

AEL Leadership Forum

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 8

JUNE 2021

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 9, 2021
AEL Executive
Board Meeting
5 pm
Via Google Meet

July 21, 2021
AEL Executive
Board 2021-22
Planning Meeting
TBA

August, 2021
No Meeting

Sept. 1, 2021
AEL Executive
Board Meeting
5 pm

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Frustration: Sometimes You Just Have to Let It Out

By Edie Picken, AEL President

As we see the light at the end of the tunnel for the school year, we still see the dark hole when it comes to negotiations. At our last session, we learned that the County Executive did not fully fund Dr. Arlotto's budget, which meant changes to the salary placeholder. This was hard to digest. The negotiating team is not backing down, however. We are continuing to push for what we know we are due.

What makes this process so incredibly frustrating is that once the County Executive concludes his budget process, it creates changes for the Board. It is this change that we find so incredibly disconcerting. Unit II has been offered some catch up and a COLA; however, our frus-

tration comes from the fact that the superintendent has a "me too" clause in his contract meaning that he receives whatever is negotiated at the highest amount.

TAAAC's steps are worth 2%, while Unit II's are valued at

1%. Unit VI – the superintendent's executive personnel – and those in Unit V who have no steps are going to receive technically what TAAAC receives with regard to the percentage. What does this mean? It means that Units V & VI are about to receive an 8% to 10% increase in salary—AGAIN. Simply apply a 2% in-

crease to an already existing \$170,000 salary and see how it compares to a 1% step increase for Unit II. AEL has attempted to get a "Me too" clause added to our contract,

and the Board has refused. Thus, the differential between those who



are supervised (Unit I) and those who supervise (Unit II) narrows even more, while the upper echelon at the Board (Unit VI) creates a differential between them and AEL the size of the Grand Canyon.

At the May 20, 2021 in-person County Council meeting at North County

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Frustration ...

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High School, AEL again brought this information to the Council's attention. I reached out to the County Executive prior to this and Mr. Chris Trumbauer from

the County Budget Office graciously returned my call. He explained a number of things to me, and also stated that once the check is written and given to the su-

perintendent, the Board can pretty much do what they want with regard to the salary placeholder. That is why negotiations have been more than a hurdle. It basically has become an obstacle course. The superintendent basically puts in his budget what he is going to give each bargaining unit and no more. It is clear, he values himself and his executive team more than he does those of us in Unit II who carry out the executive team's directives.

Ms. Schallheim noted at a recent Board Meeting that she had been following the number of people leaving AACPS for greener pastures. She specifically noted teachers. I would strongly encourage her to look at those who are in Unit II. When quality people leave the system, what will be the cost to AACPS with respect to school-based leaders? We already are seeing the impact.

Einstein was Right

By Will Myers, AEL Consultant and former AEL President

We must be insane. We continue to follow the rules for negotiations and expect to have a different outcome year after year. This year our President, Edie Picken, attempted to get the process started as early as August in hopes of having input on the Superintendent's request for compensation for Unit II. Fast forward to June. The Superintendent's budget was approved by the Board with salary enhancements. The County Executive does not fully fund the Superintendent's request. The County Council does not add additional funds for salaries. We are now back to the negotiations table.

So, the question is where does this process go wrong? Is it the Board's fault? Does the County Executive and County Council really know our negotiation process? The real answer to our issue begins in the beginning. The Superintendent is the key. If there were true negotiations and an agreement on compensation, it would be included in his request to the Board. Alas, this never happens no matter how many times we attempt to begin the process early. We cannot continue to allow this to occur. It's time to call out the Superintendent. The membership of AEL must speak out. We must take a stand and let him know we are not happy with his anemic requests for compensation. Lack of action by our membership will only result in the continued sacrifices we make day in and day out. If we expect things to change by continuing to what we have always done, well we must be insane.

Back to the Future?

By Rick Kovelant, AEL Executive Director & General

One of the most popular movies in somewhat recent years has been *Back To The Future*. The storyline involves, as you know, a time machine that allows Michael J. Fox to go back in time to witness and change certain events in his parents' life that had, or would have had, an impact on his future. Time travel fantasy has always been something of interest to me. Unfortunately, actual time travel is limited to the study of history. Although we can't change history, by learning about the past we can avoid repeating mistakes in the future. I consider the exploration of the past as a means of informing us what we did right so we can use it as a lesson in the future. Let's go back together to the year 1989 and see its relevance to the current state of affairs. If you can take a minute of your time, please read the news articles from *The Capital* that were written by then *Capital*

reporter Bob Mosier and others about administrative workload, working to rule, and how football games were stopped before they started in order to call the public's attention to these issues. Most importantly, consider the role AEL played in fighting for fair and equitable compensation and what its members were prepared to do in order to receive a fair negotiated contract

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FOOTBALL

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high school principals are "responsible for the final determination of all matters related to the athletic program," he said.

