



BULLETIN

APRIL 2009

UNITY...NOW MORE THAN EVER

Board of Directors member Lisa Norrington records Delegate John Olszewski, Jr.'s vote in support of our Fairness in Negotiations Act during TABCO'S Lobby Night in Annapolis.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: A Tale of Two Schools

It was the best of education; it was the worst of education.

The teachers at "Desirable School" smile when they come to work. They make comments such as, "I love coming to work here. I feel valued as a teacher and member of the staff. Teachers are empowered to make decisions and lead staff development. I have felt supported and encouraged in my professional growth. Our school provides a dynamic learning environment for our students. I have never worked at a better school. There is a welcoming environment in the building. Our administrators provide us additional time for data collection, which helps with the increased data demands. I feel a sense of team work under this administration. Our administrative team is extremely supportive of teachers." Administrators attain mean scores above 3.0 on the Perception Survey, approaching the highest mean score of 4.0 on most or all questions.



The teachers at "Desirable School" go above and beyond, yet are not intimidated or required to do so. They do their best because they have administrators that are a part of the team who treat teachers and other staff as educational col-

leagues instead of subordinates. The administrators remember what it was like to be a teacher and how demands have greatly increased. The administrators at "Desirable School" find ways to be supportive because they know that the achievements of the teachers, students, administrators, and school are all interdependent upon the work of the entire school community. The atmosphere at "Desirable School" is enjoyable to experience each day and the administrators take the lead in setting that tone.



Cheryl Bost
TABCO President

Just down the road is "Less than Desirable School." Teachers dread coming to work, yet they come for the children and do their best despite the dismal and sometimes intimidating atmosphere. Teachers make comments such as, "Our school is headed downhill and desperately needs revamping. I do not feel safe here. I look around and see teachers who are tired,

See "A Tale of Two Schools," page 2

Did you TELL Maryland? In Baltimore County, 80.4 % did

~Angela Leitzer, Bulletin Editor

Preliminary results showed a nearly 62% response rate statewide on the survey of educators. The TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading, Learning) Maryland survey had mixed response rates—from a low of 39% in Prince Georges County to a high of 97% in Somerset County. Baltimore County's response rate of 80.4% was the highest of the 'big seven' counties.

We contacted Governor Martin O'Malley to ask for his reaction to educators' participation and he told us, "The statewide response rate to the TELL Maryland survey is encouraging. We know the recruitment and retention of quality, dedicated teachers has a direct impact on student achievement. This data has the potential for both dramatic and subtle improvements in teaching and learning environments throughout Maryland, each with its own unique impact on student achievement. We honor our educators by listening to them, by including them in the process, and by engaging them so that we may continue to build upon our progress as the number one public school system in America. Partners like local superin-

tendents, local organizational leaders, and the Partners Coalition played a big role in the success of this survey by encouraging individual educators to take advantage of this unique opportunity."

President Cheryl Bost was tapped by the governor to serve on the survey task force. Encouraging teachers to take advantage of the opportunity to input their opinions on a wide range of questions, TABCO ran several contests. The first and second schools to reach a 100% participation rate were Norwood ES and Dumbarton MS. President Bost delivered coffee and donuts to the staffs of both schools. Additionally, all schools with 50% or higher participation were entered into a drawing for pizza lunches. The winners were: Catonsville HS, Chesapeake Terrace ES, Franklin MS, Gunpowder ES, and Villa Cresta ES.

Survey responses, however, are only as good as the changes/improvements they produce. So, what are the next steps? According to the survey website (tellmaryland.org), "The initial data will be available in April 2009 for schools

See "Did you TELL?," page 2

“A Tale of Two Schools” (from page 1)

over-worked and confused by constant, unclear last minute directions from administrators. Teachers are too intimidated to serve on the Faculty Council or to bring any concerns to the administration. Leadership and a vision for our future is non-existent. One of the most disturbing problems is that our administrators appear to lead by fear. Supplies are not provided in a timely fashion—or not at all. Our principal is all about being in charge and having the decision-making power. Our principal shows favoritism towards some staff members. Staff members are yelled at. Everyone is so overloaded with unreasonable expectations that the staff has no interest in bonding. They just want to go home.”

These teachers feel helpless and drained each day. People feel they are not valued and are constantly in fear. The staff lacks cohesiveness because there is no sense of team-building and there are select favorites among staff members. Teachers come to work to do their job and don't want to go above and beyond. Sometimes the administration tries to build allies, which creates a split among staff members. The administrators at “Less Than Desirable School” are superficial when superiors or parents are in attendance, but enjoy wielding their power and intimidation on a daily basis. Teachers continue to work because they care for students, yet often their energy and time is taken away because of lack of communication or lack of support provided for ever-increasing demands. Life at “Less Than Desirable School” is a job teachers go to each day, though they continue to hope for improvements. Many will resign from the system, transfer to a school with a collaborative working environment, or simply leave the profession.

