

APRIL 2026

Official newsletter of Harford County Education Association

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From the President:



Colleagues,

Spring is here, and I hope you were able to relax and recharge over Spring Break.

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 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 workday on April 15. If the budget is fully funded, we will not celebrate, but we can breathe for a moment. A budget that cuts positions and resources for students is not worthy of celebrating, but we can take a breath and regroup because the upcoming election season is VERY important for educators, as we will be electing people to serve of the Board of Education.

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 to advise our members on the next steps in our advocacy. We must advocate for ourselves and our students. We are prepared for the worst, and there will be a special event on April 14th that provides some very important information regarding the Harford County government and where the money to fund essential services is hiding, in plain sight. Join us at Magerk's from 6-8 pm so you are equipped with the necessary facts needed to advocate immediately if necessary. While we are learning about what's going on around us, we can enjoy the company of other educators and allies from the community. I truly enjoy chatting and getting to know our members at these events. Food and beverages will be provided, see page 8 for details.

I appreciate your commitment to public education and HCEA.

In Solidarity,

A red banner with two spotlights on either side, casting a yellow beam of light towards the center. The text 'Contract Spotlight' is written in a white, cursive font across the center of the banner.

Contract Spotlight

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS TRAINING

Knowing your rights is not optional. It is essential to protecting your job and your ability to advocate for yourself.

Too often, members are put in situations where they are unsure what to say, what to do, or what they are entitled to. By the time they reach out, the situation has already escalated. This training is designed to prevent that.

Join us on April 21 at 4:30 PM at Patterson Mill Middle High School for a Know Your Rights training focused on real situations you may face in your building.

This training will cover:

- When you have the right to union representation
- How to respond to meeting requests from administration
- What your contract actually says and how to use it
- What to do if you are being investigated or placed on administrative leave

Understanding your rights allows you to slow situations down, protect yourself, and ensure the contract is followed. It also helps us enforce the contract collectively. A contract only matters if it is enforced.

Even if you have attended a training before, this is a great opportunity to refresh your knowledge and build confidence in handling difficult situations.

Please see the attached flyer below for more details and to sign up.

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.

BUILDING POWER STARTS WITH YOU

Organizing is not just about solving problems, it is about building power. As a building rep, your role is not to carry everything on your own. It is to develop leaders, build relationships, and strengthen your building so members are informed, engaged, and ready to act.

Organizing means talking to your coworkers, understanding what matters to them, and bringing them into the work. It means moving from individual conversations to collective action. It means making sure people know their rights, their contract, and that they are not alone.

Strong buildings do not happen by chance. They are built intentionally by reps who are visible, approachable, and consistent. You do not need to have all the answers, but you do need to be present, listen, and connect people to the union.

Here is the challenge:

Bring 5 members per building rep from your building to the upcoming training.

Do not just send the flyer. Have conversations. Personally invite them. Think about who is already engaged and who could grow into a leader. This is how we build strength across our buildings and across our association.

Training Details:

What: Know Your Rights Training

When: April 21 at 4:30 PM

Where: Patterson Mill Middle High School

A strong union starts in your building.



It All Comes Down to Funding

On the next page, you'll see the highlights of our Tentative Agreements this year. These wins are pretty awesome and definitely deserved. However, these wins are dependent on funding.

On April 15th, the County Executive will release his budget. Cassilly has already made it clear that the budget put forth by HCPS is more than he's willing to fund. In his January 13th statement, he said: "The only way to fund this outlandish request is with a tax increase, which I will not support, or eliminate entire county departments, which I will not do." We know this budget is anything but outlandish; it simply takes into account all of the district's needs without relying on any reserve balance. We also know that there is no need to raise taxes to fund the request. Please join us on April 14th to hear more on the Harford County Budget - you'll find the flyer in this newsletter.

The bottom line is this: we deserve better. Our students deserve better. Our schools deserve better.

So what are we asking you to do?

We know this is a busy time of year. Testing is underway. Spring sports and after-school activities are in full swing. HCEA is already asking members to attend Know Your Rights training and learn more about the county budget. It's a lot.

That's why this ask is intentionally simple.

On Friday, May 1st, at the end of the duty day, we are asking you to walk out of your building with your colleagues.

That's it. No speeches. No extra meetings. No lost instructional time. Walk out together at the end of the workday.

It may sound small—but it isn't.

