MARCH 2024

HCEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Chrystie Crawford-Smick ccrawford-smick@mseanea.org

ESP Vice-President

Cindy Poper Bel Air Middle School

Certificated Vice President

Doug Rudd Bel Air Middle School

Treasurer

Dr. Jacob Zebley Aberdeen High School

Secretary

Leigh Bondrole Edgewood High School

Certificated ES Director

Crystal Rufenacht Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School

Certificated MS Director

Andrea Weedn-Hughes Aberdeen Middle School

Certificated HS Director

Jason Brooks Bel Air High School

Certificated At-Large

Rob Tucker Edgewood High School

Certificated At-Large

Tracy Papinchock
Patterson Mill High School

ESP At-Large

Kindra Stevens Harford Academy

ESP At-Large

Abbie Bennett Edgewood High School

Official monthly newsletter of Harford County Education Association

From the President:



Colleagues,

Budget season, contract negotiations, new board policy, and general advocacy have kept HCEA leaders busy. There is no sign of things slowing down. We need you to join us and use your voice to influence the decisions being made. The voices of thousands of educators will resonate much more than just a few dozen. A few of those opportunities are covered throughout this newsletter.

First, two very concerning policies that select board members are bringing forward need your attention. Please look at page 10 of this newsletter for information on the proposed Flag and Controversial Issues policies. Both are open for public comment. USE YOUR VOICE to influence the decisions that are being made.

A lot of double-speak and petulance is coming from the County Executive's office. First, he released multiple videos claiming that the county could only afford to provide an additional \$15 million more than last year (remember that HCPS received \$29 million less than the budget request). Then, Mr. Cassilly attempted to make a side deal with select Board members to provide an additional \$8.5 million beyond his initial "promise." That additional money came with strings attached that would cut positions and programs in the budget enough to allow the county executive to sell the false narrative that he fully funded HCPS. Thankfully, after our call to action, a few Board members had a change of heart, and they did not alter the HCPS budget. Now that Mr. Cassilly hasn't gotten his victory lap, he threatens to hold back any additional money and may provide flat funding again. Enough is enough! This is another opportunity to use your voice by flooding his mailbox with postcards (see your Building Rep), and we will launch an email campaign soon. Remind him that educators VOTE, and we will replace him in the next election cycle. When we fight, we win!

Chrystie pawford frnick



ESP Perspectives

Cindy Poper, ESP Vice President Bel Air Middle School

I know this year has been hard for most of us. It's not just the time of year either. Yes, the February March stretch seems endless, but it is so much more.

Daily I hear about the struggles of ESPs across the district. Student behaviors, at all levels, and of all kinds, have become seriously concerning. Staff shortages have stretched many of us past our snapping point. The revolving door of ESPs coming and going is spinning at levels we have never seen before.

Currently 85% of our classroom-based staff have 5 years or less in the district. We have lost many of the resources we had, our long-term employees, leaving a vacuum of experience and knowledge, making it even harder to do what we do every day.

But my hat is off to each and every one of you. You show up every day, smiles on your faces, and do what we need to do for our students. Despite everything, we do what is best for our students, because they are our kids. Not by birth, but by choice, and that makes all the difference.

Spring is right around the corner, and spring break is nearly here. Relish the flowers, the smell of new grass and trees, the longer spring days. Use this time, in the same way our planet does, a time of new growth and renewal. Take the time to refresh and return with new determination to do whatever it takes to support our students regardless of the obstacles put in our path.

Thank you for all you do every day.

ESP Negotiations



The Education Support Professionals Negotiations team: Kindra Stevens: Harford Academy; Abbie Bennett: Edgewood High; Cindy Poper: Bel Air MS; Donna Hope: Forest Hill; Larry Ginsberg; Kathy Glover, Harford Tech; and Chrystie Crawford-Smick: HCEA President

The ESP Negotiations team has been hard at work meeting with HCPS since the beginning of January, fighting for a stronger contract for all ESP members.

