



# The EASMC Extra

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*"One Voice for Public Educators"*

## From Your President



Wednesday October 12, the SMCPs Board of Education (BOE) voted to reinstate the furlough days that had been previously agreed upon in negotiations. The BOE will use their fund balance in the amount of \$1.4 million and request a "categorical transfer" of funds from the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to make this happen. The SMCPs fund balance consists of money not spent from the FY 2011 fiscal year in some categories of the budget and health care rebate monies from CareFirst. The system receives a rebate when the actual cost of our health care service is less than the amount of money collected from employees and paid by SMCPs to CareFirst. The current SMCPs fund balance is \$5.7 million. Please recall that in the past couple of years, the BOE has used fund balance money to balance the school system budget. The BOCC must approve the categorical transfer because the BOCC approves the BOE budget. Whenever the BOE changes something in their budget like this, it must be approved by the BOCC. The BOE will make the formal request to make the change on October 25. We are confident that the BOCC will approve the transfer of funds.

Once approved, EASMC/CEASMC and SMCPs will renegotiate that part of the agreement. This will enable us to work the additional 3 days (190 rather than 187 total) and be paid for them. We have agreed that you will receive a separate check on December 16 for the three furlough days. This should make for an easier process for everyone.

Another piece of good news is that because of our health care rebates from 2010 and 2011, we will also be getting 3 health care holidays this year. Unit members will not have health care costs deducted from your paychecks on November 25, December 9 and December 23. This may provide a little relief from holiday shopping or just help out with pressing bills at an expensive time of the year.

Because of the health care rebate from CareFirst, SMCPs will be asking the BOCC to approve an additional categorical transfer of funds to make our OPEB payment that was delayed this year. OPEB means Other Post Employee Benefits and under a federal law, public employers are required to pay into a trust fund (now) a large percentage of the amount needed to pay for retiree benefits (in the future). Currently, SMCPs has about \$16 million in the trust fund. The BOE will be asking to use about \$2million from their fund balance for the OPEB payment. We are also confident that this will be approved by the BOCC on October 25.

It has been a tough beginning of school for our members. We faced a 2% increase in our pension costs and the loss of 3 days salary, in addition to a 6% increase in our health insurance costs. This was a bitter pill for all of us and has negatively affected everyone. We are very pleased that the BOE took the action it did last Wednesday. We believe it was the right thing to do and sends a clear statement about the value placed on employees in our system. EASMC is proud to have advocated for the reinstatement of the furlough days and of our BOE decision. When you have a chance, please thank the BOE and the Superintendent for their leadership in making this decision.

While you are thanking the BOE and Superintendent, don't forget to thank yourself and the EASMC Negotiations =Team. Last spring you were faced with a choice. Take the three furlough days or increases to your prescription costs. You overwhelmingly chose a temporary solution for a temporary problem and chose the furlough days. You stood together and made the tough choice for the betterment of everyone. Positions were cut, but no one lost a job. We all took the temporary hit in our paycheck to keep from having a permanent increase in our prescription costs. Do you think we would be getting our prescription costs decreased right now if we had chosen that option?



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# From Your President

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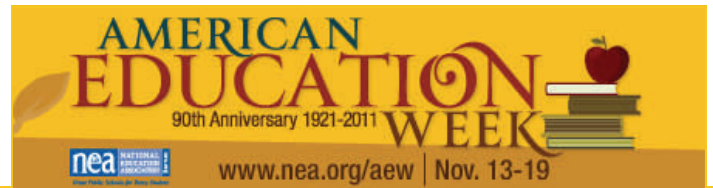
We stood strong together and we were enduring the loss of salary because of the furlough days together. Now, together we will have our days reinstated and our salaries will be made whole. You should all be proud of the decision you made last spring. We are so much stronger together.

