



Special Area teachers gather to address concerns at TABCO-sponsored forum



# BULLETIN

NOVEMBER 2008

UNITY...NOW MORE THAN EVER

## Forum identifies concerns of "Special Areas"

TABCO responded to the increasing marginalization of non-tested content areas by holding a forum to identify needs, problems, and courses of action. A strong contingent of teachers of art, library, music, physical education, technology and family studies turned out to express their concerns. As NCLB requirements for test scores have supplanted the time-honored philosophy of educating the whole child, teachers of non-tested subjects have seen their programs cut; their students denied access to a full range of educational opportunities, and their value as educators openly degraded by system officials.

A number of these teachers reported being told by a member of BCPS leadership that they should "look for other jobs," that they have value only insofar as they serve those who teach core subjects, and in at least one case, that a special area teacher is unwelcome in the training sessions for future administrators. As obnoxious as this behavior may be, it is not too far from the general attitude found in the system at large.

At the same time that the system takes credit for the accomplishments, so visible to the public, of our student artists, athletes, and musicians, it continues to allow those programs to be decimated. School administrators are given license to pull students from subjects that address their multiple intelligences and divert teachers from teaching in their non-tested content areas in a single-minded quest to raise test scores in math and reading. This tunnel vision, rather than enhancing the education of our students, is squeezing the life and color from their school experiences—despite the overwhelming collective wis-

See "Special Areas," page 2

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Waste of human resources results when procedures lack common sense & respect

A student in your classroom is not very pleased with the grades he has been earning so he has been somewhat uncooperative. In class today, he is very disruptive and argumentative; you request that the student stay after class for a minute so you can try to resolve the situation. After the class leaves, you speak with the student about his recent behavior and what he needs to do to improve his grades and his behavior. As the next group is entering your classroom, you bring the meeting to a close, suggesting that his parents meet with you and him to resolve the situation if things do not improve. You notice that the student is not pleased with the thought of his parents getting involved.

*At the end of the day, your principal comes to you, tells you to gather anything you want from your room, and says that you are not report to work tomorrow. You are told that the area office will contact you as to what you are supposed to do the following day. The principal provides no other details and escorts you to the door.*

Imagine yourself in this position. You're confused about why this is happening, unsure if you have a job or not; you're trying to reflect on what happened

to cause this. A million other feelings go through your body as you collect a few things before you leave the building, not knowing when, or if, you will return.

The way this scenario plays out in most cases in Baltimore County is that the teacher finds out within a day or two that he or she has been accused of touching the student who was kept after class to talk about grades and behavior. The case has already been reported to the Department of Social Services (DSS), and in some cases, the police. The teacher is directed to report to the "warehouse" at Pulaski Park in place of reporting to school. Often times, he or she is asked to make a written statement about the incident. The case may be picked up by DSS--in most cases it isn't--then BCPS starts its own internal investigation or "interrogation" to see if the teacher acted "inappropriately." All of this happens prior to the employee being returned to work; in most cases the teacher is kept at the warehouse (with pay) anywhere from one to ten months (and sometimes longer) with very little communication on the status of her or his case.



Cheryl Bost  
TABCO President

Did the principal ask student or adult witnesses near or inside the classroom if they witnessed any touching? Is there a mark of any kind on the student? Has any preliminary investigation

See "Waste of human resources," page 2

**07-08 STATS REVEAL OVER-REACTION**

**130** student allegations against teachers

**111** cases reported by BCPS TO DSS

**16 CASES ACCEPTED BY DSS:**

**11:** "RULED OUT"

**4:** "UNSUBSTANTIATED"

**ONLY 2:** "INDICATED" (ABOUT 1% OF ALLEGATIONS)

## “Waste of human resources”

(from page 1)

been done? This scenario and similar ones are plaguing employees in this county in great numbers. There must be a stop to this unprofessional, unjust treatment of staff members. The statistics from 2007-2008 clearly indicate a need to review the practice BCPS follows in student allegation cases. As reported at the 2008 Safe Schools Conference, there were 130 student allegation cases and of those, 111 were reported to the Department of Social Services (DSS). DSS accepted only 16 of the 111. Of the 16 cases accepted by DSS, 11 were “ruled out,” 4 were “unsubstantiated,” and **only 2** were “indicated.” No one in this organization condones neglect or abuse of students in any way, but these statistics show an over-reporting issue—an automatic assumption of guilt—that is negatively impacting employees in this county.

Although the negative impact does not include the loss of pay, it incurs the far more costly loss of an employee’s reputation in the community. The cost includes the loss of dignity when employees are sent to a warehouse instead of teaching; the loss of education for the students left to be taught for months by a non-highly qualified substitute; the loss of money that goes to pay for a substitute to cover the classes. Perhaps the greatest loss is the lack of confidence in Baltimore County Public Schools—the lack of trust that both students and employees will be treated with respect.

