

AEL Leadership Forum

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 5

JUNE 2016

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 16

**AEL Executive
Board Meeting,**

5pm

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

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‘We can’t sustain excellence on a shoestring’

By Will Myers, AEL President

Below is an excerpt from Will Myers’s speech to the County Council in May.

For the record, I am William Myers, President of the Association of Educational Leaders (“AEL”).

AEL represents all school level administrators plus coordinators and special assistants at the Central Office. We provide the leadership for every school in this county. We ensure all policies of the Board of Education are followed with fidelity. We maintain a safe and orderly environment for

staff and students. We work tirelessly in collaboration with our teachers to promote student growth both academically and socially.

We do those things because we are compelled by a calling to make a difference, to help others, to live a life that matters. Because of this, you, the county council, and executive have a unique advantage. No matter how undercompensated,

unappreciated, or disrespected we may feel, we



will do our job.

I applaud Mr. Schuh for

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‘Tis the Season

By Rick Kovelant, AEL Executive Director and General Counsel

With the approaching end of the school year, it is once again “Evaluation Season”. This is when you receive a final grade on your performance. It is

also the time when AEL receives the greatest influx of complaints and challenges. It is the time when Assistant Principals become upset with their

Principals and Principals become upset with their Regional Superintendents, and even Coordinators, who appear to be-

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2016 Retirees honored at Spring Social

Many thanks for the friendship and all the years of service: Colleen Duffy, Kaye Panagopulos, Sue Bachmann, Patty Plitt, Denna Britton and David Smith.

“The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender.”

Vince Lombardi



Sue Bachmann, Principal Folger McKinsey Elementary



Kaye Panagopulos, Principal, Belvedere Elementary



Patty Plitt, AP Severn River Middle

The tipping point

By Nelson Horine AEL Vice President

Below is an excerpt from Nelson Horine's speech to the County Council in mid May.

AEL is the bargaining agent that represents all school level administrators, as well as coordinators, and special assistants in the Office of Safe and Orderly Schools. These are the people who lead our schools, collaborate with our schools' teachers and leaders to provide instructional and management support, and maintain safe and orderly learning environments for all of our children from the time they begin school until they graduate.

I personally have been a teacher, chairperson, assistant principal, and principal for 47 years in Anne Arundel County and my three sons are graduates of Anne Arundel County Public Schools.

I am proud of these 47 years and of my involvement with the system as an educator and leader of educators. However,

I am concerned about the future. With the economic downturn at the end of the last decade and the ensuing political climate it became very easy to say no to compensation enhancements for public employees including public school teachers and administrators.

You have heard this before and I am not going to beat the proverbial dead horse. In fact, the County Executive's funding of the Board of Education's budget is a first and appreciated step to once again giving the people who educate our students the recognition and respect they deserve. Like any journey, there needs to be a starting point to begin the trip back to where we were. In the words of Malcolm Gladwell author of, The Tipping Point:

How Little Things Can Make A Big Difference. Look at the world around you. It may seem like an



Nelson reports on the Workload Committee at the Spring Social, April 28

immovable, implacable place. It is not – with the slightest push in just the right place – it can be tipped.” When it comes to the education of our children I sincerely hope the tipping point has been reached and the journey back has begun.

We have a long way to go, however. Mistakes have been made that need to be corrected. Much has been said regarding the funding of the health care account. It is im-

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‘Tis the season...

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come the least upset, get concerned as well. Unlike a math quiz where numbers are either correct or not and your grade is determined by



having the right answer, the BOE performance evaluation is a subjective matter with little or no uniformity in its personal application. To be sure, there are defined categories of evaluation topics and indeed, a numerical scale that can be applied based on the evaluator’s assessment, but really, where are the lines drawn between “satisfactory”, “effective”, “developing”, etc. ? Back when most of us

were in elementary school our social skills, behavior and relationships with others were measured with generally the same terms of “outstanding”,

“satisfactory”, or “unsatisfactory”. Sometimes our report card comments reflected, we “played well with others”. This gave some measure of how we were perceived.

