

APRIL 2025

Official newsletter of Harford County Education Association

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ccrawford-smick@mseane.org

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## From the President:



Colleagues,

Spring is here, and Spring Break is finally upon us. This is your time to reconnect with family and friends and recharge. Please rest, you deserve it.

Spring is also a busy time in the world of public education. We have very important work ahead of us. The most important is ensuring that the HCPS Budget is funded. On April 15<sup>th</sup> we will learn whether or not Bob Cassilly has chosen to fully fund the HCPS operational budget.

All 5,100 HCPS employees and 36,000 students are counting on him. We expect the budget to be released at the very end of the work day on April 15<sup>th</sup>. If the budget is fully funded, we will not celebrate. A budget that cuts over 160 positions is not worthy of celebrating, but we can take a breath and regroup because we know there will be another budget fight ahead of us next year.

If the budget is not fully funded, we will need to switch gears and focus our efforts on the county council in order to save this district from additional cuts. If that is the case HCEA will be in contact after Spring Break to advise our members on the next steps in our advocacy. We must advocate for ourselves and our students.

I hope to see many of you at our upcoming social event on April 16<sup>th</sup> from 12:30-3:30 at Magerk's. Let's take advantage of the additional time on Wednesday and celebrate spring in solidarity. I truly enjoy chatting and getting to know our members at these events.

I appreciate your commitment to public education and HCEA.

# Contract Spotlight

## Administrative Transfer Process

We know there is a lot of uncertainty related to position cuts and what next year will look like. At this point, all those whose position was part of the 168 cuts have been notified. We want to be sure you have the contract language associated with these cuts and understand what happens next.

### **What is the contract language for those whose position has been cut?**

#### **Certificated Agreement - Article 6.5 Administrative Transfer**

When an administrative transfer of teaching personnel is necessary because of a reduction of staff in a school, the administration will identify where the reduction is to take place:

(A) In an elementary school – Regular elementary teaching assignment; that is, an assignment in the grades at that school; e.g., K through 5 or 6; or an elementary subject field; e.g., reading specialist, guidance counselor, etc. For example, if there is a reduction of a regular classroom teacher, and assuming all other factors are equal, the principal will determine the teacher in grades K to 5 or 6 who has the least 7 continuous service in Harford County Public Schools. This teacher will then be administratively transferred. If the reduction is a reading teacher, the principal will identify the reading teacher with the least continuous service in Harford County Public Schools for transfer.

(B) In a secondary school – Secondary subject field; e.g., geography, English, mathematics, biology, guidance counselor, work experience coordinator, etc.

The needs of the school system, and the needs and qualifications of the individual teacher(s) shall be considered. When all other factors are equal, the length of continuous service in Harford County will be the determining factor in identifying the teacher(s) who is to be transferred from the elementary school grades or the elementary or secondary school subject field. When the length of continuous service in Harford County is also equal, the length of continuous service in the school will then become the determining factor in identifying the teacher(s) who is to be transferred from the regular elementary teacher assignment or the elementary or secondary school subject field.

In an elementary school, if a teacher identified to be administratively transferred would leave a vacancy for which there would be no other teacher in the school certified to teach the vacated position, then assuming all other factors are equal, the next least senior teacher in line would be transferred to assure that all grades are taught by teachers certified to teach those grades.

In an elementary or secondary school, when a teacher receives written notice that they are being administratively transferred; and if a vacancy in the same kind of teaching assignment occurs in the original school prior to the first preschool day, then the teacher will be permitted to be reassigned to their original school. To exercise the option to return to their original school, the teacher must notify the Human Resources Department, in writing, within ten (10) calendar days of their letter of transfer.

If a vacancy in the same kind of teaching assignment that the teacher held does not occur in the original school prior to the first preschool day, then the teacher will remain in the new assignment for the entire next school year. If at the end of this school year and prior to the first preschool day of this calendar year, a vacancy in the same kind of teaching assignment becomes available in the original school for the following year, then, at the teacher's option, the teacher will be reassigned back to their original school, provided written notice was given to the Human Resources Department within ten (10) days of the original letter of transfer. This transfer must take place on the first preschool day. Following the first preschool day of this year, the transfer becomes permanent and the teacher will remain in the school to which they are transferred. For following school years, the voluntary transfer policy will apply.

