
**AEL Executive
Board Meeting,**
5pm
AEL HQ,
2521 Riva Road,
Suite L-2, Annapolis

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Positive thoughts and rising costs

By Will Myers, AEL President

In recent discussions with our Superintendent, we have had the opportunity to present concerns and have open dialogue on topics which affect AEL members. Dr. Arlotto has been receptive and open to suggestions and forthcoming with explanations on various topics. He has made salary enhancement one of his highest priorities. He has also asked a committee to review summer hours. He understands that it is at times impossible to cover an 8:00 am to 4:00 pm schedule, especially at the elementary level. If you have a question or

concern you would like me to discuss with the Superintendent, please send them to me.

The ongoing issue of health care costs continue to be a topic of discussion. Dr. Arlotto, in conversation with the County Executive, has stressed the importance of increasing funds to maintain an appropriate fund balance. We will soon be meeting with Board representatives to discuss the issue of rais-



Dr. Arlotto when he attended our Executive Board Meeting last year.

ing prescription costs. We currently enjoy one of the best plans in the state. It is the goal of AEL, TAAAC, SAAAAC, and AF-SCME to keep costs at the current level. Unfortunately, it seems everything is going up except our salaries.

*Join your
colleagues in
honoring this
year's
retirees at
the Spring
Social*

Retirees to be honored

Come to the Spring Social to help us show our appreciation to our colleagues on the occasion of their retirements:

Denna Britton
Colleen Duffy
Pat Plitt
David Smith

How lucky I am
to have something
that makes saying
goodbye so hard.

— Winnie the Pooh

AEL Spring Social

Thursday, April 28

4:30—7:30 pm

Hellas, Millersville

8498 Veterans Hwy

Join your colleagues to honor retiring AEL members and get the inside scoop on the latest in negotiations. **It's fun and it's FREE.**



RSVP by April 22 to Bob Ferguson at
leafman65@gmail.com

What do the negotiating process and an onion have in common?

By Rick Kovelant, AEL Executive Director and General Counsel

Understanding the negotiation process is akin to peeling an onion. There are many layers and when the peeling is complete, there is really little or nothing left. Let me explain. As required by law, AEL, as the recognized bargaining representative, is required to negotiate with its employer, in this case Anne Arundel Coun-

ty Public Schools. AACPS conducts its negotiations through the Board of Education, which in turn, assigns the task of negotiations to its bargaining team, who are employees of the school system. This is the first layer.

While AEL and the Board teams meet to “negotiate a compensation result,” keep in mind, by the time this has occurred, the Superintendent has already prepared and submitted what he believes to be fair compensation for the

Board to consider as part of his budget request. Another layer?

At the bargaining table, the Board team and AEL exchange proposals, but the Board team has no authority to

accept any proposals until they are approved by the Board. The Board can accept, reject or modify a proposal that its negotiating team may have “recommended” for approval. Another layer?

Assuming the Board and AEL arrive at an agreement through this process and

“...by the time this has occurred, the Superintendent has already prepared and submitted what he believes to be fair compensation for the Board to consider as part of his budget request.”

agree on a compensation package, there is no assurance the County Executive or the County Council will approve funding as part of the Board’s budget. Incidentally, the county government is not a part of the negotiation process, but ultimately is in con-



ty Public Schools. AACPS conducts its negotiations through the Board of Education, which in turn, assigns the task of negotiations to its bargaining team, who are employees of

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The negotiating process...

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trol of the economic outcome that this process produces. Another layer?

If there is no agreement to fund the negotiated compensation, AEL and the BOE are required by law, to return to negotiations and try again. Still another layer?

While previously this has only caused the parties to renegotiate compensation once, it is certainly possible that this process of renegotiation could occur several times until AEL and the Board arrive at a figure the County Council

and/or the County Executive will find acceptable. This may turn out to be harder than guessing the value of an item on "The Price Is Right."

As if we did not have enough layers involved, keep in mind that the Board is selected by the Governor from a list of candidates recommended by a School Board Nominating Committee. This committee is now controlled by the political party of the Governor, as he selects most of its members. So in a real sense, the Board, who is in large part, selected by the Executive Branch of Maryland, has no real authority to decide the compensation payable to Unit II employees, as this is accomplished by the county government and/or the County Executive, who may or may not be of the same political party as the Governor and who have no involvement in the negotiating process. Running out of layers? Perhaps the next time

you listen to that old Abbott and Costello routine of "Who's On First," you can compare it to the negotiation process. If you really think about it, this

"...as this is accomplished by the county government and/or the County Executive, who may or may not be of the same political party as the Governor and who have no involvement in the negotiating process."

negotiation process, like an onion can make you cry!



Exercising your right to grieve

By Rick Kovelant, AEL Executive Director and General Counsel

There has been a longstanding observation that you enhance your contract rights at the grievance table as opposed to the bargaining table. This is true in both private and public sector collective bargaining models. To make this work, however, you need to exercise your right to grieve. The AEL/ Board of Education Agreement recognizes a unique grievance procedure that allows Unit II members to seek redress for violations of the contract. Since most alleged violations bring into question an interpretation of the contractual terms, it is important that these questions, where appropriate, be tested and resolved before an independent source.

Grievance procedures available under the Negotiated Agreement are set out in Article 16. A “grievance is defined as a ...claim by a Unit II member that the member has been directly and adversely affected by a violation, misinterpretation, or application of provisions of the Negotiated Agreement concerning the salaries, hours, or working conditions of Unit II members”. While a disciplinary action may impact these designated areas, unless the action is related to the provisions of the Negotiated Agreement, it is not covered by the Negotiated Agreement, but instead, a separate procedure set forth in Board policy and State law.

