

Job Survey Shows Gains But Problems Remain

More than 2,000 employees in HCEA bargaining units expressed their opinions about their work environment and its effect on their ability to provide quality education in HCEA's Job Satisfaction Survey last May. Negative responses from a number of schools in the area of trust and open communication highlight serious problems in what is otherwise an improving picture.

Countywide, 90% of those who responded to the survey felt personally successful in their work. More than 80% said they were treated as professionals and that HCEA's negotiated agreements were respected at their schools. Attitudes towards staff development activities have improved, but a 55% positive response shows that this area needs attention. Despite significant salary increases won by HCEA over past years, three-quarters of employees responding still feel they are not paid enough for the work they do.

Workload continues as a major concern. Too much time is spent on administering assessments (say 71% of those responding), required paperwork is excessive (67%) and increased workload has lowered morale (77%). While the numbers have improved over the past three years, nearly half (48%) of responders agree that

required meetings are excessive. One in four teachers indicates that school administration does not respect his/her contractual planning time.

Student misbehavior disrupts learning, say 48% of elementary, 63% of middle school and 54% of high school responders. Seventy-two percent of elementary and 58% of middle and high school responses indicate a lack of administrative support in enforcing discipline.

School/worksite morale is not good, said a shocking 39% of responders. Nearly half of responses (46%) reported there was not an atmosphere of open communication and trust at their school. A similar number (43%) felt they could not speak openly about important issues without fear of repercussion. This figure has risen from 37% in previous surveys.

"Teachers and education support professionals are being asked to raise the level of student achievement," said HCEA President Ann De Lacy. "An open, positive, professional relationship between administrators and staff is crucial to success and HCEA is dedicated to helping our members achieve that."

Grievance Nets Pay For Lost Prep Time

An HCEA grievance settled at Level Two with the Superintendent's designee granted in excess of a thousand dollars in additional pay to a group of four special ed teachers from Long Reach High School. They were paid for time they had been required to spend in IEP and other meetings during time which had been scheduled as planning time. (Contract language states that teachers "will not be assigned to any other duties" during planning time.)

This victory for HCEA members makes the standard clear. Time designated as planning time is inviolate. Administrators who wish to designate blocks for "administrative planning" have more leeway during those periods. But they must allow for at least the minimum 250 minutes of duty-free planning time.

See article on page 3 for more information. If your planning time is being violated, let HCEA know.

Interpreters 100%

Congratulations - Colleen Rice, Association Rep for HCPSS interpreters, received Congratulations at the June 2005 Rep Council Awards dinner. Colleen's efforts to explain the benefits of HCEA membership made interpreters the first HCEA job category to achieve 100% membership.



**Want to improve your pension?
Check out the MST A ActionLine.**

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The View from Here

by Ann De Lacy,
HCEA
President

Welcome back! Hopefully your summer left you refreshed and prepared for this year's challenges. After 33 years of teaching, I find it strange and somewhat disconcerting to be working out of an office without a classroom filled with expectant students nearby, waiting for my entrance.

"Who's your principal?" and "How is she/he?" are two of the first questions educators ask when we talk about our jobs. To me the best building administrator was fair, trustworthy, supportive, approachable, and available.

"HCEA's Job Satisfaction Survey addresses ... the most basic building issues."

For nearly ten years, HCEA has administered a system-wide Job Satisfaction Survey to HCEA members and non-members in our bargaining unit. The purpose of the survey is to determine the overall climate of a building as perceived by our members or potential members.

HCEA's Job Satisfaction Survey addresses categories such as morale, trust, involvement in decision-making, the ability to speak openly, professional and fair treatment (including adherence to negotiated agreements), enforcement of discipline and other working conditions. These, in my mind, speak to the most basic building issues.

I'd like to congratulate those schools with the highest positive scores on the 2004-2005 survey: Bellows Spring ES, Clemens Crossing ES, Fulton ES, Hammond ES, Hollifield Station ES, Ilchester ES, Lisbon ES, Thunder Hill ES, Glenwood MS, Lime Kiln MS, Mayfield Woods MS, Murray Hill MS, Oakland Mills HS and Wilde Lake HS.

