

NOVEMBER 2024

Official monthly newsletter of Harford County Education Association

HCEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Chrystie Crawford-Smick
ccrawford-smick@mseanea.org

ESP Vice-President

Cindy Poper
Bel Air Middle School

Certificated Vice President

Colleen Bianco
George Lisby Elementary School

Treasurer

Tracy Papinchok
Patterson Mill High School

Secretary

Leigh Bondrole
Edgewood High School

Certificated ES Director

Crystal Rufenacht
Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School

Certificated MS Director

Andrea Weedn-Hughes
Aberdeen Middle School

Certificated HS Director

Jason Brooks
Bel Air High School

Certificated At-Large

Rob Tucker
Edgewood High School

Certificated At-Large

Jason King
Joppatowne High School

ESP At-Large

Kindra Stevens
Harford Academy

ESP At-Large

Abbie Bennett
Edgewood High School

From the President:



Colleagues,

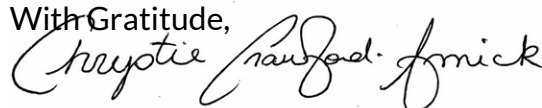
Thanksgiving is right around the corner. I hope you have the opportunity to relax and unwind surrounded by family and friends. Being an educator in today's world is extremely challenging, so please take time for yourself as you reflect on all the the people and things you are thankful for you in life.

I know the budget conversation and the County Executive's public attacks on HCPS have many people concerned. I have heard from many folks asking what our next steps should be. The answer is simple. We will do what we have always done; stand up for our students and fight for our schools. We will show up when necessary to push back on the bad decisions and the unjust actions of our elected leaders. We will educate the community about public education and why their support is necessary in this fight. We will not give up.

Some elected officials and Board members claim to support educators but have vilified HCEA; you cannot support educators and hate their Union simultaneously. Educators ARE the Union. We have many of the same goals, and working together is the only way to achieve them. We will continue to collaborate with all HCPS employee Unions because we are stronger together.

We will continue to demonstrate what it means to be a part of a union and to have solidarity. We will remain stronger together. And most importantly, when times get tough, we'll lean on each other and support our union siblings. We will not rest until every student has access to high-quality public education and every school employee feels supported to do their job. That is what it means to be a part of this Union. We are Union Strong!

With Gratitude,





ESP Perspectives

Cindy Poper, ESP Vice President
Bel Air Middle School

My heart goes out to the students, staff, and community of Joppatowne High School.

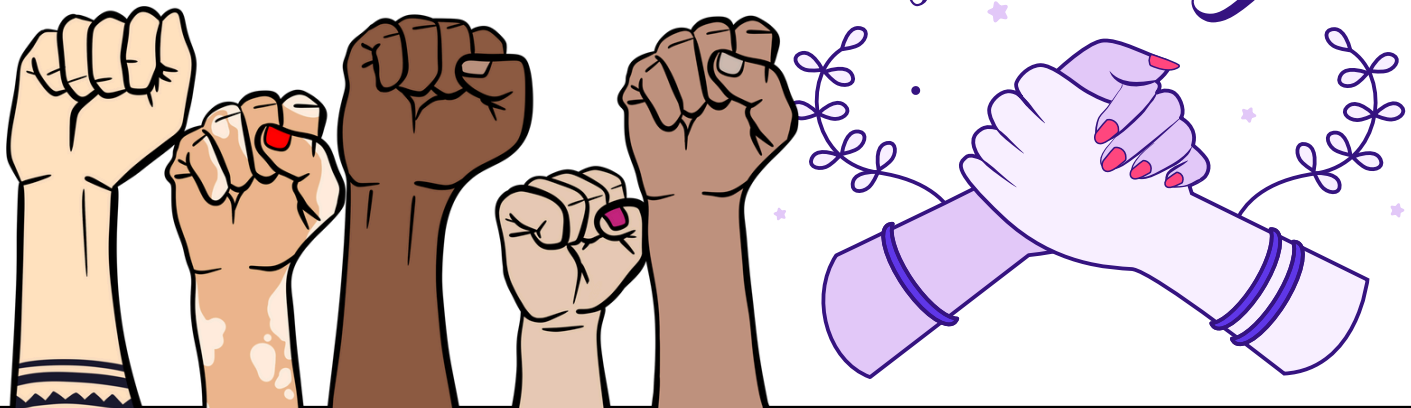
We have all thought about it, we have all looked around a new room, area of our school, or even a new school and contemplated. It is important to realize that the event at JOHS could have happened anywhere. We have learned that our children are having more and more difficulty dealing with frustration, conflict, and disagreement in an appropriate way.

