



# The EASMC Extra

44219 Airport Road, California, MD 20619  
Phone (301)737-2500, x300 • Fax (301)866-1967

*"One Voice for Public Educators"*

## Negotiations Update

Your EASMC Negotiations Team reached agreement with the SMCPS BOE on June 11 after several months of negotiating. While none of us are pleased at the loss of steps, COLAs and the inclusion of furlough days, we did get some basic protections for teacher and principal evaluations relative to RTTT and we will continue to work in study committee on EPED and stipends. Please thank your Chair Brian Rose, BBES and team members Kathy Norton, PHES and Peg Johnson, SRMS for a job well done in a very tough economic climate. Your chief negotiator Liz Purcell Leskinen is also due a round of applause for her great efforts on your behalf. This is a lengthy and tedious process and we are indebted to these folks for bargaining what we believe is best for everyone based on the surveys of our members and the less than friendly political climate.



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## Summer Fun?

As you all prepare to leave for the summer, I hope you will continue to pay attention to the political realities of our nation, the county and our state. No sooner will you be back to work and the state General Assembly will be meeting in special session. The main purpose of this special session is to reset the legislative boundaries for the districts relative to the 2010 census. This of course is done every 10 years. Another topic that may well be broached is that of shifting the cost of some portion of our pensions back to the either the county government or to the LEA's.

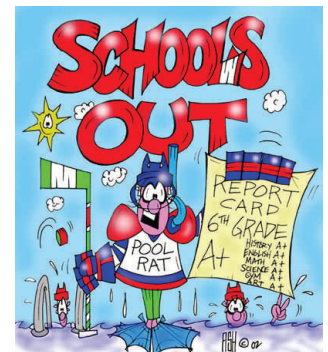
Senate President Mike Miller sent a letter to the Governor a few weeks ago informing him that the Senate was ready to take up this work once again in that special session. This cost shifting, in addition to the increased payment that we will soon be making, will surely have a negative impact if the shift occurs. Please be watching our MSEA Frontline and Action Line for updates and possible calls to action. MSEA is working diligently on trying to prevent this shift, but will certainly need some help from you, the membership. It is unclear at this point where MACO stands on the issue.

At the national level, the law that destroyed collective bargaining rights in Wisconsin for public employees was upheld by their State Supreme Court yesterday. Their union supporters came out by the thousands again to express their disappointment at this unusually quick ruling. Please watch the results of the 6 recall elections in Wisconsin this summer, as the pro-workers rights folks try to take back control of the state senate. Many other states are also fighting for their rights to bargain or collect dues through payroll deduction. It is a war zone across the country.

And locally, when you are around the county this summer and you happen to run into one of our commissioners, please take the opportunity to ask for significantly increased funding for FY 13. Tell your story about how the 3-furlough days will impact your family and why it is simply unfair and unjust in this wealthy county. Ask them if they are fighting the pension shift back to the county and what they are doing to fight it.

While you are doing all of that, we will be too and we will be working on creating the student growth portion of our teacher and principal's evaluation that we are mandated to do as a pilot county under the state Race To The Top grant. When you all get back in August, 250 teachers in 5 schools will be piloting the new evaluation tool.

There is so much going on and we must remain diligent. Enjoy a great summer, but please don't bury your head in the sand. Our associations are under attack and we have to be up for the fight. Get some much needed rest and relaxation and come back ready to do the work of education and of the association.