Assuming the contract provisions are violated by your supervisor, you begin the process on your own by requesting an “Informal Level” conference with the supervisor whose decision you are questioning. While there is no stated time period for the initiation of this conference, it should be done promptly and I would encourage it to be in writing. This writing should reference the request for informal resolution and address the specific conduct or interpretation of the Negotiated Agreement that is being challenged. At the Informal Level you are on your own. You need to discuss the matter in a firm yet respectful, manner but don’t expect resolution. Following the Informal Level, our contract requires you to seek a formal resolution through a Level One grievance with the same individual.

This must be filed the sooner of five duty days following the informal decision or 10 duty days after the grievance was presented. A written decision is required within five duty days thereafter. If you are still aggrieved or if no decision is rendered within the allotted time, you have five duty days thereafter to file the grievance with the AEL Grievance Committee. This is a Level Two grievance step.

You can do this by mailing all pertinent information to the AEL President, who will assign it to the designated committee members. If the committee deems the grievance valid, it shall, within five duty days, request a hearing before the head of the department in which the Level One grievance was filed. Within 10 duty days a hearing will be held and a decision rendered.

If an adverse decision is reached at this level and the decision was not made by the Superintendent or one who directly reports to the Superintendent then the issue is filed as a Level Three grievance with the Superintendent within five duty days. Thereafter, the Superintendent shall meet and render a decision within 10 duty days following the referral.

The Fourth Level occurs when there is an adverse ruling made by the Superintendent. In this event, the Board of Education is notified that AEL and the employee are submitting the issues to the American Arbitration Association for advisory arbitration. Although the decision may only be advisory in nature, there is an associated value. It gives the organization and the administration an understanding of their respective positions regarding the issue being grieved. It forms a basis for future negotiations and, more often than not, a third party can be persuasive in convincing a side that its position is not well reasoned or correct. Settlements do occur.

Reprinted from the February 2004 issue of *The AEL Leadership Forum*

Pre-retirement reflections

By David Smith, Soon to be Former Principal of Broadneck High School

How has 42 years passed so quickly? It is hard to believe that after four years in the classroom I became an AP (at the age of 26) and for the next 38 years served as a secondary level administrator: 14 years as a high school assistant principal, five years as a middle school principal and 19 years as a high school principal. That's a long time in school based administration. Given that, I have a few thoughts to share that might be of use as my July 1 retirement date approaches.

In the beginning...

Early in my first high school principalship in Virginia, I was standing with John Porter, the long-time, now former, Principal of T. C. Williams HS in Alexandria, as we watched our teams in a game. I asked him how he survived so long in that job while maintaining a high degree of success as well as his sanity. His response was simple: "I don't hold a grudge." He knew that energy spent being angry, hurt, disappointed is

wasted. The thought is simply this: think of your emotional and physical energy as you think of money and make conscious decisions about how you spend it. Don't waste your emotional and physical energy on anger, frustration and disappointment.

When I speak with a colleague, student or parent who is frustrated about something that is not his fault or responsibility, or that he cannot control, I often tell him "take off your Velcro and put on your Teflon." While I think this is useful advice, it reflects one way that I have learned to better understand and interpret the challenges in my professional world. I have found that simple analogy helps me understand and manage professional challenges. I like to use the analogy of a spectrum to help understand where a particular issue falls in terms of significance. That device enables me to put



what seems to be a very intense problem into a more realistic perspective.

The idea that John Porter shared and the analogy tool that I use are both examples of self-awareness. An educational leader who is self-aware and, more importantly, pursues enhanced self-awareness is, I believe, a more effective educational leader. If you understand the lens through which you view the world and how you interpret it, you will be better able to help students learn and teachers teach.

How things have changed...
Many things have changed

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Dr. Smith...

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during the 42 years I have served as a public school educator. One very important thing has not changed; in the end, it is all about relationships. The success of our students and colleagues is based in part on our ability to relate well to all types of people in all types of circumstances. The pressures of the job, the newest thing, the latest institutional demand must not cause us to lose sight of the simple fact that our work is all about people. Consistent with that is the need to keep priorities straight. Many school based

administrators have learned that lesson the hard way. Take care of your family, your health and those things that are most important to you.

In the nine years, I have served in AACPS, I have come to know many outstanding dedicated educators. I appreciate the opportunities that I have been given here during that time. I value the relationships I have established. While I am retiring soon, I'm not done. I hope to be back in AACPS now and again as a substitute Assistant Principal or Principal. Perhaps when that happens, I will have another

opportunity to work with much appreciated former colleagues. Perhaps those opportunities will enable me to work with new colleagues. Please know that I appreciate the work that all public school educators do. We influence lives, our community, the nation and the world – sometimes in ways we know and sometimes in ways we will never know. Thank you for the work that you do. I wish you well as you continue that noble work as an Anne Arundel County Public School Leader.

Welcome!

Eugene Summers,
AP, North County High School



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
 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	louisedejesu@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
Phil Elliott	Cluster Rep (AP, Annapolis HS)	(o) 266-5240	
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	
Mike May	Cluster Rep (AP, Southern HS)	(o)867-7100	cmmay@aacps.org

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

STAFF

Rick Kovelant (Executive Director, Legal Counsel)	(o) 897-0747, (c) 443-848-8022
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

AEL Office, 2521 Riva Road, Suite L-2, Annapolis, MD 21401 (o)410-224-3311 (f)410-224-3345