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Official newsletter of Harford County Education Association**From the President:**

Colleagues,

I hope you had some time to relax over winter break.

It's a new year and we seem to be surrounded by chaos. This is definitely not the way I was hoping 2026 would start for HCPS. Although the world around us may be in turmoil, we can keep our schools and offices running smoothly by working together and remaining focused on your mission and your goals. I realize this is easier said, than done. We will continue to support one another and show the nay-sayers that the HCPS family is strong. With the support of HCEA we will stay the course and advocate for the needs of our students and colleagues. Educators are strong and we will continue to stand together no matter what comes our way.

The coming weeks will be busy, we are actively negotiating both the ESP and Certificated contracts, plus it's budget season. While HCEA is always here and has your back, please remember that YOU are the Union and we must stand together and advocate for funding and services we all deserve and need to properly serve our students. In addition, this is also an election year. We need members to participate in the endorsement process with us, to make sure that only those who truly support public educator earn the HCEA educator endorsement. Please contact Allison at aheintz@mseanea.org if you would like more information.

Speaking of the election cycle, we need to ensure that Bob Cassilly does not have another 4 years to underfund HCPS and other essential services. That means he must lose the primary election, you can help and make your voice heard. Refer to page 3 for more information.

Thank you for your commitment to our profession and HCEA. We are stronger together.

In Solidarity,



Contract Spotlight

PLANS FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

As we move into January, we want to clarify an important part of the evaluation process that is often misunderstood: the Plan for Professional Growth (PPG).

A PPG is not disciplinary. The purpose of a PPG, as stated in our contract, is to support an educator's professional growth and development. PPGs may be used for both tenured and non-tenured educators and are meant to provide guidance and support, not punishment.

PPGs are intended to be collaborative. Teachers and administrators are expected to work together to identify goals, supports, resources, timelines, and measures of success. A PPG should not be created or implemented unilaterally. This is a shared process designed to help educators grow, not something that should be imposed without discussion.

It is also important to know that signing a PPG does not mean you agree with it. A signature only acknowledges receipt and participation in the process. If you disagree with any part of the PPG, you have the right to submit a written response to be attached to the document at the time you sign.

If you are placed on a PPG or told you may be, and the process does not feel supportive or collaborative, reach out to HCEA. We are here to ensure the contract is followed and that PPGs are used as intended.



TIME FOR A PARTY

FLIP!

Do you want to have power in the primaries?
Do you want to actually affect change here in Harford County?
Do you want a say in who the next County Executive is?

It may be time for a party flip!

If you are currently registered as a Democratic voter in Maryland, you may have faced frustration with elections here in Harford County. It seems as though elections are decided in the Republican primary, not in the general election. The fix? Switch parties!

We're encouraging members living in Harford County who are currently registered as Democrats to switch their party affiliation. This will give us a bigger impact on upcoming elections. And it's SO EASY!

Are you ready? Click [here](#) to access Maryland's State Board of Elections website, where you can change your party today!



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.

CONNECTING WITH YOUR BUILDING REPRESENTATIVE

Building representatives serve as a key support for members by helping them navigate questions and concerns, providing guidance and support, and connecting them with HCEA resources when needed.

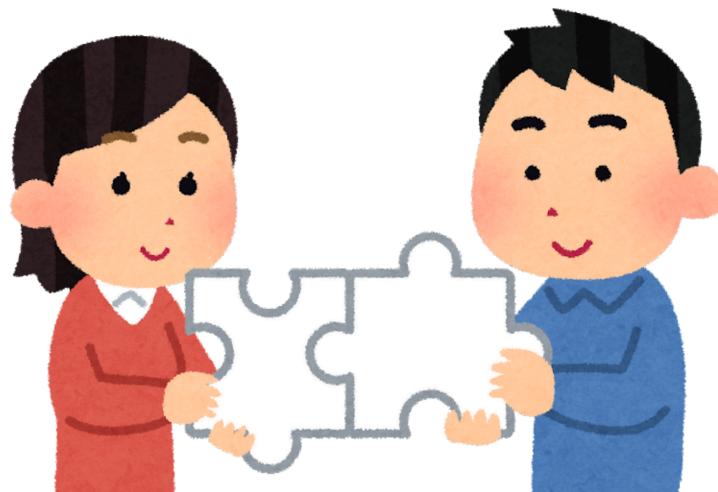
Your building rep is available to you for any reason. You do not need to have a formal complaint or a contract issue to reach out. Whether you have a question, need clarification, want to talk through a situation, or are unsure who to contact, your building rep can help.

