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

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The



Advocate



A Call to Action - Be a Changemaker!



What is a changemaker? A changemaker is a person who identifies opportunities that can contribute to the greater good. Opportunities can come to us in our homes, communities, organizations, and our places of work. As educational professionals, many opportunities to make change come to us in the schools where we work. Every day we can impact students through our interactions with them, our colleagues, and administration, building relationships that will open doors to education and a strong future. Opportunities to interact with families and influence what is happening within a student's home can lead to change.

But how can we make change when we feel like the deck is stacked against us? Entities outside of the school building have an effect on the work done within the school, impacting the positive change that can be made. To be completely transparent, our state legislators have enormous influence on the work done in local school districts. Funding for general school district budgets, special programs, and the laws that dictate how schools are to be run are all controlled at the state level. If you want to be a changemaker at your school, advocating for education issues leads down to the MD State legislature.

This year the educator shortage, the lack of a diverse teacher workforce, special education, book ban policies that negatively impact communities, and the ESP Bill of Rights are going to be discussed in Annapolis. We want our voices heard and we want you to come along! **On Monday, February 19th a charter bus will start in Allegany County and pick up members from across the counties of the West and head to Annapolis.** We will talk in one-on-one appointments with our local legislators about the issues that are going to impact our schools. Food will be provided on the trip, and we will have some fun along the way. **There will be training to get you prepped for the trip on Thursday, February 8th at 6pm.** If you want to join us for a trip to speak to your representatives, **sign up through this weblink** <https://fcta.wufoo.com/forms/kc2ubat05uu9wc/>

All of us can be changemakers. Your students need you to step up for them and make a difference with the bills that will come before the legislature this session. Join us as we go to Annapolis and talk with our lawmakers on Monday, February 19th!

ESP of the Year Nominations

For the last seven years, ACEA has participated in the MSEA/NEA program honoring our Education Support Professionals (ESPs). Last year, Peggy Bass, Instructional Assistant at Mount Savage, 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 29. The nomination forms and informational letter have been sent to every member along with this newsletter, and will be available on our website during February.

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"Do independent clauses get to write off dependents?"



ESPs of the Year



- 2017 Debbie Belfoure
- 2018 Mary "Syd" Sibley
- 2019 Christine Rephann
- 2020 Ann Abe
- 2021 Shelly Fitzgerald
- 2022 Sherry Zembower
- 2023 Peggy Bass

- CBTP
- West Side
- CCTE
- Cash Valley
- Westernport
- South Penn
- Mount Savage

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"I know it's Valentine's Day, but you look terrible. Can't you call in lovesick?"

Blueprint for Maryland's Future

Most are aware that the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* is the new law of the land in education. It is comprised of five pillars: Pillar 1 – Early Childhood Education, Pillar 2 – High Quality and Diverse Educators and Leaders, Pillar 3 – College and Career Readiness, Pillar 4 – More Resources to Ensure that All Students are Successful, and Pillar 5 – Governance and Accountability.

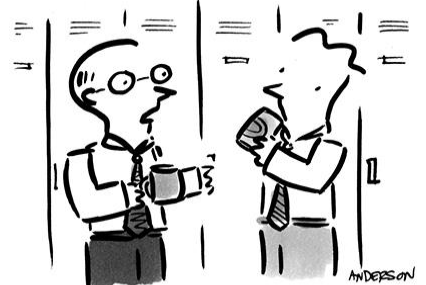
While each of these are essential elements, the timeline for implementation of each vary. We have seen the start of the implementation of Pillar 1 with the expansion of Pre-K in the county. Currently, we are highly focused on Pillar 2 and the required development of "Career Ladders" - one of the statutory requirements of the law. These involve certificated educators and must be developed and negotiated by July 1, 2024. As a result, we will be contacting some certificated members to seek input as small groups and through surveys as we work through this. Once developed AND negotiated, we will be holding general membership meetings to share and educate before a vote is scheduled for our members on this plan. In the meantime, and for more information on the final version of the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*, go to [About Blueprint \(maryland.gov\)](http://About Blueprint (maryland.gov)).

Welcome New ACEA Members!

Unit 4

- Leann Crowe CW
- Tammie Ward MS

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"I find they behave better if, instead of a substitute, I tell them it's me from an alternate reality."

We love our C.A.T.s!

Interested in knowing your contract, the art and laws of negotiations? Then become a C.A.T. (Contract Action Team) member. Join us at the ACEA Office on Thursday, February 8 from 4:30-5:30 pm when we will be learning from MSEA Attorney, Jamie Sapia, about the laws of collective bargaining and how they impact our negotiations. Those who participate can be considered for future negotiations team. Email Kim at ksloane@mseane.org with your interest and for more details.

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"I'll be happy to sign your report card, but I'm going to need to see an unredacted version first."

