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# TABCO BULLETIN

news & views

September/October 2014

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*"Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the RIGHT TO VOTE except the American people themselves and the only way they could*



**Abby Beytin**

I attended a rally for one of our recommended candidates the other day. Some of the speakers talked about voter apathy. That very topic has been on my mind for quite a while. I have watched some of our education friendly candidates lose the primary election by just a handful of votes. In one case the number was seven.

I have heard many excuses. "I don't have the time to find out about the candidates;" "my vote won't make a difference;" "it takes too long;" "I forgot;" and I have even heard "I didn't know there was an election." I am talking about well-educated folks here. I can at least understand when someone has little education not understanding the importance of voting, but many well-educated folks don't vote, including many of our members.

So, I decided to have a discussion with a friend, who happens to be an African American male, about just that. His excuse was that he hasn't had the time to really learn about the candidates, so he doesn't want to vote when he isn't sure for whom to vote. I understand that sentiment, but I can't understand the ease with which people are willing to give up this right that was obtained by many not so long ago.

I am old enough to remember the Civil Rights Movement. I wasn't old enough to join in the fight, but I can still remember the riots, the killings and the absolute unrest, not just because Rosa Parks wanted to sit wherever she chose to sit on a bus, but because so many folks were being held back from voting by unreasonable laws put into place to suppress their votes. Women, after a long hard struggle, finally gained the right to vote in 1920.

## EDITORIAL Micromanagement: TRUST VS. DISTRUST

Angela Leitzer, Bulletin Editor

*"We have been told to not deviate from our daily schedules and if someone comes in our room, we need to be teaching what our schedule says. If we need extra time for a skill or re-teach, we need to call or email the office to let them know. If it happens too much, we will have to meet with administration to discuss why. I brought up that I have eight IEP students and may alter the schedule on team days so I could still fit in reading and math. I was told to send extra schedules for those days. I feel like I already have more work because of the IEP students and this puts even more on my plate."*

This statement of frustration is one of many that were provided when building reps were asked to tell us whether or not they feel that they are being micromanaged with regard to their classroom or teaching responsibilities. They were asked to respond to the question in writing--a request made due to the many anecdotes being told as the school year resumed--stories of teachers being given directives on specifics such as seating arrangements and bulletin boards. There appears to be a steep increase in this type of formulaic directive in many schools, even as educators are



struggling to cope with another wave of changes.

Other responses demonstrate significant levels of micromanagement, saying that there are directives on

*"Everything--groupings of students, set-up of classroom, colors of bulletin boards, homework, instruction, teaching routines."*

Another teacher said, *"Every minute of our contract hours is scheduled by our principal!! Every single teacher/staff member (except the administrators)*

See "RIGHT TO VOTE," page 3

See "Micromanagement," page 2



## “Micromanagement”

has “duty”—responsibility for six minutes of every day, except for 30 minutes for lunch daily and 250 minutes of time for the week. We are forced to have ‘action teams,’ which are each often unrelated committees.”

Many of the replies cited “micromanagement” as an area in which teachers

are micromanaged. Surprisingly, there were multiple examples of teachers being told how to arrange the desks in their classrooms. Other responses highlighted the feeling of being monitored at all times, such as:

“weekly report of the number of books checked out of the library”

“camera on laptops can be accessed at any time”

“grade levels have been told to let the administration know of their ‘dedicated’ common planning time each week—administration wants to drop in on those.”

“note on schedule of meetings—attendance is monitored” and is part of your evaluation”

“an administrator came into classrooms with a clipboard, checking that all desks were in the prescribed configuration”

An article in *The Atlantic* magazine, entitled *How Micromanaging Educators Stifles Reform*, examined the issues around the problem of too many directives:

*“We’ve tried to hold educators accountable for student performance without addressing the morass of process requirements that prevents them from doing what it takes to get great results for kids. We’re asking educators to deliver better outcomes, but we haven’t given them the flexibility and authority they need to meet high standards. The problem is that we’ve built an education system based on our distrust of educators, and we didn’t rethink it when we em-*



*...unintentionally...Our education policies are a result of thousands of top-down regulations that are in their teachers’ hands rather than empowering them with authority over how they run their schools and class-*

*rooms. Teachers ever felt more distrusted as professionals would say that the proliferation of controlled curricula and prescriptive teaching has taken away any feeling of being trusted to make decisions that address the specific needs of their stu-*

*dents.*

A principal at a BCPS middle school directed her staff that every class is to be conducted via a specific formula: 10 minutes teaching—10 to 20 minutes facilitating student group work—10 minutes teaching, etc., for the duration of the class time (whether or not this template fits the content or meets student needs).

