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# Allegany County Education Association

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

May 2023



The



# Advocate

President's Message >>>

Welcome new  
ACEA Members!

## Unit 1

Beth Bicker RE  
Erin Johnson MS

## Unit 4

Casey Gates WS  
Jennifer Johnson RE  
Dakoda Spencer AD

Last Day for ACPS Students AND  
10-month Educators:  
Friday, June 2  
per May 9 BOE meeting  
*But who's counting?!?*

Thank you for so many of the  
"sweet" things you do for your  
students!

From:  
Eta Chapter of DKG MD,  
an organization of women educators in  
Allegany County

## The Apperception of Appreciation

ap-per-cep-tion [apər'sepSHən]

n. 1. the process of perceiving something consciously and mindfully.

As you may have surmised by now, I love words and manipulating them into meaningful miens. To borrow the old mnemonic, choosing the best words can make a good thing better, and a better thing best. And I want to choose the best words to express our utmost appreciation to those who have volunteered to serve our association as leaders of ACEA.

First, to our long-serving Executive Director, Peggy Bass: Your commitment and passion are second to none. As you step-back from your leadership role, we thank you for your time as a leader throughout the crucial merging of our units and your outstanding representation of all. Likewise, we thank Whitney Stoner for her dedication and service as an Executive Director while also raising a young family and continuing her professional growth.

These will be hard shoes to fill, but we are fortunate to have two incoming Executive Directors who are willing and able to do so: Cresta Kowalski and Julie Crawford. Our sincerest welcome and gratitude for your commitment to ACEA.

In solidarity and service,

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

Perhaps you saw one of these two notes in your mailbox recently along with a sweet treat? We were asked to clarify the source of the gesture of gratitude, and to acknowledge this token of appreciation shown to our educators by the [Eta Chapter of DKG MD](#), to which several ACEA members are also affiliated as educators.

We "mint" for you to know that  
we have "mounds" of  
appreciation for you!

From:  
Eta Chapter of DKG MD,  
an organization of women educators in  
Allegany County

## NEWS THAT PAYS

### AUGUST 30th PAY

Like last year, August 2023 is another 3-pay month for deductions. Therefore, the August 30, 2023, pay will have optional deductions turned off, and they will be taken on the pays of September 13th and September 27<sup>th</sup>. This is also the first pay of the fiscal year for 10-month employees.



"Not bad, but I've got three #1's and two World's Best, so it looks like I'm the winner!"

### Mandated 10% Salary Increase

Part of the initial phase of Blueprint legislation that passed required a 10% salary increase for certificated staff between 2019-2024, not including any negotiated steps. We are happy to report that ALL Unit 1 AND Unit 4 employees will exceed that threshold with the 2% COLA gain negotiated for 2023-2024.



"I don't see what a laser light show has to do with reading, but at least I'm getting caught up on grading."

### NEA Member Benefits

ACEA Members have used their NEA Benefits to purchase new tires, new computers, to book a trip, and rent a car at the best rates! To find out more and save, go to ...

<https://www.neamb.com/>

## Highlights from the

## 445th Maryland General Assembly Legislative Session

More details are available from MSEA at this [link](#).

### EDUCATION FUNDING MAKES GAINS IN FY24 BUDGET

The \$62.5 billion budget includes historic levels of funding for public education, including restoration of ESP Bonuses .

### FOCUS ON EDUCATOR SHORTAGE

Expands a program to offer stipends to student teachers, distributes funding to target future educators, increases the Janet L. Hoffman loan assistance program, and broadens eligibility for educators and school-based behavioral health providers with student debt.

### PUBLIC EMPLOYEE LABOR RELATIONS BOARD TO IMPROVE CONSISTENCY IN LABOR DISPUTES

The law establishes the new Public Employee Labor Relations Board from Maryland's disconnected three boards. With passage of this law, Maryland joins the country's growing movement to give workers a more meaningful seat at the table, enhance transparency, and improve fairness.

### UNION MEMBERS GET TAX BREAK FOR UNION DUES

Union members in Maryland will be allowed a subtraction modification of their union dues when they file their Maryland income taxes.

### VIRTUAL EDUCATION GUARDRAILS IN PLACE TO STANDARDIZE EXPECTATIONS

Bringing virtual schools in line with traditional public schools, the law guarantees that all students have access to the schools as they would with traditional public schools, that staff will be employed by the local board of education and included in collective bargaining, and the schools could not be operated by for-profit vendors, and include protections for ESP wages affected by the use of virtual schools when school buildings are closed.

### TIME FOR SPECIAL EDUCATORS TO WORK WITH STUDENTS PROTECTED

Burden of proof legislation, which failed to get out of committee after crossing over to the Senate from the House, was defeated. Although opposed by a wide range of education groups and advocates, the House passed House Bill 294 which would have shifted the burden of proof in due process cases and spike the workload of special educators.

### BLUEPRINT STRENGTHENED, ENHANCED BY NEW LAWS

This legislative session provided an opportunity to improve on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future as it begins to expand resources for early childhood education, college and career readiness, the educator pipeline, and wraparound services.

The whole value of the dime  
is in knowing what to do with it.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Orations, Lectures, and Addresses (ed. 1845)



It is undeniable that the dime of Emerson's day had much more purchasing power than today. Outside of a rare parking meter, there isn't much that a dime can be used to purchase in and of itself. However, as Emerson is quoted above, the value is in knowing what to do with it.

ACEA hadn't raised dues since 2008 which is a testament to the excellent fiduciary oversight that has been provided by the leadership of ACEA since that time. We have weathered an economic recession and significant inflation during the years since but continued to absorb and tighten the budget over those 15 years without an increase in dues. However, we were at a point where we needed to consider how to meet the rising costs and negotiated wage increases while still supporting our members and programs. Since it is the charge of the ACEA Budget Committee to review the budget and propose annual dues levels to the ACEA Representative Assembly, they carefully considered how to do this rationally and without a huge burden on our members.

The solution was not only rational, but frankly genius! Instead of randomly raising dues by large sums of \$5.00, \$10.00 or in some cases \$20 per year as some locals have done, ACEA should follow a slow, steady and easily predicted method. To do this with some rational basis, it was decided that any dues increase should be correlated to any COLAs negotiated for that year. After consideration and debate, the ACEA RA agreed with this recommendation and established it as our policy. As a result, since all members will be receiving a 2% negotiated COLA for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, dues will be increased \$2.00 next year (1% = \$1.00), or a dime per pay over twenty pays.