

REVIEW

NOV
2019
njea.org



an education and advocacy resource



A DAY AT SUSSEX COUNTY TECH

18 A DAY AT
SUSSEX COUNTY
TECH

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EARLY CAREER
MEMBERS

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TAKING ACTION
TOGETHER

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NJEA'S PAC
ENDORSEMENT
PROCESS

EDUCATION: MASTERED

Information Session
11/9 @ 10 a.m.

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- **NEW** Autism + Applied Behavior Analysis (*online*)
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- Special Education with Supervisor Endorsement
- Teacher of Students with Disabilities

Leadership

- Principal (*online*)
- Supervisor (*online*)
- School Administrator (*online*)
- Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

Speech-Language Pathology

Jayne Camen (l) and Amy Gold of the Hamilton Township EA (Atlantic) staff their table and share ideas at the NJEA Family Involvement Showcase on Sept. 28. To learn more about the NJEA Family and Schools Together Work For Children, visit njea.org/community/family-involvement.



NJEA's newly minted Teacher Leader Consultants met for a training on Sept. 14 as they help to launch the NJEA Teacher Leader Academy set to begin in January. Seated from left: Anna Muessig, Christine Candarella, Dawn Howlen, Lizandaa Alburg and Johanna Amaro. Standing from left: Teacher Leader Academy Coordinator Rich Wilson, Brenda Martin-Lee, Michael Fletcher, Ed Dubroski, Tracie Yostpille, Jennifer Dubroski and Deanne Martini.



Trent Johnson, vice president of the Passaic Maintenance, Custodians, Janitresses, Cafeteria Workers, and Building Aides Association, attended the NJEA Health and Safety Conference on Oct. 4-5.

Essex County NJREA members Lorena Tyson (l) and Brenda Hofler Battle were among the hundreds of NJREA members who attended organization's annual Fall Luncheon on Sept. 26.



I AM NJEA



Check the events calendar for upcoming events and conferences you can attend.

+ PHOTO GALLERY ONLINE
flickr.com/NJEA/sets

FEATURES



18 | SUSSEX COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Automotive technical instructor Brian Ward holds a unique position at Sussex County Technical School. A graduate of the school's automotive program he is back to the school as an instructor and as president of the Sussex County Vocational Technical Education Association. Read about his journey to becoming a teacher and get an inside look at a day in the life of his shop.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



22 | EARLY CAREER MEMBERS

If we want to maintain both NJEA's progress and the effectiveness of our local and county associations and advocate effectively for better schools for our students and better working conditions for ourselves, we need to invite our newest members into the fold.

BY MARIAH BELBER AND ROBERT MANGEL



32 | ELECTIONS 2019

On Nov. 5, New Jerseyans will go to the polls to elect members of the New Jersey General Assembly. Learn more about the NJEA PAC endorsement process and read a statement from each endorsed Assembly candidate.

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26 | STAT

STAT, or Students Taking Action Together, is an instructional strategy that builds students' social-emotional learning (SEL) skills in empathy, perspective-taking, emotion regulation, problem-solving, and respectful, effective communication. When a lack of civil discourse is the norm, STAT teaches students that it is possible to understand other points of view and show mutual respect.

BY MAURICE J. ELIAS AND SAMUEL NAYMAN

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Tests ≠ standards

GOOD NEWS!

Did you know?

New Jersey's public school fourth and eighth graders score among the **BEST** in the nation in math.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics. 2017 NAEP Mathematics: Nation's Report Card. April 2018.

The numbers

17.3%

New Jersey's teachers make substantially less than similarly educated workers, even when accounting for pensions and health benefits. According to a New Jersey Policy Perspective (NJPP) report from researcher Mark Weber, teachers with a bachelor's degree make, on average, 14.5% less than similarly educated nonteachers. The gap is greater for teachers with a master's degree: **17.3%**

Source: Weber, Mark. "In Brief: New Jersey's Teacher Workforce, 2019," NJPP. bit.ly/njppteacherpay

On the Cover



Brian Ward, an automotive technical instructor and president of the Sussex County Vocational Technical Education Association, with his students, Jake Gianattasio (l) and Michael Plutt, in his auto shop. Read about Ward's compelling journey from nearly becoming a high school dropout to teaching at his alma mater, beginning on Page 18.

PHOTO BY
KATHRYN COULIBALY

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MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership dues are: Active professional: \$950 (full time); \$475 (part time) \$475 (on leave). Active supportive \$475 (full time) \$237.50 (part time) \$237.50 (on leave). Retired: \$86; \$1,065 (retired life). Retired ESP: \$60; \$675 (retired ESP life); Preservice \$32. General professional (outside N.J. public education employment): \$250. Subscribing \$250. Only those in education positions in N.J. public schools and colleges are eligible for active membership. Payment of annual dues entitles a member to receive the *Review* for one year, from January through December. Dues include \$5 for the *NJEA Review*.



THE HUMAN ELEMENT

One of the most powerful benefits of a career in education is the ability to transform lives. Every day, in every interaction with students, we are in a position to have an impact on their futures—and sometimes, we will never even know it happened.

For Brian Ward, auto technology teacher and local president at Sussex County Technical School in Sparta, the ability to influence the course of his students' lives was one of the primary reasons he accepted a job in education. More than most, he knew the power that educators have to set a student on a path to success. After all, his teachers did it for him.

He tells his story, and how he is giving back to the teachers and school that changed his life, in our cover story this month. He also talks about how he views his role as local president and his responsibility not only to the dues-paying members of his local association, but to the students they serve.

All educators, regardless of job description, have the power to change lives. We believe that education itself has the power to do this. Certainly, the story of public education in the

United States has been one of our nation's greatest successes.

And educators like Brian, who are working to provide students with valuable, marketable skills, a strong work ethic, and self-confidence are building the next generation of public education's success stories.

We know that the work that we do matters. We see it in the faces of our students every day, and in the stories that come back to us of lives well-lived.

Thank you for all that you do for public education and the students we serve. One by one, student by student, we are building the future of our communities, our state, our nation, and the world.

Marie Blistan



NJEA President Marie Blistan was among those congratulating Kimberly Dickstein Hughes on Oct. 2, the day she was named 2019-20 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year. From left: Haddonfield EA Co-President Rachel Gould, NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller, Dickstein Hughes, and Blistan.

OFFICERS ONLINE

MARIE BLISTAN

Facebook

@Marie.Blistan: Truly a wonderful meeting with our members joined together with a common purpose to empower all members, strengthen our union, and move our profession forward! Thank YOU to all of our member leaders who shared their stories and their hopes for a better tomorrow. We will achieve our goal because YOU are AMAZING, STRONG, and NJEA!!! THANK YOU to staffers Eric Jones, Amanda Adams and Sharon Allen!!!!

On Oct. 10, NJEA President Marie Blistan and NJEA Executive Director Steve Swetsky participated in one of many discussions with NJEA members and staff addressing racial and social justice in our association and at our worksites.

SEAN M. SPILLER

Facebook

@SpillerForNJEA: A special day to remember and permanently name & honor Suzanne Helff!

NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller joined his fellow officers, Bergen County EA President Sue McBride and other BCEA leaders, retired Bergen County Community College Professor Peter Helff, and BCCC faculty, administration, staff and students on Oct. 3, for the dedication of Suzanne M. Helff Hall at BCCC. Suzanne, Peter Helff's daughter, was a veterinary student at BCCC when she died in 1997. Helff Hall is the school's veterinary technology building. The dedication marks the completion of a fundraising effort led by Peter Helff to secure \$100,000 in donations toward veterinary technology student scholarships through the college foundation.

STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

@SteveBeattyNJEA: Starting the week with a hug from a kindergartener as I walked into Carlstadt Public School! When you have caring educators and a caring community, is it any doubt what the end result is? Thank you, brothers and sisters in CPS for welcoming me and for the work you do every single day! We're #1 for a reason.

NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty visited NJEA members and their students at Carlstadt Public School in Bergen County on Oct. 7. The borough of Carlstadt proudly notes on its "Welcome to Carlstadt" sign that the town is the home of the nation's first kindergarten. Beatty posted photos from his visit.

KNOW. LEAD. ACT.

BLISTAN TO BE HONORED BY WEC



The New Jersey Work Environment Council (WEC) will honor NJEA President Marie Blistan at the WEC 2019 Awards Dinner on Nov. 22 at The College of New Jersey. Blistan

is being recognized for her leadership in ensuring safe and healthy working and learning environments for educators and students. She played a key role, even prior to becoming NJEA president, in the founding of the Healthy Schools Now Coalition.

WEC is frequently a partner with NJEA, providing guidance to local associations facing workplace safety and health issues. WEC also provides training to NJEA members at local and county association events and at statewide conferences. WEC writes a monthly column on health and safety issues in the *NJEA Review*.

WEC is an alliance of labor, community, and environmental organizations working together for safe, secure jobs, and a healthy, sustainable environment. WEC links workers, communities and environmentalists through training, technical assistance, grassroots organizing, and public policy campaigns to promote dialogue, collaboration, and joint action.

The Nov. 22 awards dinner will take place at 6 p.m. in TCNJ's Education Building, Room 212, at 2000 Pennington Road in Ewing.

To purchase tickets, or to make a donation, visit njwec.org. Click on "Events" and select "WEC 2019 Awards Dinner."

NJEA AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS

Enter your association's communications efforts

At the NJEA Communications Tools Workshop on April 25, local and county associations will be recognized for excellence in three award categories:

- Most Effective Use of Communications Tools to Achieve a Goal
- Best Website
- Best Newsletter (print or electronic)

To be eligible for consideration, entries must come from local or county associations affiliated with NJEA or N.J. Retirees' Education Association (NJREA) or NJEA Preservice.

Associations may submit for each award category within one of the following six divisions based on size and association type:

1. Local associations (500 or fewer members)
2. Local associations (501 or more members)
3. County associations (8,000 or fewer members)
4. County associations (8,001 or more members)
5. County NJREA organizations
6. NJEA Preservice campus-level associations

Local associations representing members working at institutions of higher education compete in the appropriate local association division based on size. Preservice organization entries must be submitted by campus-level NJEA Preservice chapters that are recognized by their respective New Jersey institutions of higher education and are affiliated with NJEA.

In all instances, submitted materials must have been developed and created by members of the association entering the awards program during the 2018-19 or 2019-20 school years.

How to enter:

Visit njea.org/commawards for details entry forms.

The deadline to enter is Feb. 28, 2020

STAFF NEWS



NJEA welcomed **Lesley Newman** as principal clerk-bookkeeper in NJEA's membership processing office in the Business Division on Oct. 1. Newman has over 15 years of customer service, sales, visual merchandising and expense control experience in the retail industry, including such retailers as Cole Haan, Banana Republic and Ann Taylor Loft. Newman earned her bachelor's degree in Spanish/Latin American Studies at American University in Washington, D.C. She resides in Sicklerville with her husband, Brian, and their cat, Mr. Whiskers.

NEXT DA MEETING IS THURSDAY, NOV. 7

The NJEA Delegate Assembly (DA) meeting at the NJEA Convention will take place on Thursday, Nov. 7, starting at 6 p.m. in the Atlantic City Convention Center's Hall A.

NJEA's policy-making body, the Delegate Assembly is composed of elected delegates representing members from each of New Jersey's 21 counties. In addition, elected delegates represent members from higher education, retired, non-classroom teachers, and preservice. The DA meets five times a year—in September, November, January, March, and May. Only the November meeting is in the evening and in Atlantic City. All other DA meetings are scheduled on Saturdays.

NJEA members who are not delegates and wish to address the D.A. must sign up on-site prior to the designated speaking time. That time is set for 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 7. Under the DA rules, each speaker is limited to five minutes.

Meeting entry is restricted to NJEA members and authorized individuals required for the operation of the meeting and invited by NJEA. To gain entry, non-delegate members must show a photo I.D. and have their membership verified.

YOUR TURN

Creative ways to include whole school team in Back to School Night

Here are some suggestions to enhance Back to School Night and Parent-Teacher Conferences. Some of these were used in my local association when I was a teacher. Others were developed when I did NJEA UniServ organizing work. Some required school board and administration support and negotiated compensation.

- Drivers drove their routes at night to deliver their students' parents to the school for Back to School Night. This helped parents and drivers to get to know each other and parents can learn the "Rules of the Ride." The drivers wore T-shirts that had a bus with wings that said, "Rolling Town Watch."
- Parents were invited to the cafeteria for some refreshments prepared by the staff. The staff explained the nutrition efforts of the food service program and gave out a printed menu/calendar with a well-liked recipe on the back.
- The school lobby could have tables staffed by local EMT teams with materials about home first aid, local police with material about safe schools, and firefighters showing the best place for smoke alarms in a house. Many school staffers know community members in these services and can help get them involved.
- School secretaries could provide materials with school contact information and suggestions on how to contact the school.
- Custodians and maintenance staff could give hints on safe cleaning materials.

Joe Murphy, NJREA

Joe Murphy is a retired NJEA UniServ field representative who specialized in serving educational support professionals. Previously, he was a teacher and local association leader in the Manalapan-Englishtown School District. The letter was inspired by "Back to School Night—Flip It!" which appeared in the September edition of the NJEA Review.

BENEFITS ALERT

All non-Medicare SEHPB plans to be Horizon-only effective Jan. 1

The School Employees Health Benefits Program (SEHPB), will be eliminating all non-Medicare Aetna medical plans on Jan. 1, 2020. The Aetna Medicare Advantage plans and Dental Expense Plan (DEP) are unaffected by the change.

What Aetna plan members need to know:

- Horizon medical plans and Aetna medical plans have equivalent levels of benefits.
- You will be moved automatically to the Horizon equivalent of your Aetna plan on Jan. 1, 2020.
- Horizon's network of doctors and hospitals overlaps significantly with Aetna's network, but it is not identical. Contact Horizon BCBSNJ Member Services at 1-800 414-7427 or go to shbp.horizonblue.com to confirm the network status of your providers.
- If you have an Aetna HMO plan, you will need to select a new primary care physician in the Horizon network after Jan. 1, 2020.
- If you are currently undergoing treatment such as chemotherapy or dialysis, contact Horizon BCBSNJ Member Services at 1-800 414-7427, and ask to speak with someone about "transitioning from Aetna to Horizon with active treatment for a complex condition."
- If you have a surgery currently scheduled after Jan. 1, 2020, contact Horizon BCBSNJ Member Services at 1-800 414-7427, and ask to speak with someone about "transitioning from Aetna to Horizon with active treatment for a complex condition."
- If you have an Aetna HD (high deductible) plan, call 1-800 414-7427 and ask for an "HSA transfer form." This form is needed to move your HSA funds over into your Horizon HD HSA.
- While Aetna Medicare Advantage holders won't be affected by the change, it will affect any dependents who don't have Aetna's Medicare Advantage plan.

The change is the result of the public bidding process for the state's prescription and non-Medicare medical plans that was recently completed. In August, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of NJ was awarded the contract to administer the SHBP/SEHPB's medical plans for plan years 2020 to 2023.

COOL STUFF



NOMINATE SCHOLAR ATHLETES FOR RECOGNITION

NJEA and News 12 New Jersey are seeking high school students who excel both academically and athletically. The NJEA/News 12 Scholar Athlete Recognition Program honors New Jersey high school seniors who are successful not only in the classroom, but on the court or on the field as well. Thirty students will be selected based on nominations received from high schools around the state. Each week, a Scholar Athlete will be featured in a news segment on News 12 New Jersey. In May or June, the winners, their families, coaches and teachers will be honored at a luncheon. One student will be selected as 2019-20 Scholar Athlete of the Year and receive a \$5,000 scholarship. Four finalists will receive \$1,000 each.

