

Association Events

November

- 17-21 American Education Week
- 18 Board of Education mtg
- 20 Retirement & Recognition Committee mtg
- ➡ Distribution of Perception Surveys prior to holiday
- 27-28 Thanksgiving Holiday – schools/TABCO closed

December

- 2 Board of Education mtg
- 3 Estate Planning Workshop, Loch Raven HS, 4:30 p.m.
- 10 TABCO Board of Directors mtg
- 11 TABCO Representative Assembly
- 24-31 Winter Holiday – schools/TABCO closed

January 2015 ~ Happy New Year

- 1-2 Winter Holiday continues—schools/TABCO closed
- 5 Schools/TABCO RE-OPEN
- 5 Election petitions available for TABCO officer and board positions
- 6 Board of Education mtg
- 7 TABCO Board of Directors mtg
- 9 TABCO PROUD TO TEACH DAY
- 9 TABCO 2015 AWARDS initial nominations forms due
- 10 LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST North Baltimore Plaza Hotel (formerly the Crowne Plaza Hotel), 9:00 a.m.
- 14 Maryland General Assembly opens
- 19 Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday –schools/TABCO closed
- 21 TABCO Board of Directors mtg
- 29 TABCO Representative Assembly

February

- 3 Board of Education mtg
- 4 TABCO Board of Directors mtg
- 16 President's Day-schools/TABCO closed
- 18 TABCO Board of Directors mtg
- 13 TABCO 2015 AWARDS complete nominations forms due
- 26 TABCO District Meetings for Association Representatives

ONLINE ACCESS TO
YOUR ASSOCIATION
tabco.org
marylandeducators.org
nea.org

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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

Tutors needed

▶TABCO can connect you with parents who call seeking tutors for their children. 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. It is easy to get your name on the list. Contact Stacie at sstrickland@mseanea.org.

The TABCO BULLETIN

The Bulletin is published bi-monthly throughout the school year. Your suggestions and letters to the editor are welcomed. Contact the editor at bookends68@comcast.net.

Member Benefits on NEA Click & Save

Members can earn points and get discounts on a wide variety of products and services by registering on the website:

neamb.com

Use the membership number on your MSEA-issued membership card to create a login. There are holiday special offers each day, ranging from free shipping to 25% discounts and more. Links are provided for many name-brand stores.



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| | | | | | |
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news & views

November/December 2014

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WORKLOAD:
A MONSTROUS JUMBLE
OF MANDATES



Abby Beytin

I can't remember a time when workload issues have not been a part of teaching.

However, what was once a nagging persistent pain has become a throbbing nightmare of a migraine headache. There is never enough time in the day to complete the myriad of tasks being asked of teachers. Teachers work long hours to try and fulfill the demands of the job. However, what had been work overload has become an unattainable monstrous jumble of mandate upon mandate, one more item to complete, one more form to fill out, one more new system to learn, one more piece to maneuver into place, etc. Teacher time has become so filled with red tape, record keeping, and data collection that time for planning has ended up in fifth or sixth place at best on the teacher timeline. We are living in an upside down teaching world.

So what does this workload problem look like for many of our teachers? Many teachers are arriving at school sites at 7:00 a.m. (or earlier in many high school teachers' lives) and ending their days at school at 9:00 p.m. (or later) day after day after day. That is only part of the equation. Teachers also have homework to complete weekdays and weekends as well. It is commonplace for teachers to spend several hours a night and most of their weekends grading papers, creating lessons, answering emails, etc. Family time is almost non-existent.

This is all accomplished while teachers are taking courses to complete degrees or for recertification. They are also taking workshops and training themselves, often using videos, or reading manuals, so they can be updated on all the new technology and other new initiatives coming into their professional lives. Now multiply each of those items by three and four and we begin to build just a

See "WORKLOAD: A MONSTROUS JUMBLE OF MANDATES," page 3

EDITORIAL:
MONEY



Angela Leitzer, Bulletin Editor

What has the biggest influence on public education? Or, should I say, WHO has the biggest influence? If you answered MONEY to the first question and THOSE WITH MONEY to the second, you've been paying attention.

TIME magazine's cover story of November 3, entitled *Rotten Apples* and showing a gavel coming down toward a perfectly shiny apple, took on the topic of teacher tenure and the forces at work to eliminate it. Actually, the illustrator did a remarkably good job of contradicting the title by showing how the witch hunters out for teacher blood are attacking those who are not, in fact, rotten at all.