I'd like to say that we are out of the woods and that the economy has rebounded, but we all know that is not the case. We know that we are headed back to the negotiations table again this year and we will again be facing tough decisions. We also know that the SMC BOCC has money in the coffers to spend on public education. We know they have millions in fund balance that they COULD have spent to reinstate our furlough days or to prevent them from the start. We know they chose not to do so. We must continue to monitor the BOCC and their revenues and hold them accountable for the decisions they make. In a county that has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest income in the country, we should not have to beg for the money needed to run a first class school system. Please stay tuned as we go through another budget cycle when we will be told by the BOCC that there is no money. We will continue to fight to prevent the school system budget from being balanced on your back. We will keep you posted every step of the way. Together, we can make the right decisions and move forward together. Together, we will stand strong for our students, staff and public education.

## 2012 School System Calendar Adjustments

As a result of the reinstatement of our furlough days, the school system calendar will have to be changed again. The BOE has control over the calendar and will be voting on proposed changes on Wednesday October 26. Currently, the three furlough days in the calendar are December 19-21. These are days you will be off and for which you will not be paid. To offset these three furlough days, the school system calendar was changed to make October 10, 21 and Articulation Day in April student days. EASMC has representatives on the school system calendar committee and we did meet to discuss recommendations to the calendar each time it has been changed. The proposed changes to the calendar to makeup the three days we were off because of the hurricane are January 2, January 23, and June 15. These will all be student days if the changes are approved. January 23 will be a 2-hour early dismissal day since it is the end of the semester and quarter. Twelve-month employees will take their January 1 holiday on December 23 since January 1 is a Sunday.

Because the calendar was changed to have students on three of our usual professional development days (to make up for the 3 furlough days in December), if our furlough days are reinstated they will be professional development days. They will likely be added into the calendar at the end of the year. If we use all five inclement weather days, the last day of school for teachers would be on June 22.



## NEA Celebrates the 90th American Education Week

Distressed that 25 percent of the country's World War I draftees were illiterate and 9 percent were physically unfit, representatives of the NEA and the American Legion met in 1919 to seek ways to generate public support for education.

The conventions of both organizations subsequently adopted resolutions of support for a national effort to raise public awareness of the importance of education. In 1921, the NEA Representative Assembly in Des Moines, Iowa, called for designation of one week each year to spotlight education. In its resolution, the NEA called for: "An educational week ... observed in all communities annually for the purpose of informing the public of the accomplishments and needs of the public schools and to secure the cooperation and support of the public in meeting those needs."

### Join us for the 90th Anniversary of AEW:

- ◆ Monday, November 14: Kick Off Day
- ◆ Tuesday, November 15: Parents Day
- ◆ Wednesday, November 16: ESP Day
- ◆ Thursday, November 17: Educator for a Day
- ◆ Friday, November 18: Substitute Educators Day

Visit [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org) to use their toolkit to plan your AEW Event.

## Negotiations Survey Drawing

She did the online survey and she is now a WINNER!

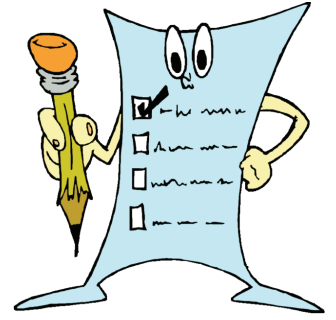
Mike (Michaellen) Winegrad of Great Mills HS has won a \$25 gift certificate from EASMC!

Mike, thanks for participating!



# Negotiations Update

By: Brian Rose



The results are in! Last month, we sent you a link to our first ever electronic Survey Monkey negotiations survey. We owe Liz Purcell Leskinen a huge thank you for putting the whole survey together. Hopefully, you found it easy to navigate. We certainly found it easier to tally the results since the computer did all the work. We thank all of you who participated because we honestly use the survey data to drive our decisions for developing our proposal and in negotiating at the table.

There was a great amount of information gathered. It seemed most reasonable to create a bulleted list of the main points of information. Generally, what follow are the results of the data encapsulating those responses that fell within the top two tiers of the spectrum (“extremely” and “very”).

