

AARSPA Executive Board Meeting
Thursday, January 8, 2026- 10:00 A.M.
MRSPA Conference Room

Attendees: Debbie Ahalt, Denise Andersen, Tony Anzalone, Tillie Barckley, Ray Bibeault, Virginia Crespo, Carla Duls, Brenda Gibson, Kate Gilbert, Bob Kanach, Linda Poole, Leslie Schell, Marge Smith, Dixie Stack, Sharon Stratton, and Deborah Turner.

Absent: Susan Baugher, Virginia Crespo, Sharyn Doyle, Kay Stawas, and Rick Wiles

Call to Order & Pledge to the Flag

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M. by Co-chair Ray Bibeault, followed by the pledge to the flag.

Treasurer's Report – Denise Anderson/Bob Kanach

Denise provided several copies of the Treasurer's report for members to review. The CD account currently holds \$57,000 and will be renewed this month. The regular account balance stands at \$106,000. There was a discussion regarding making actual reports available to members at general meetings. Board of Directors members expressed that they only need to see their specific line items to confirm their available funds each month. Denise proposed preparing a brief report for members interested in viewing the financials. The Board agreed to place a few copies of the reports on the table at general meetings for members to access.

The Treasurer's team is considering changing the account due to fees associated with the number of checks deposited. With online payments on the horizon, these fees could change. Denise and Bob are exploring the possibility of moving to Business Account, with further updates to be provided. Phyllis Cherry inquired about committees submitting budget requests. Bob stated that notices requesting these submissions will be sent out in March or April.

Minutes – Deborah Turner

Minutes from July 10, 2025, were approved with a motion from Bob Kanach with a second from Leslie Schell with the amendment to Brenda's report stating that students were recognized at the meeting, but no cards were sent.

Corresponding Secretary – Brenda Gibson

- Thank you notes sent to the following individuals for their contributions to the November 13, 2025 luncheon at the Center of Applied Technology North:
 - Dr. Mark Bedell, superintendent of Schools (Board of Education), Mrs. Wanda Ruffin Twigg, Executive Director (MRSPA), Mr. Ian Burns and students, Director of Jazz Assemble (Arundel High School), Mr. Jason Williams, Principal (Center of Applied Technology North), Dr. Joanna Bache Tobin, Member of Board of Education, Mr. Peter Akerboom and students, Teacher and Culinary Arts students (Center of Applied Technology North), and Mrs. Jacqueline Sanderson, Anne Arundel nominee for 2025 Maryland Teacher of the Year (Belle Grove Elementary School)
- Worthy Recognition and Information
 - National Board Certifications – 548 county wide; 167 first time teachers received the certification; increase in elementary teachers receiving certification
 - Hiring freeze on Central and Satellite office hiring due to 2027 budget shortfall; “prioritizing people over programs” – Dr. Bedell; 49% requested increase to go to employee compensation and benefits; will not impact hiring for vacancies in schools.

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- Financial Literacy Graduation Requirement: Beginning students 2026-2027; ½ credit course; “budget planning, bank accounts, checking, savings, credit cards, establishing and maintaining credit, student loans” (Chief Administrative Officer Catalano)
- Letters of Congratulations to the following individuals
 - Andrea Cannady – Northeast Middle School; Named Maryland Middle School Assistant Principal of the year (MASSP); focus on stakeholder involvement.
 - Kim Jakovics – Monarch Academy, recipient of the 2025-2026, George Arlotto Leadership Award; will represent Anne Arundel County as Principal of the Year in Washington Post Principal of the year program. Focus: equity in learning opportunities and closing the achievement gaps using data-informed strategies.
 - Dr. Ryan Durr – Principal of Meade High School; Principal of the Year (MASSP). Focus on building relationships; graduation rate increase 3 points; made 3 plus ranking on Maryland Report Card for two years; 13.4% increase in 10th grade English MCAP assessment. Experience is from the Cleaveland Municipal School District and Baltimore City Schools where his focus was the STEM Program.

Committee Reports:

Voices in Melody – Rick Wiles

Written report sent in due to absence.

The chorus completed four concerts at Senior Centers during the holiday season. A donation of \$175 was sent to Bob Kanach for a deposit into the Income Account. Rehearsals for the spring concerts will begin at the end of January or early February.

