



The EASMC Extra

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"One Voice for Public Educators"



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EASMC Lobby Nights

The EASMC Government Relations Committee has scheduled five lobbying trips to Annapolis for the 2012 General Assembly session. The Committee is looking for members who are interested in going with them to lobby on our pressing education issues. The dates of the trips are Monday January 23, Monday February 6, Monday, February 20 (tentative), Monday March 12, and Monday March 26. We usually leave from the SMHEC at about 4 PM and return between 9 and 9:30 PM. Transportation and dinner are provided for you by EASMC. We meet with the delegation members as a group or separately (depending on their schedules). Because we meet with them in small groups it gives the attending members ample time to tell their stories about how legislation is impacting their life in the classroom. The Committee will provide each person with talking points on the topics to be discussed on each trip.

If your school doesn't get out until after 4 PM and you would like to attend, please let us know and we will get administrative leave for you to leave school early to be here at the SMHEC by 4 PM. If you wish to use leave, please contact us at least 10 days ahead of the trip so we have ample time to request the administrative leave.

Please email Wanda Twigg if you have questions about the lobbying trips at wtwigg@mseanea.org or call us at 301-737-2500, ext. 300. If you would like to attend one of the trips, please email either Wanda or Jennifer Tidd at jtidd@mseanea.org. You don't have to be a professional lobbyist to attend. The legislators prefer to hear from our educators who are on the front lines in the classrooms who can describe what is really happening every day. Every one of us can do that! So, sign up and come on out!

EASMC Building AR Training

On Saturday, January 14th, the EASMC Membership Committee held a building Association Representative (AR) training at the SMHEC. A light breakfast and lunch was served and topics were presented by MSEA staff Sean Johnson and Liz Purcell Leskinen. Other topics were presented by EASMC President Wanda Twigg, EASMC VP Anna Laughlin (LMS), EASMC Membership Committee member Meddo Swaby (FLA), and EACC member Joe McMahan. Topics included the Role and Responsibility of the AR, Recruiting New Members, Know Your Contract, Why Politics?, Political Action Campaigns, EASMC By-laws, Mission and Principles, among others. The attending ARs spoke highly of the training and the information shared. Questions were taken throughout so the ARs could address any pressing issue they were experiencing.

Thanks to the presenters for giving up time on a Saturday and for doing a great job! Thanks are also due to EASMC Membership Chair Tammy Parsons (LHS) for her organization and planning of the event and for her assistance on Saturday with logistics. EASMC Administrative Assistant Jennifer Tidd and MSEA UniServ Director Courtney Dowling also helped with logistics behind the scenes. Thanks to everyone for their work to make the training a success.

The participating ARs were Art Leon and Chris Meyers (EMS), Kim Schrader and Sharon Page (HES), Miriam Klapka (GMHS), Kristen Breslin (SRMS), Florence Grayson (RES), Jessica Yohe (CHS), Trish Barry-Utzig (PHES), and Regina Robertson (LMS). Many thanks are due to all of these ARs for taking time on a Saturday to learn and better understand the role and duties of the building AR. If you work with these ARs, please thank them for doing this to benefit all the members in the building.

BOD Contacts

- Wanda Twigg- President, wtwigg@mseanea.org
- Anna Laughlin- Vice-President, amlaughlin@smcps.org
- Mike Soly- Treasurer masoly@smcps.org
- Linda Miedzinski- Secretary ismiedzinski@smcps.org
- Melinda Kearns- Elementary mmkearns@smcps.org
- Melissa Kiernan- General munkiernan@smcps.org
- Billy Breslin- Secondary wfbreslin@smcps.org
- Michael Loughran- A&S mssloughran@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



Public Hearing on
Proposed SMCPS
Budget

February 1, 2012
BOE Office
6:30 PM

Please plan to attend!

Questions? Contact Wanda Twigg
wtwigg@mseanea.org



Winter is the time for comfort,
for good food and warmth, for
the touch of a friendly hand
and for a talk beside the fire: it
is the time for home.