FOR THE SUMMER

### BOD Contacts

- Wanda Twigg- President, wtwigg@mseanea.org
- Anna Laughlin- Vice-President, amlaughlin@smcps.org
- Mike Soly- Treasurer, masoly@smcps.org
- Linda Miedzinski- Secretary, lsmiedzinski@smcps.org
- Melinda Kearns- Elementary, mmkearns@smcps.org
- Bonnie Skinner- General, bjskinner@smcps.org
- Billy Breslin- Secondary, wfbreslin@smcps.org
- Michael Loughran- A&S, msloughran@smcps.org
- Liz Morris- Retired, emorris@md.metrocast.net
- Liz Purcell Leskinen- MSEA UniServ Director, lleskinen@mseanea.org
- Jennifer Tidd, Admin. Assistant, jtidd@mseanea.org

## What Happened to My Paycheck?

This has been a very difficult year for education employees in Maryland and even more so, if you work here in St. Mary's County. While your Association members and others have worked tirelessly to protect your pension benefits and your salary and health benefits, we were not completely successful because we are working with elected officials. While we feel very strongly that we mitigated even more destructive losses, our members will feel the sting in their pay checks when school starts again in the fall.

Many of you helped us fight the drastic cuts to our pension benefits and the even more draconian cuts for new hires. You wrote emails, signed Keep the Promise Apples, lobbied with us in Annapolis, attended the EASMC Legislative Breakfast, signed petitions, wore your KTP wrist band and many attended the KTP Rally in Annapolis on March 14<sup>th</sup> along with 15,000 other concerned educators. Most years, this kind of well organized activism would have produced our intended result, the saving of our pensions as we knew them. However, this was not to be the case this year.

Every time we spoke with our local delegation members this spring, we were told it was our turn to suffer; that state employees had borne furlough days for years and it was our turn. We explained the difference in expectations and accountability between us and them to no avail. MSEA even created its own solid plan to save the pension system in the same amount of time as the Governor's proposal, while saving most of our benefits, but none of our friends in the legislature would champion it on our behalf.

So, by Sine Die, our pension benefits were destroyed by many of our own "friends" in the legislature. With friends like that, who needs enemies? Our biggest victory was saving the defined benefit plan and keeping the 1.8% multiplier for all current employees. Everything else is a decreased benefit and new hires bear the worst of it.

Here is the gist of the plan that came out of the conference committee.

### **Current Employees**

1. Defined benefit plan remains
2. 5 years service to be vested
3. 1.8% multiplier from 1998
4. Increased member contribution to 7%
5. COLA maximum of 2% if stock market returns on investments is 7.75% for the year
6. COLA 1% if stock market returns not 7.75%
7. Early retirement benefit at 25 years

### **New Hires as of July 1, 2011**

1. Defined benefit plan continues
2. 10 years to be vested
3. 1.5% multiplier from 2011
4. Increased member contribution to 7%
5. COLA maximum of 2% if stock market returns on investments is 7.75% for the year
6. COLA 1% if stock market returns not 7.75%
7. Early retirement based on rule of "65"

In short, all employees will pay more for their pension for a decreased benefit. This increased contribution along with the decreased benefits will "save" the state billions of dollars over the next 24 years. In fact, after 2014, a large portion of the "savings" earned by the state will go directly into the state's general operating fund to be used as legislators see fit. This "teacher tax" will not sit well with our members and we will continue to fight it in Annapolis with your help.

The increased pension contribution of 2% (for a total of 7%) will start after July 1, 2011.

So, while the state was busy messing up our pensions, the county was busy messing up any chance of a step increase or COLA for 2012. We will, in fact have 3 furlough days next year (if the contract is ratified). Here's the skinny. You will see the full impact of our negotiated step increase for FY 2011 in the fall of 2011. However, you will also see the decrease of the 2% pension contribution and the 3 furlough days and a 6% insurance increase (those rates have been shared with you previously) based on usage.

While these cuts to your paycheck will have a serious impact, at least our pensions have been stabilized for the future. Also, we were successful in getting the money to rehire the 18 lost positions and in staving off opening insurance in negotiations for take backs. We also successfully refused to reopen negotiations for step take backs. Had we reopened for these as requested by the Board of Education, your paychecks could look even worse come August. With your help and guidance we held the line on those take backs! It pays to be a member of EASMC! We are all stronger together!

When you get back to work (or continue to work if you are an 11 or 12month employee) you will see these changes reflected in your paycheck. We wanted to be sure you understood why your paycheck will not be what it should be.