On behalf of our members, we are seeking intervention from the Superintendent and his staff, the Board of Education, the public, the law enforcement establishment, and any other entity that can assist in abolishing the practice of tarnishing the reputation and good standing of innocent staff members. In addition, we seek to remedy the practice of depriving students

wisdom advocating the development of all aspects of the human mind and body to produce citizens capable of handling the rapidly evolving future world.

Among the issues most frequently identified by the forum attendees were:

- not feeling valued by the school system
- lack of support for their subject areas by administrators
- students being pulled from non-core subjects for remediation in math and reading
- teachers being required to teach out of their content areas (diverted from teaching subjects in which they are educated and prepared and are highly qualified; to teach subjects, such as math for which they are unprepared)
- workload issues, including having many different preps, insufficient time for data entry and preparation of huge num-

of an education delivered by a qualified teacher while that teacher is forced to be absent for months due to a student allegation.

### To begin to remedy this situation:

- ▶ We are seeking a revision to BCPS Board Rule 4004 that calls for teachers to be removed immediately.
- ▶ We are seeking for BCPS to allow administrators to conduct a preliminary investigation, and if that investigation demonstrates innocence on the part of the employee, to decline removal of that employee from teaching.
- ▶ We are seeking a commitment by BCPS to return teachers within three days when DSS declines to take the case, or considers the case “ruled out.”
- ▶ We are seeking an addition to the Student Behavior Handbook that delineates consequences for students who falsely accuse employees of abuse or neglect.
- ▶ We are seeking all alternatives needed to protect employees from false allegations that keep them from teaching students or conducting their job for any period of time.



We will continue to engage relevant parties in this discussion until we can bring about a more humane process for dealing with unsubstantiated allegations.

In the meantime, we remind TABCO members to endeavor to avoid situations that allow for allegations to be easily made; to avoid, as much as possible, individual meetings with students; to contact the TABCO office as soon as you are made aware of an allegation against you; and do not make any statements either verbal or written until you have consulted your TABCO UniServ Director. TABCO offers a staff training on liability issues which covers these situations and others. Those who are interested in this training may go through their TABCO building rep to contact their TABCO UniServ Director.

bers of interims, etc.

-staffing decisions that split teachers among multiple schools, or result in elementary schools having multiple teachers (i.e., a school that has a different art teacher for each of the five days of the week); impact of these splits on reasonable schedules and class sizes

TABCO will compile the written data collected at the forum and support development of actions to address these issues. Special area teachers who missed the meeting are encouraged to contact us with their thoughts—and to send their information to be added to the contact lists being generated to disseminate news on participation in future events.

~Angela Leitzer, Bulletin Editor

## “Special Areas”

(from page 1)

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# NOTES & news briefs

## TABCO & ROOKIE Award nominees needed—see nomination form insert

STAY CURRENT:

[www.mstanea.org/tabco](http://www.mstanea.org/tabco)  
for TABCO current events,  
news, and information



Each nominee's application is judged by a select group of teachers who remain anonymous. The committee reviews the achievements listed by the nominators before making recommendations to the TABCO Board of Directors. The decision of the Board is final.

The nominee and nominator, if eligible, must be current members of TABCO.

Nominators must provide specific information about the nominee's achievements and contributions, submitting the nomination form by **January 15, 2009**. At least three letters of support are required and must be submitted to TABCO by **February 23, 2009**.

The Recognition Committee handles all nominations, with their support materials, in the strictest confidence. If you wish your nominee to have copies of these materials, please make copies prior to submitting them to TABCO, since all materials received become the property of TABCO and cannot be returned or released. Please note that if your nominee is selected, a photograph will be requested.

**Celebrate our achievements as outstanding educators—nominate the best among us!**

## New TABCO Bylaws document passes

An all-member vote on the new document, which underwent an extensive review and revision over the past three years, resulted in approval by 97% of those voting.

The document immediately replaces the old Constitution and Standing Rules. The committee that conducted the revision included Chairperson Angela Leitzer, Middleborough Elementary School; Brian Barker, Loch Raven High School; Gregory Kallaur, Ridgely Middle School; as well as officers and members of the Board of Directors: President Cheryl Bost, Vice President Christine Beard, Treasurer John R. Wilkins, Abby Beytin and TABCO Executive Director Bob Anzelc.

## BCPS Student Handbook Update

All members should have received an email from President Cheryl Bost, via their building reps, on November 25. Implications of the Telecommunications Acceptable Use permission form included in the Student Handbook for completion by parent are more far-reaching than many realized. Some of these include use of group or candid photographs for yearbooks, classroom displays of student work and/or photographs, and work on computers connected to the internet (including internet-based assessments). Permission must be given even for displays of student work without names attached. Teachers should be provided with a list of students whose parents have denied permission.

For more detail, see President Bost's email and for additional clarification, contact the Office of Student Support Services (410-887-4360).

