

The View from Here



**By Ann De Lacy
HCEA President**

Race to the Top (RTTT), as defined by Wikipedia, "is a \$4.35 billion incentive program designed by the U.S. Department of Education to spur reforms in state and local district K-12 education." RTTT is funded by the Education Recovery Act as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and was announced by President Obama and U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan in late July 2009. Grants are given based on states competing with each other to receive monetary awards as a result of a scoring rubric. The application calls for the applicant to take bold steps in school reform.

In order to secure much desired funds in a time of severe economic distress, many states, including Maryland, have written into law "reforms" that require that a significant portion of teacher evaluations be tied to student test scores. With the exception of Montgomery County and Frederick Counties, the other twenty-two school districts, including Howard County,

endorsed Race to the Top and signed the Memorandum of Understanding. One thing to note is that Prince George's County Education Association President, Donald Brisco, was the only NEA local president to sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

Maryland's new Education Reform Act requires a significant component of teacher and principal's evaluations be based on student achievement (SBOE pushing for 50%). And it changed teacher tenure (the right to due process before firing) from two years to three.

HCEA is strongly committed to public education. We believe it is vital in ensuring America's role as a thriving democracy. It is our responsibility to collaborate with other education and community stakeholders to achieve greater levels of student achievement and to strongly advocate closing the achievement gaps between students who are more advantaged and those who are economically challenged.

During contract negotiations, HCEA always attempts to include instructional and professional issues that will allow us a greater role in determining our educational practices, professional development experiences, decide how we are evaluated, and to work collaboratively in deciding how to deliver instruction. At forums, we

forcefully speak out against silver bullet/flavor-of-the-month overhauls that are usually expensive, untested and provide (at best) short-term results. We believe these teach-to-the-test "reforms" stifle creativity with drill and kill strategies that dull the senses of the very children that we need to excite.

Diane Ravitch, in her book, THE DEATH AND LIFE OF THE GREAT AMERICAN SCHOOL SYSTEM, quotes then Superintendent of San Diego Public Schools, Carl Cohn, with the following declaration: "School reform will continue to fail, until we recognize that there are no quick fixes or perfect educational theories. School reform is a slow, steady labor-intensive process that depends on harnessing the talent of individuals instead of punishing them for noncompliance that bureaucratic mandates destroying their initiative. Ground-level solutions, such as high-quality leadership, staff collaboration, committed teachers, and clean and safe environments, have the best chance of success. These solutions are not easily quantified. They cannot be experimented on by researchers or mandated by the federal government."

We can only hope that U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan reads Diane Ravitch's book!



Fairness in Negotiations Act Passes!!

After more than 20 years, MSEA organized members and rallied legislators to pass a badly needed fix to Maryland's antiquated education labor law. The Fairness in Negotiations Act (FINA) finally levels the playing field in negotiations between local school boards and local associations. The measure, which passed the State Senate last year, was approved in the last hours of the 2010 General Assembly with a vote of 33 to 14 in the Senate, and 103 to 34 in the House of Delegates. *Did your legislator vote for FINA? Visit*

www.marylandeducators.org/scorecard to find out.

Passage of FINA means that the Howard County Board of Education can no longer drag negotiations on and on, keeping us from hard-fought improvements in benefits, salary, and working conditions. Now, a neutral labor relations board must resolve labor disputes between HCPSS BOE and HCEA within a *specific time frame*. The decision will be final and binding for both parties. If either party disagrees with the decision of the labor relations board, the dissenting party can appeal to the circuit court.

How it works

Before an issue rises to the level of an appeal to the new labor relations board, a mediator will bring the two sides

together for discussion. Most disagreements are settled at this stage. If the two sides fail to reach agreement, the parties can proceed to dispute resolution with an arbitrator.

Under FINA, the entire appeal process is limited to 104 days. Before FINA, the process could take a year or more. FINA is likely to encourage both sides to reach agreement earlier.

Why FINA is so important

Before the passage of FINA, the State Board of Education decided what could and couldn't be negotiated at the local bargaining table. To no one's surprise, the board's decisions often favored management over employees. According to FINA sponsor Senator Jamie Raskin (Dist. 20), it was, "like having your opponent in a sporting event supply the referee."

