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Mt. Maryland PACE 2025

Save the Date!

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

February 2025



The



Advocate

Welcome New ACEA Members!

Unit 1

Todd Vogtman MS

Unit 4

Mary Bernard CCTE

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, March 13, from 4:30-6:00 pm** when we will begin the process of preparing a member survey. It is important to have representatives of each job classification involved to help identify the needs of all. This survey will be sent to each ACEA member in late April so the information can be reviewed in time for the start of negotiations on both Unit 1 and Unit 4 fully open contracts during the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Those who participate on the C.A.T. can be considered for future negotiations team as well. Email Kim at ksloane@mseane.org with your interest and for more details.

ESP of the Year Nominations!

For the last eight years, ACEA has participated in the MSEA/NEA program honoring our Education Support Professionals (ESPs). Last year, Stewart Monroe, Jr., Instructional Assistant at the CCTE, 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 and informational letter have been sent to every member along with this newsletter, and will be available on our website during February. Take some time to honor the passion of our ESP colleagues!



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
2024 Stewart Monroe, Jr.

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

The Unsung Heroes of Our Schools

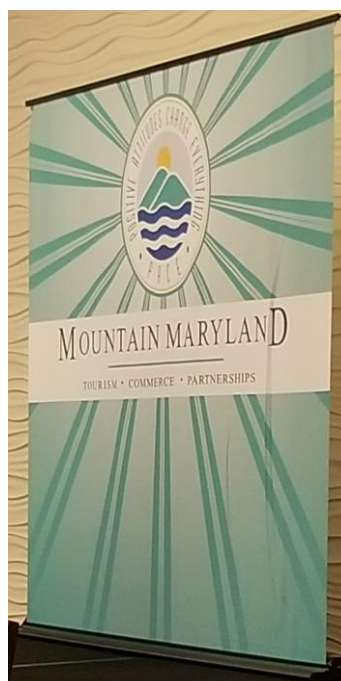
Schools are made up of many professionals, but one group is often overlooked and is the most vital to the daily functioning of every school. Education Support Professionals, or ESPs, are the people who work in our classrooms, offices, cafeterias, maintenance, information technology and transportation departments to ensure that each school building and service is functioning at maximum potential. In Maryland, about 40% of the workforce in K-12 schools belongs to the ESP job classification; across the U.S., ESPs make up about one-third of the public education workforce in public schools and colleges.

Our schools would abruptly stop without the work of our ESPs. Some are there before educators arrive, preparing breakfast and lunch for students and ensuring the building facilities are ready for the first students. Drivers start their bus routes before sunrise and are the first faces our students see. Secretaries greet people entering our schools, answer the never-ending phone calls, and ensure families feel welcome in the school community. In classrooms, IAs offer various forms of assistance to students, allowing grade-level educators to focus on the main lesson. They are often the front line of support for our most involved students, building relationships to encourage students to thrive and succeed. Many of our ESPs finish their work at our schools and pick up a second or even third job to make ends meet. Our schools would not function and could not open without our ESPs.

They are the unsung heroes of our schools, who often go unnoticed because their jobs operate in the background. Yet without any one of these essential workers, our students would suffer, our classrooms would suffer, and our schools would suffer. Our union continues to recognize their value to our students and fight for the ESP Bill of Rights—a campaign that includes a living wage, affordable healthcare, safe work environments, career advancement, and job security. Their jobs are critical to the work that happens across Allegany County, and they deserve to be recognized for the essential role they play in our schools.



ACEA was represented at the recent 2025 Mt. Maryland PACE Reception in Annapolis on January 16-17.



SAVE THE DATE!



Monday, March 17, 2025



Mark your calendars to join us at the ACEA office for either one of two, hour-long sessions on *Educator Rights in Addressing Student Conduct*. We will provide a comprehensive guide and share practical applications in the classroom. The first session will be conducted from 3:30-4:30 pm, and the second from 6:30-7:30 pm. Then, if you would like to experience an ACEA Representative Assembly, plan to stay from 4:45-5:45 pm for our monthly meeting. Registration details will be shared in the near future.