In an elementary or secondary school, when it is determined that a grade level in one school will be transferred to another school, all teachers who are regarded as the teachers of pupils at that grade level will be transferred.

Continued on next page!



# Contract Spotlight

## Administrative Transfer Process

### Why is the Admin Transfer process being used?

The Admin Transfer process is being used because none of the position cuts will cause someone to be “separated” or lose their job from HCPS. Dr. Bulson has stated numerous times that he believes all the individuals whose positions have been cut can be absorbed through attrition. This means that when someone leaves the district or retires, their position will not be replaced with a new hire. Instead, those who are a part of the 168 cuts will be placed in positions left vacant by retirees or those leaving HCPS. So while a person’s position may look different and they will be in a different building next year, they will still going to have a job within HCPS next year.

### What does this language mean?

Simply put, this language makes it clear how the district figures out who will be cut. In this case, whether it is elementary or secondary, the principal determines which subject area or grade level will lose the positions. They turn this decision into Human Resources and then HR finds the person who was last to sign their contract with the district. It is length of service in HCPS that is used, not the amount of time someone has worked within the building.

In addition, the admin transfer process sticks to who signed the contract last regardless of their type of teaching certificate/license and whether they have tenure. If we were using Reduction in Force language, whether someone was a retired rehire, conditional, or untenured would be taken into account.

This language also spells out that if a person wants the opportunity to go back to their original school, they have to notify HCPS within 10 days of receiving their transfer letter. If a position opens in the building before preservice, you can return to that building for the next school year.

### What should I expect next?

We know that the process is unnerving and uncomfortable. Now that folks have been notified, the district’s next step will be to start placing folks in open positions within the district. This likely won’t start until after we know what next year’s budget will look like.

County Executive Bob Cassilly will release his budget on April 15<sup>th</sup>. If the budget is fully funded (from what the Board of Education requested), there will not be any more cuts and HCPS can start placing folks in open positions. If the budget is not fully funded by Bob Cassilly, HCPS will need to figure out their next steps. They would have to decide how to make up any budgetary shortfalls. If more cuts occur, the district will move to the Reduction in Force language in the contract instead of Admin Transfer.

In the meantime, we know the wait is excruciating for those who have been impacted by budget cuts. Please feel free to reach out to your UniServ Director with any questions. We’re here to help you and never mind talking to our members.

# 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](mailto:LCover@MSEANea.org).

## It's Early Enrollment Season!

Starting April 1, potential members (or non-members) can join HCEA for FREE with no dues until November 2025!

Those who join during Early Enrollment get almost all of the benefits of being a member. The only benefit that doesn't kick in until next school year is legal representation from MSEA attorneys.

As building rep, this is a great time to talk to the folks in your building who are not members. In many cases, especially with people in their first few years in education, they aren't members because no one has asked them. We wanted to leave you with a few tips to make a successful Early Enrollment campaign in your building.

- 1. Make sure you have your membership rosters** from HCEA Office Manager Lisa Cover ([LCover@mseanea.org](mailto:LCover@mseanea.org)). This tells you who is and is not a member, which will make your job a bit easier.
- 2. Set a goal for the number of new members you'd like to recruit.** It doesn't matter what the goal is, really. Just be sure it is achievable.
- 3. Try to communicate with people in multiple ways.** Send out an email describing Early Enrollment with the Join Now link and tell your colleagues you'll be walking around the building to talk with folks over the next few weeks. Then, meet and talk with people face to face.
- 4. Hold a 10 minute meeting inviting potential members.** Have current members talk about why they are members of HCEA and what they get out of being in the union.
- 5. Divide the work/membership list.** If you have multiple building reps, be strategic in who each person speaks to-- maybe someone on their team or grade level, or maybe old friends.
- 6. Don't be afraid to reach out to us here at HCEA,** especially if you're a lone rep. Allison and Liz love to come out to schools and talk with people. We're happy to help you in any way we can!
- 7. CELEBRATE when you reach your goal!**



## JOIN US!



*Be an early bird. Join now for benefits!*

**Enroll in your local education association between April 1 and August 31 and pay no dues until September!**

Join your local association now and pay no dues until September. You'll get many of the benefits of membership, including the exclusive NEA Educators Employment Liability (EEL) coverage that protects you from personal financial liability stemming from employment-related lawsuits. Learn more about early enrollment benefits at [neamb.com/earlyenrollee](http://neamb.com/earlyenrollee).

