

MAY 2025

Official newsletter of Harford County Education Association

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ccrawford-smick@mseanea.org

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### ESP At-Large

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## From the President:



Colleagues,

May is finally here!! Its crunch time for educators and it's easy to get overwhelmed by all of the tasks that must be accomplished before the school year comes to a close. Please take time for yourself, enjoy the weather on a beautiful spring day, spend time with your friends and family, and unwind whenever you can. Sometimes we need reminder that we need to take care of ourselves.

The budget request was fully funded and that gives us an opportunity to catch our breath, but we know that there is a big election coming up very soon. Every elected seat on the Board of Education will be on the ballot in 2026 as well as the entire County Council and County Executive. There is a lot of power in our vote; people trust educators. We must gear up now for the 2026 election season, so we can work to ensure that people who support public education and educators are serving on the Board of Education and local elected officials who prioritize public education are leading this county. In honor of May Day, we launched a PAC campaign to build our coffers because we know that groups like Moms for Liberty will be backing candidates as well. If you would like to get more information about how we endorse candidates, please contact Liz at [ejones@mseanea.org](mailto:ejones@mseanea.org). If you would like to contribute to the PAC, please do so [HERE](#). Dues dollars cannot be used for political activity, so that is why the PAC is so important.

HCEA is always looking for members to join our committees and workgroups. If you would like to get more involved, please email me at [ccrawford-smick@mseanea.org](mailto:ccrawford-smick@mseanea.org).

Thank you for your commitment to HCEA and our profession.

*Chrystie Crawford-Smick*

# Contract Spotlight

We know this school year has felt long, and many of you are looking forward to celebrating the end of the year with a vacation. But, what if you scheduled your vacation back in September, before the school year was extended? What if you want to take off those last few days? Or maybe even just the last staff day? What does the contract say about that?

According to the contract, this is down to administrator discretion (which makes sense, or else we'd have empty buildings those last few days!). You can submit a request to your administrator, but that doesn't mean it will be approved. Your chances of approval go up if you still have personal business days left, if no one else has requested those days off, and if this is the first time you've made such a request. Here's the exact language, from Article 10.2 of the Certificated Negotiated Agreement:

*"Personal business leave shall not be taken immediately before or immediately after a holiday or weekday when school is closed on the master calendar, or on an in-service day for teachers, or at the beginning (first five scheduled work days) or at the end of the school year (last five scheduled work days). If, however, a circumstance requires the member's absence on one or more of the foregoing days, the member may request use of personal leave through the principal. The principal may, at their discretion, approve the absence as a day of personal business leave. In normal circumstances a member shall not use more than five (5) consecutive personal business days at one time.*

*Exceptions to the foregoing restrictions on days to be used for personal business leave may be made by the appropriate Executive Director of School and Performance for circumstances which require the member's absence on these days."*

That last line gives you a way to appeal should your principal deny your leave. You can appeal to the Executive Director of School and Performance that serves your school. Remember, there is no guarantee your days will be approved, but using the approved process will make it more likely.

As a reminder, sick leave cannot be used for vacations.



# MAY DAY

May 1 is International Workers' Day, also known as May Day, a day originally recognized in much of the world as a commemoration of the 1886 Haymarket Riot in Chicago, but now is a day to commemorate the many struggles and gains made by workers and the labor movement.

We can sometimes forget that before the Labor Movement and unions fought for workers' rights, the work day could be 12-16 hours long, workers had no protections in dangerous conditions and often died or lost fingers or limbs, children of any age could be removed from school to work in mines or on machinery, pregnant teachers could be forced to quit teaching as soon as their baby bump was evident. So many rights we take for granted were won by union activists.

We asked our Government Relations Committee, "What are you celebrating this International Worker's Day?"

"I'm celebrating using my voice as a member of my union."  
-Kindra Stevens

"Standing with colleagues for a united cause."  
-Tracy Papinchock

"Feeling like there is hope for change!"  
-Kim Phillips

"The power of collective action to protect our advocacy in advancing our profession."  
-George Nap



# 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).

## Gripes vs. Grievances

As a building rep, you're probably accustomed to colleagues coming to you with issues that impact their day to day work life. As the year goes on and folks get more exhausted from the challenges of being an educator, you will likely start to hear more complaints from members.

As you are sorting through how to help members in your building, we want to give you guidance on what kinds of complaints are grievances and which are gripes. All issues are important, but in order for you to be able to advise members appropriately, it is important to know the difference between gripes and grievances.