The measurement

of your performance as adults has appeared to adopt the same vague metrics. How unfortunate.

Ok, so what can you do to challenge your “report card”? Really, not much. As I said, your report card is based on subjective findings where one mistake or misstep can, and in many cases in which I have been involved, will wipe out at least ten “Atta Boys/Girls”. Hope however is not entirely lost if

you follow some of these key points:

- Make sure all timelines that are required for goal conferences and interim evaluations are met. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may cause an evaluation to be reversed.
- Document, document and document some more as to any discussions you have that may impact your final performance rating.
- If you believe that you are being disciplined for a matter, call AEL for guidance and representation where warranted. Today’s discipline will often result in tomorrow’s poor evaluation.
- While you are required to acknowledge receipt of your evaluation by signing the same, this is not an acknowledgement

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'Tis the season...

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that it is correct or that you agree with the findings. If you are not in agreement with your evaluation timely note an appeal. The procedure for doing so is online and part of Board Policy. AEL has fought long and hard to have this procedure accepted and utilized. Expanded and timely hearing dates have recently been adopted. AEL and the BOE are equally represented on appeal committees.

- Take the time to write a rebuttal to any and all of the evaluation you find objectionable and if available, support your rebuttal with emails, documents and any other useful material.

Keep in mind that a Counseling Letter will, in most cases, set the stage for a poor performance evaluation. Be prepared to attach your rebuttal to the same and notify AEL

for assistance.

A poor evaluation can be reversed if procedures have not been followed or the subjective conclusion that is reached cannot be supported by appropriate factual evidence but it is your responsibility

to make the challenge in a timely manner by noting an appeal. As always AEL is here to assist but the first steps rest with you. Seek our assistance and we can help you through the appeal process.

Retirement Alert

Sometimes it pays to wait....

New option and annuity factors will be in place for members of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System (SRPS) who choose a retirement date effective on or after July 1, 2017.

The actuarial values used to calculate monthly retirement benefits **for members who select an optional form of retirement allowance that reduces the retiree's Basic Allowance** and may provide protection after the retiree's death are being recalculated. The new factors will reflect current expectations for cost-of-living adjustments, life expectancy, and the mix of males and females electing options.

Recent experience study conducted by the System's actuary found changes in the plan provisions and demographics over the last several years warrant and adjustment in the option and annuity factors.

These new factors will only be applicable for new retirements on or after July 1, 2017. In most cases the new factors will result in **higher monthly benefits for those retirees electing one of the optional forms of retirement allowance.**

For more detailed information, please review the benefits handbook on the State Retirement Agency's website, sra.maryland.gov

Election Results

Congratulations and thank you for your service... here are the newly elected offices of AEL

Secretary: Edie Picken (2016-2020)

Treasurer: Paul DeRoo (2016-2020)

Director-At-Large: Jennifer Hernandez (2016-2020)

Director-At-Large: Patrick Bathras (2015-2019)

Director-At-large: Jessica Tickle (2015-2019)

Shoestring....

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his efforts to shore up the health care fund and to approve a one-step increase for those who qualify for a step. However, that statement for those who qualify, in essence, means all senior educators who have no steps left will not be compensated. If this holds true, that is simply not acceptable. Mr. Schuh's statement that, "we will never be able to compete with Howard or Montgomery County" is frightening. Does that mean we are willing to settle for anything other than being the best? I sincerely hope not!