A teacher in Kansas made the news when her letter of resignation was published. Her words hit home: *“I can’t work any longer where I feel so un-trusted, so on guard, so unable to be creative,” she wrote, “where my individuality is not wanted, where everyone must be doing the same thing at every grade level.”... “At my school we are given a schedule that tells us what to teach, when to teach it, and how many minutes to teach it”*

A New York teachers organization published this on the subject of micromanagement: *“Exercising your personal judgment in determining how best to teach your students is a basic professional right...The school system may set standards and guidelines for content and even recommend teaching techniques, but the day-to-day methods you use to individualize your instruction should be largely left to you. Still, some principals have attempted to micromanage the smallest details of your pedagogy.”*

So, the problem of micromanagement is not unique to our county. This is cold comfort to those struggling with directives that are counter-productive barriers to teaching effectively. (On a hopeful note, there were several respondents to our survey who said they did not feel micromanaged—and credited specific school administrators for that fact.) But let’s not dance around the problem: every layer of the education bureaucracy is leaning on the one below it and teachers are the bottom layer—treated as the bottom, rather than as the foundation of all the rest.

So long as those who do not teach are disinclined to trust the teacher-professionals, this era of micromanagement will persist and administrators will continue to insist on even the most irrational of directives.

## the Association BULLETIN Board

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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](mailto: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.



BCPS students are helped via our unique charity, **KidCare**, which is administered by TABCO staff, so every penny goes to a needy student for items such as shoes or school supplies that make it possible for “our kids” to attend school. So far this year, 238 students have been helped, at a cost of \$9,520. School staff members may contact the TABCO office to seek help for their needy students. To support KidCare via payroll deduction use the form located on the TABCO website (under the About Us tab) or simply send a check to the TABCO office made out to KidCare. Donations are fully tax-deductible.

### When is a teacher a teacher?!

Whenever the word “teacher” is used it applies to anyone who is in the TABCO bargaining unit—such as school nurses, guidance counselors, etc. In referencing the contract (Master Agreement), the same rights apply to all members regardless of their job titles.

### Association Events

NOTE: OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR BENEFITS  
OCTOBER 7—NOVEMBER 10

#### October

- 7 Board of Education mtg, New Town HS, 7:00
- 8 Classroom Management Wkshop, Loch Raven HS, 4:30
- 9 Understanding Your Retirement Wkshop, Loch Raven HS, 4:30
- 15 MSEA Delegate Caucus, Pine Grove MS, 4:30
- 15 TABCO Board of Directors mtg
- 17-19 MSEA Convention, Ocean City, MD
- 21 Board of Education mtg, Greenwood, 6:30
- 22 IPD Committee mtg
- 23 **TABCO Representative Assembly, Pine Grove MS, 4:00**
- 29 TABCO Board of Directors mtg

#### November

- 4 Elections—schools closed
- 5 Minority Affairs Workshop—Let’s Rap, Catonsville HS
- 5 Board of Education mtg
- 6 Savings & Retirement Workshop, Loch Raven Academy
- 7-8 SPARKS Retreat, Annapolis
- 8 New York City bus trip for members and their families
- 11 Home Buyers’ Workshop, Loch Raven Academy
- 12 TABCO Board of Directors mtg
- 13 TABCO District mtgs
- 15 Classroom Management Workshop, TABCO Towers, 22<sup>nd</sup> floor
- 17-21 American Education Week
- 18 Board of Education mtg
- 20 Retirement & Recognition Committee mtg
- 27–28 Thanksgiving Holiday – schools/TABCO closed

- ◆ Visit our website, [tabco.org](http://tabco.org), to see the new look and to check out updated information.
- ◆ Join the TABCO Facebook page.



[marylandeducators.org](http://marylandeducators.org)  
[nea.org](http://nea.org)  

Member Benefit: Purchase tickets for AMC movie theaters at TABCO for the discounted price of \$8.00.

### TABCO Bulletin

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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.



visor creates an ‘open and trusting environment.’” Of all professions examined in the poll, teachers were most likely to cite these two factors as the reasons for lack of engagement. The poll shows that higher engagement among first year teachers drops off precipitously between their third and fifth years on the job. These are also the years when teachers are most likely to leave the profession.

