

# Arlington Education Association

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Teaching. Learning. Leading.

## ACTION REPORT

### ELBOW ROOM

School enrollment has increased in the past few years, and APS anticipates even greater enrollment in the coming year. Lacking funding to build new schools or expand existing schools, the School Board has explored other measures. A Capacity Study begun under former Superintendent Smith has continued under Dr. Murphy. Community and staff input was sought through a series of meetings and a Capacity Survey. Consulting firm MGT of America was paid \$98,138 for further study and arrived at the conclusion Senior Staff and all of us who work here know: Arlington Schools are crowded!

Superintendent Murphy recently submitted to the School Board his proposal to address

crowding. Known as the Progressive Planning Model (PPM), the proposal consists of three Phases, with Phase I for immediate action beginning in September, 2010. One component of Phase I, converting computer labs to classroom space, has already been implemented at some schools. Other remedies include adding relocatables (trailers), increasing class size by one, moving individual Pre-K classes, and implementing a 6/7 scheduling model at the secondary level. Phases II, III, and IV also include consolidating programs by creating centers (e.g. Pre-K), implementing a staggered school day with two bell schedules at high schools, and redistricting elementary and secondary schools. Redistricting (changing boundaries) is

very unpopular among parents and has raised their ire when suggested in previous administrations. The School Board does not intend to propose boundary changes in the immediate future. Further, the capacity study revealed boundary changes will do little to address crowding problems. While the school board approved the PPM, any actions requiring budgetary or policy changes must be approved by it prior to implementation. To read the complete PPM, click on the link below.

[http://www.apsva.us/15401042216434157/lib/15401042216434157/E-1\\_Supt\\_Recs\(update\).pdf](http://www.apsva.us/15401042216434157/lib/15401042216434157/E-1_Supt_Recs(update).pdf)

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### Cultural Competence

Mark your calendars for the AEA Delegate Assembly, on Monday, January 11, 4:15 p.m. at the Kenmore Middle School Library. Former **AEA President Marty Swaim** will address your questions and concerns about Cultural Competence (Courageous Conversations About Race), training in APS schools. Marty has been involved in the development of this program from its inception, and serves on the Cultural Competence Council. She has the knowledge to inform us about why this program is valuable, and to clarify potential misunderstandings.

### RETIREMENT SEMINAR

The **AEA**-sponsored Retirement Seminar takes place Tuesday, April 6th from 4:00 to 7:00pm at Kenmore Middle School. VEA Retirement Specialists Carol Donahue and APS Personnel staff will help you prepare for imminent retirement or plan for a future prosperous retirement. **RESERVATIONS are REQUIRED** email [page@aeava.org](mailto:page@aeava.org).

**PROTECT YOUR VRS PENSION!**

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### THE 2010 VEA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA:

#### Legislation to Initiate or Support

1. Full and honest rebenchmarking of the Standards of Quality (SOQ).
2. Funding the Standards of Quality tax initiative.
3. Expand Programs & initiatives to raise high school completion rates.
4. Increase the VRS multiplier to 1.8
5. Incorporate VRS-certified contribution rate in the biennial budget.
6. Adopt a W-2 definition of salary.

7. Enable school boards & local governments to participate in the State Employee Health Insurance Plan
8. Provide retiree health care credit to Education Support Professionals (ESPs)
9. Amend the budget to support funding for teachers who receive national board certification.
10. Revision of DHRM biennial report on public school teacher compensation

methodology.

#### Legislation to Oppose

- ◆ Oppose the use of vouchers or tuition tax credits.
- ◆ Oppose efforts to undermine the security of VRS.

For details, go to <http://www.veanea.org/legislative/archive.html>

## Elbow Room (cont'd from p. 1)

### Why Should I Care About Crowding?

Over-crowding and its solutions affect *your working conditions*. Delegates attending the December AEA Delegate Assembly, reported the challenges staff are already experiencing such as inability to use technology and access to their classrooms for planning. Larger class sizes can potentially affect instruction and available instructional resources. Movement of programs may affect positions. For the well-being and sustainment of high-quality instruction, capacity issues must be addressed, however it is essential for AEA members to be active participants in the process. In order to monitor this process, your Delegates and elected officers need your input. Inform your building delegate, or e-mail AEA (aeava@aeava.org) about the effects of crowding solutions at your school.