The article goes on to contradict its own title even further, by showing that it is not justice (as represented by the gavel), but MONEY and its power in the hands of conservative "reformers," that is behind the attacks on teacher tenure. The writer lists multi-millionaires and billionaires, none of whom have any education credentials, who are making hobbies of using their money and influence to re-shape public education according to their own predilections. She states that, "The reform movement today is led...by Silicon Valley business types and billionaires...it is fought not through ballot boxes...but in closed-door meetings and at courthouses...made possible by the tactical application of vast personal fortunes." (See the TIME article for the complete quote.)

THE TRUTH about teacher tenure is that it accomplishes (at least) three important goals:

- ◆ delineates due process, giving teachers the opportunity to be fairly judged
- ◆ protects academic freedom
- ◆ curtails the use of frivolous reasons for punishing or firing teachers--which in the past, has included things like marrying, becoming pregnant,

See "MONEY," page 2

"MONEY" (from page 1)



Vergara vs. California, the case that overturned state laws governing tenure, referenced in the cartoon below, was financed by David Welch, a super-rich entrepreneur who founded a group called "Students Matter," which receives support from other like-minded billionaires, among them, Bill Gates.

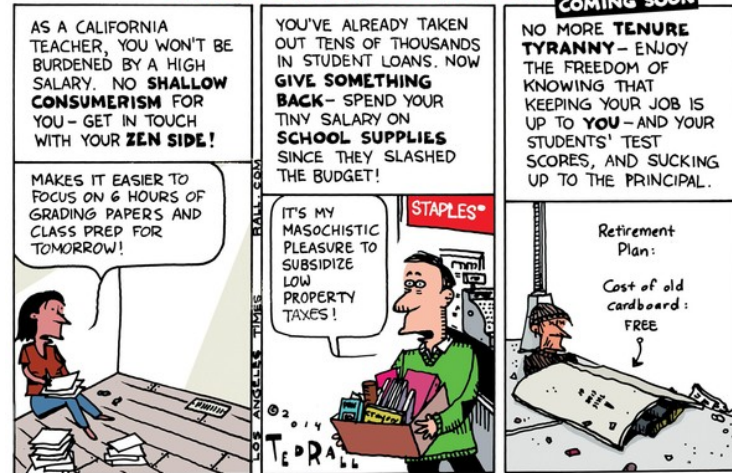
In an article for The Washington Post, entitled *Vergara vs. California: Are the top 0.1% buying their version of education reform?* the writer Mark Palko follows up the question with this:

"...the decision, the course of the trial, even the very existence of the case were largely the result of actions of a small set of very wealthy men.

What's more, this is true for almost every major education reform initiative from Common Core to L.A.'s billion-dollar iPad program to endless charter school pushes. Though the list of names does vary somewhat from story to story, the same figures keep popping up. For instance, it is rare to find a major reform initiative that does not involve someone who has worked for or received support from Eli Broad or the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation."

What is behind the attacks on teacher tenure and the blame the teachers movement? Follow the money.

HEY COLLEGE KIDS! CONSIDER A CAREER AS A CALIFORNIA TEACHER! COMING SOON



being gay, being the wrong color or having the wrong religious affiliation, teaching evolution, etc.--and continues to include such things as union activism, speaking out on education issues and advocating for students.

AMONG THE MYTHS being circulated about tenure are:

Bad teachers cannot be fired. Simply not true--they cannot be fired peremptorily, but may be terminated after due process is followed.

Unions protect bad teachers. Yes, in the sense that all teachers are guaranteed due process. Unions also protect good teachers from prejudicial or unwarranted judgments.

Tenure has resulted in bad teachers providing poor education for students. This is complicated--it isn't tenure that results in poor classroom environments, but rather a combination of socio-economic factors, lack of support for struggling teachers, lack of appropriate resources for struggling students, etc. Firing a struggling teacher, only to bring another teacher into the same environment, will not solve the problems.

WHAT BIG MONEY DOESN'T UNDERSTAND:

That the teaching profession is populated primarily by individuals who are willing to endure the long hours, low pay, lack of respect from the public at large, constant revisions and new expectations in the way the job is defined, and an increasingly challenging student population, because they have a passion for the importance of the job. BUT, enrollment in teacher preparatory programs is seeing a significant decline, which, added to the 40% of teachers who exit the profession within their first five years, and the graying of the current teacher population, is leading to a shortage nationwide. Add the pressures brought about by these big money dilettantes and the future looks grim for public education.