To nominate a student, look for a form on njea.org. (Scroll down to "Partnerships and Contests.") The form must be signed by the principal or guidance counselor, as well as the coach or athletic director. A News 12 sports panel will make the selection. Selections are ongoing, no applications will be accepted after March 2, 2020.



NEA MEMBERS CAN WIN A \$2,500 ACADEMIC AWARD FROM CALIFORNIA CASUALTY

What could you do with \$2,500? Previous California Casualty Academic Award winners have purchased chemistry lab equipment, acquired new books, funded electronic learning systems, and paid for cultural and historical learning field trips. California Casualty, provider of the NEA Auto and Home Insurance Program since 2000, is ready to add you to the list of award recipients.

The \$2,500 Academic Award from California Casualty was created in 2012 to give public K-12 educators, who use an average of \$500 to \$1,000 of their own funds each year, financial assistance in buying necessities for students, schools and learning projects.

NJEA/NEA members hoping to win the next \$2,500 Academic Award can learn all the details and enter at teachersacademicaward.com. The entry deadline is July 17, 2020, with a winner announced in August.



ART, WRITING, AND VIDEO CONTESTS FOR STUDENTS IN PRE-K-12

Motivate your students to demonstrate their creativity in one or more contests being offered by the New Jersey Association for Gifted Children (NJAGC). Students should interpret and apply the theme Giftedness: A Vision for 2020. Entries must be submitted electronically at njagc.org/contests. For art or writing, entries are due no later than Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019. The deadline for the video contest is Feb. 1, 2020. Parental consent forms are required and available online.

Educators are encouraged to choose two of the best from their classes. Winning entries will be displayed at several events including REACH Regional Enrichment Activities for Children, on Saturday, Jan 25, at the Moorestown Upper Elementary School, and at NJAGC's Annual Conference, 2020: A Clear Vision of Equity & Excellence in Gifted Education, on Friday, March 20, 2020, at the Mercer Conference Center. More information is available at njagc.org.

16TH ANNUAL NEW JERSEY GSA FORUM

GLSEN Central New Jersey and the Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice announces this year's 16th Annual GSA Forum to be held on Saturday, Nov. 16, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Grover Middle School, 10 Southfield Road, West Windsor, New Jersey.

The Forum brings together high school and middle school students, their advisors, allies, parents and supporters for a day of celebration, education, and networking. More than 500 participants are expected to join together to express their pride and to gain renewed strength for themselves and their communities.

Forum workshop topics will be targeted to the needs of high school and middle school students as well as school staff members, parents and other supporters. Included in the workshops are diverse subjects such as Youth Leadership, GLSEN Days of Action, Planning Your Future, Knowing Your Rights, Middle School GSAs, and specific workshops for GSA advisors, all school staff, and parents. Certificates of attendance for educators will be available.

Registration for the Forum is \$15 for students and \$40 for adults. Breakfast and lunch as well as an information packet, are provided. No one is turned away for inability to pay.

Register at tiny.cc/gsaforum where payment options are described. Questions about the NJ GSA Forum can be sent to outreach.brcsj@gmail.com.

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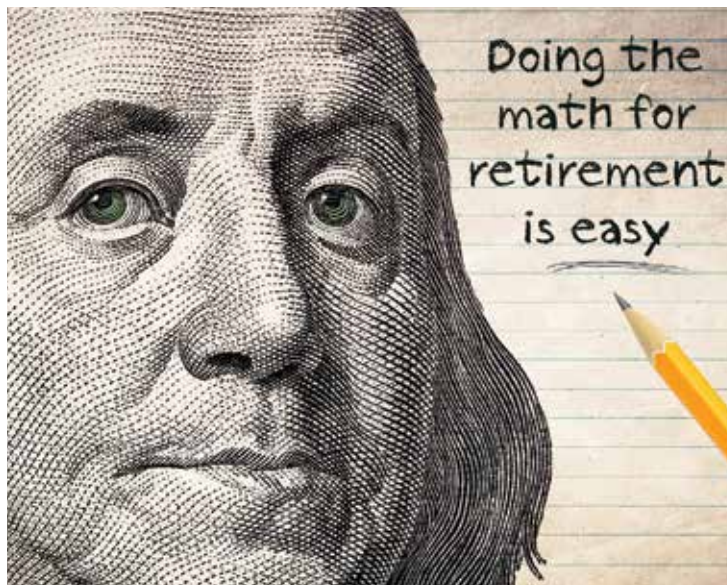
- 1. EXCLUSIVE TOOLS AND INFORMATION:** Our Retirement Income Calculator has information from your pension plan built in, so you can see how extra savings or a different retirement age can impact your future benefits and income. Simply input your information to get a customized, eight-page retirement report.
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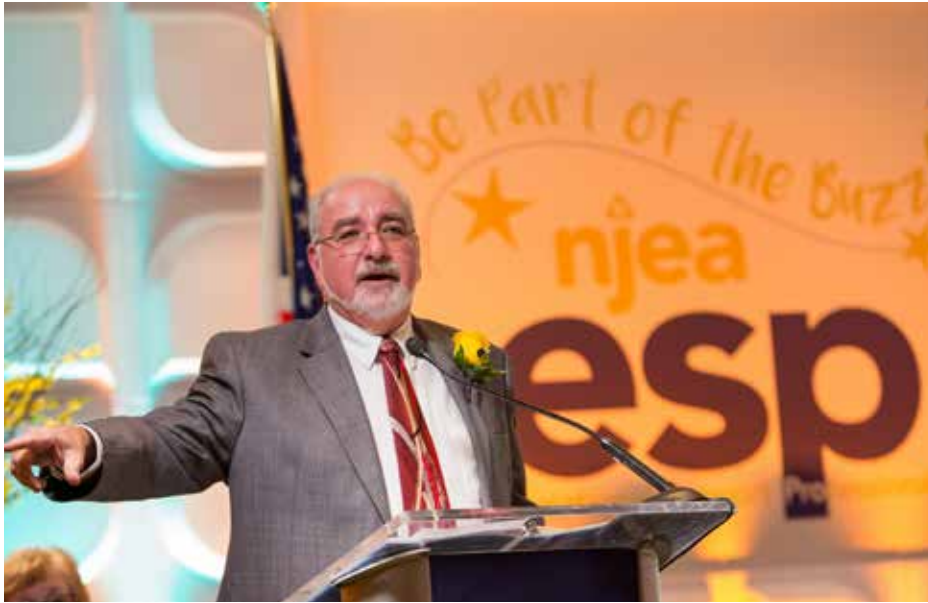
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NJEA Report

Steve Swetsky named NJEA executive director Succeeding Ed Richardson, retiring after 26-year career



Steve Swetsky, who has been named the NJEA Executive director, speaking at the 2018 NJEA Educational Support Professionals Conference.

NJEA Executive Director Ed Richardson is retiring following a 26-year career with the association. He will be succeeded by Steve Swetsky, who served as NJEA's assistant executive director for the previous six years alongside Richardson. Swetsky, who will be the seventh executive director of NJEA, was appointed to the position by NJEA's Executive Committee in August. Richardson and Swetsky are working together during this transition. Richardson's retirement begins Dec. 1, 2019.

Prior to taking on his new role, Swetsky worked for NJEA in several capacities. In addition to his time as assistant executive director, he was the assistant director of UniServ for the NJEA's southern region from 2008 to 2013 and a UniServ field representative from 2000 to 2008. He also worked as a part-time UniServ negotiations consultant for NJEA for eight years prior to joining the full-time staff in 2000.

Swetsky began his career in public education as an industrial arts education teacher in Washington Township, Gloucester County in 1980. During his time in Washington Township

he served in numerous leadership roles with the Washington Township Education Association, including president and chief negotiator.

NJEA President Marie Blistan expressed her appreciation for Richardson's accomplishments as executive director.