New Contract Ratified

Congratulations to the two HCEA bargaining teams on their recently completed contract negotiations. Both the contract for certificated and non-certificated staff included step increases for those who were eligible; those who were not eligible will receive a \$500 salary increase. Tuition reimbursement stipends also increased. And layoffs and furloughs were avoided. Although the new contracts certainly did not reflect what faculty and staff deserve, this year HCEA was one of the few Associations in the state able to negotiate

any salary increases at all for the coming year. Good job!

End of the Year Rep Dinner

The annual end of year dinner for building reps was held on Tuesday, June 1st at the Ten Oaks Ballroom in Clarksville. Once again the dinner was a great success. Awards were presented in the following categories: Friends of Education, UniServ of the Year, President's Awards, Principal's Appreciation Award, Reps of the Year, Most Valuable Player, Unsung Hero, and Rising Star. Outgoing members of the Board of Directors were also recognized along with members of the Sick Bank Committee and schools with the highest membership. Mary McDonald, Core Service Director for the Consortium for Educational Change was the keynote speaker.



HCEA President Ann De Lacy presented Karen Filippelli with the Most Valuable Player award at the end of the year Rep Dinner. Karen is a Rep at Oakland Mills High School and Co Chair of the HCEA Government Relations Committee.

HCEA PRIMARY ELECTION VOLUNTEER FORM

HCEA needs volunteers to work on behalf of HCEA-recommended candidates for the upcoming Primary Election. These include four seats on the School Board, all five county council seats, county executive and all state delegates and senators. These are the people who are instrumental in determining your salary, benefits, pension, and working conditions. Have a say in your future!

I WILL SUPPORT HCEA'S EFFORTS IN THE UPCOMING ELECTION BY:

_____ Handing out the HCEA Apple Ballot on election day.

If yes:

Preferred Polling Place: _____

No Preference _____

Preferred Time: ___ Early AM. ___ Lunchtime ___ PM.

_____ Assisting HCEA-endorsed candidates in distributing literature

_____ Telephone calling to HCEA members to work election day polls

_____ Preparing HCEA literature for mailing and distribution

_____ Take and/or deliver yard signs for HCEA candidates

_____ Work on a specific HCEA-recommended candidate's campaign.

If yes, candidate for whom you wish to work:

Name: _____

School _____

Home Tele.: _____

School #: _____

PLEASE RETURN VIA THE PONY TO :

Dan Collins, HCEA Office or email dcollins@mseanea.org



Dates to Remember:

Call HCEA to register for events.

Last Day of School

June 23

NCUEA Conference

June 26-29

New Orleans, Louisiana

NEA Representative Assembly

July 1-6

New Orleans, Louisiana

MSEA Summer Training Series

August 3-5

Silver Spring, Maryland



5082 Dorsey Hall Drive, Suite 102

Ellicott City, MD 21042

www.hceanea.org

Editor_works@hceanea.org

President	Ann De Lacy
Vice President	Donna Schulze
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Works Editor	Mary Jo Neville
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HCEA Marketplace

For Sale

Ready to Retire? Always wanted a place at the beach? Beautiful, well kept mobile home located just 5 minutes from the boardwalk in Rehoboth Beach Delaware. Two BR, one bath 65'x14' mobile home with central air, all appliances, washer/dryer, eat in kitchen w/ breakfast bar, parked on a large wooded lot in mobile home park. Park lot fee, utilities, cable, etc. run \$650 a month. Asking \$9,500.00. For more information, contact Susan_Bell@hcpss.org or call (410) 531-2486.

General Services

Longaberger Bus Trip: Join us on the Fall Bus Trip to Dresden, Ohio, October 3-4. Trip includes tours of Longaberger® Home Office (shaped like a Market Basket) and the factory. You will have the option to work with a weaver to make your own Longaberger Basket too! Contact Melissa Ronnenburg at melisron1@comcast.net if you are interested.

Photographer: Brian Roache Photography is available for portraits in home, studio, or on location. Also available for weddings, bar/bat mitzahs and other events. Studio: 410-730-1035; Email: info@BrianRoachePhoto.com; Website: www.BrianRoachePhoto.com.