- ◆ 78.6% of you prefer to correspond via your SMCPS webmail accounts.
- ◆ 96.6% feel we need to draw the community’s attention to our funding needs.
- ◆ There was a split amongst us over how often we feel involvement actually brings about change. I anticipate the exhaustion we all felt by the end of last year had something to do with the responses to this question. But look! Even though we began the year with furloughs, we continued to advocate. Wanda spoke publicly and truthfully about our need to eliminate the furlough days. Your negotiations team persisted behind the scenes. Dr. Martirano and Greg Nourse worked tirelessly to find funds internally to deliver us a three-pay insurance holiday along with three days’ pay. It certainly isn’t all that we want or deserve, but involvement certainly improved conditions. We should be proud!
- ◆ 97.9% of us feel it is important for the public to have a high opinion of education staff.
- ◆ More than 60% want labor peace, meaning less negotiations drama this year.
- ◆ Almost 70% are concerned that Delegates Wood and O’Donnell are preventing us from obtaining the Fair Share Agency Fee that has already been negotiated in our contract.
- ◆ Almost 44% of you are comfortable Working to Rule. Another 23% are moderately comfortable. The public should be encouraged to note that, even after all we went through last year, we are still willing to volunteer so much of our free time to benefit our schools and our students.
- ◆ Most of us expected what we received in our contracts. Remember, this survey came out before Dr. Martirano recommended to the BOE that we eliminate our furlough days.
- ◆ More than half of us want a COLA, step increase, full salary with no furloughs, and to keep our insurance costs at 85%/15% cost sharing in the upcoming agreement. I guess we have our work cut out for us!
- ◆ We are quite divided over paying higher health care costs in order to increase our earnings. Neutral was the highest vote getter at 25.9%.
- ◆ More than half of us want no increase to the 15% share of our health insurance cost share even if the change created a salary increase.
- ◆ There was a split regarding co-pays for prescriptions. 36.8% want things to remain the same at \$5/\$10, while 34.3% would pay \$10/\$20 if it meant salary improvements.
- ◆ However, reducing layoffs through increased co-pays was slightly less favorable. 39.9% would rather things remain the same at \$5/\$10 while 30.8% would approve of \$10/\$20 co-pays to retain all current personnel.
- ◆ People generally want money over stronger negotiated language.
- ◆ Our EASMC website is professional and clear according to most people who have visited it. There are still a minority of members who never have ([www.easmc.net](http://www.easmc.net)).
- ◆ 81.7% of you are satisfied with the representation you receive from EASMC. 8% are not. Others were neutral on the subject.
- ◆ Administrative members would like to see the ability to telecommute on bad weather days rather than having to take to the roads when conditions are poor.
- ◆ More than half of you are willing to attend Board of County Commissioners meetings, not spend personal money on school supplies, and to write to both the Board of Education members and the Board of County Commissioners.

The comments were all over the place with regards to what EASMC can do better, what EASMC is doing well, and questions you have. There were a couple of ideas that were repeated. First, members felt we should start the negotiations process earlier. Good news! Our first tentative negotiations date is November 8<sup>th</sup>. All other dates are scheduled through December with the intention of being finished by winter break. We agree that we need to present to the BOCC a budget showing what we need as opposed to being told what they will give. Also, there is a huge divide between those who felt we should be kinder and more respectful (the candlelight vigil was not well received according to the survey) and those who felt we need to be tougher and call more job actions. But the overwhelming majority of us said we want the public to have a high opinion of us and we want our community to understand the value of a high quality public school system. We will advocate for ourselves respectfully and with integrity. We will not accept permanent solutions to a temporary problem. And, most importantly, we will stand together through this negotiations process.

## Coming to a Theater Near You!

EASMC is pleased to announce a screening of the new film "American Teacher." Please watch your mailbox for the date, time and location of this timely film screening. Popcorn will be served and we hope to have a discussion following the screening. We have heard great things about the film from our colleagues in the urban districts. We look forward to bringing you this opportunity very soon. Keep your eye on your mailbox!