As ESPs we are in the position to instill these coping skills in our students. Our closer, one-on-one relationships give us the opportunity to teach our students how to deal with situations and teach them coping skills. If we start with our youngest learners, and keep reinforcing the skills, there will come a day that the death of a young person, resulting from gun violence, will be an exception and not a 'way of life.'

I want to remind everyone that all instructional ESPs are entitled to 2 15-minute breaks (one in the am and one in the pm) and a duty-free lunch. (I have not specified the duration of lunch because it is dictated by the student lunch at your school.) These breaks should be 'scheduled' and not indicated by "at some point during this class," we all know how that goes! It has come to my attention that in middle school the new "block" schedule on Wednesday and Thursday is posing some challenges in this area. If you are not getting your breaks or lunch, please try to work it out with your building administration. If that fails, please contact your UniServ Director to assist with resolution.

Please pay attention to what is happening with the Board of Education, the County Council, and the County Executive. These people all effect what and how we do what we do with our students. All BOE and CC meetings are streamed live, and are available as videos later, through their websites.

Cindy Poper
ESP Vice President [cpoper@mseanea.org](mailto:cpopper@mseanea.org)



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.

How to Hold a 10-minute HCEA meeting

As an HCEA Building Rep, one of your most important jobs is to provide up to date information to the members in your building.

Much of this information is shared with Building Reps at monthly Representative Assembly meetings or RA meetings. RA meetings are held at Patterson Mill MS/HS starting at 4:45 on the 2nd Thursday of every month. For those Building Reps who are unable to join the meeting, President Chrystie Crawford-Smick sends out a follow up email the next week with all the information, links, and documents shared at the RA meeting.

This document not only reminds everyone know what was discussed but is also intended as a guide for Building Reps to hold 10 minute meetings with members in their building. Short building meetings are part of the essential communication between the union and its members. 10 minute meetings help relay information so members can make informed decisions, learn about hot button issues in the district, or even building level issues. Check out our tips for holding a productive 10-minute meeting.

1

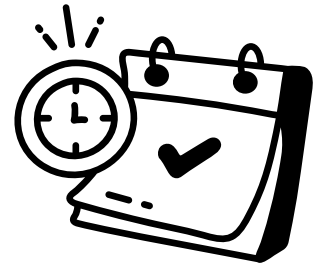
Be sure to give your colleagues at least 1 weeks notice before the meeting. One school 's building rep team determines the dates of the 10 minute meetings for the entire school year and informs HCEA members with all the dates for the school year. They also post these dates on their HCEA bulletin board.

2

Just before the meeting begins, ask the main office to announce where the meeting will be and is about to begin.

3

The key to a successful 10 minute meeting is keeping it 10 minutes! To assure that you keep to 10 minutes, ask folks to hold questions until the end of the meeting so those in a hurry can get the info and leave as needed.



4

Start on time and end on time. Respect your members' time and they will continue to show up.

5

Use your building roster to keep track of attendance or have a sign in sheet.

6

it's okay to invite potential members to your meeting! It's always good for potential members to see why joining is important and why we are stronger together.

7

Try to end each meeting with something positive the union is doing.

8

Don't be afraid to ask Liz and Allison for help! We love coming to 10 minute meetings!





The Rainbow Connection is a feature brought to you by the LGBTQ Issues team, a sub-committee of the Human and Civil Rights Committee. We are working to develop materials so our members can be better allies to each other and how to support our LGBTQ+ students. We will share resources for educators on supporting our LGBTQ+ students. The LGBTQ+ Issues Team is open to ALL members regardless of orientation or gender identity.

