

Now Is the Time to Show Your Support for School Funding!

County Council Hearing: Wed. April 9th

Big Turnout of Educators Needed to Avoid Damaging Cuts to School Funding

On March 17th, County Executive Ike Leggett proposed \$75 million more in funding for MCPS - but that is \$50 million short of the Board of Ed's requested budget.

A \$50 million shortfall would result in damaging cuts in our schools, potentially increasing class sizes and breaking contracts.

MCEA believes that the Council has the means to reduce that shortfall. MCEA President Bonnie Cullison will be testifying at the County Council Public Hearing on the Budget at 7:00 pm on April 9th.

MCEA strongly urges every school and worksite to send at least two people to show support at the hearing. Attendees are encouraged to make homemade signs (up to 8 1/2 x 14). (ex. "Lincoln School Supports School Funding" or "We' Know You Support Schools - Now is the Time to Support the School Budget").

Attendees are encouraged to arrive soon after 6:30 pm to ensure seating. Crowds are expected. If you have MCEA - or school - logo shirts or hats, please wear them!

SHORT TAKES

Job Fairs: Around the Corner

Three job fairs are scheduled for next week: **elementary school**, Monday, 4/14 at Northwest HS from 4 – 7 p.m.; **middle school**, Tuesday, 4/15 at Quince Orchard HS from 3 – 6 p.m.; and **high school** on Thursday, 4/17 at Richard Montgomery HS from 3 – 6 p.m.

Secondary Transfer Teachers: Five or Six Classes?

Secondary teachers seeking a transfer should be aware that a small number of county schools require a teaching load of six classes rather than the standard five found in most schools. While MCEA has been able to stop the spread of this increased teacher load, currently five middle schools and one high school maintain such a schedule. The five middle schools are: Eastern, Forest Oak, Key, Newport Mill and Takoma Park and the high school is Northwood.

Long Term Disability, a Conversation Worth Having

Representatives of American Fidelity, the administrator of MCEA's long term disability plan, will be visiting schools and offices the last two weeks of April. Long term disability 'kicks in' after all sick leave benefits have been utilized. Watch for announcements of when the reps will be visiting your worksite.

MCEA Affordable Housing Fair

On Wednesday April 30th , 4-8pm) MCEA is hosting an information fair for renters, potential buyers, and homeowners. Watch for a flyer coming soon with details.

TEACHER TIPS

Tense Shifts

(grades 6 – 12)

Have you had difficulty getting your students to stop using tense shifts? Here's a strategy you might want to consider: remove 'ing' verbs. This suggestion forces students to write either in present or past tense. Most scientific journals follow these rules and limit 'ing' verbs. It just might be a useful technique to focus their writing structure. Try it.

Student Numbers

(adaptable)

When you set up your files at the beginning of the year, rather than writing the student's name on the tab of the file, assign each student a number and write the number on the file tab. In this way, you can use the same files for a few years. You can tape a copy (from the grade book) of their name and number on the file cabinet door for quick reference whenever you need to file something. You can also have the students write their names and numbers on all test papers. When entering grades into the grade book, you may find it easier to match the number than to look for their names. You'd be amazed at what a time saver this little tip is.

These tips were gathered from "Works4me" an NEA on-line program. For additional tips, e-mail to lyris@list.nea.org. Then in the message block, type: subscribe Works4me (with no punctuation)

ON THE JOB

Leaves: Child Care/Adoption Leave and Long Term Family Leave

(With the start of the transfer period, MCEA is making every effort to facilitate job openings and placement. Moving forward with known leave requests will help in this effort.)

A number of leaves are available to unit members to assist in caring for family members. With the end of the school year fast approaching and the voluntary transfer process in full swing, it may be time to start considering some options. **If you are sure that you will be seeking leave soon (particularly leave for a year), it may be helpful to your colleagues to give notice soon.** Obviously, as more new vacancies become known, it makes life easier for teachers seeking a transfer. **At the same time**, if plans or family health are unclear, **teachers should not feel pressed to make decisions prematurely.** The types of family leaves and conditions include:

- **Child Care Leave** for a parent of a child up to the age of five may be taken as unpaid leave for up to one year, with the opportunity for

two such renewals. The unit member must notify Human Resources as soon as the unit member decides to utilize the leave and submit a request in writing at least 30 duty days in advance;

- **Long Term Family Leave** provides unpaid leave for unit members who wish to care for a dependent family member over the age of five. This leave, too, provides for up to one full school year with the opportunity for two renewals. Applications must be to the office of Human Resources by July 15 of the year immediately prior to the leave.

Additional leaves – both paid and unpaid — are available for sickness and family illness. Check out **Article 30** of your contract or contact MCEA's HelpDesk.

Transfer Season Timeline:

Voluntary period – 4/18 until 5/23

Involuntary/priority placements – 6/2 until 6/9 (or until all in field are placed)

Voluntary period – 6/10 (if all involuntary are placed) until 7/21

Special Election in Council District 4 - April 15th VOLUNTEERS NEEDED NOW!

As the county council debates whether to fund the school budget or consider forcing the Board of Education to break our contract, county voters in District 4 (eastern MoCo) have a chance to fill the vacancy created by the death of Councilmember Marilyn Praisner. Having a pro-education council member in that all-important ninth seat is critically important. (For information on MCEA's recommendation, go to www.mcea.nea.org.)

MCEA needs members willing members to hand out Apple Ballots at the polls after work on the 15th (4:00-8:00 pm), and to call other MCEA members who live in the district and encourage them to vote. If you can help, contact Mary Pat Spon at mpson@mcea.nea.org.