## Calendar

- ◆ October 21-22: MSEA RA and Convention
- ◆ October 25: BOCC meeting
- ◆ October 26: SMCPs BOE
- ◆ October 31: Happy Halloween!
- ◆ November 1: EASMC BOD
- ◆ November 1: BOCC Public Forum
- ◆ November 2: Save Our State Community Conversation
- ◆ November 4-5: MSEA BOD
- ◆ November 13-19: American Education Week
- ◆ November 8: EASMC and SMCPs Negotiations
- ◆ November 8: EASMC RA
- ◆ November 9: SMCPs BOE
- ◆ November 11: Veteran's Day
- ◆ November 17: Southern CBC



## EASMC Representative Incentive Program

About 6 years ago, the EASMC Board of Directors took action to create the EASMC Building Association Representative (AR) Incentive Program. The Board believed that if you were an active representative that attended most of the assembly meetings and who kept the members in your building informed, that you should be rewarded. The first incentive was a reimbursement of your local dues. This incentive seemed unpopular and few folks who were eligible to receive it actually took it. So, the Board changed the incentive.

Currently, if you are an elected EASMC Building Association Representative and you or an elected AR in your school attends 7 of 9 Representative Assemblies, your school is eligible to receive the incentive. The incentive is 2-nights stay in Ocean City during the MSEA Convention (based on double occupancy). EASMC will also provide a fuel stipend equivalent to what the MSEA RA delegates receive to offset the cost of the driving to Ocean City. This is a great incentive and we hope that many of our ARs will be eligible for the incentive this year. If you would like to be a Building AR, please see your current AR or email me at [wtwigg@mseane.org](mailto:wtwigg@mseane.org). Let's get informed and then celebrate in Ocean City next October!

## EASMC Representative Assembly:

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

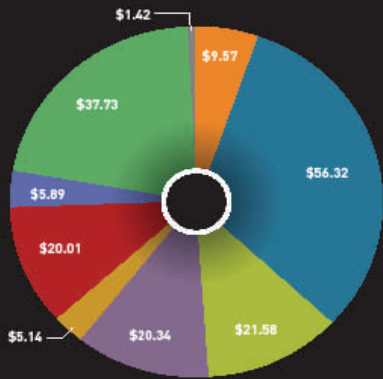
Is your school or site represented at the monthly RA? Is your building getting all the latest information and updates about what's happening across the system and within the Association? Would three or four of you be willing to share the responsibility of attending the RA on the second Tuesday of the 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 October 10, 2011?

<b>BBES</b>	Brian Rose, Murphy Holley
<b>CHS</b>	Nancy Lewis, Alice Willingham, Jessica Yohe, Karl Pence
<b>DES</b>	Melissa Formica
<b>EMS</b>	Chris Meyers, Michelle Kozak
<b>EES</b>	Zenia Wallish
<b>FLA</b>	Meddo Swaby
<b>FCTC</b>	Wendy Farrell, Amanda Granados
<b>GMHS</b>	Miriam Klapka
<b>LHS</b>	Stephanie Law, Ilene Cohen, Tammy Parsons
<b>LMDES</b>	Kim Edwards
<b>LPES</b>	Beverly Scroggins
<b>OES</b>	Patty Parsons
<b>PHES</b>	Trish Barry-Utzig
<b>PPES</b>	Renee Campbell
<b>RES</b>	Florence Grayson
<b>SRMS</b>	Kristen Breslin, Peg Johnson
<b>WMES</b>	Karen Myers



The chart below shows how your NEA dues (\$178.00; \$106.50 ESP) are allocated to support and represent members and affiliates in their efforts to achieve NEA's mission.



- Improve Teaching and Learning
- Support Strong States and Locals to Protect Member Interests
- Partnerships and Public Relations
- Legislative and Ballot Initiative Action
- Leadership Development and Constituency Support
- Legal Support
- Governance
- Administrative Support
- Contingency

## How Your Modified 2011-12 Dues Dollars Are Allocated

### \$9.57 (ESP \$5.73) Improve Teaching and Learning

Advocate for qualified teachers and support professionals in every classroom and work site; create learning conditions that close achievement gaps, particularly for low income and minority students; increase graduation rates through teacher preparation, certification and development, and working conditions that improve compensation, health care, retirement security; ethnic minority community outreach; and research and documentation on testing and accountability. Support English Language Learner policies, best practices and programs.