On Saturday, October 5, HCEA participated in Upper Chesapeake Bay Pride Festival again this year. This year, in addition to our rainbow book mark craft, we had a display of banned books that we raffled off to community members who signed up to be HCEA Community Allies. Last year, we gained 60 allies. This year, we doubled our number of new allies!

We will call on these community members and allies when the Board of Ed attempts to pass anti LGBTQ+ policies or attempts to ban courses as they tried to do this summer with AP African American Studies, Human Geography 6, and Women in Perspectives.

It is only with the support of members, educators, and the community that we've been able to stop this Board of Ed's rogue policies that seek to target LGBTQ+ educators and students and attempts to teach truth in history.

We hope you will join us at our next LGBTQ+ committee meeting at the HCEA office from 4:45-6:00 pm. We will meet each month on the 3rd Wednesday of the month.



top right: HCEA members and Edgewood MS educators at the GSA table; top left; HCEA's banned book display; bottom left: HCEA volunteers with Miss Maryland 2024, who is also Maryland's first transgender Miss Maryland; bottom right: UniServ Director Liz Jones with Miss Maryland, who she taught over 15 years ago!





Members

IN ACTION

Harford County Education Association



top pictures: HCEA members at the annual "Lost and Found with HCEA" event in Maize Quest; bottom: The HCEA delegation at MSEA Convention and Rep Assembly in Ocean City wearing purple for Joppatowne HS staff and students.

Mark Your Calendar:

ENGAGE FOR EDUCATION

**STAFF ONLY
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10
5:30-7:30
PATTERSON MILL
AUDITORIUM**

**ADVOCATE FOR YOUR
PROFESSION, YOUR
SCHOOL, AND YOUR
STUDENTS**



[#StrongerTogether]

BUDGET AWARENESS STARTS NOW!

Even though the school year just began, we're already preparing for a tough budget fight. Bob Cassilly has made it clear he will continue to underfund our student's education (in addition to public safety) in his April 2025 budget. This current school year was underfunded by over \$30 million and another over \$35 million the year before that. The HCPS budget for this school year and the previous school year did not include new programs or desperately needed staffing (like having school security liaisons in ALL school buildings), but was set to maintain status quo.

Now, with the depletion of the HCPS reserves the district has used the past several years to make up for the underfunding, the district will need to request almost \$60 million to stay afloat. HCPS is a district that has been severely underfunded in the past several decades, in the amount of over \$230 million in the past 12 years alone.

This underfunding has impacted staffing of educators, test scores, class sizes, and school safety. Bare Minimum Bob needs to do more for our children and schools. Public education (and public safety) should be a county's greatest priority. Be on the look out for future communications regarding the budget. Our activism and fight starts now.

STAY TUNED FOR THE DATE OF BOB CASSILLY'S BUDGET INPUT SESSION.

WE WILL NEED EDUCATORS TO COME OUT IN SUPPORT OF A FULLY FUNDED BUDGET.

WE EXPECT THIS WILL BE IN MID JANUARY.

Bob Cassilly recently released a video about the 2026 FY budget. Here's the transcript. You can watch the video [here](#).

Transcript:

Hi, this is Harford County Executive Bob Cassilly with an important message for tax payers. You know that your taxes fund our county budget. What you may not know is that we're already starting to put together next year's budget well before it is announced in April. My budget will prioritize fair compensation for teachers, police, and county workers. But the school superintendent and the sheriff have told us they'll be requesting a combined increase of about \$80 million dollars. That's a huge increase when the state is predicting that revenue growth will be fairly flat at less than 1%. The only way we could pay for these proposed increases will be to raise your property taxes by 20%. I know that households are struggling and I will not raise your taxes instead of asking you to pay more. I believe that government spending should keep pace with our income but that's not all up to me. The county council has the ability to raise your taxes. So please let them know what you think.

Thank you.



ACE Maryland Alumni Night

Thursday, November 21

Romilo's Restaurant & Bar | 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm ET

[Register Now](#)



Harford County Education Association

HCPS Budget Fact Sheet

Underfunding

Over the last 12 years, HCPS has been underfunded by the County Executive by nearly \$250 million. Even flat funding (the maintenance of effort required by state law) leaves HCPS \$60 million short of what is needed to stay afloat.

