



AEA CALENDAR RECOMMENDATION

As the APS Calendar Committee came to a close in January, it was noted that many recommendations forwarded to the Superintendent, did not include anything from AEA. It was not for a lack of trying, or commitment. Josh Folb, Elizabeth Palomo, and the President of AEA were on this committee. We continue to engage with the Superintendents and School Board members. Recently, letters and survey questions were put to members and non-members about Professional Development or “Flex Days”, as we call it. This allows Educators to engage in professional development courses, and then submit that time to use during the year. Don’t forget to take the survey at www.tinyurl.com/AEAPD2017, then submit your postcard for a drawing at the April 17th, Delegate Assembly.

Lobby Day

This year, AEA sent 25 people to Capitol Hill. It was noted, at that time, that no money was allocated for Educators in Virginia. HB2332 was sent to the General Assembly to compensate Virginia Educators who ranked 30th in the nation. Virginia’s average salary is \$7, 230 Below the National average. We struggle to hire and retain qualified Educators and many of our colleagues met with elected officials on your behalf. It was just passed in the General Assembly, to provide a 2% state funding increase for salaries. It has not been determined, at the time of this article how much Arlington would receive, or how it might be used by APS. Many other concerns were discussed, including Constitutional amendment on Charter Schools. We ask the elected officials to “VOTE NO”, preventing charter schools to establish within local school divisions. We also asked them to “VOTE NO”, on the parental savings plan that would send taxpayer dollars to families pursuing private education or homeschooling. **Thanks to all.** So many attended this event, there is not enough room to add their names.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

Should you be approached by ICE, our Superintendent, Dr. Patrick Murphy has directed us to immediately send these persons to the building Principal. **Keep calm, and remember our confidentiality responsibilities. Direct all persons to the Principal.**

TIAA-CREF Letter from HR

Arlington Public Schools (APS) is announcing a change to the School Board **cash match** on employees’ supplemental retirement accounts. The amount of the cash match is the greater of 0.4% of your salary or \$240 per year.

Beginning with the **February 28, 2017** paycheck, **any cash match that you receive will stop going to TIAA and will instead go to whichever vendor you have chosen** for your 403(b) or 457(b) account.

If you currently have a 403(b) account, the School Board cash match will be placed in that account earmarked as an “employer” contribution. **If you only have a 457(b) account, a 403(b) account will be established on your behalf with your current vendor.** All cash match contributions that are directed to a 403(b) account will be classified as Employer contributions, which have a higher contribution limit under rules governing 403(b) accounts.

You do not have to take any action as a result of this change. The money in your TIAA 401(a) account will remain in that account.

APS will send additional communication in the spring, for employees interested in rolling those funds over to their current accounts.

Teacher of Color Summit

The Teachers of Color Summit, designed by VEA to call attention and seek **solutions to the mismatch between students and teachers of color**, attracted classroom teachers, district human resources directors, building administrators and others to Richmond (Feb. 16th – 18th) for work, VEA President Jim Livingston called “a moral imperative.”

In addition to hearing from speakers including 2016 NEA’s Teacher of the Year, Johana Hayes and former NEA President Reg Weaver, Summit attendees had the opportunity to attend workshop sessions on topics including **meeting the needs of minority educators** once they’re hired; the **importance of teaching race and social justice** issues; strategies for **recruiting and retaining excellent teachers of color**, and **managing college debt**. They also had chances to hear and swap personal stories.

Kudos to Anthony Bea, Kelly Bryant, Olivia Funnye, JoVo’n Gant, Octavia Harris, Valerie Jackson-Smith, Wendy Woodson, and our AEA President, for wonderful attendance and representation!

VEA Convention in Roanoke

VEA Pre-Caucus Convention is on March 15, 2017, at the Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School’s Cafeteria at 5pm. **All Delegates attending the Conference in Roanoke, are expected to attend.** Any questions, contact the AEA Office.

Dear Kelly,

My administrator has notified me that they want to place me on a Plan of Improvement. I've been an employee for 10 years and this is my first PIP. I think it's ridiculous and refuse to even sign the form. I contacted my School Rep and told her that I want to file a Grievance. What are my next steps in the Grievance process?

Dear Planning,

Your administrator can place you on a PIP at any point in your career with APS if there is an area where they believe you need assistance. It is not intended to be "punitive". The process and timelines are very clear, goals are agreed upon and supports are put in place to ensure successful completion of the plan. At the end of the plan you can be removed or it can be extended. The Plans are slightly different between educator and support professionals and I've included the links below for your information.

https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/legacy_assets/www/cc81dc8ead-35-7-02-t-scaleevaluation-pip.pdf

https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/legacy_assets/www/f4c082aabb-35-7-01-supservperformanceimprovementpro-pip.pdf

The PIP and the completion of the PIP is not "grievable" and you cannot "opt-out" of the plan. It is a professional growth opportunity with specific emphasis on areas that your administrator believe you can improve.

If you would like AEA to review your plan/goals/supports, you just need to contact the office and we'd be happy to assist you in the successful completion of your PIP.

Dear Kelly,

I'm in "trouble". I know I should have joined the Association years ago, but I kept forgetting to fill out the form and send it in. My Administration has referred me to Human Resources and I have an appointment tomorrow afternoon. I'm currently on Administrative Leave with pay until the investigation is complete and have been "gagged" and told not to talk to my colleagues or parents. I just faxed the membership application in and I need you to call me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss the particulars.

Dear Trouble,

I'm really sorry that your current circumstances has led you to faxing in your membership form. As an APS employee, you need to join the Association within the first 30 days of employment to be eligible for immediate legal representation. An employee can't join once something has happened or has begun at their work site (an event). The AEA/VEA/NEA Membership is a lot like car or home insurance, you can't receive benefits AFTER a house fire or car accident.

2.2 Membership

To be a VEA Member in good standing eligible for Association legal service as stated in these *Rules of Operation* an individual must;

- be a VEA Member when seeking legal service, and
- be a VEA Member at the time of the alleged occurrence, and
- have been a VEA Member within thirty (30) days of the individual's first day of Virginia public school employment, or
- have been a VEA Member for longer than thirty (30) days after any period of Virginia public school employment when the individual was not a VEA Member, or
- have been a VEA Member for at least one full school year to be eligible for legal service in a dispute involving retirement benefits, and
- not voluntarily terminate Association Membership while receiving legal service.

I wish there was some assistance that the Association could provide in your current circumstance, please contact our office once you return to work and we'll process your membership accordingly.