

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 9, 2024  
7:00 pm  
AEL Executive  
Board Meeting,  
via Zoom

Feb. 13, 2024  
7:00 pm  
AEL Executive  
Board Meeting,  
via Zoom

March 14, 2024  
7:00 pm  
AEL Executive  
Board Meeting,  
via Zoom

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## Gratitude, Negotiations and Budget Hearings

*By Tracey Ahern, AEL President*

Dear AEL Members,

Happy New Year! As we step into 2024, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for your continued dedication and commitment to the Association of Education Leaders. Your passion for education and leadership is what makes our association thrive, and I am honored to serve as your President.

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge and thank those members who have stepped up to be Cluster Representatives. Your willingness to take on this crucial role is truly commendable.

Representation is at the heart of our organization, and your commitment to

fostering communication and collaboration within your clusters is invaluable.

As we enter this new year, we find ourselves in a state of the unknown with the onset of Maryland's Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The impact on our jobs will undoubtedly be far-reaching. AEL members must be actively involved in all planning stages to ensure our voices are heard and our perspectives are considered. We currently have representation on numerous committees, and it is through these channels that we can actively shape the future of education in our state.

Negotiations are a crucial aspect of our work, and as we delve into 2024, we remain in the middle of

these discussions. Dr. Bedell's budget must be fully funded by the AACPS Board of Education and our Anne Arundel County



*Tracey Ahern speaking at the Fall Social in November.*

Council and County Executive. Our focus continues to be on compensation, healthcare, and acknowledgment of our extensive job expectations and responsibilities.

It is of utmost importance that our voices resonate

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# Gratitude, Negotiations...

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**“...let us work collaboratively to ensure that AACPS Administrators and Coordinators are compensated fairly, setting a standard for the future..”**

*Tracey Ahern,  
AEL President*

loudly and clearly during the scheduled Board Meetings on January 9th and 11th, where Public Hearings about the proposed budget will take place. We must be united and vocal, ensuring that our concerns and needs are brought to the forefront. Let us use this opportunity to make our collective stance clear – advocating for fair compensation and the recognition of the crucial role administrators and coordinators play in the success of our educational system.

In the face of challenges, unity is our strength. Together, we can navigate the uncertainties ahead and emerge stronger. Stay

engaged, stay vocal, and let us work collaboratively to ensure that AACPS Administrators and Coordinators are compensated fairly, setting a standard for the future.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to education and leadership.

Here's to a year of collaboration, advocacy, and success.

Best regards,  
Tracey Ahern  
President, Association of Education Leaders

**AACPS Board of Education Public Hearings on the Proposed Budget**

On January 9th and 11th, 6 pm-8pm, the Board of Education will host Public Hearings on the proposed budget. Let your voice be heard. For meeting information, visit <https://www.aacps.org/Page/832>

## 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.

# Some Resolutions for Consideration

*By Rick Kovelant, AEL Executive Director and General Counsel*

Well, it is that time of the year again when Earth has completed its orbit around the Sun (thank Nicolaus Copernicus for getting that straightened out) and a new year marks the beginning of the journey all over again. After reflecting on the old year, we are expected to adopt and with great (at least initially) enthusiasm, behavioral norms which are popularly known as resolutions. After checking in the Miriam Webster Dictionary, I found, much to my surprise, that the word **“Resolution”** had no less than three distinct definitions before it even came close to defining the term, in a way that would have a meaningful application to what AEL could use to describe as a **New Year’s Resolution**. As you may now be curious, **“Resolution”** is eventually defined as, **“a formal expression of opinion, will, or intent.”** Curiously, that defi-

nition continues to state that **“intent”** is voted upon by an official body or assembled group.” Wow! I can now almost, properly apply that definition to AEL and its leadership (me included) and its membership as well!

In reviewing past investigations and disciplinary actions, I have found inspiration for a few resolutions that if kept, could make **this year’s journey around the sun a little calmer**. These resolutions do not involve dieting, stopping smoking or engaging in **more exercise**. **Let’s take a look!**

## **RESOLUTION 1: STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN**

As Unit II employees you are unique by virtue of the fact that both those that provide management supervision as well as those that are supervised are all represented by AEL. This can create potential conflicts of interest, not to

mention differences of opinions. As has been sug-



*Copernicus*

gested, conflicts that do not involve breaking AACPS rules and regulations (which require reporting) could be resolved by meeting, discussing concerns, and reaching an understanding without calling out the troops.