What this means

Since HCPS used its fund balance to make up for the lack of funding in the last budget cycle, the only ways to make up for a lack of funding this time around are some serious cuts to positions and programs. Every million dollars short means 10-12 educator positions cut.

What's next?

Use your teacher voice! Email our county executive and speak at county council budget hearings. The community needs to hear how underfunding affects you and your students. Then talk to friends and colleagues, neighbors, and your community - the community trusts educators and will listen.

Facts



HCPS ranks near the bottom in per pupil spending in Maryland



87% of the HCPS budget goes to instruction and transportation for **students.**



While the HarCo general fund has increased, school funding has remained stagnant.

HCEA'S ANNUAL

*Ugly Sweater
Social!*



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13TH

**3:30-7:00PM | PROST GERMAN
RESTAURANT | 102 NORTH RODGERS
STREET, ABERDEEN, MD**

The Best Ugly Sweater Wins a Prize!

RSVP

[HTTPS://BIT.LY/HCEAUGLYSWEATER](https://bit.ly/hceauglyswater)

OR SCAN QR CODE



NOVEMBER 2024



Let us do the driving! All you have to do is simply enjoy the ride and plan your day of adventure. Whether you decide to shop, sightsee, or experience a Broadway show, this trip will be one you will never forget!

ONLY MEMBERS CAN PURCHASE TICKETS!

December 7, 2024

Bus Schedule

Departure at 7am from Bel Air HS

Arrival location: Times Square, NYC

Leaving Times Square: 7 pm

Returning to Bel Air HS at 11 pm

TICKET PRICES: \$60

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE.

SEATS ARE NOT GUARANTEED UNTIL PAYMENT IS RECIEVED

**Don't miss out on the fun!
Reserve your tickets today [HERE](#)**

Seats are not reserved until payment is recieved.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 28-Dec. 1: Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 3: HCEA Board of Directors meeting

Dec. 7: HCEA NYC Bus Trip

November 28-December 1: Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 7: HCEA NYC Bus Trip

Dec. 10: Engage for Education: Staff Only

Dec. 13: Ugly Sweater Social



HCEA Member Benefit Options

As a member of HCEA you can participate in the following Aflac Benefits:

- **Accident** - Policy pays cash for treatments related to accidents you have **on or off the job** – Dr. visits, hospitalization, appliances, therapy, stitches, surgeries, broken bones, \$90 Wellness benefit, & more.
- **Hospital Choice** - This policy has choices and pays up to \$2000 if you are admitted to the hospital for at least 24 hours, plus add benefits if you need surgery or a diagnostic test, doctor visits, daily hospitalization, and more - for either a sickness, or an injury. **Great for pregnancies!** (1 yr. wait for pre-existing)
- **NEW! - Cancer Protection Assurance** – This policy gives you a lump-sum payout of \$5K or \$7,500K for an initial diagnosis of an internal cancer plus benefits for cancer surgeries, treatments, hospital stays, and more. A \$75 or \$100 Wellness benefit! **Children are covered for FREE!**
- **Critical Care** – This policy pays a \$10K first occurrence, a \$5K subsequent occurrence benefit, hospitalization benefit, continuing care benefits, and more for 10 major events (ie) heart attack & stroke.
- **Short Term Disability** – For sickness or off the job accidents. **Great for Maternity!** Pre-existing conditions have a 1 year waiting period. Coverage up to age 75.

For more information or to sign up, contact our Aflac representative, Don Rajala at 410-964-5530 or donald_rajala@us.aflac.com. Policies pay benefits to YOU and pay regardless of other insurances! **All policies are portable** and are payroll deducted.



