

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Mainstream Development Educational Group: part-time employment for certified teachers. After-school classes; focus on reading and math skills; Tuesdays-Thursdays; Locations throughout the Baltimore Public school district; Wages—\$45-\$55 per hour. Contact Marian Roberts, 443-415-2480, for more information or email malicia505@gmail.com.

Spend Summer in the Sun: **DRD Pool Management, Inc.** is accepting resumes for summer job openings as swimming pool field supervisors and swimming pool managers (Full or Part Time) No experience necessary. For more information, email David Watts at dwatts@drdpools.com

Padonia Park Club in Cockeysville is seeking Adventure Camp Manager. Must be at least 25 years of age and available mid-June through mid-August. Experience working with children and supervising young adults, as well as in outdoor environments. Should have skills with (or willingness to become certified in): target sports, archery, zipline, low ropes, rock climbing, wilderness skills, athletic skills for adolescents. Also seeking Adventure Camp specialty counselors in any of the skill sets listed above. Send resume to 410-561-1560 or email it to susan@padoniaparkclub.com. May contact Susan Love, director, at 410-252-2046.

Tutors needed: TABCO can connect you with parents who call seeking tutors for their children. It is easy to get your name on the list—contact Stacie at sstrickland@mseanea.org. Foreign language tutors and high school level tutors in all subjects are needed, but all teacher-members are invited to add their names to the list of referrals.

ASSOCIATION EVENTS

See www.tabco.org for more calendar information

NOVEMBER

- 22 BCPS Board of Education meeting
- 24-25 Thanksgiving holiday—schools/TABCO closed

DECEMBER

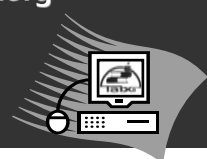
- 3 New York City Bus Trip
- 6 BCPS Board of Education meeting
- 7 TABCO Board of Directors meeting
- 8 Representative Assembly
- 20 BCPS Board of Education meeting
- 24-January 2—Winter holiday—schools/TABCO closed

JANUARY 2012

- 3 Schools/TABCO reopen
- 3 TABCO election materials available
- 4 TABCO Board of Directors meeting
- 7 Legislative Breakfast—Crowne Plaza, Timonium
- 10 BCPS Board of Education meeting
- 11 Maryland General Assembly opens
- 16 Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday—schools/TABCO closed
- 17 BCPS Budget Hearing—Ridge Ruxton School
- 18 TABCO Board of Directors meeting
- 24 TABCO Committee Chairs meeting
- 24 BCPS Board of Education meeting

ASSOCIATION WEBSITES:

NEA www.nea.org
 MSEA www.marylandeducators.org
 TABCO www.tabco.org



TABCO/ESPBC TELEPHONE & EMAIL DIRECTORY office: 410-828-6403 fax: 410-337-7081

ELECTED LEADERSHIP:

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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.



Workload:



November/December 2011 **UNITY...NOW MORE THAN EVER**



Abby Beytin
TABCO President

President's Message: Working to lighten the load

Those of us in public education who have been around a long time are used to the pendulum swinging. Everything old seems to be new again. It happens in the fashion world, too. Just look at the platform heels that are back in style. They may be a little different from the past platforms, but not so much that the original design can't be seen in the newest shoes.

There are two forces to deal with concerning our public education system. Externally we have legislation and government mandates like No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top being pushed on us by forces in Washington DC and Annapolis. Internally we have the school system pushing more prescriptive concepts in response to the external forces.

Making positive changes to the legislation will take time and all of us working together. However, we can have a more immediate effect by changing some of the school system's responses to that legislation to help make

the professional lives of our teachers much more productive.

Our workload is through the roof. Between the data collection, the objective writing, the intricate lesson plans in a very prescriptive manner, the IEPs, VSCs, BCRs, MSAs, HSAs, AltMSAs, AltHSAs, 504s, IDEA... I could fill the page with these acronyms...we are struggling to do the best for our students. We have begun to have those conversations with Baltimore County Public School officials. We all understand what is at stake and know we have to get this right. With your help and vigilance, our expertise will help guide the discussions and make the changes that allow a reasoned approach to the very external forces causing the problems in our classrooms.

I have asked you to send me specific anecdotal records to help address these issues with the BCPS officials. You have been sending me many of them. I am in the process of sharing them and will continue to do so until we see some relief.

However, we can also share some of these issues with

See "Working to lighten the load," page 2

Reinventing the wheel...writing and rewriting lesson objectives

Angela Leitzer, Bulletin Editor

....or should I say, *Today we will examine the problems created by an education establishment that "strains a gnat and swallows a camel," while analyzing the effects on the teaching and learning environment in order to reach those responsible for this nonsense and perhaps find a reasonable solution?* No, that might not have an achievable outcome...

