



Kenneth Haines, President

This spring, PGCEA members elected a new President, Vice President and four new members to Board of Directors. Kenneth Haines of Northwest High School was elected President and Blair Todd of Charles Carroll Middle School was elected Vice President. Mr. Haines will be taking over the office from Donald

Briscoe whose final term expires at the end of this year.

Elected to the Board of Directors were Talaya Ferguson (Barak Obama ES), Robin McNair (Henry Wise HS), Myrna Roberts (Crossland HS) and Mark Sandy (Mt. Rainier ES). A special election will be held in the fall for the seat vacated by Mr. Todd with his victory in the vice president's race.

PGCEA would like to extend its thanks to our outgoing Board Members, Bryan Bucklin, Jr., Laura Dinu and Geneva Rawls for their hard work and dedication to the members of PGCEA. PGCEA would also like to thank Donald Briscoe for his years of service as vice president and president of the Association. Mr. Briscoe's farewell letter can be found on page two.

NEW PGCEA OFFICERS ELECTED: Haines Elected President



Blair Todd, Vice President



Robin McNair, Board of Directors



Myrna Roberts, Board of Directors



Mark Sandy, Board of Directors



from the president

Donald J. Briscoe

Farewell

TO: All PGCEA Members

As we draw near to the close of another overwhelmingly successful school year, “that which I dreaded has come upon me.”

Since my election in 2007, we have made remarkable gains in educational programs and services. I dare say that this county has experienced many of its most significant and influential impacts on the education front since desegregation. We have come a long way.

However, today as I present a wholly realistic account on the state of education in Prince George’s County, I do so with great anticipation and hesitation, lightly seasoned with optimism. Amid the budget cuts, pending job lay-offs and overwhelming economic threats, we, by our very nature, remain hopefully expectant that “the good times will roll again.”

The slogan “Where Children Come First” has literally been more than a “catchy phrase” for us. Yes, for us, the professional educators of Prince George’s County, this has become our war cry! From the classrooms to the board room, we have made our commitments to the county’s citizens and families known. As we continue to demonstrate our willingness and ability to “do more for less,” our county yet continues to rake in the honors and accolades, far superior to our private and parochial school counterparts.

We can no longer afford (financially or otherwise) to make additional concessions to the successes we have long labored to achieve. Once again, this school year we are being asked to maintain the continuity of the academic gains with increases in class size, and the anticipation of an extensive teacher lay-off and no salary steps or differentials.

The resilience of a Prince George’s County educator will bring order to this chaos. I have every confidence in your strength to endure these great calamities. Undauntingly, educators are a different breed. We answer to a higher calling because we do **not** fear what man or woman can do.

So, as I take my final departing minutes, I pass on the education mantle of a legacy of excellence. This is not a legacy of gloom and doom. I challenge you to find strength in the conviction of your assignment. I am fully persuaded of the fleeting nature of hard times. Yes, hard times have befallen us, but hard times do not last-the strong wills of a determined people do.

Such recessions are only cyclic; while they may delay or thwart our progress, they do not destroy our destiny. For we, as educators, are a prepared force made perfect by the buffeting of the fiscal storms now upon us. And, like a freshly polished automobile, we rather look good on our smooth sail onward through the storms of life to our final destination-success remains on our GPS screens.

Thus, you must stay strong; look up; the sky is **no** longer the limit for the Force **is** with you-you are an Educator!

God Bless and God Speed. I remain your kindred spirit,

Donald Briscoe
Outgoing (yet still sane) President
PGCEA 2007–2011



The PGCEA Educator is published at least five times a year, beginning in September, by the Prince George’s County Educators’ Association, 8008 Marlboro Pike, Forestville, MD 20747, Tel. (301) 736-2700. PGCEA is affiliated with the Maryland State Education Association and the National Education Association. PGCEA is located on the web at www.pgcea.org.

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- Donald Briscoe
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- Kenneth Haines
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- Dr. Joseph Webb
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- Theresa Dudley
- Talaya Ferguson
- Geneva Rawls
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Involuntary Transfers and RIFS

As you know by now, the budget situation in the county has led to an increase in class sizes next year and the reduction of certain positions and programs. Because of these changes, plus changes in enrollment in individual schools, some members may find themselves to be a staff reduction and involuntarily transferred out of their cur-

rent positions or possibly part of the Reduction in Force (RIF).

