

# Anne Arundel County Public Schools (Annapolis, MD)

**GPA: 2.28**

**Rank: 7th place out of 50**

*Document Examined: Collective bargaining agreement,  
July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2009\**

HIGHLY FLEXIBLE
FLEXIBLE
<b>SOMEWHAT FLEXIBLE</b>
SOMEWHAT RESTRICTIVE
RESTRICTIVE
HIGHLY RESTRICTIVE

## Introduction

This study of the nation's fifty largest school districts starts from a simple premise: district labor agreements should not make it difficult for schools to be nimble, smart, flexible, high-performing organizations.

In particular, the study focuses on provisions that may limit school leaders' ability to attract and retain excellent teachers, to identify and remove ineffective instructors, to use professional development as a tool of organizational improvement, and to manage school operations in a professional manner—i.e., to run the most effective school possible in terms of core instructional and educational activities, crucial areas where school leaders need enough authority to match their mounting accountability obligations and executive responsibilities in a results-based era.

## The Grades

The scale on which districts were graded reflects the approach outlined above. Grades of A or B generally indicate provisions that confer on school leaders the latitude to man-

age their schools in a professional manner. A grade of C generally means the agreement is silent regarding the provision in question—i.e., it neither affirms nor denies a school leader's right to take a specific course of action. Grades of D and F generally indicate provisions that impede or explicitly bar school leaders from exercising discretion in a given area. Anne Arundel County's overall grade, therefore, reflects the degree to which district policies constrain school leaders' ability to make decisions on important management issues. It is in no way a holistic assessment of local education policy or school leadership, much less of school effectiveness.

## Overall GPA: 2.28 (7th place out of 50)

Anne Arundel County's GPA is the average of its scores in three areas: Compensation, Personnel Policies, and Work Rules.

Anne Arundel County receives a Somewhat Flexible rating for its 2.28 GPA, ranking seventh among the fifty districts studied—and first among the five Maryland districts examined here. The district received the top score among all districts in the Compensation category, but its marks drop to middling and then poor in the Personnel Policies and Work Rules categories.

## Compensation: A- (Top score)

The Compensation grade combines four components: Credit for Previous Experience, Performance Pay, Hardship Pay for High-Needs Schools, and Extra Pay for Shortage Subjects.

Anne Arundel's bargaining agreement gives schools the flexibility to raise starting teacher salaries based on previous experience teaching in a private school or working in a subject-related profession, but it is silent on whether they may do so based on college-teaching experience. The contract gets high marks for allowing schools to reward teachers on the basis of performance, for teaching in high-needs schools, and for teaching shortage subjects. It receives a B+ instead of an A on this final indicator only because it excludes English as a second language as a subject for which teachers can receive extra pay.

<b>Compensation</b> . . . . .	<b>A-</b>
1. Credit for Previous Experience . . . . .	B+
2. Performance Pay . . . . .	A
3. Hardship Pay for High-Needs Schools . . . . .	A
4. Extra Pay for Shortage Subjects . . . . .	B+
<b>Personnel Policies</b> . . . . .	<b>C</b>
5. Tenure . . . . .	N/A
6. Evaluation. . . . .	C+
7. Layoffs . . . . .	C
8. Transfers. . . . .	C
<b>Work Rules</b> . . . . .	<b>D-</b>
9. Professional Development. . . . .	F
10. Subcontracting Operations† . . . . .	C
11. Faculty Meetings. . . . .	D+
12. Teacher Leave . . . . .	F

### Personnel Policies: C (65th percentile)

The Personnel Policies grade combines four components: Tenure, Evaluation, Layoffs, and Transfers.

Anne Arundel's bargaining agreement is silent on whether student performance, in general, may be factored into teacher evaluations, though it does allow school leaders to consider student test scores when evaluating instructors. The agreement is also silent on whether, during layoffs, school leaders may retain an outstanding young teacher over one with greater seniority. With regard to transfers, the contract allows school leaders to consider internal job applicants and potential new hires on an equal footing, and is silent on whether transferring teachers may "bump" less senior teachers from their jobs and whether school leaders must choose the most junior teacher in a certification area if transfers are necessary. The district reported to NCTQ, however, that senior teachers do have bumping rights in practice, dropping its grade to a C for that component. Tenure rules in Anne Arundel County, as in most places, are set by state law, not local decision; therefore, the district did not receive a grade for that component.

### Work Rules: D- (35th percentile)

The Work Rules grade combines four components: Professional Development, Subcontracting Operations, Faculty Meetings, and Teacher Leave.

Anne Arundel's contract performs dismally in this category, receiving Fs for requiring schools to give teachers stipends for professional development activities outside the scheduled workday and for mandating leave for teachers to attend union activities. The bargaining agreement also caps the length of faculty meetings at two and a half hours per week. The district receives a C, its highest grade in this category, for its silence on whether school leaders may subcontract operations to nonunion workers.

### Conclusion

Anne Arundel County provides considerable flexibility for its school leaders with respect to teacher compensation, but less in other areas. The district's policies with respect to work rules are particularly constraining. To better equip its school leaders with the flexibility they need to manage their schools effectively, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education should negotiate aggressively to make contract changes that explicitly confer on school leaders the right to:

1. raise the starting salaries of teachers with all forms of relevant prior experience. (The bargaining agreement allows this for some forms but is silent on others.)
2. consider student performance, in general, when evaluating teachers. (The bargaining agreement is silent on this issue.)
3. base decisions regarding teacher layoffs on individual merit and performance rather than seniority. (The bargaining agreement is silent on this issue.)
4. base decisions regarding teacher transfers on individual merit and performance rather than seniority. (Of the three indicators directly addressing teacher transfers, the bargaining agreement frees school leaders from seniority considerations on one and is silent on two.)
5. subcontract (i.e., outsource) certain school operations. (The bargaining agreement is silent on this issue.)

### In addition, the board should amend provisions that:

6. mandate that teachers be given stipends for professional development activities outside the scheduled workday.
7. cap the time allowed for faculty meetings. (While long meetings are not necessarily preferable, principals should have some discretion.)
8. allow classroom teachers to miss instructional time in order to attend union activities.

\* The data examined in this report come from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) database, "Teacher Roles, Rules and Rights." All data were culled from the NCTQ database in November 2007. In states that permit collective bargaining, NCTQ examined collective bargaining agreements, with the exception of Jordan School District in Utah, which does not have a bargaining agreement. In states where collective bargaining is either illegal or otherwise not practiced, NCTQ examined school board policies. Where a provision in state law precludes the possibility of a collective bargaining agreement or school board policy addressing a certain component in our study, we excluded it from our analysis, marking the component "N/A." Find a more detailed explanation of this report's methodology starting on page 14.

† This indicator refers to the right of school leaders to outsource school operations to nonunion workers. NCTQ uses the term "subcontracting" in its database, which we retain here in the interest of consistency.