Sure to be on the list of professional development topics each year for faculty meetings is a session on writing lesson objectives. Teachers will be rolling their eyes as once again the debate ensues over whether "in order to" is more correct than "by." A friend and fellow teacher who returned to the classroom recently after an absence of several years was astonished to find that this nitpicking continues--a simple declarative statement of intent for a lesson is not rocket science, after all. Criticisms leveled at the public school establishment seem justified if one considers the time and emphasis placed on such a minor aspect of the teaching and learning environment. Yet we find that there has been a rash of lowered ratings on ob-

servation lessons recently--solely based on the writing of the lesson objectives. In other instances, administrators who pass on the pressure to bring up numbers on standardized tests require the incorporation of reading and math objectives in every lesson--whether or not they are appropriate to the content area or the specific lesson. Lesson objectives become so wordy and convoluted that it is difficult for the instructor to remember what they mean, much less for students to see them as anything other than incomprehensible education-ese.

This reinvention of the wheel is a task faced by teachers in every classroom as they attempt to configure language in the prescribed format, while incorporating what they actually hope to accomplish. This begs the question, why, if there is an expectation that lesson objectives match curriculum, aren't the objectives provided in the guides, written in the appropriate (latest and greatest) way? This would relieve pressure on teachers, who could pull the language from the guides as well as on adminis-

See "Reinventing the wheel," page 2

“Working to lighten the load” (from page 1)

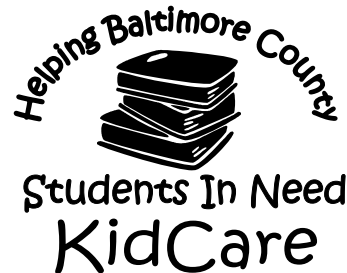
the school system via our Faculty Council system. If we see a particular issue at our schools, the Faculty Council can address it with the administration to find out the reasoning behind it. If the answer doesn't go far enough or make sense to the Faculty Council, the Council can then send the inquiry on to the Assistant Superintendent. The Council can continue the process up the chain of command within the school system. Imagine if many schools followed this protocol how much attention the issues would garner. Along the way, if we offer solutions or alternative ways to accomplish the goals of educating our students, we will move the process even faster.

Remember our strength has always been and will continue to be our collective voices. We have the power to help make the changes we seek. As the education experts, our voices need to be at the table. The Baltimore County school system wants to work collaboratively with us. We need to give the system the information and tools to help effect the changes we need to work smarter and better with a lightened workload, so we can teach our students in the most effective ways possible.

Let's help bring sanity back to our classrooms.

President Beytin welcomes your input. Contact her via abeytin@mseanea.org.

Now in the 30th year of its existence, the KidCare fund continues to care for the needs of students in Baltimore County through generous contributions by educators. TABCO administers KidCare while assuring that 100% of donated funds goes to our needy kids—for school supplies, clothing and other basic needs.



UPDATE: As of 11/4/11, KidCare has distributed \$9,680.00 to help 242 students this school year.

Why not honor the coming holidays by giving to this worthy cause and gaining a tax deduction at the same time? Download a form to become a regular contributor to this fund on the TABCO website: <http://tabco.org/kidcare/>

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

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“Reinventing the wheel” (from page 1)

trators, who could utilize lesson discussions with teachers in more meaningful ways.

A second-year teacher in an elementary school shared that she spends twenty to thirty minutes per lesson plan attempting to achieve the “perfect wording” of the objective. She is well aware that this is time that could be more productively used to prepare resources for the lesson or work to achieve differentiation for a needy student, etc.,--but when the lesson rating is going to be based largely on the perfection of the wording of the objective, focusing on the objective becomes a survival technique.

A recent discussion with a group of seasoned elementary teachers on the subject of lesson objectives revealed that they see the emphasis on how to write lesson objectives as something done for administrators, rather than something that benefits student learning. In fact, many times, the requirement that objectives be posted is a deterrent to meaningful lessons. Some research suggests that students are restricted in exploration of subject matter and that lessons are less responsive to group and individual needs as they unfold, when written objectives have become the focus. When the first question in a post-observation conference is “did you achieve the objective?” instead of “what did students learn today and how will that inform your next lesson?” that is a focus on *form* rather than *function*. This approach does not lead to best results in student learning.