### \$56.32 (ESP \$33.70) Support Strong States and Locals to Protect Member Interests

Support the UniServ program, affiliate projects and assistance grants, and bargaining training. Research will emphasize increased salaries and benefits through tax equity, economic development, and adequate school funding; and compensation and organizing database technology. Recruit and retain members in all categories and produce communications for members and leaders.

### \$21.58 (ESP \$12.91) Partnerships and Public Relations

Strengthen existing partnerships and establish new relationships with diverse supportive organizations and businesses with an emphasis on outreach to ethnic minority communities and family-community organizations. Establish NEA's public image as an advocate for great public schools through TV, radio, print and cyber news.

### \$20.34 (ESP \$12.17) Legislative and Ballot Initiative Action

Build bipartisan support for public education that includes lobbying, government relations, state ballot initiative and legislative crisis fund, cyber lobbyists, members' education and mobilization on political issues.

### \$20.01 (ESP \$3.08) Leadership Development and Constituency Support

Provide for Regional Leadership Conferences, Minority and Women's Leadership Training, constituent group leadership development, support for councils including NCUA, ESP, Higher Education, NEA Retired and the NEA Student Program.

### \$20.01 (ESP \$11.97) Legal Support

Implement advocacy programs for members including the Unified Legal Services Program, Fidelity Bond, Association Professional Liability insurance, and a one million dollar per member Educators Employment Liability insurance program.

### \$5.89 (ESP \$3.53) Governance

Implement an inclusive, engaged governance process that fosters member participation and democratic decision making through such governing bodies as the Representative Assembly, NEA Board, NEA Executive Committee, and NEA committees and task forces.

### \$37.73 (ESP \$22.56) Administrative Support

Provide for the business operations to ensure organizational effectiveness through technology infrastructure, financial services, facilities services, and human resources to serve the needs of affiliates and members.

### \$1.42 (ESP \$0.85) Contingency

Provide funding for emergencies at the national, state, or local levels.

No dues dollars are used to support NEA Member Benefits programs.

## MSEA RA and Convention

The MSEA Representative Assembly and Convention took place at the Convention Center in Ocean City Maryland October 21 and 22. EASMC sent 14 representatives this year. Workshop attendees were treated to some wonderful professional development activities and the new Teacher Learning Lounge. Many vendors were there selling their wares and the Health Fair was bigger and better than ever. Delegates and workshop participants had the opportunity to view the film, "Race to Nowhere" and attend a question and answer session with the director. There was also a panel discussion on teacher certification with the Intermin State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Bernie Sandusky bringing remarks. Certification changes are a major concern since Maryland received the Race to the Top grant.

The delegates voted on an MSEA Bylaw Amendment, New Business Items, and Resolution changes. We heard speeches from the new Maryland Teacher of the Year, MSEA President Clara Floyd and Executive Director David Helfman. The delegates also voted to endorse the candidacy of Senator Ben Cardin and to elect a new member of the MSEA Board of Directors, Theresa Dudley of PGCEA.

Your EASMC delegation is Wanda Ruffo Twigg, Anna Laughlin, Mike Soly, Linda Miedzinski, Melinda Kearns, Billy Breslin, Liz Morris, Melissa Kiernan, Tammy Parsons, Dawn Pipkin, Michelle Kozak, Kristen Breslin, Meddo Swaby and Ilene Cohen. Please thank these fine delegates for representing you in the decision making process for the Maryland State Education Association.