I've asked the building principal and an Association Representative from each of these buildings to participate in a panel discussion at HCEA's Representative Council Training Dinner in October. We want to both honor and learn from their experience.



Ann welcomes new HCEA member Teresa Butler (EMMS) at New Teacher Orientation.

The Superintendent and his central office staff have received complete results of our survey; principals will receive copies of their individual building results. I have been assured that the Job Satisfaction Survey results will not be used to evaluate building administrators, but that results will be a major talking point in improving school climate and success.

We're already working on preparing an even more extensive Job Satisfaction Survey for 2005-2006. I'll also be following up to see what happens in your buildings. Please call me with your questions, input and suggestions.

And have a great year!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann".

HCEA Helps Address Secretary's Salary Placement

Last year one HCEA member finally called HCEA about an issue she'd been trying to get resolved for several years. A competent office professional, she'd documented what she felt was her incorrect placement on the salary scale, but hadn't received a satisfactory response from administration. A call to HCEA teamed her up with HCEA/

MSTA UniServ Director Dan Collins. Dan reports, "That call brought the influence of HCEA into the mix. We resolved things quickly and our member got her correct placement and back pay."

Don't wait. If you are an HCEA member, don't let problems go unaddressed. Call HCEA. We're here to help.

Name, Address Change?

If you changed your name or your address, phone or job/school assignment this past year, please call Denise Palmisano at HCEA, 410-997-3440.

Planning Time Must Be Duty-Free

By Colleen Morris (GES), Chair of the 2005 Teacher Negotiating Team

Planning/preparation time is a duty-free time for teachers to prepare for educational activities. During this period administrators can not assign team meetings, team planning, writing of or meetings for IEPs, central office initiated paperwork or duties of any kind.

The 250 minutes of planning time required by the teachers' contract is a minimum, not a maximum. It must occur during the regular student day. Once this planning time is scheduled at the beginning of the year, administration can not reduce, alter or assign any duties during this time, even if a teacher's schedule provides for more than the minimum 250 minutes for planning and preparation. HCEA recently won a grievance on this issue. (See article on page 1.)

Secondary teachers must have a minimum of 50 minutes of uninterrupted planning time daily. Principals have the option of asking teachers to attend meetings and complete other assignments during planning periods scheduled beyond the contractual

minimum. They are, however, **not required** to assign duties in these additional planning periods. In an effort to deal with the overwhelming increase in workload, HCEA calls on administrators to be prudent in their use of teacher time and continue the practice of not assigning duties within those identified planning blocks.

New language in the teachers' contract requires that elementary teachers have at least 180 minutes of their minimum 250 minutes scheduled in blocks of at least 30 minutes. The intent of this language coupled with the requirement that they have daily preparation time during each regular student day is to provide every elementary teacher with a planning period of at least 30 minutes every student day.

If you have any questions or concerns about your planning/preparation time, please contact HCEA @ 410-997-3440.

Correction: Colleen Morris's picture appeared in the June Works in connection with an article on 11-month employees, but was incorrectly identified.

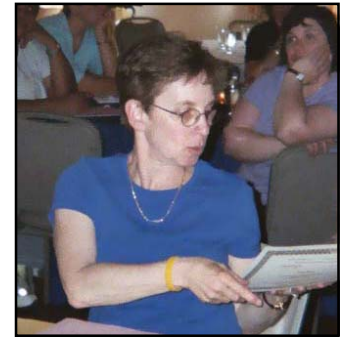
Agreements Benefit IAs and Students

Several agreements made with the Board of Education during ESP negotiations will benefit students as well as members of the HCEA Education Support Professional (ESP) unit.

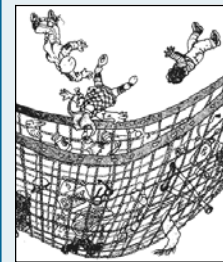
As a result of negotiations, the Division of School Administration will be issuing a directive to school principals underscoring the important role of IAs on the instructional team. HCEA welcomes the Board's support for IA involvement in instructional planning and will be working with HCEA-member IAs to help achieve the vision we share with the school administration.