Community Service – Phyllis Cherry

- Grants – An increase in grants this year. Four applications were submitted for the mini grant program.
 - Two grants approved
 - Deale Elementary School - \$250 for a Cardboard Cutter
 - Cromwell Elementary School - \$500 Arts from the Heart (art therapy): 3 one-hour classes for autistic art students.
 - The remaining two grants were determined to be items that should be covered with school funds.
- Phyllis Cherry requested that an AARSPA representative visit the school to take pictures of the students benefiting from the grants, to be included in the AARSPA newsletter. Due to scheduling challenges with the teachers, Bob Kanach suggested that someone from the school take pictures and send them in. It was proposed that the two teachers be invited to speak or be recognized at the May meeting to increase visibility, and that photos be placed on the website. Kate Gilbert will discuss partnering with TAAAC and mention posting the information on their site. Tony Anzalone volunteered to provide certificates to Kate or designee to give to the winners. Debbie Ahalt will take photos.

Employee of the Month – Tony Anzalone

Tony commented that the committee is functioning well. Honorees each month were excited and appreciative. The committee will meet in February to select the March, April & May honorees.

Free School - Bob Kanach

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- The Free School calendar was distributed.
- Open House – 113 visitors
- 193 guests including two meetings
- Various places to post Free School flyers
- A new chair has not been selected. Carla Duls suggested the committee look at a Social Studies person for the position. Kate Gilbert to check with Social Studies Dept. Chair at the AACP Board.
- Bob Kanack reported that there is no internet in the school.

Historian/Newsletter – Carla Duls

- January newsletter is available.
- February newsletter has been blocked. Contributions to newsletter were reviewed.
- A request that all members take pictures at events and send them in for inclusion in the newsletter.
- Phyllis asked if community service was included and Carla confirmed that it was featured in the January newsletter.
- Electronic Newsletter
 - Carla Duls is encouraging members to transition to electronic newsletters.
 - Members are unsubscribing to Constant Contact.
 - Leslie Schell reported on the breakdown between mailed newsletter and those sent via Constant Contact. Discussion took place about using only Constant Contact.
 - Committee suggested using “Electronic Newsletter” preferred and explain the reduction of cost for members.
 - Ray Bibeault mentioned that there are members without emails. It was also noted that the AARSP and MSRA both have a website with information for all to review.
 - It was suggested that the Emeritus members continue with mailed newsletters along with members requesting mailed newsletters.
 - Leslie will create an article for the newsletter explaining the newsletter distribution changes.
- Carla Duls shared the Historian notebook with documents since 2020. She announced that she will step down from the role of Historian chair but will continue her work on the newsletter.

Legislative Committee – No report

Membership Committee -Leslie Schell/Marge Smith

- Leslie Schell provided an update regarding the current membership status of AARSPA. She reported that the organization currently has 151 active members. This figure represents only those individuals who are actively participating in AARSPA at this time.
- Twelve members are no longer local members while 30 people have canceled their membership. The committee will be sending out 172 mailings to the 2025 retirees.
- We have received approximately 25 new memberships, and some showed interest in joining Voices in Melody.
- Bob volunteered to help with the search for members who have moved, etc. without sending moving information.

Pre-Retirement Committee – Susan Baugher

Written report submitted due to absence

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- Submitting the print shop order this month for getting the poster update. Deb Ahalt is currently looking at it for any picture update. First draft may be given for any additions/changes. Will shoot for the end of February for distribution date.
- Brainstorming session with Bridget Wicklein, Benefits Manager, about ways to honor retirees for their service. Thank you to Brenda, Kay, Sharon, Denise, Leslie, and Angela Barber for attending. Past precedent was reviewed. She will have a meeting with her bosses about budget, a possible retirement reception venue perhaps in coordination with 21st Century Foundation and special acknowledgement for 20 years, 30 years. Financial contribution from each association was mentioned. Purchasing vendors can help provide discounts. Service pins for existing employees was mentioned but had administrative disadvantages. Future Reception would be scaled down somewhat but having the Superintendent and Board president there would be important. Likely not to occur until 2027 if approved due to line item for budget. Meeting was incredibly positive. Susan will follow up with Bridget at the end of January.

