

# Arlington Education Association

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Teaching. Learning. Leading.

## ACTION REPORT

### SNOW DAYS: TIME TO PAY

Superintendent Murphy has announced his proposed Make-up Plan for instructional hours missed due to the recent historic snow storms. There are three phases to the make-up plan, and they address the need to make-up lost instructional time as well as plan for the possibility of additional lost time in the event of more snow days or delays. A link to the make-up plan is provided at the end of this article.

AEA President Jennings and UniServ Director Kelly Paine met with Drs. Murphy and Hobbs to discuss, among other matters, the thinking

behind the plan. Following are explanations for some questions posed by members:

**Q:** Given the state of emergency declared by the Governor, why can't APS request a waiver from the state?

**A:** Per Virginia State Code 22.1-98, school districts must certify that "every reasonable effort" was made to make up days lost before requesting a waiver. Reasonable efforts would include extending the school year, curtailing spring break and adding instruction on Saturdays

**Q:** Why are Early Release schools and Limited Early Release schools (e.g. FLES), required to make-up the same instructional time? Since FLES schools have fewer early release days, shouldn't they make-up fewer hours?

**A:** Per Dr. Murphy, the objective of the make-up plan is not only to make-up for instructional hours already lost, but to have hours "built in" in case additional school closings or delays occur during this school year. The extra hours will also provide

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### And on TOP OF EVERYTHING ELSE...TAXES

Don't forget to collect your receipts for unreimbursed out-of-pocket expenses for your 2009 income tax return.

**Your AEA DUES may be eligible for a partial deduction on your income taxes.** Your calendar year payroll dues deductions for tax purposes are:

- T-Scale full time \$672.20
- T-Scale Half time: \$336.10
- ESP Full-time \$336.10
- ESP Half time: \$168.05

Consult your tax advisor for specific advice. Don't forget to deduct your unreimbursed out-of-pocket expenses on your income tax. Tax Day is April 15<sup>th</sup>!

**H&R Block and NEA Member Benefits make tax time less stressful!**

H&R Block is the nation's largest tax preparation company and a name that millions of Americans know and trust. NEA Member Benefits and H&R Block

have again joined forces to offer discounts and special pricing on tax preparation for NEA members. Receive \$20 off tax preparation at an H&R Block retail office or \$40 off in an H&R Block Premium office.\* H&R Block has over 12,000 offices nationwide, so there's always one close to you. Learn more at:

[http://www.neamb.com/home/1199\\_4551.htm](http://www.neamb.com/home/1199_4551.htm)

**Murphy to Present Proposed APS '10-11 Budget**

Superintendent Pat Murphy will present his proposed APS Budget for FY 10-11 on Tuesday, February 23rd at 5:00 pm in the Ed Center Board Room. The meeting is open to all staff. AEA members should attend this and meetings indicated below:

**APS School Board meetings**-Thursdays, February 25, March 11 & 25, April 8 & 29. All meetings begin at 7:30 pm in the Ed Center Board room.

**Budget Sessions:** Feb 23, March 2, 9, 16 & 18 at the Ed Center, 8:30pm room 101.

### RETIREMENT SEMINAR

The AEA-sponsored Retirement Seminar takes place Tuesday, April 6th from 4:00 to 7:00pm at Kenmore Middle School. VEA Retirement Specialist 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).



## SNOW DAYS: Pay to Play

FLES and other elementary schools with additional hours to prepare for SOLs and provide high-quality instruction. Although the state requires a minimum school year of 180 days or 990 hours, recall how APS's school year for students at all levels consistently exceeds the minimum requirement.

**Q:** Middle School and Elementary School Conference Days were canceled. How am I supposed to meet with parents?

**A:** This is the most challenging aspect of the make-up plan. **AEA** recommends teachers first take a triage approach and reach out to the families whom you believe are most in need of conferences. Should other parents request a conference, encourage telephone conferences. Make a *reasonable effort* to meet with parents who insist on a face-to face conferences. Principals are making plans to use in-house substitutes, support staff, and non-classroom instructional staff to assist in providing planning and conference time. Work with your administration to make the best of an extremely difficult situation whose cause can only be blamed on Mother Nature.