The ESP team has several new members on the team that are providing a fresh perspective at the negotiations table. The team continues to fight for the rights of ESP workers, lead by Chief Negotiator and HCEA President, Chrystie Crawford-Smick.

Throughout negotiations season, many HCEA members have shown their support of the ESP team fighting for ESP rights by wearing red and HCEA gear. Check out some of the pictures of support on page 3.



















HCEA members from across the district show solidarity with the ESP negotiations team by wearing red on bargaining days.

The certificated negotiations team began the negotiations season by listening to focus groups and reading members' negotiations priorities surveys. The team used information and feedback collected to set priorities and bargaining goals.

The team heard HCEA members from across the district talk about needing more planning time and that all educators, especially special educators and elementary educators, are overwhelmed with a workload that keeps growing larger each year.

The team has been working to assure any agreements at the table improve the working conditions of all those in the certificated branch of HCEA while standing in solidarity with our ESP brothers and sisters.

The certificated team has met with HCPS 8 times now. This month, the team and district will continue Career Ladder negotiations and hope to come to an agreement that works for all members.



Certificated Bargaining Team: top left: Andi Weedn-Hughes, Ali Weedn-Hughes, Alice Jolly-Smith, Kim Mayforth. bottom left: Doug Rudd, Jake Zebley, Jason Brooks, Mark Gross.

BUILDING REP CORNER

All building reps should have received updated membership lists. If there are inaccuracies, please send them to Lisa Cover, HCEA Office Manager, at LCover@MSEANea.org.

Leadership retreat recap

This past weekend, 29 HCEA members stayed in Annapolis for a 3 day leadership retreat. We spent our time together building power, growing our skills, and understanding what it means to be a part of the labor moment.

Participants learned communications strategies, about the history of the education labor movement, and strategies for moving members to take action, all with the intent to give our leaders the essential skills to fight for our students, especially in our continued budget fight and fights against rogue BOE policies.













Attention Building Reps: We must make sure to contact Bob Cassilly in every way possible and encourage him to fully fund the Board of Ed's budget request.

One great strategy to get as many educators to fill them out as possible is to ask your administrative team if you can present for a few minutes during a staff meeting. Remind your colleagues what is at stake if the budget is not fully funded. Have staff fill out the cards then and there, collect them, and send them to HCEA in the courier. We'll stamp them and send them all to Bob Cassilly.



The Rainbow Connection is a feature brought to you by the LGBTQ Issues team, a sub-committee of the Human and Civil Rights Committee. We are working to develop materials so our members can be better allies to each other and how to support our LGBTQ+ students. We will share resources for educators on supporting our LGBTQ+ students. The LGBTQ+ Issues Team is open to ALL members regardless of orientation or gender identity.

Join the LGBTQ+ Issues Book Study Group!

The LGBTQ+ Issues Committee received a grant to hold a book study and will start a book study early April with the book *Read This*, *Save Lives*: A *Teacher's Guide to Creating Safer Classrooms for LGBTQ+ Students*.

The book, written by then 16 year old student Sameer Jha, offers information on the negative effects of bullying, how to prevent slurs in the classroom, understanding of what the call "the alphabet soup", and tips for creating an inclusive classroom and starting a GSA club in schools.

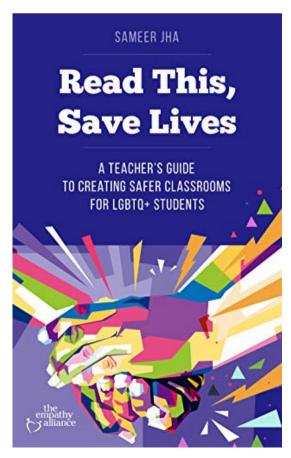
The book is a short and fast read full of information you surely will find useful.

