

Identity Crisis

There are moments in life when we must fit into different roles. In my 47 years, I have fulfilled many roles-daughter, wife, mother, student, teacher, community organizer, and friend. In my new role as a UD, I often experience overlap in my roles which cause somewhat of an “identity crisis”. I am a 21-year veteran teacher, know what it is like to teach today, know about the day-to-day operations of schools, have friends who are working in ACPS in various positions, and have a daughter currently in the ACPS school system. My job requires me to stay focused on the pressing issue at hand, advocate for our membership, and keep my other roles in check. Somedays it feels like whiplash and other days it is like a revolving door- but the identity crisis is real.

I know that sometimes ACEA has an identity crisis of its own. Who are we really? Are we a part of the Allegany County Public School system? Who do we answer to? Who oversees ACEA? I thought I would take some time to answer these questions and to be sure that our identity is clear to members and those who would be interested in joining us.

ACEA is the organization that serves and supports members Unit 1 and Unit 4. We are not affiliated with ACPS in any way at all. As an organization who represents members in ACPS, we do attend meetings on policies and programs that directly impact members and negotiated contract items. Additionally, we attend Board of Education meetings to ensure that our members’ interests are represented to the elected representatives. But that is where our connection to ACPS ends-we are a separate entity.

ACEA is part of MSEA (Maryland State Education Association), a union organization that is 75,000 members strong. They are the state organization that supports the work done at the local level. NEA (National Education Association) is the parent association to MSEA and ACEA; they are a 3-million-member organization from every level of education. If you are an ACEA member, you are automatically a member of MSEA and NEA, getting the benefits and coverage of their organizations. The backing of the two parent organizations is vital to our work, helping the local to remain strong and supported.

As you can see, ACEA’s identity and mission is clear- we are here for you. We negotiate and defend contract related issues, impact local education policies on your behalf, and listen to your voices when you call. You are our only link to ACPS, and when you call or email it gives us an idea of what is happening that may need our attention. We are here for you, as your colleagues and friends, to lend a helping hand or listening ear. Our identity is grounded in the work of helping you to do what is best for students as you work each day in our schools. Keep doing the good work and know we are here for YOU!