AEL members are holding fast to their 6-month-old job action. Protesting failed negotiations, AEL members have refused to work more than the 37.5 hours a week required in their last contract.

Anything more than 37.5 hours will be made up through compensatory time, even if it means missing part of the school day, the AEL said.

The job action was called in March to protest stalled contract negotiations with the board. The action pushed what were normally evening events to the afternoons or canceled them.

Just before the start of the fall season, Lorton ordered football games to begin no earlier than 5 p.m. in order to ensure that players are properly prepared.

On Monday, the county Board of Education, under fire from students and parents, ordered the games rescheduled and told Lorton to determine who would supervise them.

Judge blocks night football

By BOB MOSIER
and DEBORAH FUNK
Staff Writers

A county Circuit Court judge this morning temporarily blocked county School Supt. Larry L. Lorton from ordering protesting principals to resume an evening football schedule.

Judge Eugene Lerner signed an injunction filed by the Association of Educational Leaders, barring Lorton from setting times for athletic events. The injunction, which will keep games at 5 p.m. or 5:30 p.m., is effective through Sept. 30.

The principal's union asked for the injunction after Lorton yesterday ordered principals to staff evening extracurricular events at traditional times.

The scheduling, which was to take effect tonight with 7:30 p.m. high school football games, would have returned all events to their normal schedules for the first time since March.

However, early school closings

today because of Hurricane Hugo canceled tonight's evening events.

"You are directed to restore to wholeness all programs and events in a manner that meets the criteria of timeliness and completeness as measured by the tests of precedence, tradition and reasonable expectation by students, parents and/or community in your individual school," according to a copy of Lorton's directive obtained by *The Capital*.

The events will be covered "in the same manner as has normally been the case in the past," he wrote.

Last night, AEL's executive board and all high school principals approved the legal action filed this morning, Richard Kovelant, AEL's attorney and executive director said.

The action was based on Board of Education policy that states (See FOOTBALL, Page A12)

AEL officials have warned against shifting principals' work hours to cover night events, saying it would leave schools without supervision during the day.

Several principals expressed disappointment with Lorton's decision, saying it will take them away from class time.

Broadneck High School Principal Lawrence E. Knight yesterday called the directive "utter disregard for professional integrity."

And Brooklyn Park Senior High School Principal Bill Wentworth said

it shifted priorities from the classroom to the ballfield.

"Twenty-four years ago when I was hired by this school system, I thought the education of the kids and what goes on in the classroom was the most important thing. Obviously I was in error," Wentworth said.

A change in starting times, particularly those of football games, is expected to greatly increase gate receipts. Football revenues account for anywhere from 60 percent to 70 percent of an average athletic department intake.

The Capital, September 1989

Back to the Future ...

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that recognized their economic worth as administrators.

In 1989, negotiations had stalled. Compensation and workload then,

as it is now, were subjects that were unresolved. Striking and sick outs were not a legal means of protesting. The only available remedy was to work to rule. This meant working, per the contract, a

37 and 1/2 hour work week. To accommodate the hourly requirement, AEL insisted that school football be played immediately after school and not in the evenings or on the weekends. When the Superintendent ordered the games to be played as scheduled, AEL sought and obtained a temporary injunction against the Board of Education. Eventually, AEL's action resulted in the parties reaching an appropriate agreement.

The current negotiations involve ongoing discussions about the crippling workload and compensation. These topics have not really changed since 1989. Unfortunately, the desire on the part of today's membership to lend support in bringing about change is simply lacking. Take a moment to visit the AEL Website and read Edie Picken's presentation to the County Council. As informative

The Capital, April 1989

Juggling high school schedules all part of educational experience

It's been about a month since the Association of Educational Leaders, the bargaining arm for county educational administrators, invoked a work-to-rule policy in an effort to force the board of education to negotiate on a new contract.

In the aftermath of that action, all high school sporting events were theoretically moved to 3:30 p.m.

The availability of fields and officials for the games has forced some schools to move some contests to 5:15 p.m. and even move some games to different dates.

These moves have caused rumblings that the administrators aren't serious about the work-to-rule edict and are just blowing smoke. In reality, though, the administrators seem to be sacrificing at least part of their stance to preserve the athletic programs.

"I think it probably has affected 50 percent of our varsity boys and girls contests," Broadneck athletic director Tim McMullen said. "It's mostly moving the times, we haven't moved many dates."

"I don't think it was ever the intention to hurt the kids or the programs," Annapolis principal

SPORTS COMMENT



By BOB MOSIER

Ken Nichols said. "It was to do the best we could for the kids and the programs and still make our point.

"You have to have two games in a row on some days that they're scheduled because otherwise you'll put one team on a lesser field," Nichols said. "I'm not convinced we should go that route."

McMullen and other athletic directors are being forced to juggle their schedules, but the administrators seem to be getting support not only from the faculty, but from students and parents as well.

Nichols said about 1,200 students at Annapolis signed a support petition and sent it to the school board.