Please thank the EASMC Negotiations Team for protecting your health benefits and your 2011 step increase! As always, if you have questions, email Wanda Twigg at [wtwigg@mseane.org](mailto:wtwigg@mseane.org).



# How Will the Furlough Days be Computed for My Paycheck?

When we first started talking about furlough days this year in negotiations, we knew we needed to be sure people were protected to the greatest degree possible, should we have to end up agreeing to them. So, we went to work thinking and talking about how best to do that with the least impact on the fiscal services department and on our member's paychecks.

Here is what will happen. The three furlough days will be based on each person's per diem rate. Per diem is the amount of money you make per day. To calculate this number you divide your total gross salary by your number of duty days (201). Multiply your per diem rate by 3 and this is the gross amount of money you will lose for the furlough days. Subtract that number from your total gross salary for the "adjusted" salary that your 26 pays will be based on next year. Then divide that "adjusted gross" amount by 26 to see a rough estimate of your take home pay before taxes, etc.

To reduce the impact to any one or few paychecks, the school system has agreed to spread the total out over the entire year. In other words, you will receive your "new" gross salary divided by 26 pays. No one



check will be significantly smaller because of the furlough days. Furlough days will be decided by the Board of Education since calendar is an illegal subject of bargaining, but they will be placed on the calendar before or after system holidays. Your place on the salary scale will not change even though your salary will. The salary scales will not change either. We intend that these furlough days are temporary and we did not agree to change the scales, as a result.

Your Negotiations team did a fantastic job of looking out for you, even in an ugly situation, by making sure that the cost of the furlough days did not impact one or a few checks and by ensuring that your pay scales remain the same. They also worked hard to get the actual days on the calendar where they may actually be of the most interest to staff.



## Congratulations to These EASMC Member Winners

Throughout the school year many of our wonderful members are recognized for their talents in the classroom and out. We'd like to take this opportunity to recognize them here as members of EASMC and for their successes. If you see any of these folks, please congratulate them for their most deserved awards and recognition. We are so proud of them and the gifts they bring to their students and schools each day.

- Cathy Kennedy, Central Office – Hope Swann Educator's Hall of Fame Award
- Debbie Settle, TCES; Mary Kaye Roper and Shawn Knott, HES – MD Physical Education Honor Roll School
- Kara Nelson, Lisa Ide and William Plotner, EMS; Michael Malone, PHES; Sabra Szczyglowski, EES – MD Physical Education Demonstration School 2011-13
- Charles Allen Skinner, GMHS – SMCPS Teacher of the Year 2011-12
- Brenda Henley, CAA, GMHS – District IV Athletic Director of the Year
- Ange Funya, CPCS – Charter School Administrator of the Year
- Beth Dyson, GMHS, Alice Willingham, CHS, Denise Mandis, LHS and Emily Meny, EMS – National Board Certification Teachers
- Jessie DeLorme, PHES, Bernadette Scheetz, EMS – SMECO Math Teachers of the Year
- Karen Myers, WMES, Emily Meny, EMS and Jessica Yohe, CHS – SMECO Science Teachers of the Year
- Dawn Pipkin, LMS – Governor's Educator Effectiveness Council



### NEA Click & Save "Buy-lights" for July 2011

NEA Click & Save, the online discount buying service for NEA members, highlights select retailers and merchants each month. Check out these featured "Buy-lights" for July:

- Restaurant.com:** \$25 gift certificates for \$3!
- Wyndham Hotels & Resorts:** Save 20%
- Wirefly:** Save up to \$200 on Smart phones



Join the 197,000 NEA members already registered for NEA Click & Save. Go to [www.neamb.com/clickandsave](http://www.neamb.com/clickandsave) today!

