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

September 2026



The



Advocate

"Takin' Care of Business"

Each of us have songs that -when played- motivate or inspire us with renewed energy and focus. For me, one of those songs is ["Takin' Care of Business"](#) by Bachman-Turner Overdrive (BTO) released in 1973. If you have never heard it, I have linked it for your pleasure.

From the start, this song has an irresistible rhythm to which most listeners can't resist physically responding by dancing, drumming, or strumming, and which continues throughout the entire piece. The song is only further enhanced by the lyrics which convey that work should be passionate and confident, whatever and whenever you do it.

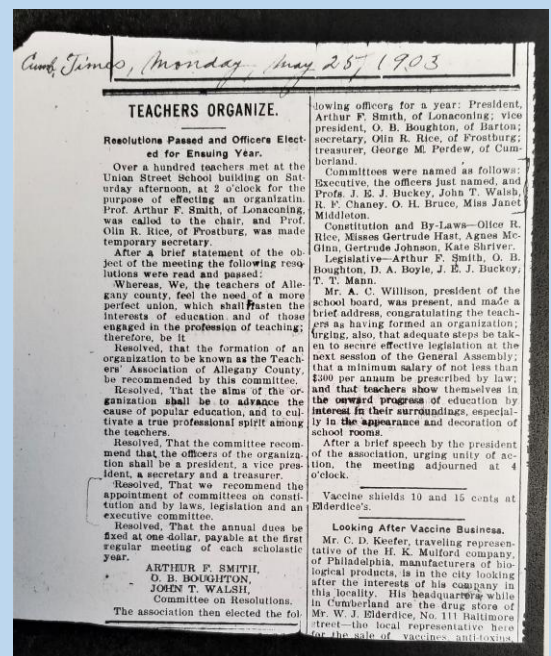
As your ACEA staff and leaders, we couldn't agree more! Since our own local association's start on May 25, 1903, that has been our mission through collective bargaining, professional development and public advocacy. With over 850 members, our collective strength potential is astounding! If each member contributed their time and talents for just two (2) hours annually this potential would become formidable! There are many opportunities to get more involved with ACEA, such as joining your building representative team, serving on various committees where you would help generate and direct the initiatives for our association, or serving as an elected delegate or officer. Just reach out to me with your interest in getting started.

We hope that like this song, your year starts strong, continues steadily and ends strong, and that you consider how you can be "Takin' Care of Business" and contribute to the legacy of ACEA.

In solidarity and service,

Kim

ACEA President
ksloane@mseanea.org



Sick Leave Bank:

Enrollment Window Open Now!

The Sick Leave Bank was established through contract negotiations in 1999 and began in the subsequent year 2000. The purpose was to create a bank of sick days for severe medical hardship such as catastrophic illness or serious accident that has depleted all accumulated sick leave and vacation days where applicable.

To join the SLB, you would be required to donate *two* sick leave days to the bank (once – not every year) and complete the Sick Leave Bank Sign-up Form. The form can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.aceamsea.org/sick-leave-bank.html>, and can be found under the "Member Resources" tab. Once completed, you must return it (email okay) to the ACEA office to arrive no later than Friday, September 25, 2026, for processing before the enrollment deadline.

Take Care of You Too!

Self-care is important for educators because being in a school environment requires patience, focus, and emotional energy every day. When educators make time to rest, set boundaries, and care for their own well-being, they are better able to support students, manage stress, and stay engaged in their work. Prioritizing self-care helps prevent burnout and allows educators to bring their best selves to the classroom.

Self-care matters for educators because it prevents burn-out, protects mental and physical health, and directly improves classroom leadership. Jobs in schools have:

- **High Demands:** Teaching involves long hours, heavy workloads, and intense emotional labor.
- **Chronic Strain:** Without intentional rest, ongoing stress turns into physical exhaustion and emotional depletion.

Taking care of yourself increases your classroom performance.

- **The "Empty Cup" Rule:** Educators cannot support others effectively when they are depleted. Take time to fill your own cup so you can pour into others.
- **Professional Survival:** Self-care acts as a buffer, helping educators stay in the profession long-term.
- **Better Engagement:** Well-rested educators show improved patience, clearer decision-making, and more creative lesson planning and student engagement.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Managing personal stress helps professionals respond calmly to classroom challenges rather than reacting out of frustration.

We all experience times when we need help, and you have the benefit of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to help at no cost to you. EAP gives you:

- 3 face-to-face counseling sessions with a counselor in your area. Video-based sessions are also available to fit busy schedules.
- Legal assistance: 30-minute consultation with an attorney, face-to-face or by phone (assistance with employment-related legal issues are not included)
- Financial: 30-minute telephone consultation with a qualified specialist on topics such as debt counseling or planning for retirement
- Parenting: Resources and referrals for childcare providers, before and after school programs, camps, adoption organizations, child development, prenatal care and more.
- Eldercare: Resources and referrals for home health agencies, assisted living facilities, social and recreational programs, and long-distance caregiving.
- Pet care: Resources and referrals for pet sitting, obedience training, veterinarians, and pet stores.

24 hours a day, 365 days a year, call toll-free 1-877-622-4327 or visit Mental and Behavioral Health | Cigna or mycigna.com (Your employer id: acps).

Welcome new ACEA Members!

Unit 1

Emily Altobello	CW
Brett Basham	MR
Colby Chapell	CW/WT
Emma Cook	FO
Devann Cowden	MT
Deirdre Davis	BR
Kristi Fisher	MT
Cainan Grapes	AL
Vincent Green	WM
Leanna Koch	SP
Lacy Kunis	CA
Kristen Maust	RE
Jeffrey McKenzie	AL
Emily Metheny	JD
Reagan Miller	GC
Olivia Ours	GC
Tessa Palumbo	MR
Robert Rydman	WA
Hailey Sharp	BE
Lakyn Strietbeck	CCTE
Katelyn Turbin	WA
Logan Winebrenner	MR
Emma Pyles	FL
Chanda Fazenbaker	BE
Alayzia Ward	RE
Mason Wolf	MS

Unit 4

Lance Adams	CCTE
Sarah Frech	FL
Kari Kamauf	SP
Tayler McCloud	FL
Yvette Mongold	BL
Crystal Palumbo	MT
Ashley White	WS
Jennifer Zook	CA

YOUR TAKIN' CARE OF BUSINESS TO DO LIST !

1. Find your salary on the new [2026-2027 Salary Scale](#) (can be found on our website under [Member Resources](#)) then compare it to your *Notice of Assignment* found on ACPS website under Employee Self Service and report any discrepancy to us.
2. While on Employee Self Service, note your prior year salary and compare it to what was reported to the [Maryland State Retirement and Pension System](#) found at <https://sra.maryland.gov/> . To do this, you must first create your account if you haven't yet done so.
3. Verify that your portion of insurance premium being deducted from your pay matches that on page 7 of the [ACPS Employee Benefits Guide](#).
4. Talk with a colleague about the [benefits of being an ACEA member](#) (see our website at <https://aceamsea.org/membership/>) during our **Fall Into ACEA Membership** campaign running now through October 30. See the poster on the ACEA bulletin board in your building for more details.
5. Be sure to learn about the improvements in your new agreements found at <https://aceamsea.org/resources/agreements/> .