



The EASMC Extra!

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"One Voice for Public Educators"

From Your President...



We want to thank those of you who were able to attend the County Commissioner's hearing on the budget at CHS on Tuesday, April 21st. There were about 60 of us and we looked great with our blue shirts and umbrellas! People did take notice!

Our excellent speakers included: Jan Emerson, SRMS; Alice Willingham, CHS; Anna Laughlin, LMS; Dawn Pipkin, LMS; Liz Purcell Leskinen, MSTA and of course, me. CEASMC members were also present and spoke. We gave Commissioner President Jackie Russell an EASMC umbrella to show our spirit of collaboration. We understand that he gave it away and that none of the commissioners wanted our umbrella. Sadly, this is what we are dealing with when we ask the commissioners for additional funds for the school system. They don't like hearing the truth.

Thanks again to everyone who gave up their time Tuesday evening to make our voices heard and our presence known. It is important that the commissioners know that we are watching and that everything we do is for the betterment of our system and our students, and that we vote!



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Welcome new member Christine Caperones from WMES.

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WE are EASMC and we appreciate all of you who came out and took a stand!



Teacher Appreciation Week

The Board of Directors of the EASMC would like to thank you all for your dedication and commitment to the children of St. Mary's County. We would also like to thank you for your continuing membership in your professional Association. As a small token of our appreciation for your membership and contributions to the success of our students, you will receive an EASMC lapel pin with our new logo. Please wear it proudly! We think it will look great on the lanyard for your school ID.

According to multiple internet sites, Teacher Appreciation Day came about as a result of the individual efforts of a teacher from Arkansas named Mattye

Whyte Woodbridge and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and the collective efforts of the NEA and the Kansas Education Association (KEA). Evidently, Mrs. Woodbridge started lobbying her elected officials for a day to recognize teachers in 1944 and was finally successful in 1953 after enlisting the support of former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. NEA and KEA also lobbied Congress for a national day and it was celebrated in March until 1985. At that time, the National PTA declared the first week of May National Teacher Appreciation Week with Teacher Appreciation Day being the Tuesday of that week.

Thank you for choosing one of the most challenging, yet rewarding careers and thank you for your membership.



School System Calendar Changes



Dr. Michael J. Martirano, superintendent of schools, announced at the April 15, 2009, Board of Education meeting that the last day of school for students in St. Mary's County Public Schools will be Friday, June 12, 2009, and the last day for teachers will be Monday, June 15, 2009. Three school days were lost this school year due to inclement weather conditions. This allows the school year to be shortened by two days since only three of the five inclement weather days built into the calendar were used.

- Tuesday, June 9, will be a regular day of school with all AM and PM Prekindergarten students attending school on a normal schedule. June 9 will be the last day of school for PM Prekindergarten students.
- Wednesday, June 10, will be an early dismissal day with AM Prekindergarten students attending school. PM Prekindergarten sessions will not be held on June 10.
- Thursday, June 11, will be an early dismissal day with AM Prekindergarten students attending school. PM Prekindergarten sessions will not be held on June 11. June 11 will be the last day of school for AM Prekindergarten students.
- Friday, June 12, will be an early dismissal day for students K-12. Prekindergarten students will not have school on June 12.

EASMC/MSTA Spring Early Enrollment Drive

"April showers bring May flowers," but they also bring the annual MSTA membership drive! If you know of a non-member who has never been a member before and would like to be, now is the prime time to get them signed up. They can sign up now and pay no dues until the first deduction in October of 2009!

People who sign up now become active members in the Association and are covered with most of the protections that other members enjoy, EXCEPT for non-local services such as an MSTA attorney.

Please talk to your colleagues and try to encourage those non-members to become members. There is truly strength in our numbers and of course, **the more members we have, the less our dues will have to be increased every year!** EASMC also gets a bonus from MSTA for every member over this year's 950 that we have when we start the next year. Recruiters also have a chance to win Target gift cards just for signing people up for membership.



Please see your building AR for the membership application forms and let's get out there and recruit some new members! Membership is everyone's responsibility!



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Educators

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Educators give so much...So we're returning the favor!

Saturn has always valued the extraordinary work of our educational community. Now, we're giving back with our Saturn Thanks Educators program, offering educators associated with a credit union the Credit Union Member Discount on any new Saturn.

