

Allegany County Education Association

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A full color electronic version of this newsletter can be found on our website.

February 2023



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Hogs & Kisses



At this time of year, it is easy to get caught in a repetitious rut like those infamous groundhogs that seem to always be bearers of bad news. Whether it is Pierre C. Shadeaux of Louisiana, Unadilla Bill of Nebraska, or good ol' Punxsutawney Phil of Pennsylvania, these woodchucks are celebrated for their perceived ability to prognosticate the length of winter based on their shadow. Yet, regardless of the outcome, the fact remains that there are still six weeks of winter left.

Similarly, evaluations can seem like a repetitious cycle of gobbledygook in the larger scheme of things. For instance, creating, executing and collecting the data for SLOs is very time consuming for our certificated members, and for all of our hard work and hopes, may still result in a less than spectacular outcome. And while the SLOs have been reduced from 50% to 30% of our overall evaluations, they can still impact our evaluations.

In addition, MSDE has indicated that the large number of "Highly Effective" teachers in Allegany County is disproportionate, or not a normal distribution based on the Bell Curve Theory. So, the TPE rubrics were revised in 2021 with this mandate from MSDE in mind. The result is that some who were once evaluated as "Highly Effective", are now found to be "Effective". But, because of our educator nature and practice of reflection for improvement, this is – like the prediction of six more weeks of winter – a disappointment for many of us. Remember that the fact remains, regardless of your designation as either "Highly Effective" or "Effective", your pay doesn't change and you are still the awesome educator that you have always been: it was the bar that was raised.

Yet, the drive to achieve this "Highly Effective" status may still get the best of us. If it does, here are a few suggestions to help you get there. First, to continue growing in your knowledge and take advantage of your membership, explore and complete modules on [NEA Micro-Credentials](#) to improve your practice as an educator and create better outcomes for your students. You can also take advantage of the PD offered by our state organization, MSEA, which can be found on our [website](#) as well as [MSEA's](#).

Another avenue and competency on the rubric (4.3) seen as a "Highly Effective" is to hold "...a leadership role within the professional community". ACEA is just that – a professional community - and we are always in need of additional building representative and committee members for both ACEA Committees and appointees for ACPS Committees. Just let us know that you are interested. If you do take advantage of any of these opportunities, please be sure to document it and share it with your administrator to be recognized in your evaluation.

But above all, and more in line with the other February holiday, be sure to practice self-love and accept yourself fully, treat yourself with kindness and respect, and nurture your growth and wellbeing. And remember, ACEA is here to help.

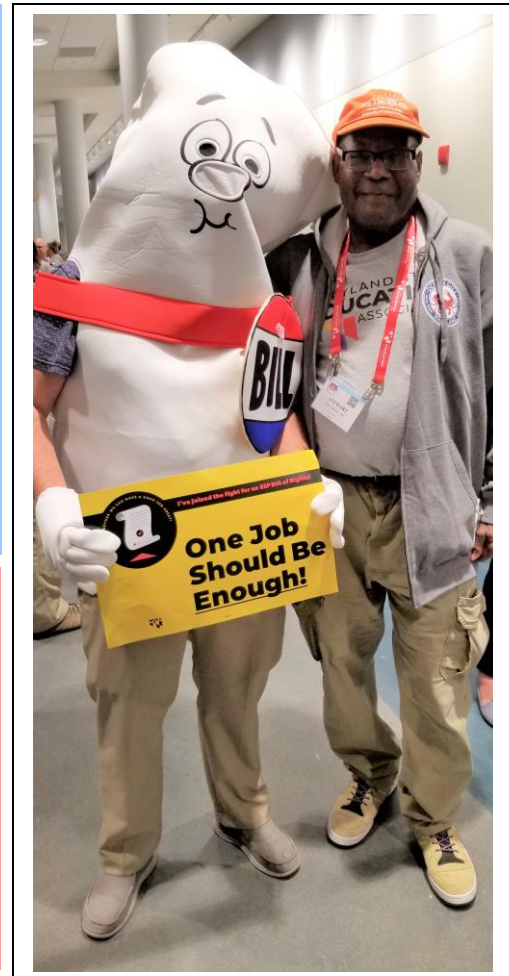
In solidarity and service,

Kim

ESP of the Year Nominations

For the last five years, ACEA has participated in the MSEA/NEA program honoring our Education Support Professionals (ESPs). Last year, Sherry Zembower, school secretary extraordinaire at South Penn was selected. Now it is time to honor another ESP/ACEA member who has supported our students, classroom, schools and association. Our ESPs include most secretaries, instructional assistants, and technicians. To nominate one of your ESP colleagues in this manner, complete the nomination form and return it to ACEA by February 28. The nomination forms will be available on your ACEA bulletin board, from your school representative(s), and can be downloaded and printed from our website at www.aceamsea.org.

While it is important to recognize a fellow ESP member in this manner, please be certain to honor all of our ESP colleagues by signing the copy of *The ESP Bill of Rights* in your building. See your building representative(s) on how to do this.



Welcome New ACEA Members!

Unit 4

Olivia Bateson WT
Tammie Delawder FS
William Spencer AD

Don't forget to check out your February

NEA Membership Benefits deals at
<https://www.neamb.com/>

E\$P Bonus Update

Our ESPs should have received the \$179 bonus on the January 18 pay. However, as we know, that was far short of the \$500 passed by the 2022 Maryland General Assembly for both this year and next. The good news is that as hoped, Governor Moore has dedicated \$22 million in his proposed budget to pay education support professionals the \$1,000 in bonuses that were passed but which former Gov. Hogan didn't fully fund. The last hurdle is to get this proposed budget passed by this year's General Assembly, but we are very optimistic about it remaining in the final budget.

Did You Know?

In the early years of this millennium (@ 2003), when the Thornton Funding was made available across the state, it was decided to take a portion of that money and start a Retirees Health Care Benefits Fund. The purpose of this RHCBC Fund is to help offset the cost of health care insurance for qualified retirees, that is, anyone who has at least 15 years of eligible service when retiring. Since that time, any qualified retiree has received this benefit until death.

Oversight of this fund is the charge of a joint RHCBC Committee comprised of a key ACPS Administrators, representatives of each bargaining unit, and is chaired by the President of ACEA. The RHCBC Committee meets twice a year to review the status of the funds and to determine if any changes need to be made to investments and/or benefits based on the markets. In addition, the ACPS Board of Education makes annual contributions to this fund to keep it sustainable for years to come - which is much appreciated - and should be counted as a long-term benefit for all employees of ACPS.



"I like the first 100 days, and the ABC countdown at the end. The stuff in the middle, not so much."



"We talked about behavior when you saw me at the grocery store. We discussed his assessments when you saw me at Starbucks. We went over homework on the field trip, and spoke about reading at the playground. So... Seen any movies lately?"



"All I know is we were talking about triangles, I asked which one was a love triangle, and now I'm here."