

*David M Pickens is the kind of para-educator every parent wants for their child, and every school employee wants as a colleague. The Permanent Sub/Teacher Assistant, or “Coach” as he is known, is a popular and respected ESP at MacArthur Middle School.*

*One example of Mr. Pickens going above his duties, when a student who loved to play football was failing Language Arts. Mr. Pickens spoke to the child parents and agree to meet with this student every morning before school for three weeks, helping him with his reading skills.*

*Becoming this student academic counselor mentor. Despite the overwhelming amount of work that everyone must do, Coach consistently finds ways to help his co-workers and counselors.*

*Mr. Pickens became very active in SAAAAC, attending general membership meetings, being the voice at his school as the Associate Rep and telling his story of why he became a member. He inspires other peers to become a member and participate in the association. The day he was awarded SAAAAC ESP of the year, he pointed out the three potential members and ask the Chair of CAPE and President to speak to them. We were successful in getting them to sign on. His school has 100% membership.*

*He has attended trainings presented by SAAAAC, MSEA and NEA. Such as Associate Rep training, Racial and Social Justice, MLT/WLT Conference and general membership meetings.*

*Outside of his duties Coach Pickens is involved in coaching football and track. He inspires and nurture young boys to continue their education and dream big. He is involved with the Community Advocacy Partnership Engagement program, (CAPE) and joining partnership with his schools’ PTA. Working with the CAPE program, we supported the students during PARCC testing, families with meals during the holiday and gifts to low income family.*

*Coach Pickens’s continues his education in the field of school counseling. He believes if he be the example for students and his peers, others will follow.*

*With the implementation of our first SAAAAC ESP Award, we were invited for the first time to be recognized during the teachers Excellence of Awards Ceremony. This recognition has added a new perspective of our ESP’s in Anne Arundel County, thank you Mr. Pickens representing us so intellectually.*