~Edith Sitwell

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 January 10, 2012?

BBES	Murphy Holley, Brian Rose
CPCS	Bryan Clapp
CHS	Nancy Lewis, Alice Willingham, Jessica Yohe
DES	Melissa Formica
EMS	Chris Meyers, Michelle Kozak
EES	Zenia Wallish
FLA	Meddo Swaby
FCTC	Amanda Granados
LHS	Tammy Parsons
LMDES	Kim Edwards
LPES	Beverly Scroggins
OES	Patty Parsons
PHES	Trish Barry-Utzig
PPES	Renee Campbell
RES	Florence Grayson
SRMS	Kristen Breslin, Peg Johnson
TCES	Lisa Cointot
WMES	Karen Myers



EASMC Elections

As a member of EASMC you should have received in your mailbox at school a copy of the nomination form for open EASMC officer and board positions and for candidates for NEA and MSEA Convention delegate. You should have also received an electronic copy of the descriptions of the open positions. If you have misplaced your nomination form or deleted the position descriptions and need another, please email Jennifer Tidd at jtidd@mseanea.org to request another nomination form or electronic copy of the position descriptions. If you have any questions about the requirements of any position, contact Linda Miedzinski, Chair of the Nominations, Elections, and Credentials Committee at lsiedzinski@smcps.org.

Open seats this year are EASMC president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and members at- large A&S and retired. We will also be accepting nominations for candidates to the NEA Convention and RA in July in Washington, DC and to the MSEA Convention and RA in October in Ocean City.

Please send your completed nomination forms to Linda Miedzinski at EMS by February 10. Nominations may also be taken from the floor of the RA on Monday February 13.

EASMC can take up to 2 delegates to the NEA Convention and RA and up to 19 to the MSEA Convention and RA. We can also elect alternates so that in the event an elected delegate cannot attend, the next highest vote getters in the election may go in their place.

Once nominations are closed following the February RA, candidates will be asked to submit their biography to the EASMC Administrative Assistant. This biography will be shared with all members when they receive their ballot. Paper ballots and biographies will be sent to the primary AR in each building as soon after the biographies are completed as possible. Ballots and biographies will be distributed to each member by the building AR. Each member is responsible for voting and sending the ballots to Linda Miedzinski at EMS. The deadline will be written on the ballot. As long as there is no inclement weather to delay the voting, the goal is have all ballots returned to Linda Miedzinski by Friday March 9. If there is inclement weather that affects our ability to vote, ARs will be contacted with further instructions.

Please take the time to educate yourself on the candidates and VOTE! This is your Association and your voice should be heard through this most important democratic process.

Negotiations Update

By: Brian Rose, Negotiations Chair

January has been a very busy month for negotiations. The teams met on January 6th and 13th since returning from winter break. Our committee met on January 24th for a strategy session as we focus predominantly on financial issues moving forward. The teams will meet again on the 26th.

So far the tentative agreements we have reached focus primarily on language changes. One possible point of interest, of which we have permission to share, relates to the number of dues deductions for next year. We are asking to extend the number of dues deductions. This will decrease the amount per pay and allow members to budget more easily by increasing the consistency of our paychecks.

We also submitted a financial proposal on day one that made your priorities and interests very clear. While negotiations are ongoing, the superintendent presented his draft budget to the Board of Education and it appears that he is trying to accommodate your interests to the extent possible given the economic atmosphere. You should definitely check it out on www.smcps.org under Board Docs. We are cautiously encouraged. Considering the fiscal constraints that the Board of County Commissioners continues to exert on public education, Dr. Martirano's budget shows that he values employees. As required by Maryland law, he has submitted a budget based on the needs of the school system rather than based on a random target issued by our fiscal authorities. If you look at the Budget in Brief, you can see that there is enough money budgeted to prevent eliminations of positions and a \$2.3 million increase for "negotiations expenses in anticipation of ratification" of our contracts. Of course, the Board of County Commissioners has to approve the

superintendent's budget, but at least it is clear that we have the full support of our superintendent and our Board of Education. If there is any fight, and we hope that will not be the case, it will be with the County Commissioners.