**Join now and you'll get immediate access to the EEL program and more, including:**

- NEA Accidental Death and Dismemberment Plan
- NEA Group Term Life Insurance Plan
- NEA Members Auto & Home Insurance Program
- NEA Car Rental Program
- NEA Credit Card Program
- NEA Magazine Service

Visit [neamb.com/earlyenrollee](http://neamb.com/earlyenrollee) to learn more about the money-saving benefits that come with membership in your professional association.

Upon full membership starting September 1, 2025, your membership includes statewide support with more than 75,000 members dedicated to your success and professional staff support where and when you need it most:

- At the bargaining table—negotiating your contract
- At board of education meetings—advocating for you
- At workshops and trainings—helping you on the job
- In Annapolis—lobbying for education funding and the support and resources you deserve
- In difficult times—providing legal assistance



Join today!



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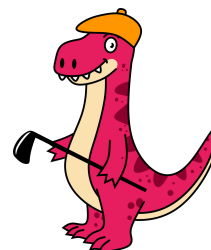


*Members*  
**IN ACTION**

Harford County Education Association



HCEA members met with various community group leaders as we build our coalition. Your UniServ Directors trained the group on organizing principles that will help as we get this movement going.



Families enjoyed their time at our Jurassic Golf Family Night! We can promise that no children or dinosaurs were harmed!



## The HCPS Budget: What Comes Next?

Given the uncertainty of the state's budget \$3 billion budget deficit, the federal calls for dismantling the Department of Education, and HCPS cutting 168 positions for next school year, many members have called us asking for details regarding what next year is going to look like. Right now, we don't have all those answers because there are a lot of moving parts to the HCPS budget, but we thought it might be helpful to break down the current budget process for you.

The budget for Harford County Public Schools comes from 3 different funding sources: the local government (through the County Executive and County Council), the state government (through the governor's budget and the legislature), and the federal government (which provides a small amount of funding for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs), Special Education, and Title 1 schools).

Typically, the amount coming from the federal and state governments is more of a known number so we focus far more on the local funding. Here's how local funding works. In February, the HCPS Board of Education passed Superintendent Bulson's proposed budget for FY 2026 (which is the 2025-2026 school year). That budget preemptively cut 168 positions knowing that the County Executive would not fully fund the budget as it currently is. In all, the Board of Ed cut about \$30 million from the operating budget for next school year in hopes that the County Executive would fund it in full.

Board of Education President Aaron Poynton continues to state publicly that he believes County Executive Bob Cassilly will fully fund the proposed HCPS budget. That budget request is now in Bob Cassilly's hands while he makes the budget for Harford County. The County Executive will release his budget and funding amounts for HCPS on April 15<sup>th</sup> and until then, we encourage our members and Harford County constituents to continue to email Bob Cassilly and advocate for a fully funded HCPS budget. Once the County Executive releases his budget, the County Council has until June 15<sup>th</sup> to accept the budget.

### **So what happens after the budget passes in the County Council?**

If Bob Cassilly fully funds the Board of Education's requested budget, we have been told there won't be any additional position cuts for next year. If the budget is not fully funded, there will likely be more cuts and there will be a lot of uncertainty as the district moves through the reduction in force process.

For the state's portion of funding, both chambers of the legislature passed different budgets so they needed to be reconciled and pass an agreed upon budget. That happened on the last day of the session, April 7 (which is called Sine Die), just before midnight. Because of the very late session budget passing, we are waiting to see what the final numbers are for state funding to HCPS.