HCEA represents 4,200 educators across 58 worksites. When we act together, even in a simple, visible way, it sends a powerful message: we are paying attention, we are united, and we expect the commitments in our Tentative Agreements to be fully funded.

And the date matters.

May 1st—May Day—has long been recognized around the world as a day when workers stand together to demand fair pay, safe working conditions, and respect for the work they do. For generations, educators and workers across the globe have used May Day to remind decision-makers of a simple truth: nothing functions without labor.

Our walk-out is part of that tradition. Peaceful. Legal. Visible. United.

This is how we show that funding our schools is not optional—and that investing in educators is an investment in students and the entire Harford County community.

One day. One moment. One united walk.

Join us.



INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY

MAY DAY

CONTRACT TIME WALK OUT

**MAY 1
2026**

- WEAR RED
- WALK OUT TOGETHER
- STAND UNITED FOR A GROUP PHOTO

SOLIDARITY: ask your colleagues in other units to join us!

**RESPECT OUR WORK. FUND OUR SCHOOLS.
STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITIES.**

TENTATIVE AGREEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Just a brief overview of what you'll see in next year's contracts!

CERTIFICATED CONTRACT 2024-2027

ESP CONTRACT 2026-2029

FINANCIALS



All eligible educators will receive a step and a 3.82% COLA.



FINANCIALS

All steps will increase by a 5.5% market rate adjustment. All eligible ESP will receive a step and a 3.82% COLA.

BEREAVEMENT



"Stepparent" has been added to the list of immediate family for bereavement leave. You can also request an option to use bereavement leave based on unique family circumstances.



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PLANNING TIME



Elementary teachers will get 120 minutes of time for personal planning on early dismissal days (up from 90).



ASSOCIATION LEAVE

ESP members may attend the MSEA Convention/ Representative Assembly and self-directed professional development scheduled on the annual MSEA conference day.

OBSERVATIONS



You cannot be observed immediately before or after a school break.

HCEA
Harford County Education Association

**DO YOU WANT
YOUR VOICE
TO BE HEARD?**



**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, Independent or Unaffiliated 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 or Independent, plus those who are unaffiliated to switch their party affiliation. This will give us a bigger impact on upcoming elections. And it's SO EASY!

Are you ready? Scan the QR code below to access Maryland's State Board of Elections website, where you can update your party affiliation today!



**As seen on
Facebook!**



JOIN US!

**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

HARFORD COUNTY BUDGET: MAKING CENTS OF IT ALL

PURPOSE

- Take a deep dive into the Harford County Government Budget
- Learn factual talking points to use when advocating for HCPS and other essential services
- Collaborate with other coalition partners.



[RSVP HERE](#)

Tuesday

14TH

April 2026

6PM-8PM

MAGERKS PUB

120 S BOND STREET, BEL AIR

RRIFE@MSEANEA.ORG

AHEINTZ@MSEANEA.ORG

Food and beverages will be provided.
Please RSVP by 4/7/26

**BETTER SCHOOLS
STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

A Greater Harford

Community Partners
for Harford County
Public Schools



Field Notes

This will be a new monthly feature where your UniServ directors give you advice based on the cases we see in the field every day!

This month's focus: **boundaries**.

It's such a weird question to answer on the fly in the middle of a disciplinary meeting: "How do you set boundaries with your students?" This is why you should be thinking about it in advance and implementing structures so that you never have to be in that disciplinary meeting at all. Boundaries protect both you and students.

The easiest boundary to set is communication. You should only be using HCPS approved methods of communication with your students and their parents. Email is best. If your school has an approved app, that's also great. You should never be texting or communicating with students (including former students) or their parents via social media. In terms of content, communicate as if whatever you're saying will be posted for the world to see (because we know that parents will post to social media when they're all riled up).

Boundaries in the classroom are a little more difficult to define, and can change depending on your students. However, you should have clear lines in your head of what conversations are off-limits, what conversations should be referred to a counselor, and what conversations are okay. It's fine to share anecdotes about your life and family; it's not fine to engage in student gossip. Knowing your line in advance and having a plan in place for when they're crossed (ex: "If a student says X, that's an automatic referral to the counselor" or "If a student asks X, I'll let them know that's not appropriate") means that you'll be ready and not panicking in the moment.

