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

**November 2026**



# *The* ACEA Advocate

## President's Message >>>

## Welcome new ACEA Members!

### Unit 1

| | |
|---|---|
| **Carrie Beeman** | **WS** |
| **Kelli Amoroso** | **RE** |
| **Christine Kuhn** | **CA** |

### Unit 4

| | |
|---|---|
| **Natasha Fink** | **CA** |
| **Nickole Stemple** | **CCTE** |
| **Robyn Miller** | **CA** |
| **Loraina Spence** | **CA** |
| **Vicky Steiner** | **WS** |
| **Shannah Knight** | **SP** |
| **Montana Arnone** | **SP** |
| **Misty Smith** | **CA** |




## *Superheroes Among Us*

No, I am not talking about the recent release of the latest in the Avengers movies, but rather our amazing Education Support Professionals! Even so, there are some similarities that can be drawn with the Avengers. Like our ESP Superheroes, the Avengers unite a group of extraordinary heroes who must set aside personal differences to face challenges that no single hero can stop alone.

Can you imagine what each school day would be like without your ESP colleagues? For anything from resources to emergencies, we count on each other to persevere and thrive. It was for this reason that the NEA Representative Assembly (the Association's decision-making body of nearly 8,000 member delegates) called on the organization to honor the contributions of all school support staff in 1987.

Since that time, National ESP Day has been observed on the Wednesday of American Education Week. This year, that is Wednesday, November 18. During this month of Thanksgiving, perhaps you might let them know just how vital they are to your success and that of your students, and personally thank them for working with you to overcome the challenges that present each day.

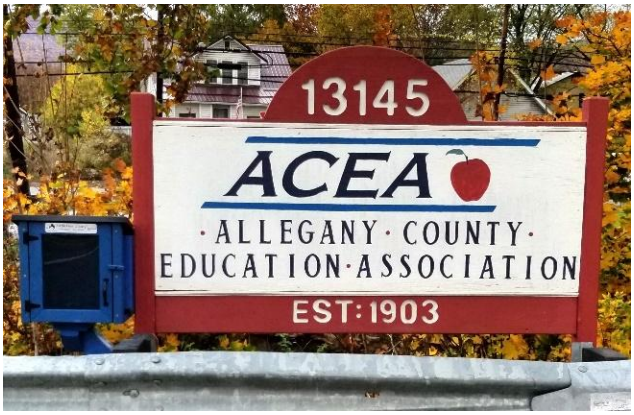
In solidarity and service,

*Kim*

ksloane@mseanea.org



## 2026 MSEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY AND CONVENTION




*Eight ACEA delegates attended the annual MSEA Representative Assembly and Convention from October 16-17 in Ocean City. Among the items on the agenda for consideration were five proposed bylaw amendments, several New Business Items (NBI's), one rules amendment, an election to fill a vacant seat, and candidate presentations for the upcoming MSEA Election.*

*If you would like to attend the 2027 MSEA Convention and RA as an ACEA delegate, OR the 2027 NEA RA and Convention, you must be nominated and elected during our 2027 election cycle which is currently in the nomination phase until November 20. If interested, nominations forms can be found on our website, or contact the ACEA office for more information at 301-729-8280.*

## Toys For Happiness!

**Since 2005, ACEA (formerly ACTA), in conjunction with ACPS, has hosted an annual Denim Day for Toys for Happiness collection to support this local charity and help spread the spirit of giving in our community. Over the past 21 years, this event has collected more than 5,000 toys and $35,000 dollars in donations for this worthy cause!**

**This year, Tuesday, December 1 will be designated as Denim Day for *Toys for Happiness*. This year we will again collect both toys and monetary donations. Toys and monetary donations (cash or checks) will be accepted at each work location that day, and can be given to one of your building representatives or another designated individual, who will forward all to ACEA. Checks should be made out directly to Toys For Happiness.**

**We encourage staff to consider making a $5 minimum donation. In exchange for your support of this event, Dr. Martirano has once again agreed to permit the wearing of seasonal garb and denim to work on this day. So, dust off those ugly sweaters for a beautiful reason.**

## What is "The Union"?

*Cresta Kowalski, UniServ Director*

What is a union? They are important right? Working in the US today, there are over 14.3 million people belonging to unions; the four largest unions in the US are the National Education Association, the Service Employees International Union, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and the Teamsters. According to NEA, an association/union is "A group of employees who unite and have legal rights to form a democratic group that advocates for better conditions at their workplace on behalf of themselves and others." What does that mean to us here in Allegany County Public Schools?

The union is not an outside entity. So often we hear, "The union will (fill in the blank with an action from Santa's wish list of items)," like it is a force that works from the outside. Not at all- the union is YOU! Any employee who is a member is the union and can make changes for better working conditions for themselves and others. The union does nothing without prompting from the membership, and you can make the change you want to see at your workplace because you have the power!

A union membership is like a gym membership-you get out of it what you put into it. Just like a gym, unions need active members who want to see the best outcome in the long run. Ways you can participate in ACEA (our local affiliate of MSEA and NEA) is to get active: come to a 10-minute meeting, become a building representative, attend an ACEA sponsored event after hours, or communicate needs in your building to the ACEA office through email or a call. Union membership and participation has monetary benefits, and we can point you in the right direction with what MSEA and NEA have to offer you for savings in monthly budget as well!

Mahatma Gandhi's famous quote "Be the change you wish to see in the world," is very fitting to the union conversation because the union is the members; no change happens in our schools without member participation and activation. There have been some differences made in just the past month, and I am emboldened by the changemakers joining in the work. I hope to see you become an active participant of ACEA and make our union the strongest source of support for educational professionals working in our schools.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE!

**November 20 : *complete your nomination for ACEA Board of Director, MSEA RA Delegate or NEA RA Delegate before this date.***

**December 3: *Interested ACEA members for both Unit 1 and Unit 4 are invited to the ACEA office from 4-5 pm to discuss Workload issues for ACEA action.***