SPARKS SHINE AT NOVEMBER NETWORKING EVENT

Twelve SPARKS ventured to Annapolis in November to participate in what would be an amazing week-end of professional growth, meaningful conversation, team building, new friendships and memories. That's right, another SPARKS Training at MSEA! (SPARKS is an association networking and training program for teachers with five or fewer years in the profession.)

The participants set off to tackle a weekend agenda that promised to be quite educational and of course FUN. The Sparks trainers, Vernon Fains, Amanda Sosnin, Frank Soda, Lisa Norrington and Cheryl Bost, led the SPARKS through many meaningful activities and conversations.

Discussions were held about classroom management, the master agreement, what the union is and how to get involved. Several guest speakers, including Ken Kuyawa--BCPS certification, representatives from Integrated Financial Solutions, MSEA leadership and staff, including Damon Felton, our ever informative MSEA attorney. The SPARKS were also able to engage in conversations with visiting TABCO leadership. After a jam-packed day, the new SPARKS were allowed a short rest before an evening of teambuilding and bonding.

Bright and early Saturday, our devoted SPARKS were back at MSEA headquarters diligently working

on their group research projects. After presentations and wrapping up, our 12 students officially graduated with the distinguished title of 2014 SPARKS! If you know any of these awesome graduates or see them around, be sure to congratulate them. We are sure this is not the last you will see of them.

GO SPARKS!



2014 SPARKS participants: Kristen Adams, Deep Creek ES; Sabastian Brown, Randallstown HS; Joe Gibson, Pine Grove MS; Kadajah Kemp, Windsor Mill MS; Meghan Lechtanski, Middleborough ES; Stacy Piet, Campfield ECL Center; Robert Powers, Hereford HS; Steph Rapazzo, Patapsco HS; Barbara Richards-Bailey, White Oak; Jack Rudy, General John Stricker MS; Grace Smith, Sudbrook Magnet MS; Doriene Varounis, Pine Grove MS

Reported by Frank Soda, Vernon Fains, Amanda Sosnin
Members of the TABCO Board of Directors

"What's your take?" (from page 4)

they show that the decline is not only a current trend.

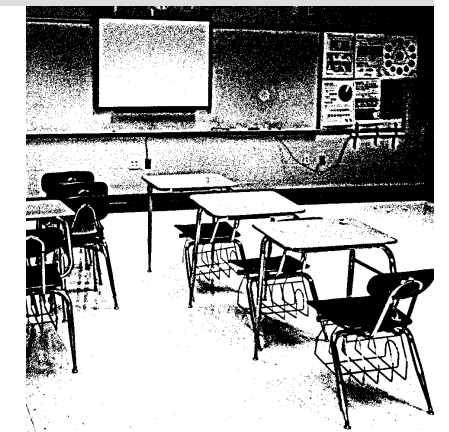
According to an article in the October 22, 2014 edition of *Education Week*, "...the decline in teacher preparation enrollments has accelerated in recent years, particularly since 2010."

Recently, the University of New Haven, which had featured a "4+1" teacher prep program that gave participants a free fifth year to earn a master's degree and eligibility for a teaching certificate, announced the possibility of shutting down teacher prep altogether. "Over the past five years, the number of students enrolled in the teacher preparation program has declined by almost two-thirds to a level where the expense of operating the program exceeds the income from tuition," said UNH President Steven Kaplan.

In a report this September regarding teacher prep programs at University of North Carolina, the Citizen-Times said, "The numbers for those enrolled in undergraduate teacher education programs decreased from 15,000 in 2010 to just under 12,400 in 2013, a 17 percent decline. Enrollment in master's programs was also down."

TALK BACK:

- What's your take?
- What's happening to "I want to be a teacher?" Would you do it again?
- Is this a glitch or a trend likely to continue?
- What accounts for the decline, in your opinion?



Tell us what you think! Best responses to be published in our next edition.

Send your thoughts to bookends68@comcast.net

TABCO Bulletin

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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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LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST—your chance to tell THEM how schools should be run

TABCO members are invited to join TABCO staff, leadership, BCPS representatives and elected officials for a hearty breakfast and an equally substantial opportunity for conversations.

They don't know what we haven't told them—and this setting makes it easy to engage with the people who make the decisions that affect teaching and learning realities.

Saturday, January 10
9:00 a.m to 11:00 a.m.