While there is guardedly good news locally in terms of the superintendent's preliminary budget, the proposed state budget announced last week by Governor Martin O'Malley includes mixed messages for public educators. In it, he included a measure to force counties to pick up half of the teacher pension costs. This allocation towards the pension costs would be on top of our Board of Education's budget. This is very bad news for our negotiations. What the governor offered is merely a proposal, and it will be sent to the legislators who will then spend the next couple of months determining the outcome of the state's budget. We will need to mobilize to tell our delegates and senators to not send any of the pension costs to the local counties.

Our legislative co-chairs, Anna Laughlin and Melissa Kiernan, have organized bi-weekly trips to Annapolis. The carpools leave SMHEC at 4 PM on January 23, February 6, February 20, March 12, and March 26. If that is during your duty day, you can have administrative leave. Simply contact Wanda Twigg so that you can attend. We will need to personally meet with our legislators to let them know we feel the state must keep its promise to us regarding our pensions.

On February 1st, there will be a public hearing regarding the superintendent's proposed budget. The hearing will take place at the BOE office at 6:30 PM. Please attend to show your support or to offer your suggestions about the budget. In the meantime, begin making your contacts with your delegates now telling them not to shift the pension costs to the county.



Have You Checked Out Our Website?

The EASMC website is packed with important information including:

- EASMC Leaders
- Negotiated Agreement
- Legal Assistance
- Criminal Accusation Info
- Legislative Topics
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Calendar of Events
- Photo Gallery
- Member Advertisements & Local Discounts ***NEW**

Visit us at
www.easmc.net

Movie Night

Sponsored By: EASMC

Popcorn & Drinks Provided

Brief Discussion Afterwards

Featuring
American Teacher
(Narrated By Matt Damon)

Date: Monday, January 30, 2012
Place: Forrest Career & Tech Center
Time: 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Deadline to RSVP: 1/23/12
Contact: Jennifer Tidd
jtidd@mseanea.org
301-737-2500, x 300

FREE TO PUBLIC!

EASMC/CEASMC/CEA/CAESS Legislative Breakfast

The 8th Annual EASMC/CEASMC/CEA/CAESS legislative breakfast was held on Saturday, January 7 from 8:30 to 10:30 at Lenny's in California. About 100 people attended including Delegates Bohanan, O'Donnell, Wood and Fisher. Representatives from both Calvert and St. Mary's county commission boards, boards of education, school systems, the PTSA, MSEA and other elected officials also attended. Members of all four employee groups were also well represented.

A video of Calvert and St. Mary's local Association leaders was shown which addressed how budget/funding cuts are impacting the classrooms and central office. Billy Breslin of LHS and Melinda Kearns of DES did a fabulous job explaining the results of budget cuts in their rooms, their schools and how that is all affected by central office cuts. Some of the delegation members took notes during the video for later reference.

Again this year, the delegation members were part of a panel discussion on four education topics. The topics were education funding, B.O.A.S.T., the possibility of a pension shift to the counties and MOE (maintenance of effort). Each topic was introduced by a member of the Association who presented the Association perspective on the issue and then asked the legislators to answer a question related to that topic and our position. The delegates then responded to each question.

Our delegation is supportive of proper education funding from the state based on the Thornton formula. They spoke about the need to maintain that spending to keep our schools competitive, but Delegates O'Donnell and Wood expressed concern that school system would need to tighten their belts as the state has a budget deficit again and that other budget items had been cut year after year and that education couldn't be kept safe at other agencies expense. Delegate Bohanan decried the SMC BOCC for not increasing their spending on education when they have the means to do so. He said that the Superintendent can't "keep pulling rabbits out of his hat" year after year trying to make ends meet when the county has the ability to do better. This brought a loud round of applause from most of the crowd.

All of the delegation is supportive of B.O.A.S.T. but believed that it wouldn't pass again this year because it has a fiscal note and the state isn't really taking on new spending items right now. They do not agree with us that B.O.A.S.T. is a voucher bill that will move monies out of public education to private schools.