Each participant will receive a free copy of the book for the book study. This will be an excellent opportunity for educators to have open and honest conversations about how to become better allies and how to create spaces for our students that are LGBTQ+ affirming. If interested in participating,

please FILL OUT THIS INTEREST FORM.

Check out this full description of the book. "Today, Sameer has become an activist, an educator, and the founder of a non-profit called The Empathy Alliance. He is a Congressional Silver Medal recipient, has been named one of the top 10 trans youth activists in America, and has reached over 1 million people with his message promoting LGBTQ+ student safety. This book tells the story of Sameer's journey, using specific incidents to illustrate important lessons about LGBTQ+ youth needs and how to meet them.

Find more than a 100 actionable tips created with busy, resource constrained teachers in mind. An entire chapter is devoted to an extraordinary teacher who has transformed her own school using many of the same principles included in this guide. Read This, Save Lives is brimming with expert quotes, sobering statistics, cutting edge research, critical terminology, real world case studies, and resources from some of the best LGBTQ+ rights organizations in the country. Get ready to be inspired by one of the few books on the topic of LGBTQ+ youth safety that has actually been written by an LGBTQ+ youth!"



HCEA mombard

HCEA members have been BUSY! They have been working on funding advocacy in Harford with the County Executive's Budget Town Hall, lobbying in Annapolis, showing up to support our Cecil County brothers and sisters in a funding crisis, and celebrating the Superintendent of the Year,









Clockwise from far left: Doug Rudd (HCEA VP and counselor at Bel Air MS), Jessica Uleck (Building Rep at Aberdeen MS) and Kim Phillips (ESOL teacher and Building Rep at Edgewood HS) give testimony to Bob Cassilly who didn't bother to look at them

Hundreds of educators and union activists from across the state went to Annapolis to adcocate for the ESP Bill of Rights. For the first time ever, MSEA joined together with Baltimore Teachers Union, AFSME, SEIU, and other unions statewide to advocate for rights of support staff in schools. Kyle Dixon (Special Educator and Building Rep at Southampton MS) and Stephanie Dowell (Admin Support Specialist and ESP Year Round Organizer at Central Office) joined the event.





HCEA leadership and members joined the celebration for Maryland's Superintendent of the Year, Harford County Public Schools' very own Dr. Sean Bulson. Deanna Burch (left, Havre de Grace High School Building Rep and Foods and Hospitality teacher) and her students created a beautiful menu spread of dishes cooked and served by Foods and Hospitality students. Elizabeth Nemeth and her sweet baby Annalie (bottom left) show their love with "Babies for Bulson". HCEA leaders (bottom right) pose with a cardboard cut-out of Dr. Bulson during the festivities.









Educators support educators. HCEA members showed up to support Cecil educators in their budget fight. We know they are the canary in the coal mine; when districts are underfunded for decades, its just a matter of time before drastic cuts occur

Bare Minimum Bob's Plan to Underfund HCPS... again

Bob Cassilly has once again promised to underfund Harford County Public Schools. Several months ago, County Executive Bob Cassilly promoted a video stating he would not give HCPS more than a 5% increase in funding, which equates to \$15 million dollars.

On January 23rd, Cassilly had his **one and only Budget Town Hall** to "listen" to constituent concerns and needs related to the Harford County budget. HCEA filled the room with members, along with the Sheriff's office.

Educator after educator stood to give testimony to what their students and schools needed and why fully funding the Superintendent's budget was so important. HCEA members spoke about funding new books in libraries, regional special ed programs, student mental health needs, special education issues, class sizes, educator workload... but Bare Minimum Bob didn't lift his head once to look at educators speaking to him.

