



TABCO member Leslie Whiten is interviewed by Fox News reporter outside October 7 Board of Education meeting.



BULLETIN

OCTOBER 2008

UNITY...NOW MORE THAN EVER

TABCO PROTEST SEES POSITIVE RESULTS Board of Ed responds to employee pleas

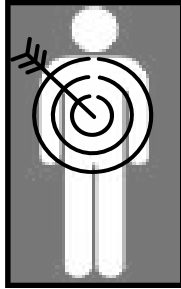
In a quick turnaround on an initial proposal to reduce 403(b) retirement plan providers to one, Lincoln Financial Group, the Board of Education voted on October 21 to extend contracts to five vendors: AIG Retirement, ING Life Insurance & Annuity Company, Lincoln Financial Group, MetLife Resources, and Security Financial Resources & Security Distributors, Inc.

This action followed the defeat of the original recommendation to move to a single provider at the Board meeting on October 7. Although we do not know the exact number of letters received by Board members prior to their meeting which saw the protest gathering of between 500 and 600 educators at the BCPS Charles Street campus, we do know that the letters made a strong impression on the Board. Several members, including Rodger Janssen, commented on the time they had spent reading through and considering the appeals made by teachers and others. After a motion by Joseph Palozzi to reject the single vendor recommendation, several Board members spoke in favor of his motion. Following discussion, the motion to reject the single vendor recommendation passed.

Educators who had responded to TABCO's "Call to Action" lined the driveway from the ESS building to the Greenwood Mansion offices and several spoke with members of the television and print media about their lack of confidence in a system that seemed to have disregarded them, starting last spring when no provision for a cost of living adjustment was made in the school system budget. Veteran teachers were particularly incensed over the initial single vendor

See "Positive results," page 2

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Were your parents failures? ...the blame game



The testing madness continues to spiral out of control and I am constantly amazed when I see to what lengths some will go. Recently I learned that one BCPS area assistant superintendent is requiring principals to provide the names of teachers who taught students who scored "basic" on the latest MSA—that list will be compared to their observation write-ups to check on whether those teachers are receiving satisfactory observations and evaluations when their students are scoring "basic." So, of course, the implication is that if a student scores "basic" on the MSA, the only logical conclusion is that his teacher is not a good teacher. Makes sense to me...NOT!

After I vented on the absurdity of assuming a blanket reason as to why students score differently from one year to the next, I thought about my parents and siblings. Based on the belief that if one set of students doesn't master a set of skills at the same time or as well as the previous class of students, my parents should be labeled "unsatisfactory parents."

My oldest brother, six years my senior, was an average to above average student who excelled in science and physics as he entered into middle school and high school. He excelled in judo and loved to take things apart, although they never seemed to get put back together. In the MSA world, he would have probably scored proficient in some areas and advanced in others. Then there was the middle son. He seemed to excel academically in everything, especially when it

came to math. He was in honor societies, and was eventually part of Mensa, a high IQ society. He graduated in the top 5% of his class. In the MSA world, he would have definitely scored advanced across the board. Then there was the baby girl! I did average to above average in school, but I was also heavily involved in dancing, girl scouts, baby sitting, and teaching Sunday school. As I got older I excelled in English and child development classes, and never really liked the chemistry, physics, or higher level math classes. I was probably your steady proficient student with some advanced scores on MSA.

If we apply the theory of accountability as this system leader does (and the basic premise of NCLB) my parents were "unsatisfactory parents." They raised the scores with their second child as compared to their first, but dropped back down to proficient on their third child. In today's educational system they might be placed on a "parenting assistance plan." This may seem funny, but what we are doing to public education and public educators is not funny. It's sad, and dishonest, and verges on criminal.

My parents have never shirked their responsibility or accountability in raising their children to be successful, productive citizens. They nurtured each of us and allowed us to have our own identity and likes and dislikes as young children and young adults. They provided us with opportunities in academics, arts, athletics, and so much more yet never forced



Cheryl Bost
TABCO President

See "The blame game," page 2

“The blame game”

(from page 1)

us into the same path at the same time as the sibling before. Most importantly they never openly compared us to each other in order to measure another’s success or failures.

Our students are distinctive young human beings; they are not empty

carcasses on an educational assembly line that is continuously speeding up. What makes us the unique human beings that we are is that we look, think, and learn differently and at different rates; we have different talents and interests, and different goals. Our school system claims to celebrate diversity, yet at the same time it expects every child in every grade to do the same thing, learn the same way, all at the same time, and then compares them to the students of the previous year.

My parents knew the wisdom of allowing each of their children to have the freedom to pursue their interests at an appropriate pace, resulting in an oldest child who became a successful physician’s assistant in neurosurgery, co-founded a company and co-authored a book. Instead of forcing the second child to follow in the footsteps of his older brother, they let him focus on other talents, and he is now the president of a Fortune 500 company handling over 40% of the petroleum in Pennsylvania. Thankfully, they allowed their daughter the same opportunity to develop her uniqueness in ways that led

her to become a 4th grade teacher, Teacher of the Year, and president of the Teachers Association in the 25th largest school system in the United States.