North Baltimore Plaza Hotel
(formerly the Crowne Plaza Hotel)
2004 Greenspring Dr, Lutherville-Timonium

RSVP to Kim Melfa, kmelfa@mseanea.org by December 15 to reserve your spot at this vital annual interaction. *Education IS political!*

WHAT'S YOUR TAKE? TALK BACK TO THIS ARTICLE!

bookends68@comcast.net

Subject: Students just say no to teacher prep!

Though there is not enough data to nail down the exact causes, reports across the nation show fewer students choosing to enroll in teacher preparation programs. California, in particular, has experienced a 53% drop in teacher prep enrollments. "In 2012-13, just over 12,000 teachers received a teaching credential, down from 17,797 in 2008-09. That was the ninth consecutive year in which the total number of initial teaching credentials in the state has declined."

Other states with steep declines include North Carolina, Texas, New York and Colorado.

A quick check of numbers available for Towson University, a major producer of teachers in Maryland, using a report published in 2008, showed a decline from 965 elementary education majors in 2002 to 759 in 2008. Special education numbers declined from 157 in 2003 to 127 in 2008. Another drastic drop appeared in the number of students enrolled in the elementary education masters program—from 177 to a mere 68 in 2008. Unfortunately, these numbers are not up to date, but

See "What's your take?" page 9

Celebrate the profession!

Let's celebrate our profession by honoring some of our very own. TABCO has a program in place for honoring those among us who are recognized as outstanding examples of the profession. Nomination forms are inserted with this edition of the Bulletin and this initial form is due on January 9, 2015.

There are two award categories:

The TABCO RECOGNITION AWARDS are presented annually in acknowledgement 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" in advocating, promoting and demonstrating such practices as the following: a quality education for students; an awareness of the varied needs of students and teachers; sound educational programs and policies; professional and emotional support for teachers; a mutual understanding between the educational community and the general public; a positive image of education and educators.

The ROOKIE RECOGNITION AWARDS are designed to recognize those individuals who have worked in Baltimore County Public Schools for fewer than five years as of the date the award is given. This award highlights "rookie" teachers who are successfully developing as professional educators and who are going the extra mile in providing quality education for students and a positive image of education and educators, and who show great promise to be exemplary educators for years to come.

The thing that makes these awards truly special is that the nominations come from our members—those who work with these outstanding people each day. Both nominator and nominee must be TABCO members, if eligible (a community member or organization being nominated would be examples of those not eligible for membership).

You know who the everyday heroes are at your work site, the ones who go above and beyond to help, to lead, to set or uphold standards of excellence. Please consider nominating them for recognition.

Those chosen by the selection committee (a team of teachers) will be honored at the annual Retirement and Recognition Dinner on May 7, 2015.

~Co-chairs Roxann Russo, Michele Snell

JAVA STOP--an American Education Story

American Education Week 2014
November 16-22
#aew2014 | www.nea.org/aew

"The National Education Association's 93rd annual American Education Week—November 17-21, 2014—presents all Americans with an opportunity to celebrate public education and honor individuals who are making a difference in ensuring every child receives a quality education."

In recognition of American Education Week, we can think of no better way to stress the dedication of American teachers than by relating the story of some dedicated professionals in our own school system who are fighting to provide the kind of authentic learning experiences that make a real difference in students' lives.

At Patapsco High School and Center for the Arts, two FALS (Functional Academic Learning Support) special education teachers, Dana Evans and Beth Gray, recently found themselves at the center of a controversy regarding a program that had been honored with a VOYA Unsung Heroes Award for "the first and only student-run business in a Baltimore County or Maryland public school that is run completely by students with significant cognitive disabilities."

We asked them to share their story with us, and it is both compelling and inspirational—enough so that it has received national media attention. Here it is in their own words:

"We initially developed the Patriot Java Stop as a way to provide an authentic vocational experience to our special education students within the school walls during the school day. Our students already go into the community for a work experience one period per day. Unfortunately, due to the lack of liability insurance, there are very few businesses that will allow us in. Those that do allow us to bring students there will only allow us to do simple tasks like sweeping, bagging ice, rolling silverware, etc. We aren't able to access actual entry level job tasks like food prep, cash register use, customer service interactions, stocking shelves, etc. So...Beth and I, who have taught together for about 10 years now, decided to make our own opportunity for our students. We did extensive research into what would provide the most benefit for our students and settled on a coffee shop. We met with a school leader from CT who had implemented a similar program in her school. Then we developed a business plan and took it to our principal.