Until those with the authority to do so face the consequences of this county-wide practice of tasking teachers with individually attempting to apply formulas to objective writing, teachers will continue to worry—am I setting myself up? Will the lesson be judged solely on whether the stated objective was met, or more rationally, on whether I responded to students in a flexible way, adjusting the lesson to the actual circumstances during the lesson time? Was I able to fit the purpose of the lesson into the “right” language? (*What is the “right” language this year?*)

Objectives should be targets, with the understanding that each student's performance represents an arrow that may land in different places around the bull's eye. The teacher can use that to differentiate and meet needs--IF he or she is not nailed because every student didn't hit the bull's eye the first time—and IF the objective formula is not a “gotcha.”

**Many thanks to the teachers who took the time to respond to this concern in writing or in discussions, who will remain nameless, because the risks involved in writing objectives may not be as risky as declaring that the whole thing is a mess.*

NEWS & NOTES

Association Elections 2012

TABCO: Members have the opportunity to serve and to be more involved in Association decision-making via the TABCO election process. Open for election this year are the offices of Treasurer (a 2-year term); Board of Directors District I (two seats open, one for a 2-year term and one for a 3-year term); District II (one seat for a 3-year term); and District III (one seat for a 3-year term). Election materials will be available for pickup at the TABCO office upon our return from the winter break, January 3, 2012. Candidates must see Teresa McDowell *in person* for copies of all necessary materials, including the timeline for their return.

NEA: The NEA Convention will be held in Washington D.C., June 30-July 5, 2012. If you are interested in running to serve as an NEA delegate, please email Teresa McDowell, tmcdowell@mseanea.org, to get the required paperwork to place your name on the ballot.

MSEA: Our former TABCO president, Cheryl Bost, is running for the post of Vice President of our state association, MSEA. Let's commit to a good return on the state ballots to help boost Bost to that office!

Thanks in advance to our building representatives for conducting elections at their building sites and returning ballots in a timely manner.



Legislative Breakfast: Education IS political

Your Association provides you the opportunity to speak directly to those who set your salary, determine your pension and benefits and define your working conditions, in an informal, relaxed setting over breakfast. Don't miss this chance—put the date, **January 7**—on your calendar now. Bring a colleague and tell it like it is to your elected officials, Board of Education members, and school system officials. Enjoy a bountiful breakfast buffet and spend two productive hours relating what you know to those who need to know!

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Timonium

9:00-11:00 a.m.

January 7, 2012

TABCO contact: Kim Melfa, 410-828-6403

This year, among the important topics to be addressed are attempts to push back pension costs to county governments, something that could have devastating effects on all educators. Watch for more information to come and make your reservation for this vital activity.

Note: The Maryland General Assembly opens January 11—not long after the breakfast conversations you will have with your delegates and senators!

Your Master Agreement Rights NEGOTIATED & PROTECTED BY TABCO

10.6.2 On days when **inclement weather** causes a delayed opening, the required workday of teachers will begin not more than fifteen (15) minutes before the revised starting time. On days when inclement weather causes an early dismissal, the workday of teachers will end as soon as the teacher's responsibilities for student supervision are completed.

10.13 The principal and his/her staff, through the Faculty Council, shall **mutually** determine the number, type, and time of non-emergency **faculty meetings**. Teachers, through the Faculty Council, will be involved in the development of the agenda for faculty meetings. In order to clear other afternoons for other purposes, all schools are urged to use Mondays for scheduling faculty meetings.

11.2 Discipline in the classroom, including appropriate intervention activities, is basically the responsibility of

the teacher. A teacher may exclude a pupil from his/her classroom when the grossness of the offense, the persistence of the misbehavior, or the disruptive effect of the violation makes the continued presence of the student in the classroom intolerable. In such cases, the teacher will send the pupil to the office of the principal, or his/her designee, and explain the reason for the exclusion as promptly as possible. The affected pupil will be readmitted to the classroom of the teacher involved only upon authorization by the principal or his/her designee, who will make such determination **after conferring with the teacher and notification to the teacher of the action taken by the administrator prior to the student returning to the classroom.**

Know your rights! Members may access the Master Agreement online via “Publications” on the TABCO website: www.tabco.org.

“If a doctor, lawyer, or dentist had 40 people in his office at one time, all of whom had different needs, and some of whom didn't want to be there and were causing trouble, and the doctor, lawyer, or dentist, without assistance, had to treat them all with professional excellence for nine months, then he might have some conception of the classroom teacher's job.”

~Donald D. Quinn

American Education Week 2011

“The annual observance, now in its 90th year, honors students' hard work to learn, recognizes the professionalism and dedication of teachers, support staff and other educators, thanks parents and members of the community who help students succeed, and rededicates the community at large to quality public education for every student.” (www.nea.org) **Your association salutes you as you welcome the community into your classrooms this week.**