As I consider my family’s results, I would say to this area superintendent that my parents were very successful. I would not chastise them for producing children with different results, nor for tolerating different needs and achievement in different ways. Equally as successful are the thousands of teachers who greet students from all walks of life with special talents, needs and circumstances, with all levels of previous education or lack of education and move them forward in academic achievement. No high stakes test, no data chart, and nobody sitting in an office far removed from the school house can truly evaluate success or do what educators do.

Teachers may be held accountable in a fair and reasonable way when growth of student progress is measured over a year or in a course, and when the accomplishments of one year’s class is not judged versus another. Also, and importantly, when they are provided all of the necessary tools, resources, curriculum and support to do the job they are expected to do. To anyone who thinks he or she can do it better, I urge that person to go teach in a class for a month or two, and walk a mile today, not 10 years ago, in our teachers’ shoes. Our teachers deserve support, encouragement, professional development, and assistance, not to become pawns in the blame game!

“Positive results”

(from page 1)

proposal that would have affected the majority of those within a few years of retirement age.

Dr. Brenda Rainwater, who has 36 years in education, 22 of those in BCPS, spoke about her distress with the

“paternalistic” tone of the initial 403(b) proposal. She said, “In this time of instability and tight financial circumstances such a movement is not in employees’ best interest—it is certainly not a consideration that I see as in my best interest.”

President Cheryl Bost explained the call to action, saying, “The rally was a way to get members involved in what happens to them and a visible way to show system leaders that the decisions they make impact real people. We had been denied a COLA and we didn’t want BCPS to then limit our 403(b) vendor choices. We are dedicated professionals and should be treated as such. We were very pleased that the Board members listened to our voices and rejected the single provider.”

Many of the protesters wore black clothing or black armbands and held signs that expressed the sentiment that BCPS had turned its back on educators. Bost told the Board that teachers were in mourning over the breakdown of communication between the Association and the school system. We are

encouraged by the positive response of Board of Education members to our sincere concerns about the need for choice in retirement plans. As we work through negotiations this year, we look to our members to continue to inform the Board about their needs and insights on the issues and we look to the Board members to consider our input in their deliberations. The spirit of contention that has been on the increase in recent years helps no one, our students least of all.

~Angela Leitzer, Bulletin Editor



Protesting educators crowd Board of Ed meeting

Volume 32, Number 2 October 2008 **TABCO Bulletin** Circulation 6,200

The newsletter of the Teachers Association of Baltimore County, an affiliate of the Maryland State Teachers Association and the National Education Association

TABCO TOWERS 305 East Joppa Road Towson, Maryland 21286-3252 410-828-6403 fax 410-337-7081

Bulletin Editor: Angela Leitzer bookends@comcast.net

President: Cheryl Bost

Vice President: Christine Beard Treasurer: John R. Wilkins Secretary: Cheryl Vourvoulas

Board of Directors: District I~Abby Beytin, Dana Shindel Pollara, John Redmond District II~Jamie Batts,

Cindy North District III~Lisa Norrington, Ann Ritchey, Barbara Tyler

Member-at-Large~Stacey Enty

ASSOCIATION WEBSITES:

NEA

www.nea.org

MSTA

www.mstane.org

TABCO

www.mstane.org/tabco

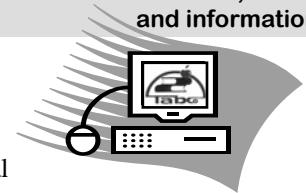
tabco

TABCO member interviewed by CNN

Have you ever dealt with a “helicopter” parent? Cindy North, 35-year veteran special educator and member of the TABCO Board of Directors is something of an expert on the subject. An article detailing her encounters in the Baltimore Sun caught the attention of both *Instructor* magazine and national network CNN. North’s experiences and reflections were sought for pieces in both media outlets. The CNN interview ran in September, but it may be seen by accessing the link at the end of this article. The *Instructor* story is due out in a fall issue.

North relates the circumstances around a “not-too-pleasant experience I had 12 years ago when a parent questioned a homework assignment and called [a congress member’s] office to try to intimidate me. Later that same year, I had to have [MSTA legal counsel] help me deal with that parent, That was certainly an example of my dues dollars at work.”
www.cnn.com/2008/HEALTH/family/09/17/helicopter.parents/index.html#cnnSTCVideo

“SPECIAL AREAS” FORUM NOV. 20



Teachers of so-called “special areas” are invited to a TABCO-sponsored forum to address issues particular to their content areas, such as the impact of state testing mandates on staffing and scheduling. The forum is for teachers at all levels, elementary, middle and high, in the areas of art, music, physical education and other non-core subjects who wish to express concerns. The forum will be held on Thursday, November 20, at **Parkville High School, beginning at 4:30 p.m.**

The forum is offered as a venue to identify concerns and solutions—no concerned “special area” teacher can afford to miss it.