## **RESOLUTION 2: STAY INFORMED**

More often than not, in this this age of virtual information, the information required to answer questions that arise regarding your benefits, severance payouts, grievances, etc. is set out in the Negotiated Agreement that is conven-

**“...a few resolutions that if kept, could make this year’s journey around the sun a little calmer.”**

*Rick Kovelant, AEL Executive Director and General Counsel*

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## Resolutions ...

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iently located on the AEL Website. This document is a product of hard work and long hours of negotiations and provides a roadmap to policy and procedure that will provide guidance and even answers to Unit II concerns. Reading the document, if done incrementally, will not cause eye strain and most importantly, you will not be quizzed on its contents.

### RESOLUTION 3: ASK FOR ASSISTANCE IN A TIMELY MANNER

Putting off the inevitable will only inevitably make

matters worse. If you receive a notice of an investigation, it is critical that you call me immediately. There is preparation time involved and accommodating scheduling concerns is not easily accomplished at the last minute.

### RESOLUTION 4: GET INVOLVED

AEL is the only unaffiliated bargaining group. As a result, it has limited staff available to service all the needs of the membership. In short, volunteers are encouraged, welcomed, and appreciated. Certainly, your time is val-

uable, but participation on AEL committees is a great opportunity to meet new friends and colleagues, have fun, and enjoy the free snacks when available. (I guess I am trying a bit too hard to gain your participation). Seriously, give it some thought and help when you can. AEL has captured the hearts and minds of nearly 85% of eligible Unit II employees. This is an accomplishment that I doubt the other bargaining groups have achieved. If we could convert a larger portion of the membership into active participants there is no telling what AEL could accomplish for all.

As you can see, these resolutions are not too difficult to identify. The hard part is keeping them as we begin our journey around the sun together. Kudos to Nicolaus Copernicus for getting that right!

## Free Help When You Need It: 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.

# MRSPA Legislative Workshop... Should Be Interesting!

By Edie Picken, AEL President Emeritus

If you read previous *Leadership Forum* newsletters, during my first year in retirement, I have provided information not only about retirement, but work done by AARSPA (Anne Arundel Retired School Personnel Association) and MRSPA (Maryland Retired School Personnel Association). Both organizations do a great deal to help AACPS, all Maryland students, teachers, and retirees.

Last year, I became a member of the MRSPA Legislative Committee. This committee works tirelessly to keep the State Legislature out of what educators do when appropriate and supports legislation that will help and improve what it is educators do each and every day. I learned a great deal and wrote some of the letters that were sent to State Legislator committee chairs imparting MRSPA's stance on particular proposed legislation. I look forward to continuing my participation in another active year.

Each January, MRSPA holds its annual Legislative Committee Workshop. Vital information is shared by AARP, the Maryland State Pension System, State officials, and other groups that work on our behalf. This year, Dr. Kirwan will be presenting, which will certainly open the door for some interesting dialog. I am extremely interested in what he has to say about the Maryland Blueprint. I already have begun to list a multitude of questions to ask if given the opportunity. School based administrators are going to be impacted in ways that will impede their ability to do their job with excellence. As you know, or should know, principals and assistant principals will be teaching. At the secondary level, principals will teach one section and assistant principals will teach

two sections. No information has been provided to date on exactly how this will be implemented. Will planning time be provided? How will 504s be managed? What impact is this going to have on handling discipline issues? If a school-based administrator is NBCC in their content area, will they receive additional compensation now that they are back in the classroom? How will observations and walkthroughs be managed if, particularly for assistant principals, the entire day may be filled with all their regular daily responsibilities? How will this be done in elementary schools, particularly where there is no assistant principal? These are just some of the questions on my list, but I assure you there are more.