The entire delegation was opposed to a pension shift to the counties. Delegate O'Donnell said, "I should just say I am opposed to the shift and leave it at that." This received a nice round of applause from the crowd. They all believed that now is not the correct time to shift this burden to the counties, but they believed that it would likely happen in some form someday when the economy had improved. We know that the Senate already passed shifting legislation the last 2 sessions and the House has not. We will need to continue to lobby our delegation to oppose such a shift.

Our delegation also believes that the MOE law needs to be addressed to ensure that all local governments are doing all they can to support public education. Delegate Bohanan spoke about a committee of legislators that would be looking at the law and at what the counties are currently doing and what else they could be doing before proposing some changes to strengthen the law. He said that counties like ours that are growing and that have strong income/revenue should be doing better by their public schools. Half of the counties in the state are declining in student population, so their needs will be different. The new law will have to address all of that.

EASMC would like to thank the Government Relations Committee Co-Chairs Anna Laughlin (LMS) and Melissa Kiernan (LHS) for the efforts in planning the breakfast. Jennifer Tidd, EASMC Administrative Assistant also deserves great thanks for all of her work behind the scenes creating, printing and mailing the save the date cards, invitations, name tags, agendas and arranging the restaurant and food. Many thanks also go to the EASMC speakers Anna Laughlin (LMS) and Melissa Kiernan (LHS) for the wonderful speeches and to Dennis Mooney and CEA President Debbie Russ for their speeches. EASMC President Wanda Twigg served as Master of Ceremonies and helped with the overall planning and logistics of the breakfast. The video was created by MSEA. Our door prize flower center pieces were created by Ed Carney's Horticulture students at the Forrest Career and Technology Center and were beautiful as always. The staff of Lenny's provided us with a yummy meal and was very helpful and responsive to our needs. Thanks to all of the interested members who attended this well planned and orchestrated event. The 2013 breakfast will be on Saturday, January 5, 2013. Mark your calendar to attend now!



MSEA/NEA Elections

It is time once again to decide who the leaders of our state and national organization will be. The EASMC Nominations, Elections and Credentials Committee (NEC) would like to encourage each and every one of you to be sure to cast your ballot in this most important election.

The ballots should be in your building this week. Your building AR will get them from MSEA in one large envelope. Then, the NEC suggests that the AR hold an all member meeting to distribute the ballots and allow members time to ask questions before they vote. Once everyone has voted, the AR will collect the ballots to be mailed all together back to Annapolis by the February 24 deadline. You will need a number 2 pencil to vote.

The EASMC Board of Directors is recommending the following candidates for office.

- MSEA President: Elizabeth (Betty) Weller, Kent County
- MSEA Vice President: Wanda Ruffo Twigg, St. Mary's County
- MSEA Board of Directors: Richard Benfer, Anne Arundel County Teachers
Joe Coughlin, Baltimore County ESP
Lori Hrinko, Cecil County Teachers
Debbie Schaeffer, Anne Arundel ESP
- NEA Board of Directors: Karen Myers, St. Mary's County
- NEA Convention Delegate: Karen Myers, St. Mary's County
D. Kathleen Myers, St. Mary's County
Candidates from Calvert, Charles, Allegany, Garrett, Frederick, Washington or the Eastern Shore Counties.

Please attend the member meeting in your school and please support our recommended candidates. Every vote counts in every election so please do your part to help decide our state leadership for the next 3 years. If you have any questions, please email Linda Miedzinski the NEC chair at ismiedzinski@smcps.org or jtidd@mseanea.org.

We're Having a Birthday Party for Dr. Seuss and You're Invited!



Date: Saturday,
February 25, 2012

Time: 10am - 12pm

Location: Forrest Center

24005 Pt. Lookout RD
Leonardtown, MD 20650
301-475-0242

Questions?
Jennifer Tidd
301-737-2500, x 300

Come join in on the activities. There will be storybook reading, celebrity readers, face painting, live music, birthday cookies and more!