The book *A Tale of Two Cities* written by Charles Dickens was a fictional tale. Unfortunately, our teachers know that *A Tale of Two Schools* is not fiction. The names of the schools are obviously fictional, but the comments are not. The comments included are taken directly from various Perception Surveys from around the county. This depiction of differences is not new, but at a time when our school system has placed unrealistic testing and data demands on teachers, schools and students, it exemplifies the problems they face. Our consistently high teacher turnover rate is a red flag showing that we must make more schools like our “desirable school” and address systemic needs. So, why can some of our administrators make life in some schools “desirable” for all, while others make some schools “less than desirable?” Is it power? Is it fear? Is it coming from leaders higher up? Is it a lack of quality administrative candidates? What is it?

Principals are the key leaders in each of our schools.

Data demands come and go, superiors come and go, educational trends come and go, staff members and students come and go, but it is key for the administrative team to build a safe, empowering, and dynamic learning and teaching environment during the time they lead a school.

Other staff members are not without responsibility in the success of the administrative team. It is equally important for teachers to build a safe, empowering, and dynamic learning environment for students. Also, teachers need to step up and become an integral part of building a positive working and learning environment when provided the opportunity.

I applaud the administrators who scored 3.0 and higher on nearly every question on the Perception Survey when completed by a majority of the teaching staff. They know who they are and their teachers show their appreciation just as the administrators show the staff they are valued equals in the school. These administrators will leave a positive legacy wherever they serve.

To the principals or assistant principals who consistently scored below 3.0 on many of the questions and received comments like those for “Less Than Desirable School,” I challenge you to make a change. Reflect upon your skills as an educational leader and develop a plan with your staff to build a positive and dynamic learning environment for all. Accept that mistakes have been made and use the data and comments provided to work to make improvements from this point forward. Or accept that the job is not the right fit and allow someone else the opportunity to lead. We are here to help in any way we can so that all of our teachers work in a “desirable school.”

and districts to use in identifying strengths and recognizing areas in need of improvement.”

Other states have conducted similar surveys and are several years into the process of applying the information to school improvement. North Carolina has an impressive website (ncteachingconditions.org) which indicates that survey results are impacting teaching and learning conditions in the state. Among the interesting documents on the site is one entitled, “Creating an Atmosphere of Trust.” This brief was based on the survey results and notes, for example, “From the working conditions data, we know that the factors most strongly associated with trust include:

- 1) a school-wide commitment to a shared vision;
- 2) an effective process for making collaborative decisions and solving problems; and
- 3) school leadership that consistently supports teachers.”

Although these statements, and most others on the website, do not indicate new findings (teachers have been saying these things forever), they are established, along with many others, as guidelines for the mission of improving schools from a *mandated state-wide position*. The Maryland coalition statement of purpose, which may be accessed at the TELL Maryland website, asserts the intention to utilize the collected data to bring about effective changes in a collaborative manner.

“DID YOU TELL?”

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NOTES & news briefs

STAY CURRENT: See President Bost's email updates.
(Note: the TABCO website is being converted to a new format ... please consider it to be "under construction" through April.)



NEA Past President Reg Weaver to Keynote Annual Dinner

We are pleased to announce that we have secured **Reg Weaver**, the immediate past president of the NEA, as the keynote speaker at the **48th Annual Retirement & Recognition Dinner, to be held on Thursday, May 7, at Martin's East.** Reg is known as an exciting and motivational speaker.

Reg Weaver has been named one of *Ebony* magazine's 100 Most Influential Black Americans for his national influence. He is the recipient of the 2005 Spirit of Liberty award presented by People for the American Way as well as the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute's 2006 George Meany Latino Leadership Award. Weaver also received the National Conference of Black Mayors President's Award, the *Ebony* Magazine Influential Black Educators Award and the Illinois Education Association's Human Relations Award.

Weaver frequently provides a critical voice on public edu-

cation for national publications, including *The New York Times*, *USA Today* and *The Washington Post*, along with decision-maker publications, such as *Congressional Quarterly*, *Education Week* and *Education Daily*." (www.vtnea.org)

He has traveled worldwide to work toward the NEA's goal of Great Public Schools for all and has been a major force in seeking to improve *No Child Left Behind*.

We are honored to welcome Reg Weaver to speak to our retirees, and to join the ranks of our Recognition Award winners, as he accepts our thanks and acknowledgement of his contributions to public education.

Don't miss this very special event! Contact sstrickland@mstanea.org to reserve your place at the dinner.



TABCO & MSTA elections results

We are disappointed to report that our member participation in the recent MSTA elections was only 18% (overall state participation was 21%).

MSTA election results

MSTA Vice President—Betty Weller of Kent County
MSTA Board of Directors—Bill Fisher of Charles County; Jane Stern, Phyllis Parks-Robinson and Amy Watkins, all of Montgomery County.

NEA Director—Wanda Twigg of St. Mary's County
NEA Delegates—None of our Baltimore County candidates were elected to gain state funding.

There is another vacant seat for NEA Director. Delegates to the October MSTA Convention will receive ballots for this election.

TABCO ELECTIONS

President—Cheryl Bost

Vice President—Abby Beytin

Board of Directors—District I, Stacy Enty;

District II—Stephanie Foy; District III—Lisa Norrington

NOTE: Thirty-one schools did not turn in ballots by the March 31 deadline. School-by-school results have been provided to each school for review—see the Association Representative Chairperson.