Outstanding educators to be nominated by colleagues

Planning for the annual Retirement & Recognition Dinner and awards program for 2008-2009 is underway. **Save the date—Thursday, May 7, 2009.** Retirees will be honored and awards will be presented to educators who have been nominated by their colleagues for either:



- a **Rookie Recognition Award**, for outstanding new teachers with five or fewer years in teaching, or

- a **TABCO Recognition Award**, presented in acknowledgment of outstanding persons in the field of education, or from the community, who consistently display dedication to education in Baltimore County, and whose contributions go “above and beyond.”

Now is the time to think about those educators (or friends of education) that you want to nominate for recognition at the spring event. Our next Bulletin will include a nomination form, and it will also be available on our website.



Left—Stephanie Foy expresses her views in hallway outside Board meeting.

Below left—Bost waits with other members for Board vote on 403(b) providers

Below, right—Executive Director Bob Anzels with protestors lining BCPS driveway;



Bulletin Board

In memory of...



Halethorpe ES Reading Specialist, *Cheryl Neugebauer*, passed away suddenly on Thursday, October 9, 2008 after suffering a stroke. She was a vital part of the school, touching the lives of many children, parents, and staff. Mrs. Neugebauer was an outstanding teacher, an excellent school leader, a mentor, and a friend. She always had a smile on her face and an encouraging word for her students and for the parents and teachers. She loved her job and was passionate about helping students succeed. Mrs. Neugebauer has a three year old son, Connor and a loving husband, Tom.

We deeply mourn this loss to our school and to all who knew her.

There has been a fund set up for Connor's College Fund in lieu of flowers. Donations may be sent to:
PNC Bank
c/o Krystal Morgan - Connor Neugebauer College Fund
8593 Baltimore National Park
Ellicott City, MD 21043

We also mourn the loss of *Helen Shortal*, who passed away on August 27. She had just turned 80 the day before. Helen was a Librarian for 19 years at Carroll Manor ES. She was also a TABCO rep before she retired, and very active with the union. Her daughter Trish would like to invite people to go to www.legacy.com where they can leave notes or reflections about Helen if they wish.

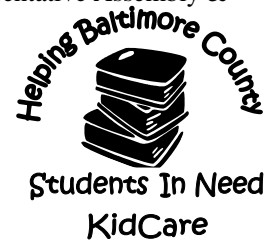
The Bulletin will include notices to memorialize the passing of our members. Please notify us (email bookends@comcast.net with the name, school and death date of any TABCO member who should be listed). We cannot be held responsible for the omission of information that we have not received.

Association Events HIGHLIGHTS

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

- October 28:** Retirement Workshop
- October 29:** Parent Conferencing Workshop
- November 3:** Bowling Happy Hour at Country Club Lanes, 3--6 p.m.
- November 5:** Observations, Evaluations and Your Rights
- November 7 & 8:** SPARKS (by invitation)
- November 11:** Home Buyers Workshop
- November 13:** TABCO District Meetings
- November 20:** Special Areas Forum
- December 5-6:** Personal & Professional Decision-making Skills
- December 11:** Representative Assembly & Holiday Dinner

Entertainment books are on sale at TABCO for \$26—all profits go to KidCare. Already this year \$5,520 has been disbursed to 138 students.



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 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 <http://www.thewhycircle.com/nkboecker>

DISCLAIMER: TABCO assumes no responsibility for representations made or services performed in advertisements published

TABCO/BACE TELEPHONE & EMAIL DIRECTORY

410-828-6403 fax: 410-337-7081

ELECTED LEADERSHIP:

TABCO President Cheryl Bost	ext. 229	cbost@mstanea.org
Vice President Christine Beard	ext. 224	cbeard@mstanea.org
Treasurer John R. Wilkins	ext. 223	jrwilkins@mstanea.org
BACE President Gloria Collins	ext. 227	gcollins@mstanea.org
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Bob Anzelc	ext. 225	banzelc@mstanea.org

UNISERV DIRECTORS:

Southeast Area: Debbie Banaszkievicz	ext. 234	dbanaszkiewicz@mstanea.org
Northeast Area: Linda Kane	ext. 236	lkane@mstanea.org
Southwest Area: Michael Carrington	ext. 235	mcarrington@mstanea.org
Central & Northwest Areas: Ray Suarez	ext. 230	rsuarez@mstanea.org
BACE: Kathy Wyatt	ext. 233	kwyatt@mstanea.org

SUPPORT STAFF:

Jacque Gerhardt	ext. 237	jgerhardt@mstanea.org
Lisa Levee	ext. 222	llvee@mstanea.org
Teresa McDowell	ext. 226	tmcdowell@mstanea.org
Stacie Strickland	ext. 240	sstrickland@mstanea.org
Marcelle Wilson	ext. 232	mwilson@mstanea.org
Ray Prematta	ext. 238	

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