PGCEA has placed several documents on our website regarding the proposed RIF including a comprehensive guide on surviving a RIF.

The RIF Guide is very detailed and included in that guide is a section on staff reductions and involuntary transfers.

At this time, HR is working to place all employees who have already been notified of their involuntary transfer in new positions. Placements will be determined by area of certification and they are attempting to place affected employees in locations with geographic

proximity to their current placement or home.

While the majority of affected individuals have already been identified and notified, as this process unfolds, it will be likely that additional members may get transfer or lay-off notices in the next few weeks. If you do, contact PGCEA and we can help make sure if you have been properly identified for this action and what your next steps should be.

Remember to check the website frequently for the latest updates to this ever changing situation. If you have questions, contact your UniServ Director at 301-736-2700.

Pension Changes Mean Paycheck Changes

In April, the Governor and General Assembly recommended and passed changes to the Teacher Retirement System. These changes will be first seen in employee paychecks in the 2011-12 school year.

PGCEA, MSEA and other unions staged the Keep the Promise Rally in Annapolis to bring attention to the unfair changes being proposed. While our efforts were successful in preventing many of the worst changes for our members, we were still hit with an increase in the contribution amount.

Currently employees pay 5% of their salary into the retirement



system but that will increase to 7% beginning July 1. As that contribution is deducted directly from your paycheck, **please note that you will experience a reduction in take home pay due to that increased contribution.** For more information on the changes to the pension system, click here.

Unfortunately, this fight may continue. The General Assembly

is planning a special session in the fall and it is widely expected that the plan to shift pension expenses to the Counties will take center stage. This would have a disastrous impact on county budgets and severely impact school funding. PGCEA will be monitoring this issue and we will undoubtedly be calling our members to action to stop such a plan.

State and Local Budgets Take Center Stage

This year was a tough one all over the country for education budgets. Budgets are being slashed and thousands of teachers from California to New York are getting pink slips. Maryland was no exception. Here in Prince George's, the Superintendent proposed a budget that had to account for a \$155 million deficit and that meant the cutting of spending, programs and ultimately, jobs to try to prepare a budget.

At the start of this year's Legislative Session, state wide education spending was slated to be reduced by \$90 million dollars. After intense lobbying by our members and the Keep the Promise Rally in Annapolis, the General Assembly restored most of the funding, including more than \$10 million for Prince George's. When it was all said and done, PGCPD did receive an additional \$13 million from the state, with a significant portion designated to capitol improvement.

Then the focus turned on the County Executive and Council. The County Executive released his budget in April and provided an increase of approximately \$14 million over FY 2011. However, the majority of that is proposed as one-time money or revenue that cannot be used on expenses that would continue from year-to-year, such as positions or salaries. Some of those funds went to the successful retirement incentive program, which by virtue of over 500 educators



retiring, will reduce the number of positions actually lost.

PGCEA President Donald Briscoe and vice president Kenneth Haines testified before the County Council during the budget deliberations and many more members packed the gallery to advocate for a greater financial commitment to our schools. Many more members made calls and sent emails to Council members urging greater funding of the schools budget to prevent a class size increase. At the time of this printing, the County Council had approved a budget of about \$1.6 billion and sent it back to the Board of Education for reconciliation. The BOE has until June 30 to complete the budget and it is likely to go right down to the wire. This budget may likely lead to the lay-off of 300 PGCEA members. Some reduction in

force (RIF) letters have already gone out and ultimately, the employment status of some members may not be settled until the summer, when all retirements, resignations, and secondary certifications have been considered.

Undoubtedly, next year will be another difficult year for our members. While we were able to avoid furloughs, the BOE has not provided funds for the same compensation pieces like this year. Those would include: steps, the differentials listed in the Differential Scale on page 36 of the Negotiated Agreement; the stipends for National Board of Professional Teaching Standards stipend and National Certifications in other fields, Senior Teacher Stipend, Attendance Stipend, Tuition Reimbursement and salary lane changes for credit accumulation or earned degrees.