

Arlington Education Association

Volume 3 Issue 3
LOBBY DAY! :)
Blackboard Blues:(

October, 2009



Teaching. Learning. Leading.

ACTION REPORT

IS YOUR VRS PENSION SAFE?

Is your VRS Pension safe? Perhaps not. Rob Jones, Director of VEA Government Relations expects VRS retirement benefits to be a target for those in the Virginia General Assembly seeking ways to reduce expenditures by state government. Last fall the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) report included VRS policy options, but the General Assembly, perhaps in consideration of the upcoming elections, deferred consideration of the options. Now, during these tough economic times, the possibility of disadvantageous changes to our pensions will be raised again. Here is the latest information from VEA. Unaddressed in the current information is what happens to the ancillary

benefits such as disability retirement and life insurance if some VRS members switch away from the current plan. Stay alert to future communications. Meanwhile, the VRS Executive Director states only recommendations R1 and R2 below would apply to vested VRS members (one is vested when one has 5 years of service). *All other recommendations, if adopted would apply to non-vested VRS members and new hires.* None of the proposals would apply to those who are currently retired.

R1-Impose an additional 2% employee contribution. This would be in addition to the 5% employee contribution now paid by your employer, who also pays the employer contribution. This

2% might be phased-in 0.5% at a time in years when raises are granted.

R2-Change the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) on retirement benefits by capping the increase at 4% a year rather than the current 5%. FYI-if, for example, this change in COLA was applied retroactively to one who retired in 1978, the reduction in benefit would have been 6% over the first 10 years and 12% after 30 years in retirement. Note: The VRS Actuarial Report states the average retirement age for teachers is 59.36 years.

R3-Increase the minimum retirement age for non-vested and new hires from 50 to age 60.

A, E, G, M, & X-scale Advisory Committees

Attention **A, E, G, M, and X**-Scale members: Do you have concerns or suggestions about your wages, conditions of employment, or other work-related matters? Your Employee Advisory Committee Members represent your concerns and make recommendations to the Superintendent. The deadline for relating employee concerns has been extended to October 30. Following is a list of your representatives. You may contact them via their APS e-mail addresses.

A-Scale: Eva Ingram* (ESP repre-

sentative on the **AEA** Executive Board), Tonya Dunbar*, Ingrid Gant*, Regina Richardson*, and Rowena Quinta.*

E-Scale: Robin Gardner*, Joe Baumann, Maria Del Villar , Renita Mathis, and Terence Proctor

G-Scale: Wanda Gant*, Lottie Mack*, Mary Payne*, Nellie Vargas*, Candice Wilson*, Donleigh Honeywell, and Ellen Moreno

M-Scale: Steven Berheisel*,

Lawrence (Larry) Whitener*, Darlene Carr-Green, Moises Herrera, Padraig McLaughlin and Samrach Nguon.

X-Scale: Barbara Collier*, Benita Goode, and Belinda Watson.

*Denotes **AEA** member

Hobbs, Garvey to Address AEA

Mark your calendars for the **AEA Delegate Assembly**, on Monday, October 26, 4:15 p.m. at the Kenmore Middle School Library. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Betty Hobbs and APS School Board Co-Chair Libby Garvey will discuss and answer your questions and concerns regarding health insurance premiums, and the FY 09-10 and 10-11 APS budgets. This Delegate Assembly, like all **AEA** Assemblies, is open to *all members*. Bring your questions, concerns, and your Sunday-school manners. Don't miss this opportunity!

WHAT IS CPST?

The T-scale *Collaborative Problem Solving Team*, addresses issues of mutual concern to teachers and the administration of the school system. Issues may include, but are not limited to, means of supporting Annual Priorities, facilitating instruction, attracting and retaining excellent teachers, salary, fringe benefits, working conditions and other budget items that affect teachers. T-scale representatives include the **AEA** President and teachers representing elementary, middle, high school, and the Teachers' Council on Instruction (TCI). Six administrators and the Assistant Superintendent of Personnel represent administration.

(Source: APS PIP 35-4.2)

AEA Welcomes KELLY PAINE- Working for YOU!