Also, to be considered, is the impact of this program on taxes in Maryland. The cost of this program is over \$9 billion. Where is that going to come from? You bet—property taxes. In the not-so-distant future, our property tax bills are going to look like other states where what you are charged for your property is one amount, but the largest amount will be the attached school tax. Currently, some states--New England states, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and others--have this breakdown on their annual property tax bills. This will impact everyone, particularly retirees. Governor Hogan attempted many times to have the State Legislature consider not taxing our pension; Maryland does not tax Social Security. Many AACPS retirees have fled Maryland to live in states that do not tax Social Security and pensions. When the Legislature was asked

why they would not consider this, the response was that it was too expensive a loss. What was that loss? You guessed it--\$9 billion. **Hmmm...think about that.** Governor Hogan saw the writing on the wall. He proposed numerous times to make Maryland more attractive for retirees as he saw a substantial percentage were leaving the state, which of course, reduces state revenue. Governor Moore seriously needs to take this into consideration as well. Depending on the taxation impact, Maryland may be losing a population base to those states that are more appealing. It will be incumbent on all of us to reach out to our legislators imploring them to stop taxing the pension. The more we all bombard them, the Governor and Lt. Governor, the more likely they are to consider and propose this important legislation and get it passed into law. You may still be working, but at some point, you will consider retirement. Such legislation will benefit all overall.

Best wishes to all of you for a safe and well-deserved restful holiday.

To find your State Representative, Maryland General Assembly go to: <https://msa.maryland.gov>

*If you have any questions about The Blueprint that you would like me to ask Dr. Kirwan at the Legislative Committee Workshop, please forward them to Edie Picken, [epicken.ael@gmail.com](mailto:epicken.ael@gmail.com) . It will be helpful to me if you let me know what level you are (elementary, middle, high) so I can organize the questions you have and identify the same questions from others. Please forward your questions no later than January 10, 2024.*

## AEL Highlights 5- Star Recognition

AEL's 5-Star Recognition program allows AEL members to recognize colleagues who go above and beyond the call of duty.

### **Karlie Magazu, Arundel High School**

Have you seen the Arundel High School Instagram? School Culture is a vital component to successful student outcomes. In order to create belonging, a school needs to have a place where students want to belong. Karlie Magazu uses social media to tell the story of Arundel High School by highlighting all the best of us- student achievement, teacher praise, diversity, and most importantly, fun. She gives hours a week to connect our students and teachers to each other and to Arundel.

Karlie Magazu has transformed the social media world for Arundel High School. Day in and day out, Karlie can be seen around the building capturing the highlights of the day and then spending hours after school posting them to the school's social media. Karlie was also the idea person behind having high school athletes meet their feeder elementary schools as they enter the building in the morning. Many schools have started this initiative after Karlie started posting Arundel's success which is a testament to the inclusive idea that Karlie has started!

### **Stacy Herbert, Magothy River Middle School**

Stacy Herbert has built up our PBIS Program, with Positive Referral Friday. She encourages teachers to complete Positive Referrals for students. At all Friday lunches we call student names, give them a copy to take home. Using our special treat cart, students pick a snack or other item as a reward. Positive referrals are tracked by our discipline secretary so there is a "glow" message in the folder along with any "grow" documents. Mrs. Herbert does all the shopping and prep for Positive Referral Fridays. We have had as many as 75 to give in a week! Thank you, Mrs. Herbert!

### **Heather Garris, Tracey's Elementary School**

Heather is forward thinking, proactive, and an amazing advocate for her students as well as community. In addition, she is always willing to jump in and help her colleagues at the drop of a hat, with a helping hand and without judgement. She is a 'go-to' for information, expertise, and she should know how valued she is!

To nominate a Unit II member, please complete the google form-  
[AEL Highlights- 5 Stars](#)





# AEL Fall Social: November 1, Blue Dolphin, Gambrills



“I did not always attend AEL events because of my busy administrator schedule. However, now I realize that these events provide us a great opportunity to network. We all work hard and have common goals. But sometimes, we can feel isolated in our buildings. AEL can only accurately represent us if we come together and discuss issues that are important to us, even in an informal setting. Plus, these gatherings remind us that we are not alone. And it is a fantastic chance to reconnect with the people we have worked with on our leadership path.”