A circular will also be issued to inform principals that they can request substitutes for IAs who are out for more than three days and directing them not to circumvent the contractual agreement on additional pay for IAs who substitute for absent teachers by assigning the task on an hourly rather than a half- or full-day basis.

The school system will continue to issue the circular on morning and afternoon breaks relative to ESP unit members. If you have question about these issues, please contact HCEA.



WLMS Tops Them All - Jane Sherman, media assistant and Association Rep at Wilde Lake Middle School, received the Rep Membership Award in June for having the highest percentage membership for both teachers and education support professionals (ESPs) at her school. Way to go, Jane!



KATRINA RESPONSE

Want to help kids, educators and schools? Your donation to HCEA

Help-A-Child can provide assistance to evacuated students in HCPSS and other students who need emergency help. Check out the HCEA web site for more you can do.

New Rights Won – Chief ESP Negotiator Dan Collins reviews the new rights HCEA won for Food Service Assistants with a new HCEA member. Food Service Assistants can now join HCEA and the HCEA ESP Sick Leave Bank. Deadline for signing up for the Sick Leave Bank is October 31.



Dates to Remember:

Call HCEA for information.

HCEA Night at Toby's Elton John & Tim Rice's AIDA

Tuesday, September 27
Discounted tickets \$25
Reservations: 410-730-8311

Communication Styles

Wednesday, September 28, 4:00 - 5:30 pm
HCEA Office – Light meal

HCEA M.A.C. Committee Game Night – Meet and Greet

Wednesday, October 12, 4:00 - 6:30 pm
HCEA Office – Snacks, Soda and Fun

MSTA Convention Representative Assembly & Professional Development Workshops

Friday & Saturday, October 21 & 22
Visit mstanea.org for information.

Preparing for Observations and Evaluations

Tuesday, October 25, 4:00 – 5:30
(TEACHERS)
Thursday, November 3, 4:00 – 5:30
(ESPs)
HCEA Office – Light meal

Successful Parent Conferencing

Thursday, November 10, 4:00 – 5:30
HCEA Office – Light meal

ParaPro Assessment Preparation

Fall dates to be announced.

Praxis Preparation

Let HCEA know if you are interested.

If we want to grow in our practice, we have two primary places to go: to the inner ground from which good teaching comes and to the community of fellow teachers from whom we can learn more about ourselves and our craft. . . .

(The Courage to Teach, Parker J. Palmer, 1998)

HCEA Members Attend Summer Training

Bridget Jones (PVMS), Karen Filippelli (OMHS), Pat Pecor (OMHS) and Brian Donoughe (MHMS) took part in the MSTA Emerging Leaders Academy this summer in Fells Point, Baltimore. Brian also attended the Leadership and Organizational Development Institute in at the Harbourtown Resort in St. Michael's along with Bonnie Young and Linda Callan from Burleigh Manor MS. Cheryl White (IES) took part in the Teaching and Learning Institute at Rocky Gap where she focused on Bridging the Achievement Gap.



HCEA New Teacher Training – Cheryl White, (IES), a member of the HCEA Board of Directors, talks to new teachers about holding successful parent conferences. HCEA will offer this training and others during the fall. (See Dates to Remember.)



A Family Affair – Danielle Mirabelli (left) is the HCEA Rep at Mayfield Woods MS. Mom Belinda King is a Cradlerock Rep. If you and a family member are both HCEA educators, let HCEA know. We'd like to honor our educator families on our web site.

Welcome New Members

More than half of teachers attending New Teacher Orientation signed up for HCEA membership on the spot. HCEA is concentrating on explaining the benefits of HCEA membership to new hires during September and October. **HCEA members who sign up a colleague will receive a \$20 stipend for their efforts.**



ParaPro Prep: LA's Terry Wisniewski (left, TSES) and Bertha Robinson (right, LoES) prepared for the ParaPro Assessment with HCEA/MSTA UniServ Director Cheryl McLeod last June. Tests will be given again in January, April and June 2006. HCEA will continue to provide support to our members.

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