We did a grant campaign through donorschoose.org; between that grant and donations from the faculty, parents and local community partners, we were able to raise what we needed to get started. We have been in business since December 2013. The skills our

students gained were priceless, and their sense of empowerment made all the hard work worth it for us. They've learned so many real-world job skills, such as inventory, purchasing, stocking, cash register use, money management for a small business, food safety and sanitation, proper use and hygiene of food service machines, and most importantly, genuine customer service skills. Those customer service skills, along with the cash register skills, are the two most valuable things we've been able to teach them in this process. Those are things you can't teach in a classroom through reading, modeling or even scenarios. The fast-paced environment of the morning coffee shop forced them to work quickly and efficiently. It truly was amazing to see. At the time we were shut down, the students were to the point where they could just about run the shop from open to close by themselves, with us just on standby should they need us.

We also won a VOYA Unsung Heroes Award over the summer for \$2,000. WBAL heard about it and came out to do a story on our success. It was great, except that it led to MSDE and BCPS realizing that we were doing this—it conflicted with a new policy that MSDE passed in July 2013, prohibiting the sale of caffeinated beverages to high school students. We were made aware of this in early September, and began doing research, trying to find a loophole or any way to save the coffee shop. It's important to note that the federal policy regarding the sale of caffeine in schools ALLOWS it to be sold in high schools. So MSDE has chosen to be more stringent than federal guidelines on this issue.

BCPS has set up multiple meetings for us with various departments, mainly food services, to try to find a solution; something our students could sell that would provide them with the same vocational experience, while falling within the guidelines of this new regulation. A local vendor that BCPS works with heard about all this and donated a fruit slushie machine. We initially practiced with the machine and were disappointed that its prep, use and clean up is fairly complicated and takes quite a bit of the independence away from our students. However, we felt obligated to fill this void that was left by the coffee shop. So, we spent the last month or so training, practicing, and getting

See "Java Stop—an American Education Story," page 8

“Java Stop—an American Education Story” (from page 7)

ready to try fruit slushies. We started yesterday and both days we have sold out, so it has been a success from that perspective. But there are quite a few issues.. We can't sell in the morning because the mix takes 1-2 hours to get cold enough. So, we have to sell during our school's FLEX time. So each day, two of our students have to give up their FLEX time to work the stand. The filling and cleaning of the tanks are too difficult for the students to complete, so they aren't involved in that part of the process. The students no longer have an inventory to maintain. We used to sell over 30 flavors of coffee they had to keep track of; now we have three flavors in jugs that they can't even put into the machines themselves because they're too heavy and cumbersome. With the coffee, there were three machines and a cash register, along with our condiments table, that all had to be maintained. This provided work for four students daily. The slushies consist of one machine and the register, so now we can only "employ" two students at a time. Overall, the diversity of job tasks has greatly diminished, moving us farther away from our goal of providing an authentic work experience for our students that gives them real world job skills. Financially, the fruit slushies are more costly on our end, so we aren't even sure if we'll be breaking even in the long run.

Any profit goes back into our program to fund our Community Based Instruction trips, which are required through BCPS, and a vital part of our curriculum for which we are not permitted to solicit funds from parents. So we are forced/encouraged...whatever you want to call it...to get creative when it comes to finding funds for these trips. We were pretty proud of how well we had managed to do that while providing this great experience for our students.

We've only sold the slushies for two days and the list of "cons" grows each day. But we're keeping our game face for the students, trying to give them something to look forward to as a replacement. Meanwhile,

we're both still plugging away behind the scenes trying to work to get the coffee shop back up and running. We've received great support from parents of our students, our school staff and the community. We even received an email

from a parent of a student with a disability in South Dakota who saw the story and wrote us with her support. A gentleman from Baltimore contacted our principal after seeing the story in the Sun; he has a cousin with a disability, and he made a large donation to our program to assist with the loss of funds from the coffee shop closing. WBAL did a follow up story and interview with one of our parents and another of our parents did a petition to MSDE on change.org that has about 1500 signatures. ABC news also did a story on their website and the *Baltimore Sun* did a story about our success and the closing. John Olszewski, who is a former Patapsco special ed teacher and local politician, contacted us and voiced his support publicly. Bob Long, another local politician, also expressed his support. The C4 show on WBAL radio has discussed our coffee shop and the surrounding situation twice now on air. So it's been widely publicized and supported. Through all of this, no one from BCPS or MSDE has spoken to Beth or to me directly regarding this situation.

