

Contract Secure!

MCPS Budget Approved

On May 17, the County Council approved next year's budget, restoring most of the earlier proposed cuts to MCPS. The approved budget falls short of the Board of Education's request by just \$7.2 million – much less than the original proposed \$21 million shortfall. As a result, the new MCEA/BOE contract is securely funded for next year. In addition, other improvements proposed in the MCPS budget will also be funded. It is expected that MCPS will be able to absorb the \$7.2 million shortfall without harmful cuts.

MCEA wishes to thank all the MCEA members who lobbied the County Council in support of school funding. More than 600 school supporters rallied at the County Council last month and hundreds more sent emails, letters and made phone calls to Council members.

The new contract includes: * an across-the-board salary increase of 4.8%; * funding to maintain our current health insurance premium cost-sharing formulas; * increase in sick leave cash-out for those leaving MCPS at the end of the school year, (provided notice is given by April); * increase in total elementary planning time within the teacher work day; and * new stipends for Gradebook Advisors and Pinnacle Superusers, among other things.

In addition, the following Operating Budget initiatives are also assured of funding: * 16.5 added middle school counselor positions to reduce caseloads, and * an increase in ES team leader allocations to 7 in all schools.

SHORT TAKES

Electing your Faculty Rep. (EFR)

Elected Faculty Reps., or EFRs, are to be elected in every county school over the next two weeks. The EFR serves as a faculty voice on each school's leadership team. Has your school vote been scheduled? If not, check with your MCEA Representative or principal for the date. Any MCEA unit member may seek the position.

MCEA's Retirement Reception Scheduled

MCEA's annual Retirement Reception has been set for **Friday, June 8**, from 4 – 6:30 p.m. at the MCEA Conference Center. To attend the event, acknowledging MCEA members retiring this year, e-mail Deborah Mackall at dhmackall@mcea.nea.org.

Long Term Disability Open Enrollment

American Fidelity, MCEA's Long Term Disability company, will be in each building for a day during open enrollment, June 4- 15th. to enroll members in the Long Term Disability plan. Members may enroll up to \$4000 without answering health questions! Watch for the American Fidelity Representative in your school.

Batter Up for 'Teacher Appreciation Night'

Each public school teacher with ID — and their immediate family — will receive **free admission Thursday, June 14** to watch the *Bethesda Big Train* take on the *Maryland Redbirds* at Shirley Povich Field. And courtesy of MCEA, each will receive a hot dog or pizza and a soda. Doors open at 6:00 pm with the ceremonial first pitch at 7:20 pm by the president. No, not George Bush, MCEA's own President Bonnie Cullison!

TEACHER TIP

Covering Bulletin Boards

(grades 1-5)

Many schools require their shelves or boards to be covered at the end of the school year and a lot of teachers use bulletin board paper to do this. To save paper and the many strips needed to be cut, consider using old clean bed sheets to cover shelves and the like. If you do not have any old, worn bed sheets, ask for some in your weekly parent or school memo. In the fall, you could wash them and store them for the next year.

Students' Year-End Evaluations

(grades 4-6)

Do you want some feedback at the end of the year? Ask your students their opinions on the activities and special projects that were assigned during the school year. Have them list the major projects, assignments, or novels that were studied. When you read through the list, ask them if you should 'use it' or 'lose it' for next year and ask what they liked or disliked about each project. Obviously, some assignments are mandated and you have no flexibility. The input, however, will help you evaluate projects from year to year and to modify and adjust your assignments for the following year. The students also love the activity because they know that their opinion counts.

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

Class Assignments for Next Year

"What will I teach next year?," "When will I be told?" and "Do I have any say in the matter?" are frequently asked questions and are addressed in the negotiated agreement. We try to answer these questions below.

Article 18 Sec. A states that, "*Principals will notify all school-based members in writing of their projected class and subject assignment and other duties by the end of the school year.*" This requirement is straightforward. This is to take place "*between June 1 and the end of the school year.*" If, however, changes in schedules, classes or assignments take place *after* the end of school, any unit member affected must be notified promptly in writing with reasons.

If a reassignment takes place after the school year ends, a teacher may request a review "*by the appropriate representative of the Association.*" This gives all parties, including the teacher to be reassigned, an opportunity to see if any other solutions are available.

Volunteers Sought First

In **Sections B. and C., Article 18** states that "*Principals will strive to assign teachers in the areas in which they are certified and experienced and where they meet highly qualified status as defined by the NCLB requirements.*" Later, **Article 18 Sec. C** states that teachers will be invited to express their preferences (for grade or subject assignment) in writing. Subsequently, the principal will review these preferences with "*the appropriate resource teacher, department chairperson, or team leader and/or grade level teachers directly affected.*"

Because elementary assignment crosses grade levels, new language has been included in the contract that addresses situations where experienced teachers (with ten consecutive years at a particular grade level) are under consideration for a grade change of more than three levels. In those cases the change must be arrived at in a collaborative manner or else be subject to review by the community superintendent.

And finally, at the conclusion of Sec. C, the policy states, "*To the extent that it is possible, changes in grade assignments in the elementary and in subject assignment in the secondary schools will be voluntary.*"