"Ed Richardson deserves the thanks of every NJEA member," Blistan said. "He's been a stalwart advocate for members throughout his career at NJEA. Over the last six years, he has expertly guided NJEA through many challenges and leaves our union strong and well-positioned for the future. On behalf of my fellow officers, Vice President Sean M. Spiller and Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty, I thank Ed for dedicating his career to NJEA. He will be greatly missed."

Blistan praised the selection of Swetsky to succeed Richardson, highlighting his deep roots at NJEA and his diverse experiences as a local leader and staff member.

"Steve is the right leader to continue the progress that Ed has made," Blistan said. "His experience in every facet of NJEA's work, combined with his understanding of our mission, will serve NJEA

well. Steve understands that the power of our union resides in its members, and he has spent his career preparing and empowering NJEA members to effect change. His knowledge of the collective bargaining process and his deep commitment to racial, social and economic justice, combined with his belief in the power of member organizing, will lead to an even stronger union in the years to come."

Richardson also highlighted his successor's organizing credentials.

"I've had the privilege of working with Steve for over two decades," Richardson said. "From the first time we met, his focus on member organizing and empowerment has never wavered. I could not have asked for a better partner by my side during my time as executive director, and I know Steve will build on the work we did together to take NJEA to new heights. After 26 years, I will miss NJEA, but I know the organization is in good hands."

Swetsky thanked his predecessor.

"It has been a pleasure to work closely with Ed as he helped NJEA navigate some very challenging times," Swetsky said. "He is respected throughout NJEA as a steady leader, but his willingness to break new ground and try new things helped transform our union. His steadfast support during our transition has been invaluable. Ed has been a valued colleague for as long as we've worked together, and he will remain a friend when he retires."

Swetsky also spoke of his vision for the future of NJEA.

"I look forward to working with our leaders, members and staff to continue to build the power of our union," Swetsky said. "Marie, Sean and Steve share my commitment to building union strength through member power, and I know there is no match for the commitment and power of NJEA members. As one of the strongest unions in America, we've helped build the best public schools in the nation. That's no coincidence. I look forward to working with NJEA's leaders, members and staff as we continue to advocate together for our students, our colleagues, our profession, our public schools and our communities." 🇺🇸

Haddonfield teacher named New Jersey Teacher of the Year

Kimberly Dickstein Hughes, an English/language arts teacher at Haddonfield Memorial High School in Camden County, has been named the 2019-20 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year.

Dickstein Hughes grew up in Camden County and attended Voorhees Township Public Schools and Eastern Camden County Regional School District. She earned her bachelor's degree in English and Political Science from Rutgers College in 2008 and a master's degree in English Secondary Education at Rutgers University's Graduate School of Education in 2009. Dickstein Hughes has not only taught for 11 years for the Haddonfield School District, but also conducted her teaching internship there.

Dickstein Hughes was featured along with her students in the January 2019 *NJEA Review* for their work to bring Garang Buk Buk Piol, a former child soldier from South Sudan, to the U.S. to complete his master's degree in development practice. Dickstein Hughes also brings Shakespeare to life for her students, drawing on her enthusiasm for his works and through her studies at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Oxford University, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Utah Shakespeare Festival.

Dickstein Hughes' dedication to her students and colleagues was underlined by her decision to get married in the courtyard of Haddonfield Memorial High School in an open ceremony that anyone in the school community, among others, could attend. The ceremony was on Saturday, Sept. 28, only four days before being named state teacher of the year.

"The association is so incredibly proud of Kim," said Rachel Gould, co-president of Haddonfield Education Association (HEA). "A walk by her classroom on any given day has students out of their seats bringing books to life as she engages her students in ways far different than the traditional classroom many of us experienced as students. The work she does outside of the classroom

with her students at Shakespeare readings, the Alicia Rose Victorious Foundation, and with her philanthropic endeavors has empowered her students to become lifelong learners."

The Alicia Rose Victorious Foundation referenced by Gould is a national, nonprofit

for change."

"You could not have chosen a finer more deserving educator for this award," said Dr. Lawrence Mussoline, superintendent of Haddonfield Public Schools. "Kim has one speed—100 mph. To say she goes above and beyond what is expected of a typical teacher in our profession is an understatement."

"We have outstanding educators in New Jersey and the teacher of the year candidates continually show just how impressive they really are," said NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller. "We congratulate Kim on this amazing honor. She has certainly earned this distinction, and we know she will serve as an exemplary representative of the educational excellence in our New Jersey public schools."

Dickstein Hughes will be a featured speaker at the 2019 NJEA Convention. She will be speaking at the Celebration of Excellence on Thursday, Nov. 7 at 1:15 p.m. at the Atlantic City Convention Center in Hall A.

NJEA partners with the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and ETS on the teacher of the year program. Dickstein Hughes will have a six-month sabbatical from January through June 2020 to attend national and state conferences, tour the state visiting classrooms, and work on various initiatives at the NJDOE. The costs associated with the sabbatical are covered by ETS, which also provides Dickstein Hughes with a new laptop computer. ETS also sponsors programs

for state teachers of the year at the national level.

NJEA will provide Dickstein Hughes with a rental car, equipped with EZ Pass, to help her travel to speaking engagements and meetings across the state. NJEA also will provide complimentary access to all major NJEA workshops and training opportunities, a \$500 clothing allowance, media training and communications support, and funding for a trip to Washington, D.C. to meet with the other state teachers of the year and visit the White House. 🏠



Kimberly Dickstein Hughes is the 2019-20 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year.

organization that provides programs and activities for children receiving treatment for cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. Alicia Rose DiNatale, the namesake for the organization, died from a rare form of cancer at the age of 17. She was a close friend of Dickstein Hughes.

"Kim connects on a level with her students that allows them to understand how they can change the world and make an impact," said Sean Sweeney, co-president of HEA. "They have seen the change she has made, and that change has inspired countless others to embark on a journey that is bigger than themselves and work diligently

Northeast Beast Fall Fest leads to advocacy and fun

Nearly 600 NJEA members and their families attended the NJEA Northeast Beast Fall Festival event at the Turtle Back Zoo in West Orange, on Sept. 22. The attendees were members of local and county associations in NJEA's Northeast Zone. Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Union counties comprise the Northeast Zone.

Advocacy, awareness and action were an important part of Sunday's event as members interacted with staff from the various division in NJEA's Trenton headquarters as well as staff in their regional UniServ offices. Each county association had a table. Also participating were representatives from the NJEA Pride in Public Education program, NJEA Families and Schools Work Together for Children (NJEA FAST), and the NJEA Early Career Network.

To encourage interaction with every group, members were given a passport to have signed by each table. Completed passports were turned in for a drawing for a one night's accommodation in Atlantic City for the Thursday night of the NJEA Convention. There were 10 such spots for eligible members.

Members were invited to come early in the afternoon for free admission to the zoo itself before it closed for the evening. For the after-hours event, members and their families could take pictures with princesses and superheroes and enjoy dinner from a half dozen food trucks.

"The Fall Festival event was a creative way for our members in the four northeast counties to come together around some important statewide issues like our new Ch.78 bill, our ESP job justice campaign, and the upcoming assessment regulation proposals," said NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steven Beatty, who attended with his family. "This is such a great opportunity to meet with members and share with them our concerns for these issues and the impact they will have on our students, schools, and communities, and importantly, how they can get involved."

At the Assessment Table, members learned that representatives on the



An arts and crafts table was all part of the fun at the Northeast Beast Fall Festival.

State Board of Education are pushing for an ill-informed increase in the number of statewide standardized tests required during high school. At the table, members were encouraged to send postcards to the State Board asking them to back off and reconsider the consequences of such actions. (See Page 50 and Page 58 for more information on this issue.)

At the NJEA Political Action Committee Table, members who signed up to contribute to NJEA PAC for the first time or members who increased their monthly contribution were given the highly coveted red shirts known throughout the four counties as the "Northeast Beast" swag.