**Q:** Why wasn't time added to the beginning or end of the instructional day?

**A:** While this is the Phase II option, the Superintendent recognizes how changing the length of the school day mid-year would cause hardship for many members, parents and students.

**Q:** What will happen to in-services and Cultural Competence sessions previously scheduled on Early Release Wednesdays?

**A:** Plans are being made to address these events. Expect some in-services to be canceled. **AEA** will provide additional information when available.

**Q:** Should Teacher Assistants report to work on March 4th and 5th (previously scheduled for parent conferences)?

**A:** Yes. March 4th and 5th are now instructional days and teacher assistants must report to work.

**AEA** recognizes the *extraordinary* demands the snow make-up and cancellation of conference time will place on our members; but also recognizes the need for student success. The many members who have contacted **AEA** expressed opposition to cancellation of spring break, extension of the school year, extension of the school day, and school on Saturday. Phase I of the make-up plan avoids those ominous choices. The APS

slated to vote on Phase I of the plan at the February 23 School Board meeting. Those with objections to the current plan or those who have alternate plans to suggest should contact **AEA** or the School Board prior to February 23, or plan to speak during the School Board meeting.

Members: Contact **AEA** should you encounter difficulties or unreasonable demands while making up for lost instructional time. **AEA** is here to assist you.

Click on this link to read the Superintendent's Snow Make Up News Release and the Virginia State Code about weather emergencies and school waivers:

<http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/15401082104136983/blank/browse.asp?a=383&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&c=64483>

### AN OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR MCDONNELL

Dear Governor McDonnell:

The current budget proposal for the state would cut funding for K-12 schools by at least \$1.5 billion — and possibly more. Similar to other districts around the Commonwealth, Arlington Public Schools are considering cuts to the school budget. Large cuts to public education at the state level would push local schools to the breaking point.

There are some who say school budgets should be downsized in the name of "efficiency." But cutting out inefficiency will only take us so far. We can't afford to risk the quality of our schools. And that's just what would happen if we were to accept higher class sizes, loss of specialized programs, and/or fewer teachers, counselors, and aides. That's not the kind of school system we want in Arlington!

The state of Virginia bears the responsibility of ensuring that quality public schools are available to all. Virginia's legislators must work harder to find a solution to the current budget crisis that does not starve our schools of the resources they need to be effective. If continuing to provide our children with an outstanding education means all of us paying a little more in taxes, then I, for one, am ready and willing.

Please don't risk the quality of our schools.

The text above is a modified version of the text on the VEA Action Alert. Members, YOU CANNOT stand by while McDonnell makes cuts to the state education budget which could have the potential for *job losses*, program losses, larger class sizes, and other losses or reductions which would affect *your job and working conditions*. ACT NOW! To send an e-mail to the Governor, follow this link. You can send the letter provided as-is, modify it, or write your own, but TAKE ACTION NOW! Your job may depend upon it.

<http://www.capwiz.com/nea/va/issues/alert/?alertid=14681381>

### AEA MEMBERS SPEAK UP FOR EDUCATION AT LOBBY DAY

Seventeen members formed the **Arlington Education Association's** largest delegation for VEA **Lobby Day** on February 1st. Members braved chilly weather and snow to speak to *Senator Mary Margaret Whipple, Delegates Adam Ebbin, Bob Brink, David Englin and Patrick Hope*. We urged them to "keep the promise" to support funding for public schools in Virginia. They assured us they are supportive of the VEA Legislative Agenda and are advocating to minimize cuts in public education. Many thanks to the following **AEA** members who donated their time to the cause: Wendy Fox, John Tarpey, Aldonia Cooper, Regina Richardson, Rosa Navas, Sara Keys, Carlotta Rodella, Linda Carter, Francesca German, Anya Gan, Shawn Waddell, Solange John-Jules, Valerie Jackson and President Shelley Jennings. Hooray for **AEA**!

### AEA WORKSHOPS

#### LEGAL BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP for YOUR PERSONAL LIFE

Presented by Dena Rosenkranz, VEA Attorney on April 20 at 4:30pm at Kenmore Middle School.

Learn what AEA/VEA/NEA Legal Benefits are available to you and how to best utilize these resources beyond your professional life.

Registration is required for all workshops.