AEL President Barry Fader said the two sides hope to agree on an arbitrator and be at arbitration June 2.

"We're disappointed we weren't able to achieve a contract by the negotiating process," Fader said. "This was the only measure we felt we had left to get the board to see our cause.

"Our intent is not to do anything to interfere with the athletic programs and all programs for that matter. It will be interesting to see if we need to continue this in the fall, but we haven't crossed that bridge yet."

Regardless of whether the job action continues through the summer and into the fall, the administrators seem to be making their point, and rightly so.

No one should expect administrators to work 60 hours a week on a 37 1/2-hour contract. It's just not reasonable. The parents, students and athletes are finding out what sacrifice is all about now.

And isn't that part of the educational process? Aren't the administrators teaching their students to take action for what they believe in?

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Back to the Future ...

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as it was, it was only one voice. A singular voice can never be as loud as a chorus. Given the Covid requirements of limited in person meetings, the ability to rally in person during these presentations is not possible. I understand. There is no reason, however, why emails and letters cannot be sent to School Board Members, the County Council and the County Executive, indicating your dissatisfaction with compensation and workload responsibilities that far exceed any rational reading of the Negotiated Agreement. There is no reason why compensation reduction should more adversely impact Unit II than any other employee group. There is no reason why Unit VI continues to receive the disproportionate share of pay enhancements at the expense of Unit II.

If we have learned anything about AEL's history it's that when we work

together, we can, at the very least, receive the respect we deserve. Being a member of AEL must mean more than merely paying dues and allowing a small number of individuals to do all the heavy lifting. Look to the past to

see what AEL can become.

For those of you who remember the Rocky and Bullwinkle Show with Peabody and his pet boy Sherman, the Wayback Machine awaits. Let's get on it so we can perhaps arrive "back to the future."

The Capital, April 1989

Work-to-rule dampens after-school activities

Principals' job action affects sports, clubs

By SUSAN JACOBSON
Staff Writer

Before yesterday, Annapolis Senior High School senior Laura Carr watched the boys play lacrosse after her junior varsity lacrosse game was over.

But now that school administrators have begun a work-to-rule job action, the boys' games have been moved to 3:30 — the same time Ms. Carr and her teammates play.

"We can't watch the guys and they can't watch us," she said. "It's not fair."

She echoed the sentiments of most students yesterday, the first day senior high school principals joined the job action.

Other county school administrators began working to rule Wednesday to protest stalled contract talks, now in their second year.

Work to rule means principals and their assistants will work only the 37½ hours stipulated in their contracts.

Night sporting and social events are the most obvious casualties of the contract dispute — and the ones students miss most.

"It's not fair that they're taking our night games as a way to gain leverage," said Tanya Price, a junior on the Annapolis Senior girls varsity track team. "They shouldn't use us."

But not all students agreed. Some said administrators, whose demands

"It's not fair that they're taking our night games as a way to gain leverage. They shouldn't use us."

for more money have been rebuffed by the school board, have no other way to air their gripes.

"I agree with the administrators that they shouldn't have to stay extra hours and not get paid for it," said Angelita Evans, Annapolis Senior girls varsity track team manager. "If that were you, wouldn't you want to get paid for it?"

The administrators' union is concerned that some school psychologists, counselors and pupil personnel workers would make more than principals and assistant principals who supervise them if the current AEL contract remains unchanged.

However, some said pay is not the only nettlesome issue.

"More than anything else, it makes you feel like you're not appreciated for the work you do here," said John Lyons, an assistant principal at Annapolis Senior.

But judging from some students' and teachers' remarks, that may indeed be true.

"It's the teachers, parents, coach-

es and sponsors that take care of the (extracurricular) activities, not the administrators," said an Annapolis Senior High School teacher who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

"There are some large events where their help would be appreciated, but administrators aren't usually needed."

Although the county teachers' union is supporting the administrators, another Annapolis Senior teacher said working overtime is part of an educator's job, and that they should have accepted it before entering the profession.

"If I put in 35½ hours a week, I'd start the weekend on Wednesday," he said.

However, most students were both sympathetic to the principals' demands and annoyed that student events are being affected.

Many blamed the Board of Education for the inconvenience, which disrupts student and parental schedules and costs athletic programs money in lost gate receipts.

"The Board of Education is wrong for not giving them the raise, but the administrators are making the schools look bad because their reason for being here is the students, and they're hurting us," said Tim Riggins, a junior at Annapolis Senior.

Students plan to present the school board with a petition tomorrow supporting the raise for administrators.

The logo consists of the letters 'AEL' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid red square. The square has a thin black border.

When in Doubt, Call Rick

If you need help, advice or just need to ask a question, please remember to contact **Rick Kovelant**. He is AEL's legal counsel and has a wealth of experience in assisting our members. He is a valuable resource and **available to you as part of your AEL membership**. He can be reached at 443-848-8022 (Pacific time).



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.

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