Grievances are legal violations of the contract (ie: your planning time was lost to a meeting, you weren't paid for the professional development you were told to attend). Anything that is a contract violation needs to follow the grievance process outlined in the contract for resolution. For a contract violation, the member should call their UniServ Director for assistance right away

Gripes are usually individual concerns or complaints that are not contractual rights (ie: admin isn't supporting a teacher in a parent conference or admin does not communicate well). Just because it isn't a grievance doesn't mean it isn't important or that it doesn't require our attention. It's just that we cannot grieve the issue and have to use other channels of correcting the issue. Gripes can also be addressed for resolution through the Faculty Advisory Committee, which is a contractual right.

Regardless of whether an issue is a gripe or a grievance, as union members, we have the power to come together to find solutions and solve problems. As a union, we believe in resolving issues at the lowest level possible. If a problem can be solved by the staff collectively, we win in two ways: people's working conditions improve and we've built the capacity and strength of our members and our union.

It's a good practice to know the climate in your building; as building rep, you can send out an anonymous climate survey or hold a meeting to discuss the issues impacting staff. To begin your climate survey or meeting, it is a good idea to begin examining what is working and what positive things are already occurring. Then discuss concerns and prioritize those issues that affect the most staff. Consider how much people care about the issue. Do people feel deeply enough about the problem to take action? And what action are people willing to take?

Discuss solutions and how to improve the situation. These solutions can be brought to the principal using the Faculty Advisory Committee. If your school does not have a Faculty Advisory Committee, please contact HCEA so we can help you get one up and running. UniServ Directors Allison and Liz are also available to assist you in holding your first FAC meeting or meeting with your administrator.







*Members*  
**IN ACTION**

Harford County Education Association

Check out some of the hundreds of educators wearing HCEA gear or red shirts to celebrate International Worker's Day!





MAY 2025

# HCEA *Members* IN ACTION

Harford County Education Association







## LEADERSHIP TRACK OF CAREER LADDER

### DEFINED IN STATUTE

- Teacher defined as “certified public school employee who is primarily responsible and accountable for teaching students in the class”
  - The law excludes curriculum specialists, psychologists, social workers, individual with certification for career professionals from receiving NBC salary increase
- Level 4 of Career Ladder is “Teacher Leadership Track” or “Administrator Track”

### LEVEL 4: LEADERSHIP TRACK

To be on the Leadership Track, a **teacher must have National Board Certification**, OR if NBC doesn't exist for their content area, the teacher must have a master's degree in the subject area

- Tier 1: Lead Teacher**
  - Teaches 50% of day
  - Rest of time spent mentoring newer and struggling teachers and teachers pursuing NBC, leading workshops and demonstrations at the school level
  - Becoming Lead Teacher adds \$5,000 to salary
- Tier 2: Distinguished Teacher**
  - Teaches 40% of day
  - Mentors lead teachers
  - Leads workshops at school and district level
  - Promotes school culture in which students are expected to achieve at high levels
  - Becoming Distinguished teacher adds \$10,000 to salary
- Tier 3: Professor Distinguished Teacher**
  - Teaches 20% of day
  - Must be based at institution of higher learning and serves as a senior faculty member or clinical professor at professional development school or university/college
  - Serves as a mentor and instructor of teachers in training
  - Mentors new teachers at induction
  - Designs and leads professional development across state
  - Cannot be more than 1% of teachers
  - Becoming Professor Distinguished Teacher adds \$15,000 to salary
- Teacher on the Admin Track**
  - Licensed Principal
  - Distinguished Principal

We don't negotiate  
the Admin Track

You might think that because we negotiated our cost of living allowance (COLA) and our language items already that the negotiations team is finished. But that isn't the case. We still have to negotiate some of the Blueprint mandates that impact our certificated/licensed unit.

In the next several weeks, we will go back to the table to negotiate what positions are to be included in Level 4 of the Career Ladder, also known as the Teacher Leadership Track.

This level of the Career Ladder has 3 tiers. We've made a infographic for you to help explain the specific mandates for each tier based on the statute/law's language.





## Proud supporter of the Harford County Education Association

Since you do everything possible to help them grow,  
let us do all we can to help you succeed!

Discover our U Educate Member Rewards Program,  
designed exclusively for education professionals.

We're for .

[apgfcu.com/UEducate](https://apgfcu.com/UEducate)  
Serving Harford County, Cecil County,  
Baltimore County & Baltimore City

  
achieve. prosper. grow.®

Federally insured by NCUA  
Membership eligibility varies by location

# HCEA

## Understanding Your Retirement

An ONLINE Workshop by  
NEA Member Benefits

### INTEGRATED FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS

This workshop is designed for all HCEA members, especially  
individuals considering retiring in the next five years.

Preparing for income in your retirement years:

- \*Pension and payout options in retirement.
- \*Social Security retirement benefits.
- \*Income from your investments.