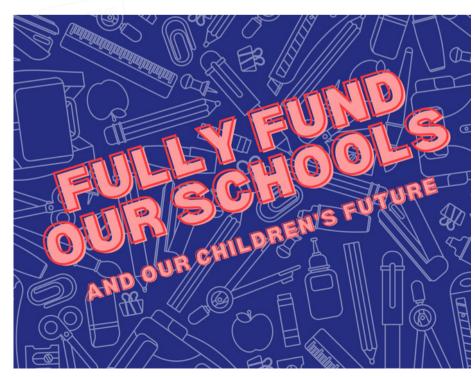
When a student spoke about needed funding to the Harford County Regional Association of Student Councils, Bob still kept his head looking at papers in front of him. When an HCEA member tearfully spoke about the importance of Pre-K classroom funding and how it helped her child with autism, Cassilly kept his head down. And when a school psychologist spoke about the overwhelming mental health crisis our students face and the need for more funding, Cassilly kept his head buried. He didn't look up to meet the eyes of the educators speaking to him.

Bare Minimum Bob may want to keep his head buried in the sand and may not want to look at the issues our students and schools face each day, but we educators live the truths of the day in and out struggles working for a school system that has been underfunded for decades. Underfunding schools impacts student achievement. Tell Bob what that looks like in your school.

Here's how we're going to tell Bob what underfunding means. We're going to FLOOD Bare Minimum Bob's mailbox with post cards asking him to fully fund our school system. Tell him about your students' struggles. Tell him what your school needs. Fill out the postcard with your message and then send it back here to us at the HCEA office in the courier. We'll stamp it and have it delivered to his office.

At the same time, we will send emails to Bob Cassilly using Action Network (expect that in your mailbox soon).

Let's help Bob look at us and the issues of an underfunded school system.



Board of Ed Updates

A few weeks ago, Board of Ed Vice President Melissa Hahn posted on Facebook that she and other BOE members were looking to craft a new budget instead of approving the budget proposed by Dr. Bulson.

As a result, HCEA pushed out a campaign for members and allies to advocate that the BOE fully support and approve the Superintendent's budget.

We learned that all the emails from our members were not being received by Board members. (Coincidentally, our members were able to receive all our emails from Action Network, but somehow. they were all blocked from being received by the Board of Ed). We were able to shift gears and get folks to send individual emails from their private email while we waited for answers on how our emails were blocked.

In all, our members sent over 1,800 emails between Thursday night and Monday before the Board meeting.

It was clear your voice was heard. The Board of Ed voted to approve the Superintendent's proposed budget in a 6-3 vote, with all elected Board of Ed members voting to approve the Superintendent's budget.

Our collective power is strong and each day, with each new member who joins us in this fight, we grow stronger.

Thank you, members. And remember:

Melissa Hahn - Vice President Board of Ed...



Melissa Hahn - Vice President Board of **Education Harford County**

In the midst of the ongoing budget discussions, I wanted to be clear where I stand on this budget. Ideally if we had unlimited funding, I would absolutely support it, who wouldn't want more money and more programs for the school system? Realistically, we will not get the funding requested. Over recent weeks, myself and other board members have been diligently reviewing the budget and engaging in many meaningful conversations and in depth discussions surrounding the budget. Myself, along with other board members have thoroughly reviewed the Superintendent's proposed budget. While I understand cuts and changes will need to be made and negotiations are in the process, I will not support a budget that cuts teachers from HCPS. Myself, along with a few other board members have requested an alternative budget be prepared that does not cut teachers or school based staff, support staff, student facing positions or activities and maintains class sizes. Looking forward to ongoing discussions, continued negotiations and coming up with other solutions to keep the focus of HCPS on educating our children and maintaining our current class sizes, keeping our current teachers along with supporting other important initiatives.

hcps.org

hcps.org



BOARD OF ED POLICIES: CALL TO ACTION!

There are currently 3 policies up for review by the Board of Ed. They have put forth changes to the controversial issues policy, a new flag policy, and a new cell phone policy. The Board of Ed takes public comment about the policies for at least 30 days before voting. We're breaking down some of the concerns about these policies and need you to go to the link <u>HERE</u> to read the policies and comment about them.