TABCO has provided assistance along the way. The day we found out we had to close, we spoke with Lisa Norrington, our building rep. She sat down with us and together we called Bob Anzenc (executive director, TABCO) who did some research on his end. He spoke with Kristy Anderson (general counsel, MSEA) who said that she felt MSEA could support our shop and felt that an exemption could be sought. Abby Beytin also came out a week ago and met with us and she drafted a letter to MSDE to voice TABCO support for the reinstatement of the coffee shop. I think it should also be mentioned that not only did we look for a loophole to this new policy, but we are asking for a waiver or exemption on the grounds that the educational benefit to our FALS students is paramount to this policy. We sent a statement to MSDE to be read into last week's minutes requesting an exemption. We haven't heard anything."

~Dana Evans, teacher, Patapsco HS

Our thanks to both Dana and Beth for courageously sharing their story and persevering in their efforts to do the best for their students—they are an inspiration to all passionate, but frustrated educators.



“WORKLOAD: A MONSTROUS JUMBLE OF MANDATES” (from page 1)

small idea of what is expected.

Next, add some copying and print management wait time and recovery time for the glitches in many of the new systems the teachers are learning as they teach. It is easy to understand the burnout workload syndrome that has befallen public education.

This is surely a recipe for disaster. This has been festering for years now. It is not new to the teachers in just the last few years, but it has been growing exponentially and as budgets continue to tighten, the expectations have begun to increase.

The problems are created by systemic issues. As the budget is tightened, support staff is cut. Whether it is less custodial staff, or education support staff, there are fewer folks helping teachers with daily chores that can be performed by someone else. Teachers rarely have access to secretaries to help them copy their items, take attendance, serve on bus duty or help with the other non-teaching items that usurp a good portion of teacher planning time. Teachers serve and clean up from breakfast for students and spend time walking classes to and from their destinations. Others could handle these duties, but the personnel are not readily available to do so. Most of our teachers no longer take their duty free half hour lunch. Instead they have students come in for extra help, or use that time as a reward for good behavior or a job well done. So, teachers provide the much desired “lunch with the teacher” time. They have no time to even sit and think, let alone plan.

Technology has brought some much needed resources and assistance to teachers, but because so much has been adopted at the same time, it has also brought its share of extra workload to the teachers. When department after department tell teachers, *this will only take a few minutes to accomplish*, they forget that when several departments are asking for one more little request, it quickly adds several more hours of work to our exhausted teaching staff. Sometimes these requests seem innocuous. After all, how can another five or ten minutes add much to the workload? When you think of the whole, five or ten minutes from ten different requests can add up to a large chunk of time.

Now an expectation has begun that teachers will be

available to answer parent questions twenty-four/seven. In our world of instantaneous gratification, parents expect teachers to answer emails sent at all hours of the day or night and to have grades and assignments and other items posted before their children arrive home from school. It sounds wonderful to be able to access information almost in real time, but that real time is time teachers should be spending with students or planning their lessons.

It is never okay just to complain about issues. Lord knows we have heard about workload issues repeatedly over time. What is it that teachers need to lessen the workload, while still delivering high quality lessons and assessments, providing necessary information to parents, and finding the proper balance so teachers can do their best work? Teachers need the support systems in place to first remove some of the non-teaching duties from their load, and provide other staff to take on those tasks, like recess duty, cafeteria duty, hall duty, to name a few. They need time to work and collaborate with their colleagues to provide high quality diversified lessons and materials for their classrooms. They need glitches to be kept at a minimum, so they are not repeating the same work over and over. They need the curricula items provided in a timely manner so they can incorporate those items that are necessary to do their work.

Of all the concerns I hear from the teachers, the loudest and strongest is always, *“I want to be able to do what is best for my students. I don't have the functional and complete tools and/or time to accomplish it.”*



STRESSED OUT?

BCPS employees are eligible to access EAP, an Employee Assistance Program, offered through CIGNA. It is a free service that offers counseling (up to 10 sessions); phone consultations on problem solving/behavioral health related issues; legal assistance (30 minutes); and financial consultation (30 minutes) on items such as debt or retirement planning; child care resources; elder care; etc.
EAP Phone access: 1-888-431-4334
Online access: Cignabehavioral.com. Click on “login to access your benefits” link and enter your employer ID: Baltimore (in lower case letters with no spaces).

