

AEL Leadership Forum

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 6

FEBRUARY 2021 / MARCH 2021

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 10, 2021
**AEL Executive
Board Meeting**
5 pm
via Google Meet

Mar. 10, 2021
**AEL Executive
Board Meeting**
5 pm
TBA

Apr. 14, 2021
**AEL Executive
Board Meeting**
5 pm
Via Google Meet

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From Then to Now

By Edie Picken, AEL President

When we look at our current situation, we need to remember from where it all began, many of us behind the times when it came to technology. Not for all, but for many. Now, the majority of us have moved from the start line having become incredibly tech savvy, maneuvering through with all the virtual tools at our fingertips. We have become more connected to our staffs who have been leaders in their own right, helping us learn along the way. To the teachers and other staff in our buildings who have supported our learning curve, we owe them a debt of gratitude. I know that I do, and I am forever grateful for the collegiality that has helped us transform to do the incredible work we have been able

to accomplish during a pandemic.

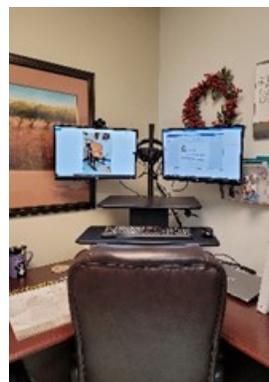
Now, let me transition to

another topic: negotiations. As of this writing, we will be back at the table in January, February, and another planned date

for March. Believe me when I tell you we are negotiating for what we believe we will be able to get; however, it is always dependent on whether or not the Superintendent will accept our compensatory requests. And, in spite of what we are able to negotiate, the County Council and County Executive have to agree to fund the Superintendent's

budget. I am referring back to the last newsletter where I referenced the "cart before the horse" process. We put on the table what we felt was reasonable, that would most likely catch up everyone on the pay scale, and a little more.

This was done in light of the current economic situation affecting not just Anne Arundel County, but the entire nation. We cannot ask for what we know is never going to be accepted. Our fiscal request was made before the Superintendent presented his initial budget to the Board. What he



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“He indicated that there were more funds—not a huge amount—but more that may be available. That certainly was music to the ears of the bargaining units.”

included in the budget was one step for all eligible employees plus a one percent COLA. Our negotiating team intends to continue to fight for what we believe we deserve, and Dr. Arlotto’s proposal simply is not enough.

On January 5, 2021, the leaders of all bargaining units were provided the opportunity to speak on our respective groups’ behalves regarding the budget. My presentation included some very specific data that got the attention of the Board. We have provided that specific information to Board members for review. AEL wants to make sure that the



members of the Board of Education are fully aware that when the Superintendent provides them

with his proposed budget, and the “placeholder” amount he includes for sala-

ries does not include salary increases for Units V and VI that take up over half of that placeholder while the rest of the employee groups have to fight for what is left. The presentation is posted on our website

www.aelaacps.org.

On January 6 ,in a presentation to the Board, a member of the County Budget Office said his office appreciated the budget that Dr. Arlotto presented, then indicated that the County was not in arrears as badly as they anticipated resulting from the pandemic. He indicated that there were more funds—not a huge amount—but more that may be available. That certainly was music to the ears of the bargaining units. I am hopeful that our initial request may be accepted now that we have that information.

As you hopefully know, one of AEL’s positions is Cluster Representative. Our current Representatives have been posing many good questions

to the Executive Board on your behalf. They participate in Executive Board meetings and should be communicating with you what we are able to share about negotiations, in addition to the answers to your questions. Our expectation is that they are communicating with you. The list of Cluster Representatives can be found on the website under the Contacts tab, and Who to Call.

Now, what can you do? For starters become better informed, tune into Board Meetings at

www.aacps.org/YouTube

to hear the topics being discussed and any public testimony that maybe presented. When public testimony is sought by the Board on issues important to employees, sign up to speak. They need to hear your voices, not mine alone. I do speak on your behalf, and take that very seriously— your voices are

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just as important. On January 5th and 7th, numerous Unit I members signed up and spoke. Where were AEL members? Crickets. The louder our voice, the more they will hear. Though we may be the smallest of the bargaining units, we deserve to be compensated for the continuous increasing workload that seems not to have an off switch. Stand

up and join me in expressing our angst being grossly underpaid for the work we do. Become active in the association. Stand up and join me in making AEL's voice louder than it has ever been. I spoke for our unit on January 5th and pointed out the increasing gap in the pay differential between Unit II and Units V and VI. I made some people

uncomfortable when I asked Board members to review the huge pay increases for Units V and VI over the past three years.

So, from where we have come to where we are now, continue to do the amazing work that you do every day—we value each of you now let's support each other. Stay safe and healthy.

“Though we may be the smallest of the bargaining units, we deserve to be compensated for the continuous increasing workload ...”

