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**Allegany County Education Association**

13145 Warrior Drive

P.O. Box 5179

Cresaptown, Maryland 21505-5179

T: 301-729-8280 F: 301-729-4834

[aceamsea.org](http://aceamsea.org)

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

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The



**Advocate**

**President's Message >>>**

**ACEA Retirement Seminars**

*If you are considering retirement this year, in the near future, or in a few years, please feel free to attend one of our virtual informational sessions on Wednesday, January 26, at either 3:30 p.m. or 4:30 p.m. If interested, please email Kim at [ksloane@mseanea.org](mailto:ksloane@mseanea.org) and she will register you and send the Zoom invite to you the day before the seminar.*



**Please support the third annual COAT, HAT & GLOVE DRIVE** in memory of John Reuschlein, the former ACEA President and 45 year member. We are collecting **NEW** coats, hats, and gloves for those in need. Donations will be accepted at the ACEA office until January 31, or call 301-729-8280 to schedule a pick-up if needed.

**Happier New Year!**

*A sincere wish for our members*

It is inevitable that we pause to consider time at this juncture of the year. And as we grow older, we realize that time really does fly - relatively speaking. But I don't think anyone would argue that these last 22 months have flown by, rather the opposite as they have felt more like a decade.

While ACEA has been aware of the many challenges that have been presented throughout this time, we needed the data to prove that these were valid and widespread issues. Hence, the ACEA Member Survey that we conducted in November. Thank you to so many of our members for participating and providing us with that information, as well as to those members who abstained so as not to skew our data which was primarily school based.

As a result of this input, ACEA was able to meet with the administration and share key information from this survey, which due to the number of participants (close to 400!), the issues were hard to deny. We made the administration aware of the relief that our members need to effectively do their jobs, meet the needs of the students, and reduce staff stress. These included additional work time without students, additional compensation for additional work, and pausing or reducing any new initiatives or non-essential programs.

As of the break, I had been informed from both members and the administration that a few of these issues have already begun to be addressed. We will continue to advocate for these things in the hope that you can indeed have a happier new year. In solidarity and service,

*Kim*

ACEA President

[ksloane@mseanea.org](mailto:ksloane@mseanea.org)

# From the Ubiquitous UniServ...

Hello ACEA Members,

Your participation in the ACEA survey was extremely helpful with our conversations with BOE officials. It appears from ACEA survey results, work related stress and workload has caused some members to consider different options with their careers.

ACEA should be one of your first resources to obtain information regarding leave request which are covered under the Collective Bargaining Agreement between ACPS and ACEA. ACEA will advise you of your rights under the terms and conditions of the agreement.

For instance, some staff have considered retiring earlier than previously planned. Other staff have considered leaves of absences for health reasons or to seek Sabbatical leave, or other types of leaves. When requesting any type of Leaves remember your ACEA is an excellent resource to help you.

Please also note, that if you are off work due to a workers compensation injury, please call ACEA to be advised of your rights under Maryland Workers Compensation law. You will also be advised of your workers compensation rights under the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Your workers compensation claim, rights, and benefits are subject to legal interpretation. Your first report of injury submitted to ACPS may be critical to the results of you receiving a successful claim.

Anytime that you are called into a meeting with your administrator regarding any type of allegations made against you, please ask the question: *Am I subject to any type of disciplinary action, including a reprimand, because of the meeting?* If the answer is yes OR maybe, you should respectfully request representation from your Association. The administrator is aware that you have the right to have a representative with you at the meeting, therefore, assert your rights.

For these situations and more, choose ACEA to be your first contact with work related issues and decisions.

Please know we will continue to advocate for our members to have the best possible working conditions possible by collaborating with ACPS administration using your voice. I want to express my appreciation for all your hard work under a strenuous working environment. Happy holidays!



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## MRSPA SCHOLARSHIP

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, through its *MRSPA Fund*, is offering three \$2,000 scholarships to public school employees in Maryland who are enrolled in a program leading to teacher certification or certification as a school counselor, speech, and language pathologist, physical or occupational therapist, school social worker, administrator or supervisor, media specialist or school psychologist. Applicants must hold a high school diploma or GED certificate.

The scholarship is also available to certificated teachers who are pursuing certification in another area or level of teaching or to become qualified as one of the above-listed education specialists. Applicants must be current employees of the Board of Education and must intend on working in a Maryland public school while working toward certification and upon completion of their requirements for certification.

Applicants apply online between January 1, 2022, and January 31, 2022, at [www.frederickcountygives.org](http://www.frederickcountygives.org). Winners will be notified by March 1, 2022.

Additional information is available to potential applicants on the MRSPA website at [www.mrspa.org](http://www.mrspa.org). Please contact Wanda R. Twigg, Executive Director, at [wtwigg@mrspa.org](mailto:wtwigg@mrspa.org) if you require assistance or have questions.\*

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## It's ELECTION SEASON!

**MSEA:** Electronic voting will be conducted through Elections America. Electronic ballots will be sent to personal emails of record with voting open from 9:00 a.m. on Monday, January 31 – Friday, February 18 at 5:00 p.m. The ACEA RA will consider candidate recommendations at the January 10 RA and share with our membership as voting nears.

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**ACEA:** Postcards with ACEA Election Guidelines will be sent to all members' home addresses on January 5, 2022, in accordance with federal laws. The nomination period for ACEA Officers, as well as MSEA and NEA Delegates, will be open from Monday, January 10 - Friday, January 28 at 4:00 p.m.



## Contracts 101

Our current contracts, one for Unit 1 Certificated employees, and one for Unit 4 Non-certificated employees, are in effect from 2020-2024. These can be found on our website under the "[Important Documents](#)" tab, which is linked to the ACPS website where the contracts are published.

During the interim years of the contract, we are open to negotiate on two (2) language items, as well as salary and benefits. While negotiations are "formally" started in December, they progress throughout the spring and are often influenced by state legislation during that time. This year, and for several years to come, the Blueprint legislation will be a major consideration.

Our UniServ serves as the chief negotiator. He is assisted by a negotiations team for each of these two units. These teams are selected by the ACEA President each year and approved by ACEA Board of Directors in accordance with [ACEA Policies and Procedures Article XI](#).