Postcards supporting the Chapter 78 relief ESP job justice bills were another featured activity. Members wrote and signed postcards that would be sent to legislators asking them to support the legislation. 🇺🇸



James Frazier, the vice president of the Union Township Education Association, gets a temporary tattoo during the Northeast Beast Fall Festival. Frazier is a candidate for NEA secretary-treasurer.

The benefits of bilingualism

Paying it forward



CBS Immigration Reporter Camilo Montoya-Galvez, center, returned to his alma mater, Randolph High School, to meet with ESL and journalism students and to thank educators who provide a lifeline to ESL students. Teachers Michelle Land (second from left) and Sylvia Sanchez-Gonzalez (right) encouraged his visit and hosted him that day.

One way educators can judge how much they have affected their students is when they reconnect with their teachers after graduation, and it is especially rewarding when they “make it big.” One such student was in Noreen Drucker’s ESL class when he first came to the U.S. at the end of third grade. Drucker is now retired and an NJREA member.

“Moving to a new country can be a daunting experience—especially when it comes to learning a new language,” Camilo Montoya-Galvez wrote. “It sure was for me 13 years ago. I was one of these kids. My parents and teachers, like Ms. Drucker, were instrumental in my efforts to learn English and transition to my new home. And it is extremely encouraging that these young newcomers have people like Ms. Land and Mrs. Gonzalez to guide them through this important process. Their work for immigrant youth is exceptional—and we sure as heck need more of it in this country.”

Montoya-Galvez graduated four years ago and is beginning his career in journalism. Teacher Sybil Sanchez-Gonzalez, who was his Spanish for Natives instructor. After graduation, Montoya-Galvez kept in touch with Sanchez-Gonzalez. They discussed his coming back to “pay it forward” by sharing his experiences with current ESL and journalism students.

Through one of Randolph High School’s Passion Projects, Sanchez-Gonzalez and Michelle Land made it a reality. Through Passion Projects, Randolph educators strive to achieve a goal for the school that inspires them.

“I returned to my high school after more than three years to talk to students about my young career, the indispensable support I received at Randolph, as well as to highlight the irony that my profession now entails speaking and writing in a language I knew nothing of when I attended my first ESL class in third grade,” Montoya-Galvez said.

Before his visit, Land and Sanchez-Gonzalez shared highlights from *camiloreports.com*, Montoya-Galvez’s professional website. They learned as a journalist he had worked for Telemundo, but is now working for CBS, where he was recently promoted to immigration reporter. His articles and interviews are in Spanish and English. The students were excited to meet a recent bilingual graduate who has been on national TV and writes about topics they are interested in. Much of his work focuses on immigrant issues, Puerto Rico’s recovery after Hurricane Maria and soccer. Montoya-Galvez was excited to meet the students as well, visiting the school for a full day.

Montoya-Galvez showed a recent clip from an interview he conducted on CBS, and then answered questions in both English and Spanish. For the ESL and immigrant students, many of the questions had to do with adjusting to their new country and finding their way. He emphasized the opportunities that the students had and encouraged them to be the best they could be.

In addition to ESL students, journalism students were also invited to hear him speak. They had questions about his education, how he was able to break into the business, and any advice that he

could give them to achieve similar goals. They were amazed by his rapid success, which he emphasized was partly due to his bilingualism.

Once Montoya-Galvez learned that the ESL students play soccer during lunch, he decided he wanted to see if “they were any good,” rather than relax for a lunch with his former teachers. He regretted not bringing his sneakers so he could play too. Students come to Randolph from all over the world, but find a common language with a soccer ball, or rather, a fútbol, their teachers note.

Montoya-Galvez’s visit was meant to inspire the students, but he saw it differently.

“The students were the ones who inspired me,” Montoya-Galvez said. “Their stories are what make me so optimistic about America’s future. These kids, and the work of their mentors, represent the best of America. They hail from all corners of the globe—from Colombia and Guatemala, to South Korea and Slovakia—but they espouse an admirable and contagious tolerance. They are ambitious and determined to adapt to their new home and to make sure their families’ hard work pays off. They demonstrate the tireless immigrant hustle. And they make a pretty good fútbol team, too.” 🏆

Michelle Land contributed this story to the NJEA Review. She is a member of the NJ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/NJ Bilingual Educators (NJTESOL/NJBE). Land is co-president of the Morris/Sussex NJTESOL/NJBE Chapter. She teaches ESL at Randolph Township Schools and can be reached at michelleland88@hotmail.com.

Before negotiations

Hudson County Community College Professional Association builds strong political and cultural presence

BY MICHAEL FERLISE, PRESIDENT, HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

Hudson County Community College faculty experienced several profound changes during the 2018-19 academic year: the election of a new and forceful union leadership, a new college president, and, subsequently, a new collective bargaining agreement offering dramatic increases in salaries, compensation, and recognition—a stunning reversal of our college's labor history.

Our success, I suspect, stemmed from two things:

- The intense organizational work and preparation done by highly committed and disciplined members to revitalize their union as an organization before entering into contract negotiations.
- The sincere public commitment by our new college president, Dr. Christopher Reber, to address economic equity, shared governance, and issues for improving morale. This provided us with a unique opportunity to establish a labor-centered influence, but only if we could quickly become a cohesive organization to be taken seriously.

Our group was elected to executive office as a ticket with a distinctly assertive political and social platform, not as disparate individuals. Though very important to the majority of our members, our strategy was not exclusively economic. Deep chords were struck among our faculty concerning our professional status—our rightful place at our college, recognition and respect for the dignity of our work, and expertise and collegiality—commitment to the quality of our students' educational experience, and our educational mission.

Our first goal was to create a unified organizational center, the mind and heart of the union. Simple yet important leadership and organizational issues were immediately addressed. Regular monthly meetings were

held. Members were frequently updated for input on important matters. We revitalized our committees. The union president, we agreed, would not hold private meetings with members of the administration or act as an independent agent detached from our membership. Democracy, transparency and leadership had to go hand-in-hand if we were to build solidarity.

Our strategy incorporated long-forgotten ideas about establishing a cultural, symbolic and psychological presence at our college. Quickly the union moved to establish its presence on campus, at meetings, hosting conferences and public events. We responded immediately to all issues involving faculty rights, contract violations and inconsistent divisional practices. We engaged in a number of public confrontations with administrators who ignored our contract and union when setting policies or addressing individual faculty. Likewise, it reoriented our

which it did. Eagerly, we accepted our new president's invitation to meet with him monthly while speaking out at his town hall meetings. Our 10-member Negotiations Committee held highly productive weekly meetings, surveyed members for their input and priorities, conducted important research when drafting contract proposals and economic reports, and refined our negotiation strategies.

A new sense of ourselves as a proud, unified and independent professional body committed to democratic principles and our educational mission emerged through these demanding union-building efforts. Mistakes, learning curves and important lessons for the future were made along the way. Nonetheless, we entered negotiations as a disciplined body with a clear, coherent understanding of our overall goals and with the strong support from our faculty and NJEA UniServ Field Representative Ron Topham.

A new sense of ourselves as a proud, unified and independent professional body committed to democratic principles and our educational mission emerged through these demanding union-building efforts.

members to their rights and assured them they could rely on their union to defend these rights. This greatly increased our members' active support, confidence and union identity.

Our general message was: the new union would be collegial and collaborative when treated respectfully and included in decision-making, but confrontational and resistant when dismissed, excluded or disrespected. It opened a clear channel for more productive energies if the administration chose to move in this direction,

Anyone or any group intending to run or revitalize a union must seriously consider the social and collective reality of their organization. A union is a thing-in-itself and not a mere collection of individuals. Its collective life and logic require special attention and work. An effective union requires ideological coherence, economic resources, group identity, clear leadership and must remain dynamic as a social, cultural, and political democratic movement. 🏠

Controlling health care costs

The problem and NJEA's solution

THE PROBLEM

The situation in our schools as a result of Ch. 78's mandatory premium contributions is growing dire. Because educators are forced to pay a large percentage of rising health insurance premiums, many have seen take-home pay remain flat or even decrease year after year.