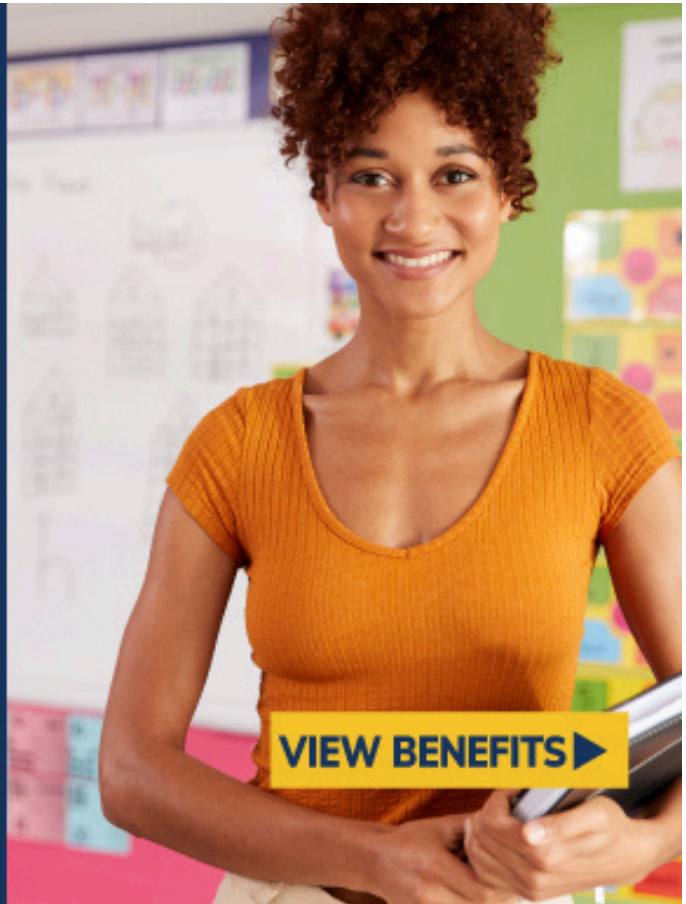
THANK YOU EDUCATORS!

Harford County school employees are eligible for Freedom's **Golden Apple Program**.

- ★ \$100 BONUS for joining
- ★ Earn 3.00% APY* with our Empower Checking
- ★ Earn 2.50% APY* with our Educator Savings Program



Federally Insured by NCUA



[VIEW BENEFITS](#)



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 us at (410) 769-5400 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 us today at (410) 769-5400 to protect your rights!



BSGLAW.COM

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.

Liz Jones: 410-353-9692
ejones@mseanea.org

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



HCEA School Split 2024-2025

Allison Heintz aheintz@mseanea.org 410-816-5025	Liz Jones ejones@mseanea.org 410-353-9692
1. Bel Air High School	1. Aberdeen High School
2. Bel Air Elementary School	2. Aberdeen Middle School
3. Bel Air Middle School	3. Bakerfield Elementary School
4. Emmorton Elementary School	4. Church Creek Elementary School
5. Homestead/Wakefield Elementary School	5. George D. Lisby Elementary
6. Fallston High School	6. Halls Cross Roads Elementary School
7. Fallston Middle School	7. Roye-Williams Elementary School
8. Forest Hill Elementary School	8. Edgewood High School
9. Forest Lakes Elementary School	9. Abingdon Elementary School
10. Hickory Elementary School	10. Edgewood Elementary School
11. Jarrettsville Elementary School	11. Edgewood Middle School
12. Red Pump Elementary School	12. Deerfield Elementary School
13. Youth's Benefit Elementary School	13. Old Post Road Elementary School
14. Joppatowne High School	14. Patterson Mill High School
15. Joppatowne Elementary School	15. Patterson Mill Middle School
16. Magnolia Elementary School	16. William S. James Elementary School
17. Magnolia Middle School	17. Ring Factory Elementary School
18. Riverside Elementary School	18. Havre de Grace High School
19. North Harford High School	19. Havre de Grace Middle School
20. Dublin Elementary	20. Meadowvale Elementary School
21. Norrisville Elementary School	21. Havre de Grace Elementary School
22. North Bend Elementary School	22. Harford Academy
23. North Harford Elementary School	23. Harford Technical High School
24. North Harford Middle School	24. Central Office
25. Darlington Elementary School	25. Harford Glen
26. C Milton Wright High School	26. Swan Creek
27. Fountain Green Elementary School	
28. Churchville Elementary School	
29. Prospect Mill Elementary School	
30. Southampton Middle School	

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.