Remembering Ollie Wittig

On Friday, January 29, AEL was informed that one of its long-time members and well-known characters, Ollie Wittig passed away.

For those of us who knew him and/or worked with him, Ollie was something. He had a wonderful sense of humor, and loved his work in education. He was a long-time principal serving at

Andover, Severna Park and Glen Burnie high schools.



Oliver Wittig

Ollie also was very active with the Severna Park Lions Club and the Boy Scouts. He was honored with the Boys Scouts of

America Silver Beaver Award, a distinguished service award for his work with the scouts. He was the liaison for an administrative exchange

program sending interested administrators to England to spend time learning about their programs, and bringing those from England to the US to do the same. He always made himself available to discuss questions or concerns, and made you feel like you mattered. There are those still working in AACPS who had the privilege of working with him. AEL is truly saddened by this news. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

The Middle Child

By Rick Kovelant, AEL Executive Director and General Counsel

“Being the middle child is probably synonymous with being the odd one out at this point.” — Childinsider.com

These tasks, unlike those performed by other employees, take place over what now appears to be an unlimited number of work hours....”

It has been said that in a family unit, the middle child seems to have the most difficult time in terms of receiving attention. As an only child, I have no way of verifying the accuracy of that belief. I can say, however, that the “middle child” concept is a perfect analogy to Unit II employees. Sandwiched in between Unit VI and Unit I as part of the educational delivery team, the compensation inequities pertaining to Unit II employees seem to clearly exist. Consider the following:

The daily responsibilities for administering a school include, but are not limited to, the super-

vision of faculty, support staff and most importantly, students. These tasks, unlike those performed by other employees, take place over what now appears to be an unlimited number of work hours and can spread into weekend and evening events. This cannot be said of faculty, staff, or probably more importantly, to Unit VI administration.

It is also ironic, that at the very least, Unit II employees, for the most part, hold the same educational degrees and credentials as those in Unit VI administrative supervisory positions. Arguably, there may be a premium paid to those who supervise Unit II employees, but examin-

ing the salary increases received by this group over the last three years, one can only conclude it is extraordinary.

Years ago, AEL fought for the consideration of pay differential between Unit I and Unit II. This concept was recognized by the BOE and dealt with somewhat appropriately. Unfortunately, the composition of Unit I includes personnel other than teaching staff who, although supervised by Unit II employees, are paid more than their supervisors. The real problem today centers around the wage comparison between Unit VI, in particular and, Unit II. Significant pay increases to

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Middle Child...

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Unit VI employees have greatly expanded the difference in pay between these two groups. Keep in mind that Unit VI receives essentially the same benefits as Unit II and perhaps more. Also keep in mind that Unit VI salaries are not subject to readjustment downward if the school population changes or administrative transfers occur. Redlining, salaries for Unit II only lasts so long before the financial impact is felt.

At a recent budget meeting, President Picken articulated AEL's concern that the growing increase of Unit VI compensation by raise or "reclassification" and/or "position changes" impacts on the availability of providing a fair consideration and funding of

Unit II pay increases. Clearly Unit VI administrators are treated far better than those in Unit II. The Board members in attendance appeared to be receptive to this concern and have, through the school system auditor, requested more detailed information. To date, this has been provided. At some point, the figures supporting this inequity will be published so you will be able to see for yourselves the extent of the growth in Unit VI compensation.

While some may argue that it is only a percentage increase issue, I suggest that when you calculate percentage increases based on an already larger compensation, it most certainly translates into more

available dollars in a Unit VI paycheck. Compound the effect of these percentage pay raises over the last

"The Board members in attendance appeared to be receptive to this concern and have, through the school system auditor, requested more detailed information."

three school years and I believe you will appreciate why Unit II employees may well consider themselves as being treated as if they are the less considered middle child.

The logo for the Association of Educational Leaders (AEL) consists of the letters "AEL" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a red square. The square has a thin black border.

When in Doubt, Call Rick

If you need help, advice or just need to ask a question, please remember to contact **Rick Kovelant**. He is AEL's legal counsel and has a wealth of experience in assisting our members. He is a valuable resource and **available to you as part of your AEL membership**. He can be reached at 443-848-8022 (Pacific time).



AEL Mission Statement

The Association of Educational Leaders exists to ensure all Unit II employees are fairly and equitably treated in the course of their employment.

We commit to accomplishing this mission on behalf of Unit II employees by ensuring:

1. Adherence to our Negotiated Agreement.
2. All Unit II employees are adequately and equitably compensated for their responsibilities and work load.
3. Personal and professional needs shall be respected.
4. Fair, consistent and equitable practices shall be adhered to when dealing with hiring promotions, assignments and evaluations.
5. Fair, consistent, equitable practices in dealing with matters relating to discipline and conflict resolution.
6. Fair, consistent, equitable practices in resolving school and community conflicts.

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