My prayer is that we are able to continue to attract and keep dedicated professionals. More and more, I see the morale of the system declining. I see good, young people leaving. Hav-

ing sat on many interview panels, I see the pool of highly qualified candidates shrinking. So, when will the impact of an underfunded educational budget be felt? Is it when we can no longer attract the best and brightest candidates? Is it when school incidents increase threatening the safety of our staff and students or perhaps it's when our students' performance falls below acceptable levels? These things will happen and they are already occurring. You cannot sustain excellence on a shoe string. A colleague of mine who is retiring after 42 years in education, the last 9 in Anne Arundel County, said it has been a privilege to work in Anne Arundel County. The support of the communities, the quality of its leadership and the dedication of the facul-

ties have made it one of the finest anywhere.

In order to continue our quest for excellence, we need more than a maintenance budget. We need to reprioritize our thinking about education in Anne Arundel County. The Board of Education and the County government need to work in collaboration to provide a growth budget for education. We must recognize the value of our people through competitive compensation, and a solvent health benefits program. We cannot settle for anything less than the very best for education in Anne Arundel County.

Life is a matter of choices. We can settle for ordinary or we can promote the extraordinary. The choice is yours. Choose wisely.

Tipping point...

portant to note that as late as 2014 the fund balance was solvent and healthy. It wasn't until the underfunding of the employer contribution in order

In solidarity with TAAAC,

the time is now to

“Raise Anne Arundel—

Strong schools, strong

families, strong commu-

nities.”

to utilize those funds for compensation that the deficits developed. We cannot make the same mistake in the future. Sacrificing health care coverage at the expense of compensation is not fiscally responsible. Mr. Schuh's budget shows us through his contribution

toward the restoration of the health care fund balance and the funding of compensation that the County can support both.

County Executive Schuh is quoted in the Capital saying, “I am committed to working with our schools to ensure we reward and retain great teachers.” However, in the same article he said comparisons with teacher salaries in the “fantasyland” of Howard and Montgomery counties are unfair. We can't compete with them.”

We need to look to how other jurisdictions meet their compensation needs. Simply suggesting that we should not compare ourselves to other “more economically enriched” counties sends a message

that we are not interested in striving for the best that we can be.

Now is the time to make the turn, to begin tipping in the right direction and start the journey back to the outstanding school system I have known for most of my 47 year career. The educators are the keystone of the educational system. However, without the funds necessary to attract and keep trained and committed

educators, we cannot meet the educational needs of our students.

In solidarity with TAAAC, the time is now to “Raise Anne Arundel—Strong schools, strong families, strong com-

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
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2015-16 AEL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/BOARD/STAFF

Will Myers (2013-17)	President	(P, South River HS)	(o)956-5600	wtmwants@aol.com
Nelson Horine (2013-17)	1st VP	(P, Anne Arundel Evening HS BOE)	(o) 222-5384	linnea.horine@gmail.com
Amy Hussey (2013-17)	2nd VP	(AP, Chesapeake Bay MS)	(o) 437-2400	ahussey@aacps.org
Edie Picken (2016-20)	Secretary	(AP, South River HS)	(o) 956-5900	epicken@aacps.org
Paul DeRoo (2016-20)	Treasurer	(P, Bates MS)	(o) 263-0270	pderoo@aacps.org
Patrick Bathras (2015-19)	Director at Large	(P, Severna Park HS)	(o)544-0900	pbathras@aacps.org
Jessica Tickle (2015-19)	Director at Large	(C, Office of Student Data)	(o)222-5153	jtickle@aacps.org
Jennifer Hernandez (2016-20)	Director at Large	(C, Div of Curriculum)		

REPRESENTATIVE DIRECTORS (14): CLUSTERS/FEEDER SYSTEMS

Phil Elliott	(AP, Annapolis HS, Annapolis Cluster)	pelliott@aacps.org
Tracey Ahern	(P, Odenton Elementary, Arundel Cluster)	tahern@aacps.org
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Edie Picken	(AP, South River HS, South River Cluster)	epicken@aacps.org
Mike May	(AP, Southern HS, Southern Cluster)	cmmay@aacps.org
Terri Poisson	(Social Studies Coordinator, Board of Education)	mypoison@aacps.org

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

STAFF

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