Program Committee – Sharon Stratton

- Plans for February meeting include Keith Hendrix who will speak on Wills & Trusts as well as Katara West and Linda Marshall on the history of the Rosewall Schools (Historical Preservation of Anne Arundel County)
- Future meetings ideas
 - September – Activity Fair – Planning stages at this time to include interest level of members; Introduce during the February meeting through a survey; Development in May; Place information in newsletter.
 - Millie volunteered to do a session on working with young people/grandparents raising their grandchildren.
 - Phyllis suggested that a session on using apps on your phone would be helpful.
 - Motion: Phyllis cherry moved that google forms or survey monkey be used for AARSPA events, meetings, etc. Second: Brenda Gibson. Motion Carried.
- Other items discussed for meetings included having a speaker before lunch and one after lunch.
 - Lunch for speakers: Bob suggested that Sharon use her budget for lunch payment. Possibly put speaker lunch in next year’s program budget. Bob also reminded everyone that he needs to know of guests before the flyer to membership is sent out in order to offset the speaker lunch cost.

Publicity Committee -No report

Raffle Committee – No report

Remembrance/Sunshine Committee – Millie Garndner/Linda Poole

- Holiday cards along with a gift card were sent to emeritus members and were well received. As a result holiday cards and thank you messages were sent to Millie. The committee found this effort to be important way to connect with emeritus members.
- All donated birthday cards were much appreciative, and we will now purchase anniversary cards.
- Recent deaths: Robert Dare Brown, Dollie Lewis, and Kay Tarter
- Announcement: Memorial service for Carly will take place on May 25th.
- Linda and Leslie have return address labels if needed for future mailings.

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Scholarship Committee – Tillie Barckley

- January 15th from 5-8 pm is Teacher Education Scholarship Fundraiser (food sales) at Rams Head Roadhouse. Reservations are recommended and the flyer must be presented to the server for AARPSA to receive 20% of all food sales. The March 27th dining total was \$101.00.
- February 4th is the deadline for scholarship applications (\$5000) Readers to confirm: Sharyn, Tony, and Dr. Les.
- Tillie has contacted previous scholars and reports that they are all doing well. She will include this in the newsletter.
 - Holden Fontaine (Southern HS) is doing well at University of Maryland
 - Shann Giunta (North County HS) has found her home at Hood College
 - Charlotte Crabtree (Broadneck HS) had an exciting first semester at St. Mary's College
 - Abigail Jeffers (Severna Park HS) is doing well at Ohio State University.
 - Looking forward to hearing from Lexie Gamble (Arundel HS)
- Several deceased members were remembered with generous donations.

Trips and Travel Committee – Kay Stawas

- Kay Stawas sent in a written report explaining the difficulty selecting trips due to the significant increases in the trip cost from Gunther Charter Company. This makes trips difficult if not impossible for many of our members to feel comfortable committing to financially.
- Gunther Charter Company's contract includes a profit margin for the recipient. Kay plans to reach out to Mike Gunther, one of the owners, to explore whether it would be possible to structure our contracts based solely on actual costs. She will emphasize to Mike that AARSPA is not looking for perks or profit; our goal is simply to provide our retirees with enjoyable trips at a price they feel comfortable with,

Old Business

Online Luncheon Registration – Ray Bibeault

The BOD were given the opportunity to assess and evaluate using QR Code for registering for future luncheons and activities. Members found it easy and will save on checks being mailed and deposited to the bank.

Website Update – Ray Bibeault

Ray will be meeting with the web master concerning AARSPA.org and membership. Will have an update for the next meeting.

Reflections on November meeting – Sharon Stratton

- Survey results: 47 responses
 - Food, service, and entertainment were the top of the likes section
 - 26 cards returned with “no” dislikes

New Business

Establish Agenda for February meeting – Sharon Stratton

Sharon shared the proposed agenda for the February 12th luncheon meeting. The BOD approved the agenda.

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Ocean Pines Luncheon – Bob Kanach

Expect flyer and sign up soon

AARSPA In Florida 2026 – Bob Kanach

Information will be in the upcoming newsletter

AARSPA in Florida 2027 – Ray Bibeault

Depending on attendance, Ray Bibeault is considering the possibility of venturing to the West Coast for spring training & crab cakes. More to come.

AARSPA 2026 Calendar correction – Carla Duls

Deadline for August 2026 AARSPS Informer: Change the date from April 10, 2026 to July 20, 2026.

Adjournment

- The co-presidents thanked everyone for attending today's meeting and for those staying to help with the newsletter mailing.
- The meeting was adjourned at 12:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Deborah Turner

Deborah Turner
AARPA Recording Secretary

Next BOD meeting: Thursday, April 9, 2026 Executive Board Meeting – 10:00 – 12:00PM – MRSPA at 8379 Piney Orchard Parkway, Odenton MD 21113