To register for the authorization code needed to receive your discount go to www.saturn.com/educators.



Teacher Tunes LLC
www.teachertunes.net

Attn: Julie Wolfe
P.O. Box 1481
Lexington Park, MD 20653

Songs for students & teachers!

- Character Education
- Elementary Curriculum
- Character Traits
- Maryland Facts

Teacher Tunes LLC provides teachers, guidance counselors, parents and students the opportunity to listen to and/or purchase original songs relating to Character Education, general academic curriculum, and Maryland information. Songs are available in several forms: download, CD and sheet music.

In addition, the website features booklists of children's literature related to various character traits. Music teachers will soon be able to get ideas for sub plans incorporating a variety of children's literature.

"We are MSEA" Official Kickoff Event!

Join your colleagues this September 1 to celebrate our historic name change from MSTA to the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA)! You're invited to celebrate with food, fun, music and prizes.

MSEA Headquarters, 140 Main St., Annapolis.

RSVP: MSEAKickoff@mstanea.org.

General Assembly Roller Coaster Ride

Maryland's General Assembly recently wrapped up its 90-day session on April 13th. Even as most other areas of the State budget were cut dramatically due to the difficult economy, our top-ranked public schools won strong support, as legislators placed a high priority on investing State funding in our schools.

Public education received a record \$5.5 billion, a 2.5% increase over 2009, on top of more than \$250 million in additional school construction funding and nearly \$200 million in funding for needy and special education students provided through the federal stimulus package.



The vast majority of Maryland's legislators really showed that they get it. The best way to strengthen Maryland's economy and build on our #1 ranking is by providing continued resources and taking steps to address critical issues affecting students and public schools.

Thanks in large part to stimulus funding from the federal government and support from the Governor in his budget proposals,

the General Assembly was able to keep the Thornton funding formula intact and fully fund teacher pensions. Legislators also fully funded the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) which will help 13 counties with higher costs, and rejected a proposed blanket waiver that would have allowed all counties to evade local school funding requirements.

While the State budget consumed most of the 90 days other important education related legislation passed or was defeated. MSTA secured passage of legislation to collect "real" class size data, require a plan for universal preschool, provides ESP the right to bargain due process for discipline and dismissal, and fair share for Calvert County teachers. Additionally, MSTA lobbyists helped defeat the BOAST bill. This bill would provide a tax credit for contributions to organizations that provide private school scholarships or provide extracurricular educational programs. This bill is essentially a voucher program and could divert tens of millions of public tax dollars to private schools.

One major MSTA priority, a bill to create an independent authority to resolve labor negotiations disputes, passed the Senate for the first time, but did not make it to the floor of the House in time. We believe the work we did on the bill this year will pave the way for passage next year. All in all, the 90 day General Assembly session was a roller coaster ride but public education came out on top.

Mark Your Calendars!

- May 1- Professional Day
- May 5- EASMC BOD
- May 10- Mother's Day
- May 12- EASMC RA and Annual Mtg
- Interims distributed
- May 13- SMCPs BOE
- May 15-16- MSTA BOD
- May 20- Ratification Mtg (tentative)
- May 21- Ratification Mtg (tentative)
- May 25- Memorial Day-No School
- May 26- SMCPs BOE
- May 27- CHS Graduation
- May 28- LHS Graduation
- May 29- GMHS Graduation
- June 1- School House Forum
- June 2- EASMC BOD
- June 5- MSTA BOD
- June 6- NEA Pre Convention Caucus



Happy Mother's Day!

"A man's work is from sun to sun, but a mother's work is never done."



May is building AR election time! Please hold your AR election and email the results to wtwigg@mstanea.org and jtippett@mstanea.org. You are allowed one AR and one alternate for every twelve members at your site!



Our Annual Meeting/ Potluck Dinner is Tuesday, May 12th at 4:30 pm!

If you wish to attend and to bring a yummy dish, please email Jen !

Was your site represented at the RA on Tuesday, April 14th?