**continued on next page...**



## The HCPS Budget: What Comes Next? cont...

One thing that occurred at session this year is that the state legislature voted to shift ½ of teacher pension costs on to local counties. This is about \$3.5 million and will certainly impact our local budget for years to come.

On the federal side, there is still some uncertainty on how President Trump's executive order to dismantle the Department of Education will impact funding to Title I, Special Education, and FARMs programs. Several organizations, including our parent union, National Education Association, have filed suits against these executive orders.

We will continue to keep a close eye on all the things impacting our public schools and we will keep you informed.



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Harford County Education Association

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let us do all we can to help you succeed!

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David Watts at [dwatts@drdpools.com](mailto:dwatts@drdpools.com)





# Education in Session

## Big wins

Maryland entered this legislative session with \$3 billion dollar deficit. Legislators were able to put forward a balanced budget without cuts to public education funding. MSEA members fought back and preserved over \$2 billion in public education funding! MSEA/HCEA activism at the state level helped encourage these wins with calls to legislators, 10,000 emails, Lobby Nights, and MSEA's Day of Action. This **activism was directly responsible for the wins** in protecting funding for public education.

## Funding:

The foundation formula for FY26 will stay the same with no cuts. Community school funding was also fully funded. Funding for Collaborative Time (as outlined in Blueprint) is paused for 2 years but funding for compensatory education, English Language Learners, and Special Ed will not be touched. Due to the uncertainty surrounding revenue in Maryland (because so many Marylanders are federal workers) the legislature did add a revenue trigger into the budget. This means if revenue estimates in March fall below 3.75% than December estimates, Governor Moore will have to present a budget that includes flat funding to education.

## Grow Your Own Educators Grant:

This program is to help combat the teacher shortage. This program provides for \$19.4 million in grant funds to help education support professionals (ESPs) become certified educators.

## New Tax Plan:

The tax reform plan creates 2 new tax brackets for those making \$500,000- \$1 million and those who make over \$1 million a year. 94% of Marylanders will see no increase in their state income taxes, but the plan (along with taxes on sports wagering and IT and data services) will bring in \$1.2 billion per year.

## County Finances:

We're keeping an eye on how the new standard deduction, increased child tax credit, and phasing out of itemized deductions will impact our county. These changes would reduce taxes for most Harford County residents, but it would also potentially reduce revenue for the county. In addition, the state moved  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the costs of teacher pensions to counties. For Harford, this is an additional cost of \$3.5 million.

## Workplace Safety:

A new workplace safety law passed. We'll update folks once we get the written law on how this impacts educators in schools.

## Antibias Training:

All County Board of Education members are now required to attend mandatory antibias training at least once during their term. Some members of the HCPS BOE could benefit with this training.





# UPCOMING EVENTS

April 10: HCEA Rep Assembly

April 16: Spring Social at MaGerks

April 17-April 21: SPRING BREAK

May 1: Government Relations Committee meeting

May 3: MSEA Racial and Social Justice Summit

May 6: HCEA Board of Director's Meeting

May 7: HCEA LGBTQ+ Issues meeting



## HCEA Member Benefit Options

As a member of HCEA you can participate in the following Aflac Benefits:

- **Accident** - Policy pays cash for treatments related to accidents you have on or off the job – Dr. visits, hospitalization, appliances, therapy, stitches, surgeries, broken bones, \$90 Wellness benefit, & more.
- **Hospital Choice** - This policy has choices and pays up to \$2000 if you are admitted to the hospital for at least 24 hours, plus add benefits if you need surgery or a diagnostic test, doctor visits, daily hospitalization, and more - for either a sickness, or an injury. **Great for pregnancies!** (1 yr. wait for pre-existing)
- **NEW! - Cancer Protection Assurance** – This policy gives you a lump-sum payout of \$5K or \$7,500K for an initial diagnosis of an internal cancer plus benefits for cancer surgeries, treatments, hospital stays, and more. A \$75 or \$100 Wellness benefit! **Children are covered for FREE!**
- **Critical Care** – This policy pays a \$10K first occurrence, a \$5K subsequent occurrence benefit, hospitalization benefit, continuing care benefits, and more for 10 major events (ie) heart attack & stroke.
- **Short Term Disability** – For sickness or off the job accidents. **Great for Maternity!** Pre-existing conditions have a 1 year waiting period. Coverage up to age 75.