## EASMC Representative Assembly:

### Do you know what's really happening in EASMC & SMCPs?

Is your school or site represented at the monthly RA? Is your building getting all the latest information and updates about what's happening across the system and within the Association? Would three or four of you be willing to share the responsibility of attending the RA on the second Tuesday of the month? It's work to get representation at every meeting, but the benefits are well worth the effort! Let us know how we can assist you in getting representation for your site!

### Was your site represented on May 10, 2011?

<b>BBES</b>	Brian Rose, Murphy Holley
<b>CPCS</b>	Bryan Clapp
<b>CHS</b>	Karl Pence, Nancy Lewis, Jessica Yohe
<b>EMS</b>	Chris Meyers, Michelle Kozak
<b>FLA</b>	Meddo Swaby
<b>GMHS</b>	Judi Stokes
<b>LHS</b>	Stephanie Law
<b>LMDES</b>	Kim Edwards
<b>OES</b>	Betsy Hundert, Mary McNey
<b>PPES</b>	Renee Campbell
<b>SRMS</b>	Kristen Breslin, Peg Johnson
<b>TCES</b>	Lisa Cointot
<b>WMES</b>	Karen Myers



## Negotiations 2012

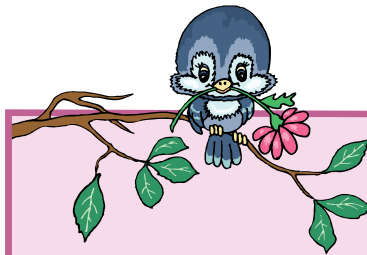
Amazingly, we are just ratifying our agreement for 2012 and it is time to pull together a committee of concerned members to start the process for the 2013 contract. This year the entire negotiated agreement is open. Negotiations are to

start by October 15, so anyone who is interested in being part of the EASMC Negotiations Committee should plan to attend the initial meeting on **Monday July 18 from 1 to 5 PM here in the SMHEC.**

In this first meeting we will talk about priorities for this round of negotiations and begin to put together the survey of the membership about their interests and priorities. If you would like to be part of the committee, please RSVP to Jennifer Tidd at [jtidd@mseane.org](mailto:jtidd@mseane.org) and let her know if you can attend on July 18. Jennifer will create a distribution list of interested members and we may be in contact with you over the summer with information.

Please note that being a member of the committee does not mean you are a part of the team that does the negotiating. The team is appointed by the President. The committee does the background work with the team and advises the team as they go through the negotiations process when needed.

We hope many of you will volunteer a few hours to this most important EASMC Committee. Brian Rose of BBES will once again be your Chair. Again, please email Jennifer Tidd at [jtidd@mseane.org](mailto:jtidd@mseane.org) if you would like to be a member of the Negotiations Committee.



## Prize Winner!

Congratulations to Jillian Tira of LHS for sending an email to the BOCC expressing concern over the education budget! Her name was chosen from the many that sent emails to win a fabulous prize! Bruster's ice cream will taste yummy on any summer day. Thanks to everyone who sent emails on behalf of the staff and students of SMCPs.

## Calendar

- June 15- EASMC Contract Ratification
- June 16- Last Day for Students
- June 17- Last day for Teachers
- June 20- Retiree Breakfast
- June 22- SMCPs BOE
- June 30-July 1- NEA BOD
- July 2-5- NEA RA
- July 13- SMCPs BOE



# Have A Great





## Your June 30 Stipend

According to our negotiated agreement for FY11, if you DID NOT receive a step increase in December 2010 or in June of 2011, you will receive a onetime stipend of \$750 payable to you on June 30, 2011. This stipend will come to you separate from a regular paycheck, but will still be sent via direct deposit to your primary bank account. Anyone who received a step increase in the 2010-11 school year will not receive the \$750 onetime payment. If you still receive a paper "check" from SMCPS for your bi-weekly paycheck, your \$750 will come to you as a paper check in the US mail. Please thank your Negotiations team for securing this stipend to ensure that every staff member would receive additional monies in 2011. Be watching your bank account or the EAC for this onetime payment on June 30.

