

# LEADERSHIP FORUM

The Newsletter of the Association of Educational Leaders, Anne Arundel County

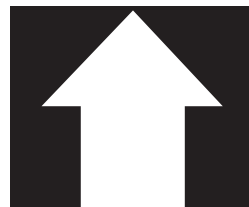
Vol. 6, No. 1  
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## Continuing on a path of positive change

**H**appy New Year!! May the year provide us with health, wealth and happiness. I have learned not to make public the resolutions that I cannot keep. So I will only divulge one resolution that I will keep related to my professional life. I resolve to continue on a path of positive change for our organization. This will manifest itself in improved communication among members and increased member participation in developing the vision and purpose of AEL. Please support me in accomplishing this resolution.

As always at the end of the year the media provides us with an array of articles about the successes and failures that have touched our lives. The local papers have been no different. In the *Capital* and the *Baltimore Sun* we were able to read the media's interpretation of Dr. Maxwell's budget. The interpretations led us to believe that this budget was just another frivolous attempt by Dr. Maxwell to garner more funds from the county than were needed to run our system. These opinions were followed by an article the last weekend of December informing the public that in this

time of recession the school system was considering paying "bonuses" again this year. The tenor of the article was less than positive and poorly written. Throughout the article I saw no mention of the funding sources for these bonuses nor did I see reference to the fact that for some of our AEL members the furlough day reductions have returned most, if not all, of that performance pay to the system. The \$7.5 million that was quoted as the total expenditure is less than most Wall Street executives get as quarterly bonuses. So what was the point of that article?



*by Sue Errichiello  
AEL President*

As I mentioned, just prior to our holiday break, Dr. Maxwell delivered his annual budget projections

for the 2009-2010 school year. While his proposed budget provides a somewhat "optimistic" view that all will remain status quo in the upcoming school year, we all know that there will be sacrifices asked of us again. What they will be -- is the question. This year we will be reopening the negotiations on our contract. In the best of years this is a battle that a few of our colleagues have taken on to insure we remain competitive in the current market. This year the negotiations team will need unprecedented support from the members so that it can deliver the message that we are united as a professional group in our efforts to retain the stipulations of our prior contract along with continued competitive raises and incentives. Your input is needed

Thanks to all who  
attended the AEL Social  
on Jan. 7

It was a great venue and a  
good time to catch up with AEL  
friends and colleagues.

## Upcoming Events

March 1  
**AEL Board Meeting**  
Open to all AEL members  
Belvedere  
Elementary School  
5:00 pm

April 6  
**AEL Board Meeting**  
Open to all AEL members  
Belvedere  
Elementary School  
5:00 pm

April 15-17  
**MASSP Spring Conference**  
"Doing it Differently"  
Princess Royale Hotel  
Ocean City, MD  
Keynote Speaker: Dr.  
Todd Whitaker  
"What Great Principals Do Differently"  
"Dealing with Difficult Teachers"  
[www.md-massp.org](http://www.md-massp.org)



AEL website  
[www.aelaacps.org](http://www.aelaacps.org)

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## AEL email and communication

For several months the Executive Board tried to establish an email program that was both secure and solely AEL. The final test of its potential came late last October with a “blast” to all, nearly 300, members.

The result was not good. Only 13 were opened. Clearly, it wasn’t working. Therefore, effective of February 1 “flast@aelaacps.org” will be abandoned.

However, AEL still needs a secure, instant when necessary, member-only, electronic communications system. Also, an electronic communications network will achieve some operating cost savings. We are going to “Plan B” as follows.

Every member is being asked to register an email address for AEL business that is regularly used. A personal address is ideal and inherently secure. But, the aacps email is OK, too. All

by Larry Lorton,  
AEL Administrator

members [except for those who attended the January 7 AEL social and filled out the green form] are asked to do the following asap—even as you read this:

1. Log on to our website at [www.aelaacps.org](http://www.aelaacps.org);
2. Click “AEL MEMBERS” link at the top right;
3. Complete the simple form shown: first and last name and PREFERRED address; and
4. Submit.

Three things will happen. First, the address you submit is the one that will be used by AEL. Two, our address list in-whole or in-part is not shared or exposed to anyone, at any time, for any reason. And, three, this website registration mechanism is temporary and soon will be shut down.

Please jump on this now. We must find a way to make it work!

## Eight basic tips for talking to reporters

There are AACPS guidelines for talking to the press that should be followed. Here are a couple of other tips to keep in mind when the need arises.

1. Keep your explanation simple and jargon free. How would you explain this to

your neighbor or a family member?

2. Place your most important points at the beginning of your response where they will be clear and isolated.

3. Short answers are always better than long ones. A few sentences using simple language gives

the interviewer less opportunity to misunderstand you.

4. Be sure you understand the question before responding.

5. Don’t let the reporter put words in your mouth. If you don’t like the way the question is stated, don’t use it in your response, even (especially) to deny it.

6. If you don’t know the answer to a question, don’t hesitate to say so. Offer to find that answer and get back the reporter later.

7. There is no such thing as “off the record.” Anything you say can be used – and most likely will be used. Say nothing to the reporter that you wouldn’t want published with direct attribution to you.

8. Never lie. ■



## Policy will reduce your rights

**A**s you consider what is happening to your paycheck in this down economy, you may wish to consider that your rights are shrinking along with your compensation.

Setting aside all privacy concerns and Fifth Amendment

Rights, the Board of Education is considering a self reporting policy regarding any alleged “criminal activity” on your part. While touted as an extension of the current drug and alcohol reporting policy, the new improved version goes far afield. The operative word in the new policy is “alleged” criminal violations that

**by Richard Kovelant,  
Executive Director & General Counsel**

appear to range from mere code violations to capital murder. Under the guise of providing a safer school environment the Board’s legal staff has suggested a new self reporting policy for

those charged with alleged criminal behavior of any conceivable kind and nature.

In the enclosed letter to Human Resources, you can see AEL’s concern over this new reduction in rights initiative. The Advocate will explore a more comprehensive analysis of this proposed policy. I hope you share the same point of view and will come out in opposition to this policy and regulation. ■

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## New year...

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for our negotiations to be successful. At our recent Executive Board meeting, the question was “what are our colleagues willing to do to make our position known?” You need to contemplate this question and provide us with the answer. We will need to be loud and clear in our messages about the value of our talents and skills. We cannot sit back and leave our future in the hands of the few. This is your opportunity to have a say. Talk to your cluster rep or email me at [serrichiello@aelaacps.org](mailto:serrichiello@aelaacps.org) to share your ideas.

Keep in mind that in a recent *Washington Post* article Dr. Grasmick was quoted as saying: “It [school success] begins with an effective principal [leader]. I’ve never been in a great school that didn’t have a great principal [leader].” We all know that is so. Now let’s show how the journey to greatness begins with us – the great AACPS leadership.

Don’t forget that you are welcome to join us the first Monday of each month at 5PM at Belvedere Elementary School. Best Wishes for a great year. ■

## From one leader to another

The AEL Forum asked Annapolis Middle School Principal Eddie Scott to share his thoughts on leadership in the new year.

According to Scott his daily leadership motto centers around the following:

“In trying to keep first things first, since relationships are key and considered the glue to the work we do with teachers and students, I have also found that as I succeed at home, all other relationships become easier.”

“Additionally, in the words of John Maxwell, author and speaker, ‘If we’re growing, we’re always going to be out of our comfort zone.’”

## The Association of Educational Leaders

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