Even years with decreased premiums provide very little real relief after years of increases.

Because of those imposed costs, many educators are forced to work multiple jobs to make ends meet. That harms students because their educators have less time available before and after school to do the extras that make our schools and students so successful. It also leaves educators exhausted, burned out and unable to do as much as they want for their students and for their own families. It's unsustainable.

Because of those conditions, some are already leaving the profession—or planning to—because they can no longer support their families on salaries that effectively decrease from year to year.

We also are in the midst of a retirement wave as more baby-boomers reach retirement age. There is also declining enrollment in teacher preparation programs, as incoming students see both the disrespect shown to teachers and the financial instability of the profession.

It's already a crisis, and it threatens to grow into a disaster for our public schools if we don't deal with it right away.

New Jersey's schools are some of the best in the nation. *Education Week* just ranked our schools Number 1, moving ahead of Massachusetts for the first time. All of that is under threat if we cannot attract and retain the workforce needed to sustain that success.

Unless we fix the economics of the teaching profession, we will lose our best educators and lose our top ranking. Students and New Jersey families will pay that price.

We also know that rising health care costs are a problem for the state and local employers. NJEA has worked with the state's other public employee unions in recent years to address that problem. As a result, we've seen stable or even decreasing health care costs in many parts of the public sector. In the School Employee Health Benefits Program (SEHBP), for example, the cost of active employee health insurance is set to decrease by 4.5% in January.

That's a great start, but we know that more savings are available, and we have an opportunity to work with unions to realize those savings and address the crisis facing school employees.

OUR SOLUTION

There is a solution that has been introduced in the state Legislature with NJEA's support: A-5814 and S-4114. These bills will save money for the state, for school districts and for New Jersey's educators. It's a win-win-win. It achieves the goal of having educators pay a percentage of their salary, instead of a percentage of the premium, so they will come out ahead.

It also includes \$300 million savings for employers: \$100 million for the state and \$200 million for local schools in the first year alone. That is in addition to the savings for members.

Here's how the legislation does that:

- It establishes three benchmark health insurance plans to be developed by the SEHBP Plan Design Committee. Each plan would provide a different level of coverage, at a different total cost, and a different employee premium share. In other words, employees who choose a lower-cost plan would have a lower premium share.
- It requires that employee premium shares would be a percentage of salary, on a sliding scale, ranging from 2-8% of salary. These percentages would be established by the SEHBP Commission for each of the three benchmark plans. There would be no more loss in take-home pay from year to year, sometimes called negative net.
- All school districts—including those not in the SEHBP—would be required to offer the three benchmark plans at the employee rates set by SEHBP for five years. Districts would also be required to continue to offer other plans required in local collective bargaining agreements. Employees who do not want one of the state benchmark plans could remain in their current plan at the current employee cost.
- At the end of the five years, all terms of health insurance, including employee costs, would be subject to collective bargaining. In other words, we will have a reversal what Ch. 78 did to collective bargaining.
- The same three benchmark plans would be provided for non-Medicare retirees. There would be no change in the benefit Medicare retirees receive. For those required to pay a premium share, it would be the lower of the new percentage of their pension or the current Ch. 78 amount.

NJEA, legislative leaders and staff, experts from the Division of Pensions and Benefits, and other actuaries have reviewed this approach. All parties are convinced that the plan design committee and commission can achieve those savings benchmarks and more and still offer plans that provide affordable access to high quality health care for New Jersey's educators.



A DAY IN THE LIFE AT SUSSEX COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOL

MEET BRIAN WARD,
AUTO SHOP TEACHER
AND LOCAL PRESIDENT

BY KATHY COULIBALY



It's 7:10 a.m. and Brian Ward, automotive technical instructor, is on cafeteria duty. He greets students and colleagues alike with a joke and a smile as he watches over the packed lunchroom of the school he loves.

Ward holds a unique position at the school. In 1989, he graduated from the automotive program at Sussex County Technical School, known to all as 'Tech.' In 2005, he came back to the school as an instructor, and a few years later, became president of the Sussex County Vocational Technical Education Association (SCVTEA). But his story almost ended very differently—and he credits his teachers at Tech with changing the course of his life.

"In 1986, my father had just passed away and my mother's car constantly needed repairs and she was getting raked over the coals," Ward recalled. "I had no real ambition to be a mechanic, but I thought that if I didn't learn this trade, we were going to be much poorer than we already were."

"I joined the diesel program at Tech. That was a very tough period of time for me, but my teachers—Mr. Meyers, the shop teacher; Mrs. Bueney, the math teacher; and Mr. Dixon, the welding teacher—took me under their wing."

Within a few years, Ward was attending high school from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and night school from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. He wanted to quit school so he could get a job to help provide for his family. He convinced his mother to sign the papers that would allow him to leave school.

But his teachers had other plans for him. The very day he attempted to quit school, Mr. Meyers, Mrs. Bueney and Mr. Dixon pulled up in front of his house in a white Lincoln.

"They sat at the kitchen table with my mother and me and convinced us that they would find a way to make it all work," Ward said. "They took me back to school and persuaded the administration to make me the first student teaching assistant in the school's history. I owe everything to them."

After graduation, those three teachers helped pay for him to attend Ohio Technical School. When he finished his studies there, he went to work at a car dealership, working his way up the ladder to greater responsibilities.

"Everything that I learned here at Sussex Tech, value-wise, made me successful in the dealership," Ward said.

In 1997, he opened his own business. Once he was established, he invited his high school teachers



Ward uses the latest automotive technology to prepare students for their future careers.

out to dinner and asked them how he could ever repay them for what they had done for him. They agreed that he could repay his "debt" by coming back to Tech as a teacher if he got the chance.

"A couple of years later, the auto tech instructor called me at my shop and said, 'I'm retiring. I want you to come in and apply for my job,'" Ward recalled.

"I always stayed in touch with my teachers," Ward added. "Once I started teaching, I relied heavily on their advice and expertise. If I didn't have them as mentors, I'm not sure I would have survived as a teacher. Those first three or four years are really tough."

Ward has not only survived as a teacher, he has excelled. He is certified in automotive and diesel education, and he is very proud of the program that he and his colleagues have built. The students rotate every two marking periods. In order to participate and comply with all of the program's and state's requirements, students have to forgo an official lunch period in favor of additional instructional time. But that sacrifice pays off. When they graduate, they are Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certified in automotive and diesel. No other technical school in New Jersey offers that.



Ward is a proud alumnus of Sussex County Technical School and was awarded the Ben Wickenheisser Memorial Scholarship when he graduated in 1990.

Kathryn Coulibaly is the associate editor of the NJEA Review and provides content and support at njea.org. She can be reached at kcoulibaly@njea.org.

Everything that I learned here at Sussex Tech, value-wise, made me successful in the dealership.

Following lunch duty, Ward enters his classroom and monitors the students as they go through the morning routine. They enter a locker room off the automotive shop and change into overalls. The students sit in a tiny classroom to listen to announcements and so Ward can give them the charge for the day, and then they file out into the shop for hands-on work experience.

Ward occasionally interrupts to instruct or correct, but for the most part, students are confidently performing their tasks.

“We value and emphasize that you have four years here and then you’re out in the workforce,” Ward says. “No one is going to teach you how to work. The majority of our teachers here are focused on ensuring that students know how to be successful in the workforce when they walk out these doors for the last time.”

Ward wants his students to be good mechanics but that’s not his main focus. He wants his students to be good people—to do the right thing when no one is looking.

“I spend more time with these kids than their parents do,” Ward notes. “You have to be a guidance counselor and a father figure. If you can’t do that part of it, you’re not going to be successful in the shop because that’s where their mindset is.”

That includes seeing to some of their most basic needs.