If you would like to represent EASMC at next year's convention, the election takes place in the spring. Simply nominate yourself or have another member nominate you and throw your hat into the ring! We

can take up to 19 delegates and we always need alternates for folks who are unable to attend. If you need more information please contact Linda Miedzinski at [lmiedzinski@smcps.org](mailto:lmiedzinski@smcps.org) or Jennifer Tidd at [jtidd@mseanea.org](mailto:jtidd@mseanea.org).





Liz Purcell Leskinen  
UniServ Director

## Just Ask Liz



mise. If you are unable to come to a satisfactory agreement within the confines of the negotiated agreement, please call the office or email me; I will be glad to assist you.

### QUESTION:

Is a principal required to give teachers a copy of any letter written by a parent stating that a parent does not want a certain teacher for their child?

### ANSWER:

The EASMC negotiated agreement does not have language the states precisely this, but we do have language (see below) that requires SMCPSS to advise you when there is a concern or complaint about you, and to give you the opportunity to defend yourself. Moving a child from your room without explanation or discussion is inappropriate. Without proper communication, it could be perceived as a judgment that you have somehow failed or done something wrong, when the truth could be that the child is being moved to protect you or to simply make a difficult parent go away. In any case, I would suggest that you ask for a copy of the letter so that you can (1) respond appropriately to protect yourself and the school system, (2) collaborate with the principal to design a team solution, and (3) quickly and satisfactorily resolve the concern for the benefit of all stakeholders.

#### Article XI, Employee Protection

F. *Complaints concerning school personnel shall be handled as follows.*

1. *Employees and the Board agree that as a general rule, complaints concerning personnel should be dealt with at the lowest organizational level.*
2. *Decisions on complaints shall not be made without interviewing the subordinate against whom the complaint was lodged.*
3. *In order to respect the rights of all persons involved, each will have the right to be informed of all scheduled meetings concerning the complaint.*
4. *Any parent, student, or other third person complaints made to any member of the administration that are used in any manner in evaluating such personnel will be investigated and called to his/her attention, unless the investigation is being conducted by a law enforcement agency or the Department of Social Services.*
5. *Anonymous complaints that have not been verified shall not be used against the employee in matters of discipline or evaluation.*

### QUESTION:

Can a principal make you work more than one duty (i.e. breakfast duty, lunch duty, bus duty, etc.) during a day?

### ANSWER:

Under normal circumstances, the principal can assign you to as many duties as he/she wants as long as you are not assigned duties that are scheduled or require work before/after your negotiated work hours, you get a 30-minute duty-free lunch, and you get the appropriate amount of daily planning time. Thus, while the negotiated agreement does not dictate a specific maximum number of duties, it does limit the time available for such assignments and therefore imposes boundaries by default.

The negotiated agreement also imposes limitations for several special circumstances. Teachers working from a cart (without a classroom) or assigned to teach in an area in which they are not highly qualified should not be assigned ANY additional duties. We negotiated this language to recognize and relieve the significant additional burdens already imposed on teachers in these two scenarios.

#### Article IV, Working Conditions; Paragraph A, School-based Employees:

8. *In order to organize and plan for class and material transitions unique to their floating assignments, teachers without their own rooms shall not be assigned additional duties within the duty day before or after school.*

#### Article XX, Teacher Observation and Evaluation:

- G. *At the request of the Board, employees occasionally accept assignments that are not within their certification area due to the Board's difficulty in filling positions within critical shortage areas. During the first two years of such assignments (if the assignment extends beyond a year), these personnel shall not be penalized on their evaluations or in any other form for lack of expertise in the assigned area. During this two-year period, the employee shall not be assigned extra duties (bus duty, lunch duty, homeroom, etc.) before or after the student day and the Board shall provide additional support to assist the employee in gaining knowledge in the assigned area.*

Some members each year question the "requirement" to participate on school committees. Again, you cannot be required to serve on a committee unless appropriate time is being made within the duty day to perform all of the committee responsibilities. The bottom line is that if you feel an assignment is unfair, I recommend that you have an honest conversation with your principal, seek to understand the reasoning, explain your concerns, and seek a compro-

## HAPPY HALLOWEEN

