

Memo on Educator Salary Policy Proposal

To: Steuart Pittman
From: MSEA
Cc: Richard Benfer and Bill Jones, TAAAC

The Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) and the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County (TAAAC) are excited to work with the Pittman Campaign to bring pro-public education leadership to the Anne Arundel County Executive Office. It has been a rough few years under the Schuh Administration—with disrespectful remarks and damaging budgets—but we are energized by your comments about the importance of teacher pay and your background as a community organizer.

We believe teacher salary can be a key issue in this campaign. At a time when teacher pay is a growing national concern, Anne Arundel is punching far below its weight compared to other Maryland counties. Despite having the state's fourth highest median household income, Anne Arundel ranks 11th in the state for average teacher salary at \$64,474. To put that in perspective, Allegany County—with a median household income less than half of Anne Arundel's—has an average teacher salary of \$64,036.

Each of Anne Arundel's neighbors—Baltimore, Calvert, Howard, and Prince George's Counties—has more competitive salaries. That means Anne Arundel is at a disadvantage in recruiting and retaining talented teachers, a crucial aspect of building a top-flight education system. Studies show that teachers are the single greatest in-school factor for student performance.

Voters understand this reality and are concerned about their schools. Our polling shows that Anne Arundel voters, when asked what they want elected officials to focus on, pick schools first (23%), even over jobs and the economy (19%), crime (16%), and taxes (12%). And when asked how to improve schools, more voters named increased teacher salaries as a top priority than any other policy idea.

We believe making teacher pay a priority in the campaign will deliver two key benefits:

1. It creates a defining difference between your campaign and Schuh's on the most important policy issue in the campaign. This presents an opportunity for you to solidify standing as the public education alternative to Schuh's anti-public education record.
2. It will motivate and activate TAAAC's base supporters to knock on doors and make phone calls as volunteers on your campaign.

TAAAC members are frustrated and demoralized after missing more than five step increases in their negotiated contract. They need a champion with a specific plan to fix those broken promises.

That's why we are proposing a plan to catch all certified educators in Anne Arundel public schools up by 2022 (the FY2013 budget). Under this plan, for each of your budgets in your first term, you would work with the County Council to fund step increases for all educators AND an additional step increase for every educator who is still behind on their salary schedule. In the fourth year, any remaining educators who need a second extra step to catch up would get one as well. According to our estimates, this would ensure every Anne Arundel certified educator is being paid what the county promised under our contract.

While we are still working on exact calculations, we do have some preliminary cost estimates:

Year	Educators Getting Extra Step(s)	Percent on Step	Cost of Extra Step(s)
FY2020	4,677	51.3%	\$7,095,004
FY2021	3,306	61.9%	\$4,979,024
FY2022	2,549	80.0%	\$3,914,879
FY2023	1,825	100.0%	\$5,142,324

This plan can be funded through state funding without increasing county taxes. New Education Trust Fund dollars—generated through casino gaming—are projected to come to Anne Arundel starting in FY2020:

FY2020: \$8.3 million

FY2021: \$16.5 million

FY2022: \$24.8 million

FY2023: \$33.1 million

This is just part of the new money that could be directed to Anne Arundel after the state adopts a new funding formula as recommended by the Kirwan Commission. An adequacy report commissioned by the state revealed that Anne Arundel public schools are underfunded by the state by about \$40 million every year (it says the county underfunds schools by \$250 million). While the Kirwan formula funding is expected to be phased in gradually over the next decade, we can expect state funding to grow by the tens of millions during this four-year plan.

While much of this funding will be necessary for the teacher salary increases, we also support the prioritization of attaining living wages for our education support professionals. Our certified educators would not be able to do their jobs without the public service of clerical, building service, and food workers, and without bus drivers, technicians, paraeducators, school nurses, and health assistants. The Department of Legislative Services estimates that it would cost \$24.7 million a year to fund living wages for all ESP in the county, and we believe that could be funded mostly through new state funding and phased in over three years.

Year	Education Trust Fund Dollars	Plan Cost	Teacher Salaries	ESP Living Wages
FY2020	\$8.3 M	\$7.1 M	\$7,095,004	\$0
FY2021	\$16.5 M	\$17.5 M	\$4,979,024	\$12,481,000

FY2022	\$24.8 M	\$22.5 M	\$3,914,879	\$18,604,000
FY2023	\$33.1 M	\$29.9 M	\$5,142,324	\$24,708,000

While increased state funding covers the cost of extra steps and ESP living wages, there will be other investments needed in schools to make up the funding shortage identified in the Kirwan Commission. Additionally, just covering the typical step increases for certified educators every year typically costs about \$15.5 million. This is where the county should be dipping into its capacity to afford additional investments in schools. Fortunately, we can avoid talking about raising taxes by instead pointing to the tax breaks given to developers as an example of funding cuts that can be repurposed for public education.

We have developed a draft message framework to effectively communicate this plan. We are happy to discuss the policy and messaging behind teacher salary increases and look forward to getting into more details so we can create a public platform that is both credible and inspiring to the public and our members.