“If I know a kid is hungry, I’ll pretend I packed too much lunch, or I’ll go to the cafeteria and buy an extra lunch because here in the shop students need to be focused or they’re going to get hurt,” Ward said.



Sussex Tech’s automotive program is among the best in the state. Upon graduation, students who complete the program earn Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification in automotive and diesel. No other technical school in New Jersey offers that distinction.

UNION ADVOCACY BENEFITS STUDENTS

“I absolutely see my role as a union president as advocating for the students,” Ward insists. “If we’re fighting to protect the teachers and the contract, that’s ultimately going to affect the kids.”

“Make no mistake about it: my role as a union president is about advocating for the kids,” Ward explains. “And if there’s anyone at a school who is not fundamentally concerned with what’s best for

our students, then they’re in the wrong business and they need to go.”

One of the biggest frustrations for Ward and his colleagues has been a lack of funding and support for the work they do. Tech has been flat-funded for more than seven years. But Ward and his colleagues work hard to mitigate the impact on students. And, as union members, they recognize the power of collective action.

I see my role as a union president as advocating for the students.

“The kids don’t need to know that we’re fighting to get textbooks, resources, and quality staff,” Ward said. “They’ve got enough going on. That’s our job. As instructors, we have some power to make things better for our students. But as union members standing together, we have a lot more power to do what’s right for kids.”

Brian Ward shares his story in an *NJEA Review* video. Watch it online at njea.org/SussexTech.



THE VALUE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

"Sometime in the late 1990s, 'vocational' became a dirty word," Ward said. "As vocational instructors, we've always seen the value of vocational education. But now they're trying to call these 'new collar,' not 'blue collar,' or 'white collar,' jobs. When you peel back the 'new collar' label, it's vocational education."

Ward notes the misunderstanding that Vo-Tech is only good if you don't want to go to college.

"But that's not true," Ward cautions. "If you go to a vocational technical school, you have a leg up at college. Students can earn up to 30 college credits during their time at Tech. We've had students go to MIT and other prestigious engineering schools."

At the end of the school day, Ward transitions to his other job at Tech: servicing school buses. He oversees a team of mechanics who ensure that the district's buses, as well as those from other sending

The kids I have taught will define who I was as an instructor, and the people who continue to work here after I'm gone will define who I was as a union president.

districts, are well-maintained and safe.

By 8:30 p.m., Ward is ready for his final job of the day: nighttime guest instructor at technical schools across the state.

Amid all this, Ward juggles his responsibilities as union president.

As a result of his work ethic, sense of humor, rapport with students and staff, and dedication, Ward is a highly respected member of the Tech family. But he is cautious about commenting on his legacy.

"The kids I have taught will define who I was as an instructor, and the people who continue to work here after I'm gone will define who I was as a union president," he said. "Hopefully, I've served them well."

When it comes to his mentors—the teachers who changed and, in Ward's opinion, saved his life—Ward is humble.

"I think I made them proud." 🏠



Brian Ward stands with Sussex Tech seniors Jake Gianattasio and Michael Plutt, continuing the legacy that Ward's teachers conferred on him.

BUILDING BRIDGES

ENGAGING EARLY CAREER LEADERS

BY MARIAH BELBER AND ROBERT MANGEL
EARLY CAREER LEADERSHIP NETWORK

NJEA and its local association affiliates are forces to be reckoned with. New Jersey public school employees have stronger salaries and better benefits than our counterparts in most other states. This could not have been accomplished without the hard work and dedication of thousands of NJEA members over the past 166 years. We owe what we have to those who came before us and upon whose shoulders we stand. If we want to maintain our progress and advocate effectively for better schools for our students and better working conditions for ourselves, we need to invite our newest members into the fold.

Undoubtedly you have heard, and maybe believe, some of the most prevalent stereotypes of early career members: “They’re disinterested and unengaged,” “They’re apathetic and don’t understand the importance of the union.” The reality is our early career members are one of our union’s greatest untapped resources.

The National Education Association (NEA) identifies individuals in their first five years of membership as “early career” members. This group

is dynamic, energized, and eager to be engaged.

As of 2018, early career members made up 25% of NJEA membership. That percentage is likely to grow as more of our veteran members move into retirement, and hopefully, to membership in the New Jersey Retirees’ Education Association. One of our goals as an organization must be to recruit these potential members and groom them for eventual leadership roles. The future of the NJEA depends on us accomplishing this goal, and the Early Career Leadership Network is set up to help us achieve it.

THE EARLY CAREER LEADERSHIP NETWORK

If you’ve attended the NJEA Convention, you may have seen the sign on Main Street NJEA with a fist and the unity symbol. That area is the convention home of the NJEA Early Career Network, the space for public school employees in their first five years of work.

To help better engage these new—and usually enthusiastic—members, NJEA has organized a group of members, the Early Career Leadership Network or ECLN, to plan events for our early career members. The ECLN is relatively new in the long history of NJEA. It was first established five years ago. In that short time, the ECLN has grown from three member-organizers to more than a dozen member-organizers across the state committed to bringing our early career members into the fold.

Over the course of the last

five years, the ECLN has designed events and opportunities for early career members to engage with the union in meaningful ways. The events have covered a wide range of topics including understanding your paycheck, how to engage students in difficult conversations, and how to advocate for ourselves and our colleagues. These events have been met by our members with excitement and lots of questions.

Many early career members have questions about their job, and NJEA can be a source of good information for them. That’s why it is vital to make sure that early career members feel supported and see themselves as part of our union. This realization, along with a few others, has helped us better understand the best ways to meaningfully engage these members.

Over the course of our time organizing, we have come to realize a few things about early career members that have helped us more effectively engage them: that early career members have a lot of questions, that they are not all young, and that they want to be active and engaged, but they often don’t know where to begin.

Mariah Belber is an advanced learning program teacher at Bartle Elementary School in Highland Park. She is the Pride chair and webmaster for the Highland Park Education Association. Belber is a member of the NJEA Early Career Leadership Network. She can be reached at belber.mariah.elizabeth@gmail.com.

Robert Mangel is a social studies teacher at Linden High School and the vice president of the Linden Education Association. He is a member of the NJEA Early Career Leadership Network. Mangel can be reached at robmangel@gmail.com.



**Early Career
Network**

EARLY CAREER MEMBERS HAVE QUESTIONS

Early career members want to know about everything: what works best in their classrooms or workspaces, how things work in their school districts, what all those abbreviations on their paychecks mean, and why unions engage in political action.

Early career members are almost always in search of ways to improve their practice. Professional and career development can, and should, be a crucial component of how we as an organization engage our early career members. From statewide conferences to local association sessions, if we can demonstrate to new members that the NJEA is a vital resource of information, they will more readily turn to us for support.

At early career events, we talk about it all: comparing assessments between our districts and buildings, talking about different observations methods and how we can improve as educators, working with the different members of the whole school team and more. Early career educators are focused on their craft and getting better, and asking veteran members questions is one of the best ways to do that.

If we want to maintain our progress and advocate effectively for better schools for our students and better working conditions for ourselves, we need to invite our newest members into the fold.

As the ECLN, we do our best to address these questions, but we sometimes struggle with the specifics of individual districts. This is where local leaders can step in and be an informational resource for their early career members.

The first paycheck, while exciting, can also be overwhelming for early career members. Many early career members will just be happy they're getting a paycheck—they won't think to check their deductions to make sure they are correct. One of our most successful annual events explains the deductions and acronyms of paychecks—and there's pizza! Answering early career members questions about their paychecks is a great way to build trust and a relationship between them and their local, and a great way to introduce them to all the benefits of being a part of NJEA.

Another question so many early career members will have is about politics and how NJEA engages in them. They ask, "Why do we need to get involved?" and "What do politics have to do with education?"

As public employees, we demonstrate how almost everything we do in our public schools gets decided by politicians, which is why our advocacy as public employees and the members of the most powerful public-sector union in the state is so important. As early career members, some may not understand why Chapter 78 is important. It is vital to educate members about health care costs.