**More teachers are female, aging, and being replaced by “young ‘uns:”** A 2014 study by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education identifies seven trends in education. One of these shows that the percentage of teachers who are female continues to grow, in spite of increased opportunities in other professions. The percentage of female teachers has increased from 66.9% in 1980-81 to 76.1% in 2011-12. (By the way, women in the leadership role of principal is only 52% overall.) The ratio of veteran teachers to newer teachers has changed, however. From 1988 to 2012, the percentage of teachers with ten or fewer years of teaching experience increased from 37% to 45%. The report poses this question, “an increasing proportion of women in teaching may have implications for the stature and status of teaching as an occupation. Traditionally, women’s work has been held in lower esteem and has paid less than male-dominated work. If the feminization of teaching continues, what will it mean for the way this line of work is valued and rewarded?”

**Teachers do not have sufficient time (for anything):** The most recent TELL Maryland Survey of the state’s educators showed a decline in those items regarding teacher time—time for paperwork, time for instruction, time for preparation, time to adequately address student needs, time taken away by additional duties. Here in our county, time concerns are being impacted by new technologies and we hear from high school, middle school and elementary school teachers who are struggling to attach time realities to expectations.

**They are more likely than other types of workers to join their unions.** According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately 40.8% of teachers, police officers and firefighters are union members, compared to an overall rate of 11.3% of all wage and salary workers in the U.S., in a report released in January of 2014.

Several of you took time within the end-of-school-year craziness to respond to the editorial in our last edition, titled *For those of you who teach a low status subject...*, regarding the attitudes toward so-called “special area” (SA) subjects. With their permission, these comments are given below, though without names to avoid possible negative consequences.

One teacher said, *“Thank you for taking the time to construct a wonderful article that clearly articulates the frustration every SA teacher experiences!!! For many SA teachers no matter how much they volunteer at their school, put in extra hours on lessons, execute torturous duties such as bus arrival and dismissal outside in the pouring rain, freezing temperatures, just plain hot sun, their position will be one of the first cut when budgets are slashed. The culture has the misperception that our jobs encompass playing, drawing, painting, or singing all day. As you know this can be very frustrating and demoralizing. I, as many other SA teachers, hold dear the time we have with our students. We are an integral part of shaping the adults of tomorrow. I am sure everyone I ask could remember precious memories of teachers who were special to them during their own school days and many of them would have been SA teachers.”*

Another teacher commented, *“I just read your editorial and it couldn’t have been any more SPOT ON. I’ve been exceeded twice due to programming (Language, Algebraic Thinking) and this year my music position was cut down to 3 days to make way for STAT. I’ll be at 2 schools next year and 2 out of the 5 days will be split between the two schools. I’m wrapping up my 12th year and I will tell you that if I ever leave, I will cite your article as to why! What keeps me here, as many teachers of the Arts will tell you, are the moments with the kids. Everything else is what burns you out. After the second time I was exceeded in 4 years, I looked outside the county at private schools but they didn’t pay enough. Thank you for your editorial. It is nice to see everything I feel articulated so clearly and passionately in one article!”*

**Thank YOU for taking the time to TALK BACK on the issues! Your insights are valuable to your colleagues.**

*In memory of...*  
**Denis Dement**, who taught Biology and Social Studies for 35 years in Baltimore County Public Schools. Denis enjoyed sailing on the Chesapeake Bay, and in retirement was pursuing his lifelong interests in photography and drawing. Denis passed on September 17th, after a struggle with cancer. A former student wrote this about him: *“Denis was the first teacher I ever had who became a genuine friend. Few people had more influence in making me the person I would become.”*

## REP ASSEMBLY HOSTS BILLY BURKE

The agenda for the September RA included a visit from Billy Burke, Chief of Organizational Effectiveness for BCPS. He spoke about a variety of topics and responded to a number of concerns raised by association representatives.



Regarding the questions about BCPS One problems, he said that he uses a metaphor—BCPS One is like a shopping mall, when one wing is open, but the rest is under construction. Many questions were raised about difficulties with the online grade book and when BCPS One and STARS would be able to “talk” to each other.

Some questions were answered fairly clearly—Mr. Burke stated that asking special area teachers to enter grades every two weeks was “an unrealistic expectation” and said “we’re making sure principals understand that.” He went on to say that since first graders do not receive report cards for the first quarter teachers are not required to enter grades. (This seemed to be contradicted by a letter dated September 22, sent via email to teachers from Mr. Burke and Chief Academic Officer Verletta White.) Other questions were deferred, as he stated that he would have to seek the answers. He said that he meets once a week with President Beytin to improve communications and “relieve some tension and anxiety.” “That is my job,” he stated.