Controversial Issues Policy

Public comments must be made by 11:59pm on March 14.

There are many concerning components of the Controversial Issues Policy rewrite. While the policy states it intends to make the controversial issues policy clear, what is considered a controversial issue is vague. Educators are asked to "distract" elementary students from anything controversial and for secondary educators to distinguish between opinion, theories, ideas, and facts for students in all cases.

This policy bans educators from asking questions about anything that maybe considered "sensitive personal or psychological information" without parent permission, and educators cannot ask students about their pronoun preferences.

This policy will have many consequences, one of which is making a classroom less welcoming to LGBTQ students. With this policy, it will be difficult to actually teach most topics without fear of being disciplined.

G. Adherence to Legal Requirements This policy is intended to be consistent with all applicable laws and regulations, including but not limited to the Title JX, Family Educational Rights and Privacy. Act (FERPA), and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA). Ensuring students' and parents' rights and privacy is vital for fostering a safe and supportive learning environment. All HCPS employees shall not: (1) engage in the collection of sensitive personal and psychological information about students without first providing requisite notice and obtaining advanced written consent from parents/guardians (2) compel students to engage in speech they might sincerely disagree with (3) conceal and information from parents and guardians. Any staff member administering a questionnaire or survey or requesting personal information that violates the PPRA would be acting outside of the scope of his or

HCPS will continue to provide relevant training on laws impacting students and families, specifically including the PPRA and FERPA, and will continue to enforce legal compliance on laws impacting students and families, specifically including the PPRA and FERPA.

her authority. This includes any prompting by staff for students to announce their pronouns. Staff and students may declare their preferred pronouns if they so

H. Training on this policy shall be provided to all HCPS staff members upon hire, with bi-annual updates provided, including consequences of staff policy violations.

Click <u>HERE</u> to give the Board of Ed public comment regarding the Controversial Issues Policy

Flag Policy

Public comments must be made by 11:59pm on March 28.

This policy targets not only flags, but symbols. With this policy, no classroom is allowed to have a "this is a safe space" sticker with a rainbow in the background. The policy specifically mentions these symbols cannot be on desks, walls, or any other "fixtures" in the school.

Make no mistake, this policy directly targets LGBTQ flags and is intended to remove them from all places of a school building. The rainbow flag is not a political ideology. It is a symbol of inclusivity for all.

Much like the controversial issues policy above, the consequences of this policy will make school environments far less inclusive and welcoming to LGBTQ students.

In addition, this policy is estimated to cost the district at least \$45,000 in order to post flags in all the required places that do not already have flags.

Click <u>HERE</u> to give the BOE public comment regarding the Flag Policy

\neg		CV
PU	ᆸ	CY

Harford County Public Schools

POLICY TITLE: Display of Flags		
DOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE:	MOST RECENTLY AMENDED:	MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED

Purpose

To establish a uniform countywide policy in regard to the display of the

II. Definitions

- A. Flag: a piece of cloth or similar material, typically rectangular, attachable by one edge to a pole or rope that is used as the symbol or emblem of a country or institution, or as a festive decoration.
- B. Display: make a prominent exhibition of (something, in this case the flag) in a place where it can be easily seen.
- III. Statement of Policy

The Board of Education agrees with Section 7-105(a) of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland that "the love of freedom and democracy, shown in the devotion of all true and patriotic Americans to their flag and country, shall be instilled in the hearts and minds" of the students attending the Harford County Public Schools. In furtherance of that provision, the current American flag shall be displayed on the grounds of every school and in every classroom, conference room, school office, gymnasium, cafeteria, auditorium, and stadium.