Building reps also play an important role in sharing information and supporting members at the building level. They help explain contract related processes, share updates, and raise concerns so issues can be addressed early and appropriately. This connection allows HCEA to identify common issues, address concerns early, and better advocate for members across the county.

January is often a time when questions arise about evaluations, observations, workload, and expectations for the remainder of the school year. Reaching out early can provide clarity and support before concerns escalate.

When an issue requires additional assistance, building reps work with HCEA staff to ensure members receive appropriate support and guidance.

Members who are interested in learning more about the role of a building rep or who may be considering becoming one are encouraged to contact their assigned UniServ Director, Allison Heintz, or Roxanne Rife.





Members IN ACTION

Harford County Education Association



Above: Members address HCPS Board of Education members at a staff-only Engage for Education Night

Right: Members change their voter registration to have power in the primaries and write Christmas cards to the county executive





Contract Negotiations Ahead

Our union is gearing up for upcoming contract negotiations, and this year will look a little different for each bargaining unit.

The Education Support Professional (ESP) contract will be fully open, meaning all contract language is subject to negotiation. The certificated contract will have a limited opener, with negotiations focused on two language items and salary.

These negotiations are led by union members who volunteer their time, experience, and knowledge to represent all of us at the table.

ESP Bargaining Team

Allison Heintz (UniServ Director), Cindy Popo, Donna Hope, Kathy Glover, Kindra Stevens, Stacey Albrecht, and Stephanie Dowell

Certificated Bargaining Team

Chrystie Crawford-Smick (HCEA President), Jason Brooks, Colleen Bianco, Kim Mayforth, Alice Jolly-Smith, Andrea Weedn-Hughes, Allison Weedn-Hughes, Noah Hutton, Seth Tillman, and Jason King

Serving on a bargaining team requires many hours of preparation and meetings—sometimes outside the workday. We are grateful to these members for stepping up to negotiate the strongest contracts possible on behalf of all of us.

We'll continue to share updates as negotiations move forward. Thank you for supporting your bargaining teams and our collective work.

Education in Session

Maryland's 2026 Legislative Session Begins in Annapolis

The Maryland General Assembly – our state legislature – is set to convene its 449th regular session on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, in Annapolis. The session runs for 90 days and is scheduled to adjourn on April 13, 2026. This yearly gathering of lawmakers is when legislation is introduced, debated, amended, and passed – including bills that affect public education, school funding, teacher working conditions, and other issues important to educators and students.

Maryland State Archives

How Long is the Session?

Under the Maryland Constitution, the General Assembly meets each year beginning the second Wednesday in January and usually continues for a maximum of 90 days. While an extension of up to 30 days is possible with a supermajority vote, most sessions end around early-to-mid April.

Maryland General Assembly

During these three months, legislators:

- Hear testimony from stakeholders and the public on bills,
- Work in policy committees (including education-related panels),
- Debate bills on the floors of the Senate and House of Delegates, and
- Pass Maryland's state budget for the next fiscal year.

How You Can Contact Your Legislators

If you want to weigh in on legislation or share your perspective as educators, here are easy ways to reach out:

Email or Call

Use the email addresses and phone numbers listed above. Calling during session (10am-4pm on legislative days) can be especially effective.



Education in Session

Maryland's 2026 Legislative Session Begins in Annapolis, Cont.

Submit Written or Live Testimony

To speak on a bill during a committee hearing, legislators require testimony submissions through the Maryland General Assembly's electronic platform, MyMGA, usually a couple of days before the scheduled hearing.

Visit Annapolis

If you're interested in observing a floor session or committee hearing, you can visit the State House galleries or watch livestreams online.

Tips for Effective Advocacy

- Be clear and concise about your issue and how it affects educators and students.
- Include personal experiences from your schools or classrooms.
- Let legislators know you are their constituent (include your home address).
- Follow up if you don't hear back – persistence matters.