**10 Month and 12 Month Pay Options**  
Many folks continue to inquire about having their salary spread over a 12 month period. Although TABCO leadership continues to seek a reasonable solution, at this point, the system would have to change everyone to the 12 month plan. It is either all 10 month or all 12 month. Since there is not a unanimous desire to change, we must wait until such time as both options can be handled. In the meantime, there are ways to arrange automatic deposits for summer months through financial institutions.

**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](mailto:bookends68@comcast.net).

**FACULTY COUNCILS** are the microcosmic version of TABCO within each work site. Association Representatives conduct an election of TABCO members at the site each year (ideally, in May, for the following school year). School administrations “shall consider the advice of the council in developing and evaluating policies and practices of the school.” An example of an issue that Faculty Councils should be dealing with currently is the “ongoing issues with printers and copiers. You should have the print capacity you need to provide your instruction. If you do not have what you need, please talk it over with your administration. They have the ability to ask for the print changes and materials needed for your school. Forty-eight schools have received their print management systems and another twelve will be brought on board soon. All other schools will not receive the change-over for about four to five months as the glitches are fixed. Each principal has been given the information about his/her individual school printer plan. Make sure your faculty council and administration have had conversations about your school’s plan.” (From a recent message from Abby Beytin to reps) Reps who need assistance in beginning a council may contact their UniServ Directors—they may also be available to train and meet with Faculty Councils and administrators as needed. See the directory on page 7 for contact information.

## “Above and beyond” – who are they?

Association members have the opportunity to nominate colleagues or friends of education to be honored at the annual **Retirement & Recognition Dinner on May 7, 2015**. The nomination process begins in late November—nomination forms will be provided. Start thinking now about colleagues whose superior qualities make them eligible for the TABCO Recognition or Rookie Recognition Award (given to “rookies” with 5 or fewer years in the profession).

The possibility exists to nominate “friends of education” such as businesses or other entities not eligible as members of our bargaining unit, but who contribute to our schools or students in some exceptional way. Although awards are presented to such groups, the main goal of the awards is to recognize outstanding **teachers**. You know who they are—help us to find them!

\*Nominators and nominees must be members of the Association, if eligible.  
~Committee Co-chairs Roxann Russo, Michele Snell





Reduce stress ~ Plan for success

## “SEASONED” COUNSEL FROM YOUR ▲ COLLEAGUES

**Remember that you are not alone.  
We were all first year teachers once.**

Don't ever hesitate to ask veteran teachers for advice or assistance. No question is too ridiculous. ~Elva M. Venzke  
Make sure you are consistent with classroom expectations and giving consequences. ~Sharon Schneck  
Don't forget to have a life...find balance! ~Donna Simmons  
Be prepared to work harder than you ever had. ~Jane Rice  
Embrace every mistake you make!

Find a teacher with some experience to be your shoulder to cry/lean on.

Talk to colleagues and take time to be human. Do not neglect family, friends, and/or relationships that are important to you. ~Schimica J. Gauldin

*Don't get discouraged. Keep moving forward.*

Kids don't care what you know, they want to know that you care.

Keep calm. There is always a new day to try new things. ~Elizabeth Golob

Set up a system to organize and document everything! Visit your library media specialist for help with online and library-based resources for your curriculum. He/she can also help you with technology concerns.

*It is critical that you remain consistent in every aspect of teaching (planning, discipline management & procedures).*

~ William Williams

Use the advice of seasoned teachers for classroom management and for advice for interacting positively and constructively with administrators. ~Joan Mickiewicz

**Take care of yourself!**

Be patient and enjoy your students. ~Ann Smolinski  
Don't take anything the kids say personally. Find a mentor in your building. Don't struggle alone.

~Leslie M. Whitten

**Attend TABCO workshops—they are designed to give you the information and strategies you need!**

*Close your door, leave the administrative baggage outside, and enjoy teaching.*

Make lists and follow them with to-dos. Remember—to err is human. ~Karen Barboza

*Make sure to always take your 30 minute duty-free lunch.*

Make sure you are also skilled in another field so you will feel comfortable leaving teaching if the need or desire presents itself. ~Kathy Mannion

**Sometimes you have to just know when to let it go.**

~Stacey Seiler

**Who you are is more important than the content you teach.** ~Ed Kitlowski

## Very Important People

- Your building maintenance staff
- Your office secretaries
- Your TABCO representatives
- Your library-media staff & other colleagues
- Your TABCO UniServ Director
- Your TABCO officers
- Your elected officials

**These VIPs are those who are most likely to:**

- ▶ affect your teaching conditions
- ▶ have the answers to your questions
- ▶ have the resources to help you with classroom needs
- ▶ be on the “rescue squad” when difficulties arise
- ▶ want to help you succeed
- ▶ know what you don't know that you should know.