The only other flags or banners that may be flown, posted or affixed to the grounds, stadiums, fencing wall, doors, ceiling, or any other appurtenances Board of Education of Harford County (including, but not limited to design any other fixtures), are as follows:

- The current Maryland flag
- The current Harford County flag

Policy Number: Page 1

Election Results



Harford County Education Association 2024 Election Results

Harford County	Education Association	
Certificated MS Board of Director	Vote for one (1)	Ballots Cast: 854
*** Andrea Weedn-Hughes	731	99.59%
Write-In	3	1
George Kasnic	1	
Kindra Stevens	1	
Tracy Papinchock	1	
Abstain	120)
Certificated At Large Board of Director	Vote for up to two (2)	Ballots Cast: 854
*** Tracy Papinchock	316	39.35%
*** Jason King	267	33.25%
George Kasnic	234	29.14%
Allison Weedn-Hughes	213	3 26.53%
Brenda Greene Hinton	170	21.17%
Kim Mayforth	140	17.43%
Write-In		3
Alex Jenkins	1	
Jacob Zebley	1	
Kelley Fonger	1	
Michael Murphy	1	
Shawn Sharpeta	i	
Abstain	. 51	N ·
AND COLL	0.	100

Click HERE for additional election results

congratulations to the following worksites with at least 50% of members voting:

Harford Glen- 100%

Patterson Mill High- 87.18%

George Lisby ES-75%

Edgewood HS: 65.56%

Joppatowne High- 62.71%

Patterson Mill Middle- 60.53%

Edgewood Middle- 60.22%

Aberdeen HS- 58.57%

Bel Air MS- 54.93%

Fallston HS-53.49%

Old Post ES- 51.61%

Aberdeen MS-50.63%





FAMILY NIGHT AT JURASSIC GOLF



FRIDAY, MARCH 15 5:00-7:00 PM

HCEA WILL PAY FOR MEMBER AND 3
FAMILY MEMBERS/GUESTS. ADDITIONAL
GUESTS COST \$7.70

RSVP HERE



Snacks and Beverages Compliments of HCEA 331 Baltimore Pike, Suite 8, Bel Air

If you need assistance, please contact your HCEA UniServe Director.

Liz Jones: 410-353-9692 ejones@mseanea.org

Temporary Staff: Larry Ginsburg (YES, Larry is back for a short time) lginsburg@mseanea.org



HCEA School Split 2023-2024

Larry Ginsburg lginsburg@mseanea.org

1. Bel Air High School

- 2. Bel Air Elementary School
- 3. Bel Air Middle School
- 4. Emmorton Elementary School
- Homestead/Wakefield Elementary School

6. Fallston High School

- 7. Fallston Middle School
- 8. Forest Hill Elementary School
- 9. Forest Lakes Elementary School
- 10. Hickory Elementary School
- 11. Jarrettsville Elementary School
- 12. Red Pump Elementary School
- 13. Youth's Benefit Elementary School

14. Joppatowne High School

- 15. Joppatowne Elementary School
- 16. Magnolia Elementary School
- Magnolia Middle School
- 18. Riverside Elementary School

19.North Harford High School

- 20. Dublin Elementary
- 21. Norrisville Elementary School
- 22. North Bend Elementary School
- 23. North Harford Elementary School
- 24. North Harford Middle School
- 25. Darlington Elementary School

26. C Milton Wright High School

- 27. Fountain Green Elementary School
- 28. Churchville Elementary School
- 29. Prospect Mill Elementary School
- 30. Southampton Middle School

Liz Jones

ejones@mseanea.org 410-353-9692

1. Aberdeen High School

- 2. Aberdeen Middle School
- 3. Bakerfield Elementary School
- 4. Church Creek Elementary School
- 5. George D. Lisby Elementary
- 6. Halls Cross Roads Elementary School
- 7. Roye-Williams Elementary School

8. Edgewood High School

- 9. Abingdon Elementary School
- 10. Edgewood Elementary School
- 11. Edgewood Middle School
- 12. Deerfield Elementary School
- 13. Old Post Road Elementary School

14. Patterson Mill High School

- 15. Patterson Mill Middle School
- 16. William S. James Elementary School
- 17. Ring Factory Elementary School

18. Havre de Grace High School

- 19. Havre de Grace Middle School
- 20. Meadowvale Elementary School
- 21. Havre de Grace Elementary School
- 22. Harford Academy
- 23. Harford Technical High School
- 24. Central Office
- 25. Harford Glen
- 26. Swan Creek

If you are asked to attend a meeting that may be disciplinary in nature and would like your UniServ Director present, please contact us right away. If your UD isn't available, you can ask to have the meeting rescheduled when your UD is available.