Harford County's Delegation in Annapolis

Here's who represents Harford County in the 2026 Maryland General Assembly, with contact info you can share with members who want to stay engaged:

State Senate

- Senator J. B. Jennings (District 7) – Republican

James Senate Office Building, Room 323, Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: (410) 841-3706 | Email: jb.jennings@senate.maryland.gov

- Senator Mary-Dulany James (District 34) – Democrat

James Senate Office Building, Room 103, Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: (410) 841-3158 | Email: marydulany.james@senate.maryland.gov

- Senator Jason C. Gallion (District 35) – Republican

James Senate Office Building, Annapolis, MD

Phone: (410) 841-3603 | Email: jason.gallion@senate.state.md.us

Join our PAC!



Education in Session

Maryland's 2026 Legislative Session Begins in Annapolis, Cont.

House of Delegates

- Delegate Lauren C. Arikан (District 7B) – Republican

Lowe House Office Building, Room 414, Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: (410) 841-3334 | Email: lauren.arikan@house.state.md.us

- Delegate Andre V. Johnson, Jr. (District 34A) – Democrat

Lowe House Office Building, Room 311, Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: (410) 841-3801 | Email: andre.johnson@house.state.md.us

- Delegate Steven C. Johnson (District 34A) – Democrat

Lowe House Office Building, Room 311, Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: (410) 841-3280 | Email: steve.johnson@house.state.md.us

- Delegate Susan K. McComas (District 34B) – Republican

Lowe House Office Building, Room 411, Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: (410) 841-3272 | Email: susan.mccomas@house.state.md.us

- Delegate Michael Griffith (District 35A) – Republican

Lowe House Office Building, Room 423, Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: (410) 841-3444 | Email: michael.griffith@house.state.md.us

- Delegate Teresa E. Reilly (District 35A) – Republican

Lowe House Office Building, Room 325, Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: (410) 841-3278 | Email: teresa.reilly@house.state.md.us



UPCOMING EVENTS

January 8: HCEA Rep Assembly

January 13: ESP Negotiations Begin

January 15: Legal Night Q&A

January 16: Certificated Negotiations Begin

January 18: Ice Skating Social



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ace.edu/contest-rules

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Doctorate

Ed.D. in Leadership:
\$24,810*

Specialist

Ed.S. in Curriculum and
Instruction: \$12,660*

Master's

M.Ed. in Special Education:
\$9,976*

M.Ed. in Early Childhood
Education: \$9,109*

M.Ed. in Literacy: \$9,109*

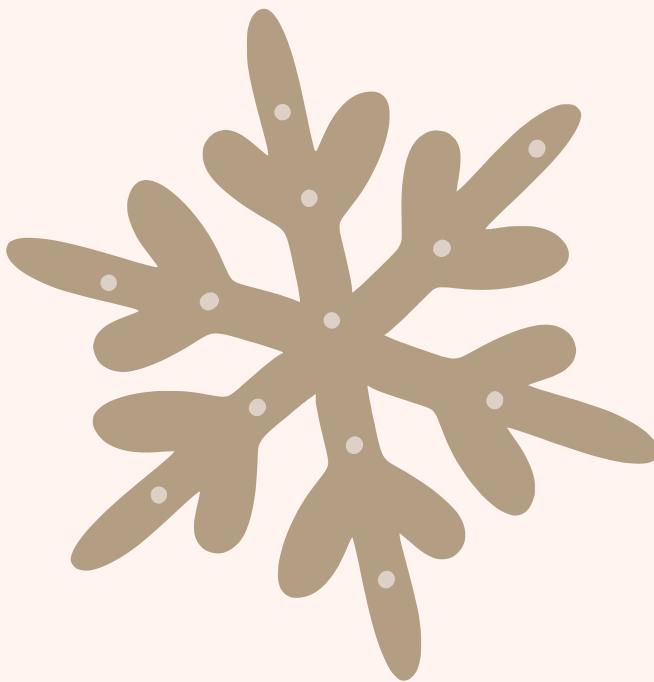
Bachelor's

Education Studies: \$8,370*

Certificate

Principal Preparation:
\$6,219*

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HCEA
Harford County Education Association

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 BSG Law at 800-827-2667 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 BSG Law at 800-827-2667 to protect your rights!