**Thursday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025**

*The Workshop will be Virtual & Facilitated Online  
Starting at 5:00 PM and ending at 6:30 PM*

*RSVP \* Online at*

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/hcea-understanding-your-retirement-tickets-1337090526759?aff=oddtcreator>

SECURITIES OFFERED THROUGH LFL FINANCIAL MEMBER FINRA/SIPC

HCEA and NEA Member Benefits is not affiliated with, nor endorsed by, LFL Financial





# Education in Session

## “Full Funding”

You may be wondering: if the Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) budget for next year is “fully funded,” why are we still facing the elimination of 168 positions? Why are so many educators and staff still uncertain about their placements for the upcoming school year?

While the County Executive continues to publicly congratulate himself for “fully funding” the school system, it's important to take a closer look at what that term actually means.

In this context, “full funding” simply indicates that the County Executive has proposed to allocate the amount of money that HCPS requested. However, this does not mean that the amount requested was sufficient to maintain current levels of staffing and programming. In reality, HCPS leadership made the difficult decision to propose a reduced budget—one that already included significant cuts—because the County Executive made it clear he would not support funding that met the district's true needs. By preemptively adjusting the budget, HCPS retained more control over where those cuts would fall, rather than leaving those decisions to the county government.

This situation is not new. Since 2012, HCPS has been underfunded by a staggering \$234.49 million. In just the two budget cycles since County Executive Cassilly took office, the district has been shorted by \$65.5 million—and that doesn't even include this year's so-called “full funding.”

So what can we do about it? As a union, we can help shape the future of our school system by endorsing and electing candidates who are committed to adequately funding public education and supporting HCPS. This work is carried out through our Political Action Committee (PAC), as union dues cannot legally be used for political activities.

If you want to make a real difference in local elections and advocate for a better future for our schools, consider getting involved. Scan the QR code below to learn more and take action.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

May 3: MSEA Racial and Social Justice Summit

May 6: HCEA Board of Director's Meeting

May 7: HCEA LGBTQ+ Issues meeting

May 21: Representative Assembly

June 18: End of Year Celebration

June 19: Schools/Offices closed for Juneteenth

June 20: Last day for teachers!



For more information  
about ACE, please contact  
[morgan.meadows@ace.edu](mailto:morgan.meadows@ace.edu).

TEACHERS

## Builders of Bright Futures

**Your tremendous  
impact extends  
into tomorrow  
and beyond.**

**Enter for a chance to win a  
\$25 Amazon gift card.**

Scan the QR code to fill out the drawing  
form and enter for a chance to win!  
Contest runs from May 5 to May 16.  
Winners will be notified around May 23.

For complete contest rules, see  
[ace.edu/contest-rules](http://ace.edu/contest-rules)





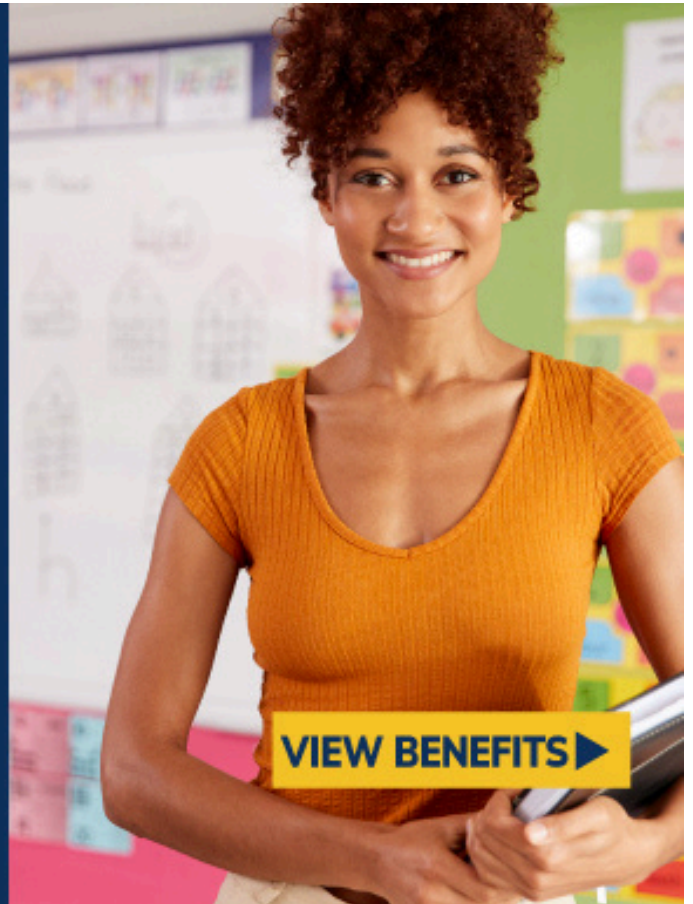
# THANK YOU EDUCATORS!

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



## 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!



NEA Approved!

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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.