## AEA BUDGET AGENDA FOR APS BUDGET to be RATIFIED at January 11 ASSEMBLY

The AEA office was packed December 10 when members came together to discuss the economic challenges facing the APS School Board and Dr. Murphy as they struggle to prepare a budget for the 2010-'11 school year. What does AEA want is the questioned posed to AEA President Shelley Jennings in meetings with School Board members. Members discussed and debated what we want to see in the APS budget. Discussion was lively, but always courteous. The group recommended 10 items to forward to the Delegate Assembly for ratification at the January 11 meeting. All members are also asked to review suggested reductions for the APS budget and to bring your top 5 "untouchables" to the January 11 DA, where the body will also

vote to recommend "untouchables" in the APS budget. As with all AEA Assemblies, the January 11 meeting is open to ALL members. Those unable to attend may e-mail their recommendations by January 7 to president@aeava.org, but decisions are made by those who show up!

### WEBMASTER WANTED: STILL WANTED!

AEA is seeking a member to serve as webmaster and provide periodic updates for our web pages. Compensation negotiable. [kpaine@veanea.org](mailto:kpaine@veanea.org) for details.

## YOUR PENSION & RETIREMENT (cont'd from page 1)

The VA General Assembly is eyeing your pension to help fill state budget gaps! Options to reduce your retirement benefits include:

- ◆ Defined Contribution Plan with NO guaranteed benefits-reducing benefits by 48%.
  - ◆ Defined Contribution Plan with a 5% guarantee Reducing benefits by 43%!
  - Combining the current plan with a Defined Contribution Plan-reducing benefits by 15%!
  - Cap the Cost of Living benefit at 4%
  - Increase minimum retirement age to 60.
  - Replace set health insurance credit with an investment plan, shifting risk to employee.
- These are just some of the ideas being floated,

and that's why YOU should join fellow AEA members on February 1, 2010 in Richmond for **VEA LOBBY DAY**. Talk to VA legislators face-to-face about issues that concern YOU! AEA provides transportation to/from Richmond, lunch and association leave. To register, E-mail [page@aeava.org](mailto:page@aeava.org) and **GET INVOLVED!**

## AEA WORKSHOPS

### 15 FINANCIAL MISTAKES YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MAKE!

Back by popular demand, this workshop is presented by NEA Member Benefits Specialist Richard Smith. You can't afford *not* to attend this workshop. MAKE YOUR MONEY WORK FOR YOU! Tuesday, January 12th 4:30-6:00 (includes 1/2 hour Q&A) at Kenmore Middle School.

### BECOME A NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHER!

Presented by Board-certified AEA members Linda Forehand and Greg Chapuis, on Tuesday, February 16, 4:30-6:00pm (including Q&A). Learn what you can do to further your professional and financial growth. Location: Kenmore Middle School.

Registration required for all workshops. E-mail [page@aeava.org](mailto:page@aeava.org)

## Wanted: A few good women-and men too!

- ◆ **Friday, January 29, 2010** is the deadline to submit your petition with 15 member signatures to run for the offices of President, Vice President, Middle and Elementary School Representative, Treasurer and Educational Support Representative. Download a petition from the AEA website: [www.aeava.org](http://www.aeava.org). May the best candidates win!
- Friday, January 29, 2010 is also the deadline to self-nominate to run as a delegate for the **NEA ESP Conference** (March 12-14), **Virginia Education Association Convention** (April 22-24), and the **National Education Association** (July 1-6). All nominations must be in writing. Phone nominations are not accepted. Send your nominations by e-mail to [page@aeava.org](mailto:page@aeava.org) by school mail or U. S. mail to
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