

NEWS & NOTES

Hard Times for Our Kids

KidCare is in trouble. Payroll contributions are down, but the requests to help needy students are way up. Lisa Levee, the TABCO administrative assistant who handles the fund, tells us,

“As of today, the fund has disbursed more than it did the entire year for 2013.”

Last November (2013), \$10,200 had been disbursed to aid 255 students, and the total for the entire 2013-2014 year was \$12, 240, distributed to 306 students. Compare that to this year’s figures—KidCare grants of \$12, 720 have been distributed to aid 318 students just in the first quarter.

We know that many of our students are homeless; in fact, Lisa estimates that seven out of ten of the requests for KidCare aid coming in this year are to help homeless kids who are without the necessary items to make school attendance possible--as basic as shoes and clothing.

Unfortunately, without an increase in contributions, the capacity to continue helping our needy kids will be depleted. In 2011, there were 215 employees donating



Students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

to KidCare via payroll deductions --that figure is down to 170 employees this year. Baltimore County employs about 8,200 teachers, so about 2% of us give via payroll deduction.

KidCare receives some monies through fund-raising activities, most notably the KidCare Raffle held each year at the annual Retirement and Recognition Dinner, which raised \$3658 last May, and

some donations are made by several of our endorsed vendors. However, without the sustaining funds coming in through payroll deductions, our teacher-created and supported charity cannot continue to fulfill the mission of helping our most needy students.

Your help is needed TODAY. You can contribute a painless amount of your choice, from each pay (the form to sign up is at tabco.org. Click on Member Benefits, then KidCare, and then click the link at the bottom of the article) or send a contribution via check to TABCO, 305 E. Joppa Rd., Towson, MD 21286. Please put this at the top of your TO-DO list. Cold weather and the holidays are coming...our kids need us.

ARE YOU RUNNING?

TABCO Elections 2015

Those who are interested in running for TABCO leadership positions must be active members who have completed a minimum of three consecutive years of active membership immediately preceding the official filing for office.

Candidates must obtain the appropriate forms from the TABCO office. Teresa McDowell (tmcdowell@mseanea.org) may be contacted as of January 5, 2015 ,regarding these forms. Among the requirements for nomination are the acquisition of at least 75 signatures of active TABCO members from at least three different schools in the appropriate district, with no more than 38 from any one school. These petitions must be submitted to TABCO by February 15, 2015. TABCO elections will be held during the week of March 16-20, 2015.

POSITIONS UP FOR ELECTION

President: 2-yr. term
Vice President: 2-yr. term

Board of Directors:
District I 3-yr. term
District II 3-yr. term
District II 2-yr. term
District III 3-yr. term

Health Care Rate Splits

As part of the five-year health care agreement we ratified two years ago, the rate split percentages are changing as of January 1, 2015. The Cigna OAP (in/out of network) is going from 15% to 17% paid by the employee (83% paid by BCPS). The Kaiser HMO and the Cigna OAPIN plans are going from 12% to 13% paid by the employee (87% paid by BCPS).

Employees hired on or after January 1, 2013 automatically go to the end point of the five-year phase-in period which is 20% for the Cigna OAP plan and 15% for either the Kaiser or Cigna OAPIN plans. There are still two more years after this one before we have reached the final percentages for the health care rate split changes, i.e., 2017. Each year you have seen an incremental increase instead of having to deal with it in one big jump. That is why we negotiated it incrementally. Remember, the health care benefit calculator is based on the calendar year from January through December.

EDUCATION BLOGS WORTH FOLLOWING

Lily's Blackboard

<http://lilysblackboard.org/tag/lilys-blog/>

Written by Lily Eskelsen Garcia, newly elected president of the National Education Association and former teacher and president of the Utah Education Association. Lily's blog covers the latest in national education issues.

Quote from a recent post: "When it comes to fighting for our kids, we never hold back and we never give up. Today there is a lot of talk about winners and losers. It's hard to see so many good people lose and accept that so many good friends of public education will not have the opportunity to serve. My heart is heavy today."

Diane Ravitch's Blog, A Site to Discuss Better Education for All

<http://dianeravitch.net/>

The blogger is a historian of education, and Research Professor of Education at New York University. She is outspoken on education reform issues.

Quote from a recent post: "Last year, the school board of Lansing, Michigan, voted to eliminate music, art, and physical education from its elementary schools. It was a budget-cutting measure. Where were the 'reformers'? Silence. Do you remember the strong statement from Secretary Duncan? Neither do I."

The Answer Sheet--Valerie Strauss

Education Blog for The Washington Post

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/people/valerie-strauss>

Strauss is a journalist who has covered education for *The Washington Post* for about twenty years.

Quote from a recent post: "There are, apparently, some things even billionaires can't buy. The California state superintendent's position, for example. With strong support from teachers unions and school superintendents, Tom Torlakson, the incumbent California superintendent of public education, handily beat Marshall Tuck, who was strongly backed by a gaggle of anti-union billionaires from Wall Street, real estate and Silicon Valley, including some who don't live in California."

Education Week Teacher Blogs

<http://www.edweek.org/tm/section/blogs/index.html>

Includes links to a variety of blogs with varying perspectives, arranged in categories, including that of award-winning educator Nancy Flanagan, *Teacher in a Strange Land*.

Note: It is necessary to subscribe in order to read full articles. A free two-week online subscription is available.

Quote from Nancy Flanagan's blog: "My TIME magazine (as yet, not cancelled) arrived earlier this week. And yes, I'm in full agreement with those who believe the cover is a hail-Mary attempt to keep a wheezing magazine relevant for a few more months--as well as a disgrace to the publisher and a reprehensible attempt to humiliate public schoolteachers."

2014 ELECTIONS



The 2014 Election is over. I think we are all election weary and glad it is finally finished.

Most of our TABCO-recommended education friendly candidates were elected to office on November 4 and we look forward to working with them. We were not successful in all offices and the governor's race was a prime example. The beauty of the United States is that we hold our elections and the country moves forward and we coalesce behind the newly elected officials. At least, it is supposed to work that way. I, for one, am going to support our governor-elect, Larry Hogan. He has announced that he was not only elected for those who voted for him, but for all Marylanders. I am taking him at his word and will help him understand public education from teachers' perspectives.

No matter what the outcome of any election, the important point is that you vote. If you voted, it doesn't mean always choosing the winning candidate, but it does mean your voice mattered. You used your rights and privileges as an American to vote. Folks in other countries die for that right. I am proud that the United States stands for our freedom.

On a personal note, I would like to thank all of you who worked during this election, giving of your own time and energy. It is rewarding, but very tiring work. I would especially like to thank Danielle Jones, who served as our regional political organizer during the election. She worked for Baltimore and Harford Counties to help organize and contact our members and did countless other tasks, which included many weekends as well. Danielle will be continuing on in her role as UniServ Director for the Northeast Area.

Also, I would like to thank Ray Suarez for all the work that he did over the long interview and election process. He serves as a liaison to the Government Relations Committee and traveled the county from east to west many times over the course of the election. Without their help, and the members of the Government Relations Committee, along with our secretary, Kim Melfa, we could not have accomplished so much.

~Abby Beytin, TABCO President