BBES	Jeanne Taylor, Brian Rose	Leon. Ofc.	Courtney Mohammed
CHS	Karl Pence, Nancy Lewis Alice Willingham	LPES	Beverly Scroggins
DES	Melinda Kearns	OES	Betsy Hundert
EMS	Karen Maloney, Michelle Kozak	PHES	Jessie DeLorme, Mary Albee-Tullberg
Fairlead	Meddo Swaby	RES	Sheila Coon
FCTC	Bonnie Skinner	SRMS	Peg Johnson
LMS	Rick Condle	TCES	Lisa Cointot, Linda Richardson
LHS	Melissa Kiernan	WMES	Karen Myers

NEA Member Benefits Thanks YOU at the NEW NEAMB.COM!



In honor of National Teacher Day, May 5, 2009, NEA Member Benefits is thanking NEA members! Register on our new website at neamb.com and enter to win over 100 prizes between April 15 and August 31, 2009 (NEA members only--see rules at neamb.com). Plus view the biggest virtual thank-you card ever from people all across the country, and create your own card to multiply the thanks!

HELP US!

We are looking for a new "unique & creative" name for the EASMC newsletter!

Send us your suggestions and if we choose your title, we'll give you a FREE gift!

Email Jen at jtippett@mstanea.org.

NBCT Stipends Impacted by State Financial Crisis

Currently, under Maryland law, a Nationally Board Certified teacher receives a \$2,000 stipend from the state of Maryland for holding that certification. EASMC has negotiated an additional \$3,000 for a total of \$5,000 per year for the 10 years of the certification. Sadly, when the budget ax was swinging during this legislative

session, some of the state NBCT stipends were cut.

For FY 2010 and beyond, **NBCTs who work in a school in comprehensive need will be paid a \$1,500 state stipend rather than the \$2,000. Teachers at all other schools will receive a \$1,000 state stipend rather than the \$2,000 stipend.** MSTA worked hard to prevent these cuts, but did not prevail. Unfortunately, something in education had to be cut and this was one area the legislators elected to cut. State teacher signing bonuses

were also completely eliminated from the budget. EASMC had never negotiated any signing bonuses. A school in comprehensive need is a school that has not met AYP (in any of the last 3 years) and is still on the state list of schools in need.

EASMC will do all we can at the negotiations table to keep the local portion of the NBCT stipend intact. We recognize the commitment that this certification requires and we will work to maintain the local stipend for you and future NBCTs.

More About SPARKS!

By: Bonnie Skinner
Allied Health Teacher



SPARKS was a two-day program that was sponsored by EASMC and held in Annapolis on February 20 and 21, 2009. It was a great opportunity for newer (1-6 years experience) teachers to learn about NEA, MSTA and EASMC, and to network and improve teaching skills. I attended a training hosted by TABCO (Teachers Association of Baltimore County) last year and was able to participate in planning the SPARKS program for St. Mary's County. It was a great experience to work with Wanda Twigg and Dawn Pipkin in planning and I learned right along with the participants. I have only been teaching for four years and I enjoyed meeting the other new teachers and sharing stories and ideas. Liz Purcell Leskinen, UniServ Director for EASMC, gave a great presentation to kick off the program followed by Damon Felton, MSTA attorney assigned to St. Mary's. We toured the MSTA building and were able to meet the MSTA president, Clara Floyd and many other leaders and employees at MSTA. We had a brief "I Can Do It" training by Wanda that led to a full course being offered later. We concluded with our NEA Member Benefits training by Richard Smith. After a long hard day of learning we had some fun when the participants completed a scavenger hunt and learned about our capital, Annapo-

lis. We met for a dinner with ACTA (Allegany County Teachers Association) which was also holding a SPARKS training that weekend. Finally we got to dance the night away with Herman Whitter, MSTA Manager, and then retire to rest up for another day of learning and networking. The second day we learned about agency fee, or the Fair Share Representation Fee, and then SPARKS participants created some wonderful presentations to share that related to the organizational structure of our Association, the benefits we have available to us, leadership opportunities and the role of the building representative. We then said our goodbyes and headed home.

This was a great group of teachers and I truly benefited from meeting and working with each of them. I really appreciate the opportunities that EASMC has given to me and I look forward to another SPARKS training next year. I am glad that our school district and Association supports programs like this to help the new teachers during a challenging time.