This event is sponsored by the Southern MD Reading Council and the Education Associations of St. Mary's County (EASMC/CEASMC).

FREE!





Liz Purcell Leskinen
UniServ Director

Just Ask Liz



relative to realistic expectations for an elementary teacher. According to Ms. Hall, "Instruction is the responsibility of the teacher. Paraeducators support and reinforce instruction. Teachers should make every effort to meet with students each day but we understand that not every group will meet for the same amount of time. It is appropriate for groups to have longer sessions with the teacher on one day and the para on another. Sometimes just a brief check in by the teacher with the group or groups that the para is primarily working with on a particular day is all that is possible and this is okay; but that group or groups should have a lengthier instructional group with the teacher on the following day. We both strongly believe the main issue is that teachers are the instructors and they have an obligation to provide the instruction more days than not."

QUESTION:

What is a "lead teacher", who picks them, do they get paid extra money, and how do I apply?

ANSWER:

We posed this question at our November 28, 2011 meeting with Superintendent Michael Martirano and Chief Academic Officer Linda Dudderar. Apparently a "lead teacher" is the same as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) leader. There is no extra compensation except when there are specific PLC activities scheduled after the negotiated duty day, in which case the employee is paid an hourly stipend. The PLC members should choose or elect the PLC leader is; it is not a position that should be decided or appointed by the site administrator or anyone else.

QUESTION:

I submitted a sick leave request form in advance to my principal to be off on the anniversary of my mother's passing. This is a very emotional day for me and I prefer to spend it in privacy and where I can nurture my own well-being without the obligation to perform at my best in front of students. My principal denied it and told me that I would have to use personal leave because I was not physically ill. Do you agree?

ANSWER:

No, I wholeheartedly disagree. Wellness is not just limited to physical issues. Knowing yourself well enough to anticipate your need to be home on the anniversary of your mother's passing should be applauded. Most importantly, you have taken care of yourself which is the most significant step in your ability to continue to take care of others! Secondly, you have ensured a positive learning environment for your students knowing that you may not be at your best on that date. And finally, you have extended your administration the professional courtesy of advance notice when you really could have just called in sick. It is clear that you put the needs of you students and school above your own.

I suspect that your principal was well-intentioned but perhaps misguided. SMCPSS has been putting increased emphasis on accountability, and fair and consistent leave accounting. In this case, your principal unwittingly discouraged good behavior and encouraged the opposite. If time allows, I would respond to your principal by asking if he/she would mind checking in with HR to confirm his/her perception of best practices. I touched base with Mr. Nourse and Dr. Martirano, and both would support the use of sick leave for your intended purpose. Moving forward, perhaps consider submitting your sick leave request with less information. You do not have to reveal the nature of your illness or wellness issue. I know that you were well-intentioned, but sometimes less is more!

QUESTION:

Are teachers required or is it considered a good practice to meet with every student every day? In other words, it is an acceptable practice for an elementary teacher to work with two groups per day and allow the paraeducator to meet with the other two groups on that given day?

ANSWER:

Having been out of the classroom forever and never having been in an elementary classroom as a regular teacher, I deferred to the experts! Kelly Hall (SMCPSS Director of Elementary Education, Title I, and the Judy Center) and Linda Dudderar (SMCPSS Chief Academic Officer) are in complete agreement regarding this topic in terms of best practices and also



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Calendar

- ◆ Jan 19 Southern CBC
- ◆ Jan 24 SMCPSS BOE
- ◆ Jan 27-29 NEA Mid-Atlantic Conference
- ◆ Jan 30 EASMC "American Teacher" Screening
- ◆ Feb 1 SMCPSS Budget Hearing
- ◆ Feb 7 EASMC BOD
- ◆ Feb 8 SMCPSS BOE
- ◆ Feb 9-11 NEA BOD
- ◆ Feb 13 EASMC RA
- ◆ Feb 14 Valentine's Day
- ◆ Feb 17-18 MSEA BOD
- ◆ Feb 20 President's Day
- ◆ Feb 29 SMCPSS BOE