Then there are physical boundaries. It might be hard not to hug the little ones, but you're better off with a high five (if you have to, go for the side hug). This should go both ways - students and colleagues should be respecting your physical boundaries. "Sorry, I'm not a hugger, but I could go for a fist bump," is perfectly professional.

If you have any questions about boundaries (or really anything!), please reach out to your UniServ Director: aheintz@mseanea.org or rrife@mseanea.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 30 - April 6: Spring Break - HCEA Offices Closed

April 9: HCEA Rep Assembly

April 14: Budget Presentation

April 20: HCPS Board Meeting

April 21: HCEA Know Your Rights Training

May 1: May Day!





KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!



**HCEA
MEMBERS
TRAINING**

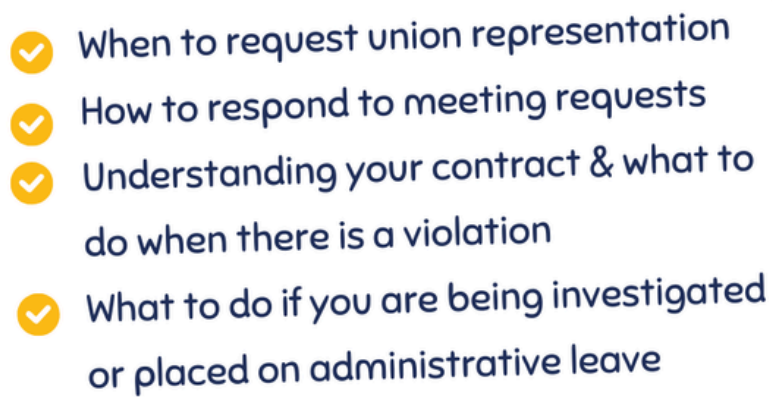


**REGISTER
NOW!**



APRIL 21 @ 4:30 PM

Don't miss the chance to know your rights and understand your contract. Gain the tools to advocate for yourself with confidence!

- 
- ✓ When to request union representation
 - ✓ How to respond to meeting requests
 - ✓ Understanding your contract & what to do when there is a violation
 - ✓ What to do if you are being investigated or placed on administrative leave

For more information please contact us:

RRIFE@MSEANEA.ORG



**PATTERSON MILL
MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL
85 PATTERSON MILL RD**



RSVP NOW! <https://bit.ly/rsvpknowyourrights>

HELP BUILD OUR UNION

JOIN THE

HCEA

EARLY ENROLLMENT

ORGANIZING TEAM



APRIL 15 - AUGUST 15

WHAT YOU'LL DO

- Talk with colleagues about joining HCEA
- 1-1 conversations with non-members
- Follow-up with potential members

WHAT YOU'LL EARN

- \$10 per conversation
- \$30 per new member

WHAT'S REQUIRED

- Attend organizer training
- Track outreach with MiniVAN
- Input data into MiniVAN

NO CAP

THE MORE YOU ORGANIZE,
THE MORE YOU EARN

WHY THIS MATTERS

MORE MEMBERS = STRONGER UNION
STRONGER UNION = BETTER PROTECTIONS

SIGN UP NOW!





INFORMATIONAL WEBINAR

Join us for a webinar session on ACE program information and LETRS transcription opportunities. Learn how to apply your LETRS course completion to graduate-level credit with ACE! Items to cover include the process, affordability and time for Q&A.



Peggy Burke-Miles

peggy.burke-miles@ace.edu
Partnership Manager

April 9, 2026

7:00 pm ET / 4:00 pm PT



Scan the QR code or click the arrow below to register. If you cannot attend live, please register and a recording will be sent after the event.

Register Now 



DRD Pool Management, Inc. is accepting resumes for summer job openings as Swimming Pool Field Supervisors & Swimming Pool Managers (Full or Part Time)

No Experience Necessary

For more information, email Allen Watts awatts@drdpools.com

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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!

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION NEA Approved!

BSGLAW.COM | 800-827- 2667



BERMAN | SOBIN | GROSS LLP

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.

Allison Heintz: 410-816-5025

aheintz@mseanea.org

Roxanne Rife: 202-594-6525

rrife@mseanea.org



HCEA School Split 2025-2026

Allison Heintz aheintz@mseanea.org 410-816-5025	Roxanne Rife rrife@mseanea.org 202-594-6525
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Joppatowne High School 15. Joppatowne 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 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.