Health Insurance Rate Adjustments for FY 2010

Health insurance rates for FY 2010 have been adjusted at a 15.91% increase for active employees and retirees with an 11% increase for Medicare eligible. The original recommended increase from CareFirst for FY 2010 was 14%. Their final recommended increase for FY 2010, dated March 20, 2009 indicated increases of 12.67% for PPO and 14.42% for our HMO. This equates to an overall increase of 12.78%.

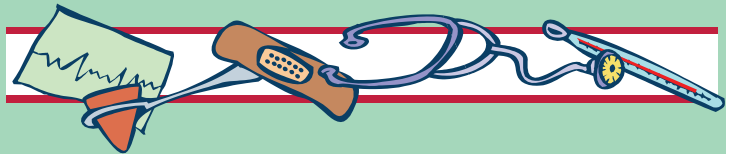
When asked if CareFirst was comfortable with their recommended rate increases, there was hesitation and discussion based on the following factors:

- Catastrophic claims in FY 2009 ranging from \$102,450 to \$736,642;
- No anticipated refund for FY 2009;
- Aging employee population;
- Increase in drug costs; and
- An increase in cardiac and diabetes cases among the employee population.

Based on the discussion with CareFirst, discussions among staff, and insurance rate trends in the surrounding systems, SMCPS health insurance rates were adjusted to reflect the following issues:

- Aging employee population may lead to increased catastrophic claims;
- Increase in drug costs;
- Increase in cardiac and diabetes cases among the employee population;
- Anticipated budget reductions from State and local funding authorities in FY 2011 & 2012; and
- Addition of new acute rehab program for employees.

SMCPS is currently budgeting health care coverage at 12% anticipating the need for additional funding from fund balance at the end of the fiscal year. Should there be excess revenue from employee contributions, either a refund will be processed or the revenue will be credited toward FY 2011 resulting in lower adjusted premium rates. Should you have any additional questions regarding FY 2010 health insurance premium rates please contact Heather Huff at 301-475-5511 ext. 182. Should you have questions concerning the information provided above please contact Greg Nurse at 301-475-5511 ext. 173.



Negotiations Update

Seems like it's been quite a while since we have been to the table to negotiate and it has. With the state economic situation being uncertain and the General Assembly waiting until the close of the legislative session to vote on a budget, SMCPS has been waiting for accurate financial information before returning to the table.

Our next and hopefully last negotiations meeting will be on Thursday May 14th. SMCPS will be presenting its salary proposal that day. The EASMC team hopes to finalize all language and salary discussions and move to ratification soon after the 14th.

The EASMC team feels very strongly that this round of negotiations has been successful, open and honest. There truly is a sense of collaboration in this often tedious but very important process. Because we are so close to the end of the school year and because of all of the testing that is about to occur in the schools, we are planning to conduct ratification at two large all-member meetings, rather than conducting a meeting in each school. **These meetings are tentatively scheduled for May 20 at 6PM and May 21 at 4PM here at the SMHEC.** Wish us well as we head into the salary portion of negotiations.

Congratulations to the first six members who had the correct answers to our question, "What's different about the newsletter?" in the April edition.

These folks have received a free EASMC gift for being so quick and on the mark!

Brian Rose, BBES
Ginny Fusaro, EMS
Melinda Kearns, DES
Greg Schaeffer, GMHS
Wanda Read, EMS
Stephanie Hampton, FCTC



Small Grants Application Made Easier

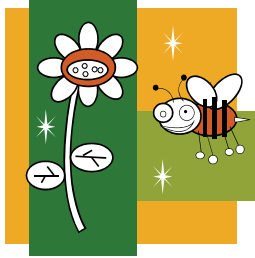
The NEA Foundation has introduced a new online grant application system for our popular \$2,000 and \$5,000 Learning & Leadership Grants and Student Achievement Grants that is making grant application easier than ever. The new system, which was launched in October, is greener because it's paper-free. It also makes applying for grants more convenient and less prone to user error. Reports from educators using the new applications have been extremely positive. They love it!

For a guided tour and detailed instruction of the new system, the Foundation has posted a video featuring grants manager Jesse Graytock. Applications are accepted, reviewed, and granted three times a year. **Deadlines are June 1, October 15, and February 1.** Applicants can view the video or link directly to the applications from the NEA Foundation's web site at www.neafoundation.org/grants.