Note to those elected as NEA delegates in the TABCO election: Keep in touch with TABCO secretary Teresa McDowell and President Bost for pertinent information and deadlines.

Elections Reminder to Association Representatives: May is the month to hold building elections for Faculty Council and School Improvement Team members for 2009-2010. In addition, elections for Association Representatives should be held. Contact your TABCO UniServ Director if you need assistance with elections procedures.

Retirement Alert: 400+ not enrolled

Over 400 BCPS employees are in jeopardy regarding their retirement/pension benefits. These employees do not have their paperwork in place for eligibility.

Counties all over the state were alerted that hundreds of employees who are having deductions taken and who are receiving pension statements are not adequately enrolled in the state retirement and pension system. These individuals must complete the appropriate paperwork by **April 29**.

Those who are impacted will receive letters via standard U.S. mail or certified mail, requiring them to accurately and fully complete the pension application again. Completion requires the following: copy of valid ID, completed membership application, and completed beneficiary designation. All items must be notarized. To assist employees in completing the process, BCPS will hold sessions with notaries and support provided running from April 21 through April 29.

Advice to all employees: keep all employment records, certification records, pay stubs, observation and evaluation reports, and all other pertinent employment papers in a secure location.

25 YEAR PINS

Are you an educator and TABCO member who has served for 25 years? The TABCO Membership Committee would like to recognize your service with a lapel pin.

Please contact:
tmcdowell@mstanea.org
to request your pin.

Bulletin Board

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

NEW! What are YOU doing with your time this summer? Are you open minded, coach-able, and interested in healthy living and good nutrition? I NEED YOU! The Health and Wellness industry is expected to be a trillion dollar industry by the year 2010! Join us in helping others with their physical and financial wellness. Earn supplemental income that is residual. Become a successful market rep for an international, 24 yr. old, debt-free company. Get paid to set up customer accounts. Generous compensation plan. Contact Natalie Boecker; 410-252-1879.

www.TheWhyCircle.com/nkboecker

Needed: Retired or Other Certified Teachers

To work two days a week in private schools with Title I academically needy students. Teachers are needed in the areas of reading and math during the school day. The current rate of pay is \$27.30 per hour.

Please contact Carol Ann Ruth at the Office of Title I for more detailed information: 410-887-3487.

Camp Milldale: Summer Staff Needed—June 22 – August 15. Searching for staff and specialists to be part of our camp team in Baltimore County providing programs for children ages 5-15. Positions available—Counselors & Specialty Camp Staff: Senior Counselors, Special Needs Counselors, Adventure Camp Staff, Sports Camp Staff. Specialist Positions: Aquatics Staff, Arts & Crafts, Music. Interested individuals should contact Dianne Newborn at dnewborn@jcc.org or download a job application from our website at www.campmilldale.org

The Community College of Baltimore County is looking for instructors for its Summer Camp Program. Full-time positions are available on the Essex campus. Part-time positions available at other locations. Experience with summer camps preferable. Pay is \$24-\$29 an hour based on experience. Average 15-30 hours per week. Some Particular Needs: Forensics, Japanese Anime, Math Teachers, Keyboarding (Typing), Puppeteer, Web Page Design, World Traveler Class, SAT Prep. We are also looking for summer camp staff—morning and after school providers. Send resume to: ARobinson@ccbcmd.edu and/or lrobertson@ccbcmd.edu. Please include subject area of expertise.

Jewish Community Center's Noah's Ark Camp looking for teachers: We are seeking energetic, creative, outgoing individuals to be a part of our camp team. Our preschool camps in Owings Mills offer a fun-filled summer of indoor and outdoor play for ages 2 to 5. We are seeking: Teachers/Counselors with a degree in Early Childhood or Elementary Education as well as specialists such as Nature and Art. For more information please contact Gabrielle Burger, Camp Director at 410-356-5200 ext. 508 or at gburger@jcc.org

Beth Tfiloh Camps seeks head counselors and instructors of camp craft, singing, nature, sports, art, and swimming. The Owings Mills day camp runs Monday-Friday from 9 AM-4 PM for 8 weeks (June 22-August 14). Visit our website at www.btcamps.org or phone 410-517-3451. **YOUR CHILD ATTENDS FREE!**

Association Events

April

- 23—Representative Assembly (*note: date change*)
- 25—Third Annual KidCare Walk, The Avenue at White Marsh
- 28—National Board Certification Workshop, TABCO Towers, 22nd floor
- 29—TABCO Board of Directors mtg.
- 30—BCPS Job Fair

May

- 5—National Teacher Day
- 5—Board of Education mtg.
- 7—48th Annual Retirement & Recognition Dinner, Martin's East
- 19—Board of Education mtg.
- 20—TABCO Board of Directors mtg.
- 21—TABCO Representative Assembly
- 25—Memorial Day—schools/TABCO closed

June

- 3—NEA Delegate Caucus
- 3—TABCO Board of Directors mtg.
- 6—NEA Caucus—PGCEA
- 9—Board of Education mtg.

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MSTA
www.mstanea.org
TABCO
<http://tabco.mstanea.org>

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