

## **ACTION REPORT**

### **Insurance OPEN ENROLLMENT SEASON goes High-Tech**

**Open Enrollment** for Health and Dental insurance begins **October 13 through November 13**. Note the Open Season does **not** begin on the traditional October 1 date. Open Season is the time to add or drop spouses and dependents, or discontinue insurance or flexible spending plans.

This year, via STARS, APS offers **optional** online enrollment or modifications to employees' current health and dental insurance as well

as flexible spending accounts. Beginning October 13, employees can log on to STARS to review one's current health benefits as well as make changes. Use of STARS for this purpose is optional. Prefer enrolling on paper? No worries; paper copies of enrollment forms will be available at all APS sites. A postcard alerting employees to Open Season will be sent to all employees' home addresses. In an effort to cut costs and postage, insurance packets will **not** be sent to homes. **AEA**

recommends the following:

- Verify your home address in STARS. Go to <http://mystars.apsva.us>.
- Print out a copy of your enrollment forms.

**AEA** President Jennings and UniServ Director Kelly Paine previewed the STARS enrollment option, and our suggestions were incorporated. It is very easy to use, and repeated changes can be made up to 11:59pm November 13.

### **DON'T "FRIEND" PARENTS!**

Don't be a "Friend" to your students' parents—at least not on FACEBOOK®. Some APS parents have asked to "friend" their students' teachers. **AEA** says "don't"! It's a very bad idea with many repercussions. Traditionally, FACEBOOK® has been a social, but not professional networking site. Your relationship with parents is professional. Across the country, educators and ESPs have been reprimanded or even lost their job due to postings on FACEBOOK® which, on the surface, seemed fairly benign. Do you really want

your students' parents seeing photos of your Rehoboth weekend? Even if you don't "Friend" parents, be very, very, careful about the personal information you post on your page. You are a professional educator and role model and therefore are held to a higher standard than other professionals and subject to greater scrutiny. It is unnecessary to friend parents on FACEBOOK®, since APS offers various communication modes. Parents can e-mail,

telephone or voice mail. They can make appointments for conferences at any time of the year. Staff can also use your school's webpage to reach out to parents. If you must choose to friend parents, make a separate FACEBOOK page or blog and *keep it purely professional*. Don't provide anything other than a professional biography. Dedicated church-goer or wild child—keep your private life private.

**AEA Representatives on 403(b) Review Committee**

**AEA** members Theresa Cavanaugh and Gerry Collins now represent employees on the 403(b) Review Committee. Employees now have voices on this important committee. Direct questions or concerns regarding 403(b) to [president@aeava.org](mailto:president@aeava.org).

Muchas gracias to Theresa and Gerry for representing us!

### **CQ's Press's STATE FACT FUNDER SERIES STATE RANKINGS for 2009**

**Is something wrong with this picture?**

- In per capita personal income, VA ranks 8th.
- In per pupil state spending VA ranks 37!
- In average teacher salary as a percent of average annual pay VA ranks 50th

There IS something wrong with this picture, but YOU can make a difference. Join the Arlington Education Political Action Committee (A-PAC). A minimum donation of \$5 can make a difference. Log on to [www.aeava.org](http://www.aeava.org) for details.

## PAT MURPHY and the "T" WORD

The "T" word is "trust", and new superintendent Patrick K. Murphy wants APS staff to develop trust in him. He reminds us he is a new leader with a different style and would like the opportunity to demonstrate his philosophy of transparency and eagerness to listen to all stakeholders-including staff. On a positive note, **AEA** and the Superintendent have reestablished the practice of meeting monthly with the **AEA** President and UniServ Director. This is a step in the right direction.

Check your **AEA dues Payroll Deductions on your paystub**. Per pay period FT professional=\$33.94, 1/2 time professional=\$17.22. FT support=\$17.59 & 1/2 time support =\$9.14

## Elementary Planning Time is now LAW

Thanks to *years* of advocacy by the **Virginia Education Association (VEA)**, in March Governor Tim Kaine signed a bill mandating "Each school board shall ensure that all elementary school teachers in its employment are provided at least an average of 30 minutes per day during the students' school week as planning time". Since the bill addresses all elementary teachers, this includes specialists in all disciplines.

The passage of this bill is one of many examples of how **VEA** advocates for members and education in Virginia. Thanks to members, **VEA** has the resources to continue good work for Virginia's students. Aren't you glad you're a member of your professional association?

## HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS TO INCREASE

The **good news** about your APS health insurance: Co-pays will **not** increase in FY 09-10! The bad news: Employee semi-monthly deductions are increasing. Cigna POS & Open Access subscribers will see a 19.84% increase. Kaiser subscribers will see an increase of only 2.84-2.85%. Why the difference? APS is self-insured with CIGNA and saw a significant increase in claims filed by a very small, but very sick minority of employees.

Are you over-insured? An insurance expert tells **AEA** many people buy more insurance than they really need. Visit representatives

for CIGNA & Kaiser during Open Season to get advice. **So, what is the connection between Health Care Reform and your salary?** Our take-home salaries are directly affected by how much APS pays for health care insurance. The pot has just so much cash in it, and health care premiums are a huge part of compensation. This is why at the 2008 NEA Representative Assembly, your delegates adopted a New Business Item that described the guiding principles NEA would support for health insurance coverage reform. These principles include comprehensive coverage without loopholes,

preventive and wellness care, and using technology to improve quality and cut cost. Your NEA is working actively in Washington to have these principles included in a Federal health care bill. The principles are in the best interest of America's workers-including **YOU** and **our students!** Call or e-mail your Congress person and demand comprehensive health care reform today!

**"Quality health care is essential to children's well-being and their ability to learn". -NEA President Dennis Van Roekel**

## APS School Board Adopts FY 11 Budget Framework

The Arlington School Board has adopted the FY2011 Budget Framework. The budget framework requires budget expenditures be aligned with the school system's Strategic Goals. The framework also requires the Superintendent to effectively utilize funds. There is a grave shortfall in funding for both the present '10 budget and the projected '11-12 budget. The shortfalls are due to decreases in county revenue gained through residential and commercial real estate taxes. This affects APS's budget because the school system has a revenue-sharing agreement with the county government. It is essential that **AEA** members be vigilant and actively participate in the budget development process. What ideas/concerns do you have about the budget? Tell your **AEA** representatives.

## APPLICATIONS DUE OCTOBER 15, 2009 for NEA FOUNDATION GRANTS

**Student Achievement** grants provide \$5,000 to improve student achievement.

**Learning and Leadership Grants** provide \$2,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for groups. For more information go to [www.neafoundation.org](http://www.neafoundation.org) or call (202) 822-7840.

## Our Newest Member!

Congratulations to **AEA** member *Jane Scruggs* and husband Rick Fulgencio, the proud parents of baby boy *Julian* born August 6, 2009!



## AEA MEMBERS OF DISTINCTION

Kudos to **AEA** member **Deborah Polhemus** (Wakefield)! Deborah's proposal "*Keeping Hispanics in School Through Advocacy*", made her the winner of the 2009-10 **VEA** mini-grant program! Outstanding, Deborah!

**AEA** member **Charlotte Kelso** (Swanson), completed **VEA's** Trainer of Trainers program this summer. Charlotte will work with **VEA** to provide high-quality professional development throughout the Commonwealth. Congratulations, Charlotte!

## HEALTH CARE REFORM & YOUR SALARY

*(continued from page one)*