Liz Purcell Leskinen
UniServ Director

Just Ask Liz



Question:

Is the below information true? "Reminder - the subfinder system is programmed to find substitutes for **half days and whole days** only. If a teacher or staff member needs to be off for an hour or two during the day, that absence should be reported separately to the administrator. The subfinder system telephone number is 1-866-763-2095. This number can be utilized to access information over the telephone as well as using the webconnect: smcps.subfinderonline.com."

Answer:

Yes, it is true. According to Ed Weiland, "Subfinder is programmed for either a half day or a whole day substitute. If the leave requested is for less than a half day, the principal will usually cover that period of time internally."

Question:

We received a principal's bulletin on Friday with the following as the last item: "Teachers should refrain from grading papers during faculty meetings. The presenters deserve your undivided attention". In your opinion, is the above a suggestion or mandate? Will we be insubordinate if we grade papers or otherwise refrain from giving presenters our full attention? Since faculty meetings are a standard/traditional practice, doesn't it follow that the multitasking we have always done counts as a standard/traditional practice too?

Answer:

I recommend that those concerned speak to the principal about it rather than try to determine if he/she considers this a mandate or a suggestion. I think that you would be best served to tell the principal that you certainly will be polite and discreet, but that multi-tasking is essential to meeting your heavy workload demands. Depending on the response, you could also remind him/her that most teachers routinely work well beyond the duty day and sacrifice much personal time to meet the needs of their students, and that forbidding good use of your time will likely discourage rather than encourage people to continue to donate personal and family time.

All said, I'm guessing your principal is just trying to avoid blatant disrespect of guest speakers and ensure that folks have all of the necessary information. If you are able to respectfully pick up the essential information and grade papers, I suspect that your principal will be satisfied.

In any case, I suggest that a group of those concerned or a few association representatives meet with the principal to better understand the concerns, express your apprehension, and try to come to a mutual understanding.

Question:

We heard that there is a new policy coming out that restricts the use of book club bonus points. Is this true? We do book clubs because we want to and it takes much time and effort. If anything obtained with the bonus points is the property of the school, the teachers who I have talked to said that they won't do the book clubs anymore. This, in turn, hurts our kids. Can the school really demand that we give our bonus points to the school when

we do all the work, and points don't have anything to do with our schools?

Answer:

I contacted Chief Academic Office Linda Dudderar to see what she knew about this topic. She said that as both a teacher and a principal, she looked at the extra books (that she received as teacher incentives for student purchases) as school property and made them a classroom library, but referred the question to Kelly Hall, Director of Elementary Instruction, Administration, and School Improvement. Apparently Ms. Hall met with elementary school principals in January 2009 and shared the Fiscal Departments recommendations that the following policy be added to teacher handbooks.

It is permissible for classroom teachers to collect funds from students for the purpose of purchasing reading materials from Scholastic Books or similar book sales programs. Parents should be instructed to make checks payable to the company rather than the school or classroom teacher. Any cash and/or checks made payable to the teacher or school are to be deposited into the school activity fund. Using the deposit receipt as support documentation, the teacher will request a check, in the exact amount of the deposit, to be made payable to the book company. Bonus points earned by the teacher as a result of sales to students must be redeemed for other books or materials to be used by the students in the classroom. These items become property of the school and should be stamped or tagged as such.

We have heard from many of our members that they find this policy unfair and discouraging. They feel that book club participation is voluntary and requires much time and effort to coordinate. Since they are doing the extra work, which further increases the quantity of personal and family time that they sacrifice, they feel that they should be able to choose how to best utilize these gifts, and that they should be trusted to make the right decisions.

While I understand how you feel (I used the book clubs extensively when I taught high school English), SMCPs is trying to avoid a situation where it could be perceived that teachers benefit personally from student/parent funds. MSTA Attorney Damon Felton confirmed that this practice is as much for your protection as for the protection of kids. I have shared with Ms. Hall your feedback and requested that SMCPs consider removing the last sentence of the above proposal. This would still require that bonus items be used for the benefit of students, but would allow teachers to use things like pencils or stickers as student incentives. We'll update you if any changes result. Thank you for keeping us informed.



**MSTA
Membership
Workshop,
Set Sail with
MSTA!**

Michelle Kozak, EMS; Lisa Cointot, TCES, Meddo Swaby, Fairlead