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NEA Approved!
BSGLAW.COM | 800-827- 2667

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BERMAN | SOBIN | CROSS LLP

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- 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@acsipartners.com



MOVIE TICKETS

Discounted Horizon Movie Tickets



HCEA Member Benefit-Horizon Movie Tickets \$9.00 each

Please call or email Lisa Cover to order tickets- 410-838-0800 x200
lcover@mseanea.org





Baby



**COOL OFF
WITH HCEA
FOR A FAMILY
FRIENDLY
SKATE EVENT
AT ICE WORLD
IN ABINGDON!**

[**RSVP HERE**](#)



**SUNDAY, JANUARY 18
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM
ICE WORLD
1300 GOVERNOR CT. ABINGDON, MD 21009
MUST ARRIVE BY 7:00 FOR FREE TICKETS**





LEGAL Q & A

with Jamie Sapia, MSEA Counsel

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2026



Legal Q&A:
5 - 7pm

Abingdon Grill

**418 Constant
Friendship Boulevard**

**Scan the QR
code to RSVP**



or click here

**GET HONEST
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QUESTIONS
ABOUT YOUR
RIGHTS AS AN
EDUCATOR!**

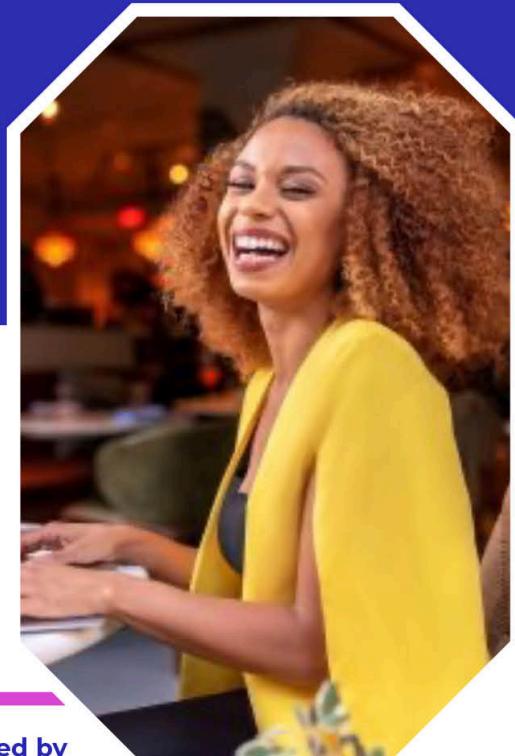
EARLY CAREER EDUCATORS!

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MSEA!

Level Up Your Teacher Toolkit

Professional Development for Early Career Educators

Strengthen your classroom management, deepen your instructional practices, and connect with a supportive community at MSEA'S annual Early Career Educator Conference. Educator-led workshops and sessions will boost your confidence and your practice. Use the QR code below to learn more and register today! It's FREE!



When: February 28, 2026
9:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
Registration begins at 8:00
Lunch and snacks included
Where: College Park Marriott Hotel
& Conference Center
3501 University Blvd East
Hyattsville, MD 20783

You'll choose three of six breakout sessions led by veteran educators:

- Creating Culture in the Classroom for New Educators
- Empowering New Educators—Strategies for the Classroom
- Not Just in June: LGBTQIA+ Representation in Our Classrooms
- Responsible AI PD: Integrating Pedagogy with AI Emotional Literacy
- Student Voice: Addressing Race & Equity
- Unlocking Your Member Benefits for Financial Wellness

This conference is one of four MSEA events being held on February 28 with a joint opening session and keynote speaker. Expect to meet career educators from across the state!



Learn more
and register—
it's FREE!

Keynote Speaker
Dr. Cierra Kaler-Jones
Dr. Kaler-Jones is a social justice educator, writer, scholar, and artist who focuses on creating educational spaces rooted in joy and love. She is the director of storytelling for Communities for Just Schools Fund, a donor collaborative that resources education justice organizers across the country.

EC
**EARLY CAREER
EDUCATORS**



CONNECT WITH US!



Follow us @marylandeducators

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

Allison Heintz: 410-816-5025
aheintz@mseanea.org
Roxanne Rife: 202-594-6525
rrife@mseanea.org

NEED HELP
?

HCEA School Split 2025-2026

Allison Heintz
aheintz@mseanea.org
410-816-5025

Roxanne Rife
rrife@mseanea.org
202-594-6525

- 1. Bel Air High School**
2. Bel Air Elementary School
3. Bel Air Middle School
4. Emmorton Elementary School
5. 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. Ioppatowne High School**
15. Ioppatowne Elementary School
16. Magnolia Elementary School
17. 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

- 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**

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.