For more information or to sign up, contact our Aflac representative, Don Rajala at 410-964-5530 or [donald\\_rajala@us.aflac.com](mailto:donald_rajala@us.aflac.com). Policies pay benefits to YOU and pay regardless of other insurances! All policies are portable and are payroll deducted.



# 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



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## Protect Yourself!

IF YOU ARE INJURED AT WORK:

1. Report it to your supervisor
2. 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!



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## HCEA Sponsored Long-term Care Insurance

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

For a no obligation consult and quote, contact

Michael Markowitz- 410-455-0680  
Mike.Markowitz@acsiapartners.com





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

**Liz Jones: 410-353-9692**

**[ejones@mseane.org](mailto:ejones@mseane.org)**

**Allison Heintz: 410-816-5025**

**[aheintz@mseane.org](mailto:aheintz@mseane.org)**

**NEED HELP?**

## HCEA School Split 2024-2025

<b>Allison Heintz</b> <a href="mailto:aheintz@mseane.org">aheintz@mseane.org</a> 410-816-5025	<b>Liz Jones</b> <a href="mailto:ejones@mseane.org">ejones@mseane.org</a> 410-353-9692
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Bel Air High School</b></li> <li>2. Bel Air Elementary School</li> <li>3. Bel Air Middle School</li> <li>4. Emmorton Elementary School</li> <li>5. Homestead/Wakefield Elementary School</li> <li><b>6. Fallston High School</b></li> <li>7. Fallston Middle School</li> <li>8. Forest Hill Elementary School</li> <li>9. Forest Lakes Elementary School</li> <li>10. Hickory Elementary School</li> <li>11. Jarrettsville Elementary School</li> <li>12. Red Pump Elementary School</li> <li>13. Youth's Benefit Elementary School</li> <li><b>14. Joppatowne High School</b></li> <li>15. Joppatowne Elementary School</li> <li>16. Magnolia Elementary School</li> <li>17. Magnolia Middle School</li> <li>18. Riverside Elementary School</li> <li><b>19. North Harford High School</b></li> <li>20. Dublin Elementary</li> <li>21. Norrisville Elementary School</li> <li>22. North Bend Elementary School</li> <li>23. North Harford Elementary School</li> <li>24. North Harford Middle School</li> <li>25. Darlington Elementary School</li> <li><b>26. C Milton Wright High School</b></li> <li>27. Fountain Green Elementary School</li> <li>28. Churchville Elementary School</li> <li>29. Prospect Mill Elementary School</li> <li>30. Southampton Middle School</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Aberdeen High School</b></li> <li>2. Aberdeen Middle School</li> <li>3. Bakerfield Elementary School</li> <li>4. Church Creek Elementary School</li> <li>5. George D. Lisby Elementary</li> <li>6. Halls Cross Roads Elementary School</li> <li>7. Royce-Williams Elementary School</li> <li><b>8. Edgewood High School</b></li> <li>9. Abingdon Elementary School</li> <li>10. Edgewood Elementary School</li> <li>11. Edgewood Middle School</li> <li>12. Deerfield Elementary School</li> <li>13. Old Post Road Elementary School</li> <li><b>14. Patterson Mill High School</b></li> <li>15. Patterson Mill Middle School</li> <li>16. William S. James Elementary School</li> <li>17. Ring Factory Elementary School</li> <li><b>18. Havre de Grace High School</b></li> <li>19. Havre de Grace Middle School</li> <li>20. Meadowvale Elementary School</li> <li>21. Havre de Grace Elementary School</li> <li>22. Harford Academy</li> <li><b>23. Harford Technical High School</b></li> <li><b>24. Central Office</b></li> <li><b>25. Harford Glen</b></li> <li><b>26. Swan Creek</b></li> </ol>

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT DISCIPLINE MEETINGS

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. According to both contracts, you must be given at least 2 business days to get representation.

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.