## Steps for Getting Your Finances Under Control

Many people feel as though their personal finances are out of control, with no hope of ever recovering from the financial mayhem in which they find themselves. With jobs lost, mortgages underwater, and retirement accounts still on life-support, this feeling of hopelessness is understandable.

Each tip in the following list can help put you on the road to solid financial ground.

**Live within your means** – Simply put, don't spend more than you make. To accomplish this, put the credit cards away. Many well-meaning people resort to living off of credit when facing a financial crisis, digging an even deeper financial hole. Instead, try living on a cash basis. People who do this typically spend 20 percent less, and they do it without feeling deprived. They buy what they want, but since their level of awareness has increased, they don't spend as frivolously.

**Get financially organized** – Sometimes people become so overwhelmed that they bury their head in the financial sand. Not only do they neglect paying their bills on time, they don't even open the monthly credit card statements. Such habits result in late fees, a tarnished credit report and a lower credit score. Become financially organized by creating a cash-flow calendar where you record each payday for everyone in the household who earns money. Next, write down which bills are to be paid out of each check. Get into the habit of keeping all bills in one location so that you can easily put your hands on them, and commit to visiting your home "financial center" at least once per week.

**Don't overdraw your checking account** – Even if you have overdraft protection, this is a habit that speaks of a deeper problem that should be addressed. Write

down each deposit and withdrawal in your check register, including all debit and ATM transactions. Regularly balance your checkbook, and reconcile your bank statement within one week of it arriving. If you do these things, but continue to overdraw your account, the overdraft is no accident. Do not continue in this pattern. Instead, reach out to a legitimate credit counseling agency for help in resolving whatever is at the root of the problem.

**Know where your money goes** – Have everyone in your household who spends money track their spending for 30 days. At the end of the month, come together to review the findings and determine where the leaks are. Jointly decide how to plug them. Make adjustments so that your budget reflects exactly how you want your hard-earned money to be spent. You will never be fully in charge of your finances until you complete this exercise.



**Create a rainy-day fund** – Many people say they can't afford to save. Neither can they afford to be ill-prepared for the inevitable money-gobbling emergency. Now that you've tracked your spending and are allocating where your money goes, be sure to include a savings category with money earmarked for that purpose each month.

**Improve your tarnished credit** – If recent events have made your credit report less than stellar, work on improving it. Review the damage by obtaining a free copy of your credit report from [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). Look for what's doing you the most harm, things such as ac-

counts that have gone into collections, or old credit card bills that you've forgotten about.

Create a plan to begin repaying these debts, even if it's a small amount each month. A past-due bill that has been paid is less damaging than a past-due bill that remains unpaid. Further, recent activity has a stronger influence on your credit score than things that happened in the past, so taking positive steps now will likely result in an improved score down the road.

**Slowly reenter the world of credit** – Most people will need a thick and positive credit file to obtain the credit necessary to buy a big-ticket item such as a house or a car. If you are not currently a candidate for more traditional forms of credit, you may want to consider applying for a secured credit card. You will be required to place a pre-determined sum of money as collateral on the account. Your spending limit will be equal to this amount. (Note that you must still pay your bill each month—the collateral funds you put up remain untouched, somewhat like a security deposit.) Make sure that the secured card you select reports your activity to each of the credit bureaus and doesn't have unreasonable fees. Treat your obligation responsibly, and it is likely that you will soon be offered an unsecured card.

If you've suffered a financial setback, know that it is possible to restore financial stability to your life. The NFCC Member Agencies assist millions of people each year and understand how overwhelming it can be to deal with a serious financial situation. The sooner you reach out for assistance, the sooner you will be on that road to recovery.

If you need help recovering from a financial set-back, reach out to an NFCC certified credit counselor. To be automatically connected to the NFCC Member Agency closest to you, dial (800) 388-2227, or find a counselor online at [www.DebtAdvice.org/nea](http://www.DebtAdvice.org/nea). Assistance in Spanish is available by calling (800) 682-9832.