Kelly Paine has been AEA's interim UniServ Director for the past year, and as of September 1st is officially AEA's UniServ Director. Kelly brings 10 years of experience working with Member Right's issues to AEA. She has successfully advocated for AEA members in a variety of cases. In addition, her expertise in technology (she holds a M.S. degree in Information Science), has help to upgrade technology and its uses in the AEA office. Have you seen our fabulous website (www.aeava.org)? Kelly successfully conducted AEA membership drives, organized workshops for members and saved costs for the AEA office through efficient uses of technology and other resources. Welcome, Kelly!

Online Professional Development

VEA members receive a \$25 discount on all courses through PBS /Teacherline. No textbooks or software to buy! For details: <http://qw.vtrenz.net/?L4IMEITJ8K:PBMLQ3OKWB=ssID:523305602>

LOBBYIST FOR A DAY!

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 for members wishing to travel to Richmond to talk with their

State Delegates and Senators about important education legislation. Lunch and association leave are provided to participants. Email Shelley Jennings at president@aeava.org

IS YOUR VRS PENSION SAFE? (continued from page 1)

R4-For new and non-vested employees, replace the Retiree Health Insurance Credit with Integral Part Trust (IPT) Accounts.

R5-For new hires and non-vested employees, combine a defined-benefit (DB) and defined contribution (DC) plan. The DB would have a lesser benefit than the current VRS benefit. Employees would contribute to both. The COLA would only be included in the DB plan. This plan would provide 85% of the benefit of the current plan (15% cut).

R6-Require a Cash Balance Retirement for new hires and non-vested employees.

This is like a 401(k) style defined-contribution plan, except that a 5% return is guaranteed even when the market falls. Employees contribute with an employment match that increases with years of experience. There is no COLA on benefits. The entire balance can be withdrawn when separating from service. This plan would provide 57% of the current benefit, (43% cut).

R7-Require a DC plan for new hires and non-vested employees. The matching contribution from the employer would increase with years of service. No COLA would be provided, and the entire balance could be withdrawn when separat-

ing from service. Only two states now have this plan. The plan would provide 52% of the benefit value of the current VRS plan (48% cut).

These options are **not consistent with VEA's positions**. As we await specific legislative proposals, AEA and VEA need **YOUR HELP** educating your colleagues regarding what looks like a battle ahead. To learn more about this, and other legislative issues go to <http://www.veanea.org/legislative/archive.html>

BE A CYBER-LOBBYIST!

Click here to become a VEA Cyber-lobbyist. Contact your legislator. Your voice counts! <http://www.veanea.org/legislative/cyberlobbyist.html>

AEA to Develop Budget Priorities for FY 10-11 APS Budget

The **Arlington Education Association Professionalism in Education (PIE) Committee** has developed goals to advance the understanding of educators in the greater Arlington Community. The Committee, in cooperation with the Arlington Political Action Committee (A-PAC), is also developing APS FY 10-11 budget priorities for possible ratification by the AEA Delegate Assembly. Upon ratification by the AEA Delegate Assembly, these recommendations will be forwarded to the Superintendent and the APS School Board. Given the estimated shortfalls in county revenue, development of the FY 10-11 budget poses great challenges. It is essential for AEA members to be vigilant and actively participate in the budget development process. The next PIE Committee meeting is Tuesday, October 27 at 4:15pm at AEA.

Blackboard Blues

Blackboard Blues include inability to log-on, slowness, and general orneriness! AEA is working with APS administration, and a full report will be made at the next Collaborative Problem Solving Team (CPST) meeting on October 22. Staff should report problems immediately to:

bbsup-

port@arlington.k12.va.us.

C.c. president@aeava.org



Flu Shots!

Free voluntary flu shots for APS employees. To register for a flu shot, click here or go to:

<http://www.maximhealthsystems.com/pickatime/?id=335>

Take your i.d. badge with you!

MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to artist and teacher Denise Phalan (Yorktown), whose work is on exhibit until November 1st in the Featured Artist Gallery at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, Virginia. Retired member Linda Larochelle is also a Featured Artist this month.

Kudos to former AEA Administrative Assistant Taylor Daniel, who began her Phd in psychology this fall. Taylor is also engaged to be married. Got News? E-mail page@aeava.org.