However, if admin refuses to reschedule, you must go to the meeting so you do not face discipline for insubordination.

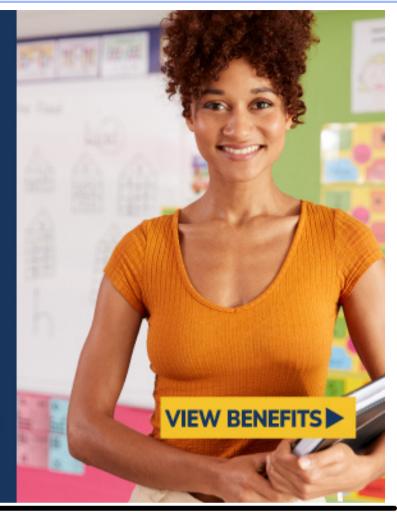
Just state that you will take notes and write down questions that you will answer after conferring with your rep.

THANK YOU EDUCATORS!

Harford County school employees are eligible for Freedom's **Golden Apple Program.**

- \$100 BONUS for joining
- Earn 3.00% APY* with our Empower Checking
- Earn 2.50% APY* with our Educator Savings Program





Federally Insured by NCUA

HCEA MEMBERS: Protect Yourself!

IF YOU ARE INJURED AT WORK:

- Report it to your supervisor
- Document the injury completely
- 3. Seek medical attention from the doctor of your choice
- 4. Call us at (410) 769-5400 to discuss your legal rights!

Solely reporting the accident to the county **WILL NOT** protect your rights!

Protect your rights by filing a workers' compensation claim with the State of Maryland.

Contact us today at (410) 769-5400 to protect your rights!



NEA Approved!

BERMAN | SOBIN | GROSS FELDMAN <mark>F 3</mark> DARBY LLP

Attorneys at Law

www.bermandarby.com

HCEA SPONSORED LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE

- Offering long-term care insurance to HCEA members and their families.
- Helping members protect their hardearned assets.
- Giving members a way to remain in control of their healthcare choices.
- Providing members with peace-ofmind.

For a no obligation consult and quote,

Contact: Michael Markowitz - 410-455-0680

Mike.Markowitz@acsiapartners.com





Summer Employment For Faculty

Now Hiring:
Area Supervisors,
Pool Managers,
FT/PT Lifeguards
(Swimming Skills Required)



Contact David Watts at dwatts@drdpools.com



Quality Education You Can Afford

M.Ed. Programs Under

\$9,500

Doctoral Programs Under

\$24,000

This is an estimated value of the cost for tuition and fees. Amounts may vary depending on number of transfe credits applied to the selected program hours, the pace and satisfactory completion of the selected program red



Proud supporter of Harford County Educators and Support Staff

Because you do all you can to help them grow, let us do all we can to help you grow, too!



apgfcu.com/UEducate Serving Harford County, Cecil County, Baltimore County & Baltimore City

Federally insured by NCUA Membership eligibility applies.

Learn about our **U Educate Member Rewards Program**, designed exclusively for our education professionals.

March 26, 2024 | 4 pm

Register in advance for this meeting at the link below or scan the QR code: http://tinyurl.com/yzk8fn5z



March 28, 2024 | 1 pm

Register in advance for this meeting at the link below or scan the QR code: http://tinyurl.com/4p7juh9r



After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