Gina Davenport, Principal, Arundel High School



## 2023-24 AEL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/BOARD/STAFF

|                          |                   |                               |                  |  |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Tracey Ahern (2022-26)   | President         | (P, Odenton ES)               | (o)410-222-6514  | <a href="mailto:tahern@aacps.org">tahern@aacps.org</a>     |
| Stacey Smith (2022-26)   | 1st VP            | (P, South River)              | (o)410-956-5600  | <a href="mailto:smsmith1@aacps.org">smsmith1@aacps.org</a> |
| Brian Love (2022-26)     | 2nd VP            | (Admin, BMAH)                 | (o)410-761-8950  | <a href="mailto:bllove@aacps.org">bllove@aacps.org</a>     |
| John Wojtila (2022-26)   | Secretary         | (P, Rivera Beach ES)          | (o)410-222-6469  | <a href="mailto:jwojtila@aacps.org">jwojtila@aacps.org</a> |
| Ryan Sackett (2020-2024) | Treasurer         | (C, Secondary Mathematics HS) | (o)410-222-5383  | <a href="mailto:rsackett@aacps.org">rsackett@aacps.org</a> |
| Shira Dowling            | Director at Large | (P, Rippling Woods ES)        | (o)410-760-7900  | <a href="mailto:sdowling@aacps.org">sdowling@aacps.org</a> |
| OPEN                     | Director at Large |                               |                  |  |
| Edie Picken              | Director Emeritus |                               | (c) 410-371-9527 | <a href="mailto:rag_qb@hotmail.com">rag_qb@hotmail.com</a> |

### REPRESENTATIVE DIRECTORS (14): CLUSTERS/FEEDER SYSTEM

|                  |                      |                            |  |  |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| Tiffany Foster   | Annapolis Cluster    | (P, Germantown ES)         |  | <a href="mailto:tfoster@aacps.org">tfoster@aacps.org</a>                 |
| Gina Davenport   | Arundel Cluster      | (P, Arundel HS)            |  | <a href="mailto:gdavenport@aacps.org">gdavenport@aacps.org</a>           |
| Kellie Anderson  | Board of Ed          | (C, NCSP)                  |  | <a href="mailto:kjanderson@aacps.org">kjanderson@aacps.org</a>           |
| Stacy Herbert    | Broadneck Cluster    | (AP, Magothy River MS)     |  | <a href="mailto:sherbert@aacps.org">sherbert@aacps.org</a>               |
| Shanna Cahoon    | Chesapeake Cluster   | (AP, Chesapeake HS)        |  | <a href="mailto:secagoon@aacps.org">secagoon@aacps.org</a>               |
| Open             | Crofton Cluster      |                            |  |  |
| Karla Barlow     | Glen Burnie Cluster  | (AP, Woodside ES))         |  | <a href="mailto:mconnelly@aacps.org">mconnelly@aacps.org</a>             |
| Erica Garren     | Meade Cluster        | (AP, Meade MS)             |  | <a href="mailto:egarren@aacps.org">egarren@aacps.org</a>                 |
| Kirk Greubel     | Old Mill Cluster     | (P, Southgate ES)          |  | <a href="mailto:kgreubel@aacps.org">kgreubel@aacps.org</a>               |
| Lakisha Mitchell | North County         | (AP, Brooklyn Park MS)     |  | <a href="mailto:lmitchell@aacps.aacps.org">lmitchell@aacps.aacps.org</a> |
| Jessica Colberg  | Northeast Cluster    | (AP, Northeast HS)         |  | <a href="mailto:jcolberg@aacps.org">jcolberg@aacps.org</a>               |
| Open             | Severna Park Cluster |                            |  |  |
| Kerri Buckley    | South River Cluster  | (AP, South River HS)       |  | <a href="mailto:kbuckley@aacps.org">kbuckley@aacps.org</a>               |
| Tamika McPherson | Southern Cluster     | (AP, Southern HS)          |  | <a href="mailto:tmcpherson@aacps.org">tmcpherson@aacps.org</a>           |
| Shannon Motsco   | Special Centers      | (AP, Chesapeake Sci Point) |  | <a href="mailto:smotsco@aacps.org">smotsco@aacps.org</a>                 |

There are several Open Cluster Representative positions, please contact Tracey Ahern for more information.

### STAFF

|  |                  |  |
|--|------------------|--|
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