Thinking about remodeling your current home? Adding an addition, finishing a basement, adding a deck or garage? Thinking about building new? Before you spend precious time, energy and money on any construction project contact The CAD Studio for a FREE Consultation. Contact us online www.thecadstudiodesign.com or 240-994-9554 for your free consultation. MHIC #92007

Kelly's Critter Sitters Going away for a week or a day? Have no worries, I'll be there in a hurry! We provide pet sitting, dog walking, playing and litter box maintenance. In addition we will water your

plants, take in your mail and alternate your lights and blinds. Serving Columbia, Clarksville and parts of Ellicott City. Call Kelly 443-413-1964 or e-mail her at ksjacks64@gmail.com.

Life Coaching for Educators: Do you find yourself wishing you were using your time more wisely? Do you wish that you enjoyed life more? Life coaching can help. I am a certified Life Coach and a teacher. I can truly relate to your needs. Call or email Nellie Hill to set up a free sample session. nthill@me.com or 410 733 4226. Spirit Adventures; Helping educators find their passion both inside and outside the classroom.

Mobile Laser Tag: Crew Leaders wanted to bring outdoor laser tag fun to peoples' homes, summer camps, picnics and events. No experience necessary, we will train you. Call Eudene Rossi at 410-750-2367 and visit our website www.tagparty.net for more details.

Sail the Chesapeake with Captain Larry: Enjoy a delightful day sailing on the Chesapeake Bay; charter a Brunch or Sunset Dinner cruise, sail to the Eastern Shore for the day, or enjoy one of the fine activities we offer. Looking for more of an adrenalin rush? Join the crew for a Wednesday evening or weekend race. Visit AtlanticSailingExperience.com for more information. 410 746 8925.

Become a volunteer host family for a French exchange student. Host families needed for three-week sessions July 10-31st or August 7th-28th. If interested contact Sherri at slevy48@gmail.com or call 410-218-0052.

Vacation Rentals

Outer Banks NC Condo: Never too early to plan your summer vacation. Condo is available for rent last week in July and first week in August (July 25-August 1 and or August 1- August 8). Located right on beach in the town of Kill Devil Hills.

Full kitchen, cable TV, phone, Jacuzzi, etc. One bedroom, sleeper couch, sleeps four, linens and towels included. \$925/wk. Rent for two weeks \$900/wk. Call Marius at 410-997-3440.

Deep Creek Lake: 5 BR log cabin chalet; fully furnished; all amenities included; minutes from WISP Ski resort; 30% discount to HCEA members; weekend or weekly rental. Call Dan 410-465-5190.

Vacationing in Myrtle Beach? Rent our place in Barefoot Resort. 3BR 2B, sleeps 8. pool, private beach with cabana, screened in porch overlooks one of 4 courses on resort, 2 miles from Barefoot Landing (which has the House of Blues, Alabama theater and lots of shopping). \$900 per week including cleaning/ daily rates available. Call cell # 757-646-1202 or send an email to kimberly_colaiacovo@hcpss.org.

Ocean City, MD: Book your summer vacation NOW! Newly updated 2 bdrm, 2 bath, 2 story, cathedral ceiling, private parking, easy walk to beach mini golf and more! Back deck overlooks pool. HCPS discount. Call Kecia 410-241-9005 or kecialittle@comcast.net.

Want a dream vacation in Maui? Breathtaking sunsets await you at Ka'anapali Beach Club on Maui's famous North Shore. This unit has a beautiful ocean view with a balcony. Arrive on July 18, 2010 through July 25, 2010 \$1500.00 for the week. Call cell # 443-857-4651 or email gisele_morin-connolly@hcpss.org if interested.

Employment

Beth Tfiloh Camps seeks head counselors and instructors of campcraft, singing, nature, sports, art, and swimming. The Owings Mills day camp runs Monday-Friday from 9 AM-4 PM for 8 weeks (June 21-August 13). Apply online at www.btcamps.org or phone 410-517-3451. YOUR CHILD ATTENDS FREE!