## SCHOOL TEAM DATES SET FOR PRESENCE AT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

TABCO members are needed to continue showing a strong presence as we head into this year's negotiations process with the school system. Meetings are held at the ESS building, room 114 on the BCPS campus at 6901 Charles St., Towson 21204. December assignments are shown below:

### *December 2, 2008- 7:30 pm*

Heberville ES, Martin Boulevard ES, Bear Creek ES, Grange ES, Chatsworth ES, Franklin ES, Sparks ES, Westchester ES, Carney ES, Deep Creek MS, Pikesville MS, Rosedale Center, Perry Hall HS, Sparrow Point HS, Western School of Technology

### *December 16, 2008- Work session- no public comment- 6:30 pm*

Stoneleigh ES, Red House Run ES, Pleasant Plains ES, Powhatan ES, Prettyboy ES, Holabird MS, Chase ES, Featherbed ES, Fort Garrison ES, Eastwood Center, Sparrows Point MS, Franklin MS, Towson HS, Woodlawn HS, Vincent Farms ES

## 403b decisions pose dilemmas for many

Over 6,000 BCPS employees currently participate in the 403(b) and 403(b7) programs. As a result of the recent BCPS bid process and our actions to keep BCPS from dropping to only one vendor, BCPS will be offering 5 vendors for employee participation: AIG Valic, ING, MetLife, Lincoln, and Security Benefits (formerly NEA Valuebuilder).

To date, BCPS has not put in place a third party administrator (TPA) as stipulated in the motion that the Board of Education approved. As a result, all of the vendors are in a state of "limbo," waiting to see how BCPS is going to proceed with the new IRS regulations that will be effective January 1, 2009.

We strongly urge those currently working with vendors who will no longer be approved and those not currently participating in a payroll deduction investment program to contact our endorsed vendor, Integrated Financial Solutions. Tom Henry, Bill Bush, Damion Dengler, or Rich Davies may be reached at 410-480-0007. This is a TABCO/NEA approved vendor and will work with TABCO and BACE members even if you don't invest with them.

**403b workshop  
December 10  
cafeteria at Loch Raven HS  
4:30-6:30.**

# Bulletin Board

## In memory of...



**Elizabeth (Bea) Holston**, a retired teacher from Pleasant Plains ES, passed away recently. Her final gift to the cause of giving knowledge was the donation of her body to science.

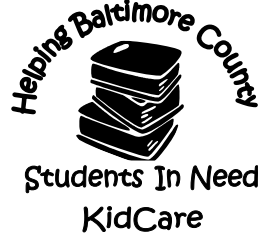
The Bulletin will include notices to memorialize the passing of our members. Please notify us (email [bookends@comcast.net](mailto:bookends@comcast.net) with the name, school and death date of any TABCO member who should be listed). We cannot be held responsible for the omission of information that we have not received.

## Association Events HIGHLIGHTS

~For a complete listing of Association events, see the TABCO website

- December 6: New York Bus Trip
- December 10: 403b Workshop, Loch Raven HS, 4:30
- December 11: Representative Assembly & Holiday Dinner
- January 8: Finance Management Workshop at Loch Raven HS
- January 10: Annual Legislative Breakfast at Crowne Plaza Hotel (formerly the Holiday Inn) in Timonium
- January 14: Budget Hearing at Ridge Ruxton
- January 29: Representative Assembly

Entertainment books are on sale at TABCO for \$26—all profits go to KidCare. Already this year \$7,040 has been disbursed to 176 students. As the year draws to a close, please consider a tax-deductible gift to KidCare—charity at work for our kids!



## Coming in December— assessTrax & ESALs:

- ▶ How are ESALs (and others) affected by assessTrax expectations? We want to explore this topic that we are hearing about. What do you want us to know?
- ▶ What are your positives and negatives?
- ▶

Send your comments to the Bulletin Editor  
[bookends@comcast.net](mailto:bookends@comcast.net)  
Your input counts!

"The arts humanize the curriculum while affirming the interconnectedness of all forms of knowing. They are a powerful means to improve general education."

~Charles Fowler

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

### 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.

**TUTORS:** Subject area teachers needed to tutor secondary math, chemistry, physics, biology, SAT prep., English, reading, Spanish, French, Latin, special education, and elementary subjects. Please contact [professionaltutoringservice@comcast.net](mailto:professionaltutoringservice@comcast.net) or 410-486-3464.

**Supplemental Income:** large, inc.,500, International Wellness Company seeking educators. Create a reliable, residual income. Educate consumers on healthier, safer products. No selling! Free training; dynamic support team willing to help you reach your goals. Contact Natalie Boecker: 410-252-1879 or 410-241-6949; [nkboecker@wedeliverwellness.com](mailto:nkboecker@wedeliverwellness.com) <http://www.thewhycircle.com/nkboecker>

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**TABCO Office Hours: MONDAY—THURSDAY, 9:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. ~FRIDAY—9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.**