Getting to know them is part of a smart start.

### KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:

*Take time to read the Master Agreement and learn your rights. Administrators and others may convey information that is not accurate. You are your first line of defense. Knowledge is power!*

**Get “SPARKED”:** Watch for information about the SPARKS training program for teachers with 5 or fewer years. TABCO takes a group of “newbies” for two days at MSEA Headquarters with an overnight in Annapolis, learning about certification issues, financial planning, liability issues, teacher survival techniques, etc. If you are interested, contact Lisa Norrington: [lnorrington@bcps.org](mailto:lnorrington@bcps.org)  
Free to eligible members!



### SAVE MONEY:

;-TABCO members are entitled to a *ton* of discounts via their membership. Start with a visit [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com) (NEA member benefits) to discover the many retailers offering discounts on everything from electronics to shoes. Register using your membership card. (See links on [tabco.org](http://tabco.org))

**PLAN FOR RETIREMENT NOW:** All the financial experts tell us that those who begin saving even a small amount in their twenties will reap financial stability in the future. The time to begin contributing to a tax-deferred savings plan is NOW. You cannot imagine how smart you will feel when, suddenly, those first 30 years have passed and you are close to retirement day. See the TABCO website, Member Benefits, to find endorsed companies.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE “RIGHT TO VOTE” (from page 1)

I find it hard to understand how we aren't all moved to vote when we watch others across the globe die for that right; when at this very time, in state after state where Republican governors were elected, laws are being passed to suppress the vote of the poor and disenfranchised electorate. The very rights I watched people in this country die for during the sixties are being displaced again, and we are sitting back watching and not protesting or voting because of apathy or the misguided sentiment that “it doesn't make a difference” and that “all the candidates are the same.”

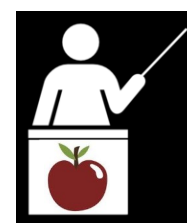
Knowing all of the history surrounding voting rights, I asked my friend what he thought would motivate people to get out and vote and why it was so easy to throw away that right. He pondered my questions for quite a while and couldn't really come up with an

answer. However, I made him rethink his own motivation. I know he is now thinking about the struggles his forefathers fought for his right to vote.

I know without question that if we don't exercise our right to vote, we will lose what makes our country great. We mistakenly send out the message to those who decide what we teach, when we teach, and how we teach it, that they can easily dictate those rules to us because we won't do anything about it by voting for education-friendly candidates.

It makes a difference who sits in elected offices. We will never find a candidate who agrees with us on everything, but we must choose those candidates who will help us move our profession forward. There are too many candidates who want to undo public education and sell it to the highest bidder. Please think of the difference your vote can have on your life as an educator. VOTE!

Members at Joppa View ES show their pride as they pose with President Abby Beytin on the first of three days designated as “Team TABCO” days. Maryann Nietubicz and Valerie Schissler are the Joppa View reps, leading the way for 100% participation. Two more Team TABCO days are planned for January 9 and March 20. Twenty-eight sites had 100% participation for the first day; these are the winners of the lunch drawings: Hebbville ES, Sparrows Point MS, Towson HS, and Meadowood Education CTR.



## TRUTHS ABOUT TEACHERS

**They are good for the economy (and supplementing the BCPS budget):**

On the Sunday before the Labor Day holiday, this was the scene at a local Learning How store: hordes of teachers, lining up to subsidize the public school system as they purchased charts, paper, drawing and writing supplies, learning enhancement materials, bins and folders to hold supplies, classroom décor, etc., etc. One teacher paid to laminate yards and yards of teaching materials, as others waited their turn. This beginning of the year spending spree will be repeated in spurts throughout the school year. Several sources give \$500 as the average amount teachers spend supplementing classroom needs. Given that this is lower than many spend, while some may spend

less, let's say \$300 times the 8,200 teachers in Baltimore County--that's a whopping \$2,460,000 subsidy of the school system by its employees. And that's a conservative estimate.



**Only 31% of teachers describe themselves as “ENGAGED” in their jobs:**

According to a 2014 Gallup Poll, teachers' “engagement” level is only one percent higher than the average American worker (30%). Gallup says this translates as dissatisfaction or lack of emotional connection with their workplaces. The poll results say this disengagement on the part of 69% of American teachers is due to two key factors: “whether they feel their opinions at work count, and whether their super-

See “...MORE TRUTHS,” page 4