One dramatic way to show the cost of Chapter 78 is to compare paychecks before and after the enactment of Chapter 78. Many early career members do not remember a time when health care costs were not as steep as they are now.

Early Career Leader and Highland Park Legislative Action Team chair Hannah Pawlak educated members about Chapter 78 with a "Bad Bill Brunch." Members used a calculator to find out how much they would save if Chapter 78 were revised. Armed with that information, the early career members wrote postcards to state lawmakers on legislative committees considering relief legislation and sent emails to their local legislators. This not only engaged members in political action but showed the early career members how important it is to get involved in political advocacy. It benefits their students and our co-workers.

EARLY CAREER MEMBERS ARE NOT ALL YOUNG

The second major understanding we learned is that while we may typically think of early career members as the bright-eyed and bushy-tailed young teachers, the reality is much more layered. According to NJEA's most recent membership data, over 74% of our early career members are over the age of 30, and teachers are not the only early career members. Educational support professionals (ESPs)—the bus drivers, food service professionals, custodians, school secretaries, paraprofessionals, and other members of the school team—make up a substantial portion of NJEA's early career members.

This information is crucial in how we structure our outreach and the different types of opportunities that we offer. We must create and sponsor events that these members can attend and find meaningful. Members who are in their second careers might be more concerned about pensions than members who just graduated from school.

When you are brainstorming ways to engage your early career members, make sure you are thinking about all of these members, not just teachers straight out of college. By building events that meet the needs of all early career members, we can more successfully engage one of NJEA's greatest untapped resources.



North Brunswick EA member Danny Cyckowski and New Brunswick EA President Leshawn Arrington at an Early Career Network event in New Brunswick.

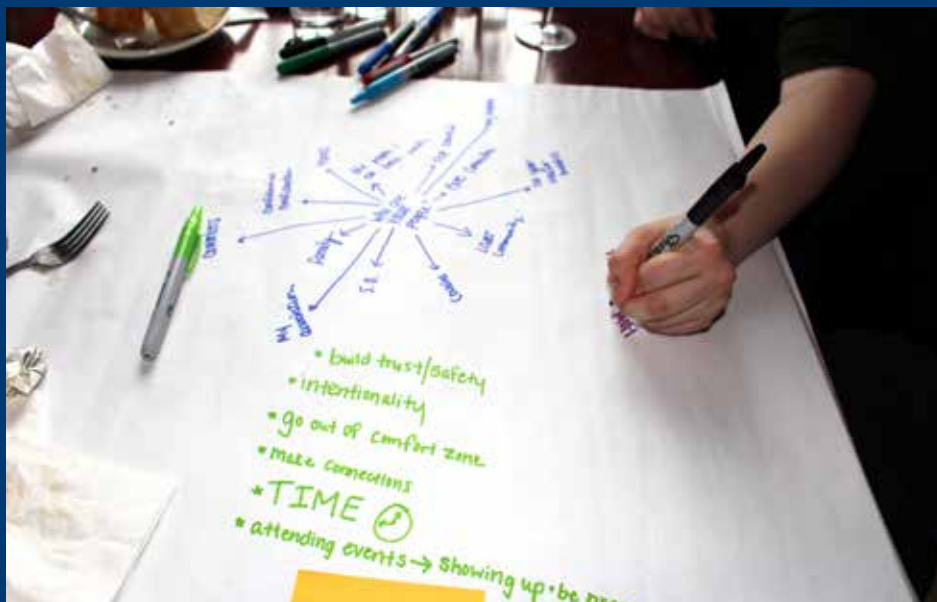
As of 2018, early career members made up 25% of NJEA membership.

EARLY CAREER MEMBERS WANT TO BE INVOLVED

Around the country, union membership is on the rise and people's views of unions are becoming more positive. According to a 2018 Gallup poll, 64% of Americans had a favorable view of labor unions; this is up from 61% in 2016 and 47% in 2007. This positive upswing, when coupled with increased social and political engagement across the spectrum is an opportunity for NJEA and its local association affiliates to increase our ranks and build leadership with an eye to the future.

In the ECLN's conversations with early career members, we have found that they want to be actively engaged in unionism. Time and time again, first-time early career event attendees provide feedback saying, "I had no idea that this type of event was offered by NJEA" and "Let me know when your next event is so I can bring some of my colleagues."

By inviting early career members into NJEA spaces, we welcome them into unionism and can provide opportunities for them to grow their involvement. By providing a door into the union, we can invite members in and then provide them with opportunities to get further involved. By inviting these members into the union—and keeping them—we can ensure that the NJEA is able to remain a strong organization that serves its members well.



At an early career event, members record thoughts during a world café discussion.

EARLY CAREER MEMBERS WANT TO GET INVOLVED, BUT DON'T KNOW HOW

One of the most common reasons educators avoid getting involved in their union is fear of retaliation from their school and district administration. We've all heard it: "Don't get involved until you're tenured." As early career leaders, we want to change that narrative. There are many ways to get involved as nontenured educators that are not considered threatening.

One of the most beneficial to the community

and the school is being involved with NJEA Pride in Public Education and NJEA Families and Schools Work Together for Children (FAST). These grant-based programs provide funding for activities to help bring the school district, the local association and community together.

Being part of Pride and FAST allows early career members to get to know the community where they work a little better. Getting involved in Pride and FAST bolsters the out-of-the-classroom resume—something most administrators enthusiastically support. It also provides extracurricular opportunities for early career ESP members who often are not provided opportunities in their districts to advise clubs, coach sports or become involved in community outreach.

In a post-Janus world, we need to engage and involve our newest members. We need to give them ownership over their union, just as we give our students' ownership over their learning. 🏡



Early Career members gather for an annual networking event at the NJEA Convention.



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What great minds can do.



STUDENTS TAKING ACTION TOGETHER USING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES TO BUILD CIVILITY AND CIVIC DISCOURSE

BY MAURICE J. ELIAS AND SAMUEL NAYMAN, RUTGERS
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT LAB

HELPING PEOPLE GET ALONG BETTER.

Sounds simple, doesn't it? Yet, the polarization in our culture, the lack of civil discourse and willingness to truly listen to others' points of view, and the disenchantment with participating in civic life, tells us that we have a long way to go when it comes to helping people get along better.

Our schools can provide a forum for teaching students the skills to critically examine issues from multiple perspectives, empathize with people of diverse backgrounds, and effectively solve the problems that plague their communities and the wider world. However, the challenge of how to do this feasibly, effectively and in a scalable way persists.

Enter STAT: Students Taking Action Together, a project of Rutgers' Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab, with funding from

the Einhorn Family Charitable Trust's "Helping People Get Along Better Fund." STAT is an instructional strategy used with schools' existing content that builds students' social-emotional learning (SEL) skills in empathy, perspective-taking, emotion regulation, problem-solving, and respectful, effective communication.

STAT helps students analyze social issues—including historical and current events, and community and school issues, as well as those in literature—and formulate action plans in response to them.

THE STAT INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Four primary instructional strategies comprise STAT: norms, yes-no-maybe, respectful debate and PLAN.

Norms

Norms help establish foundational guidelines for appropriate classroom behavior and foster positive, trusting relationships and communication. To develop class norms, students work individually, in pairs or small groups, and as a classroom community.

The norms usually include behaviors such as listen with your ears and eyes, treat your classmates the way they would like to be treated, wait for others to finish speaking before you speak because what they have to say is as important as what you want to say, and work to understand other points of view. Students may encourage each other to ask themselves, "Why might someone have that opinion?"

Yes-no-maybe

Yes-no-maybe, is an easy tool to help encourage perspective-taking and respectful listening. In a yes-no-maybe activity, educators provide a statement to students for which they must decide if they agree, disagree, or are not sure. They must explain their reasoning while their peers listen respectfully. This works best when students can move to parts of the room representing each of the three responses and discuss their views in triads or quartets.

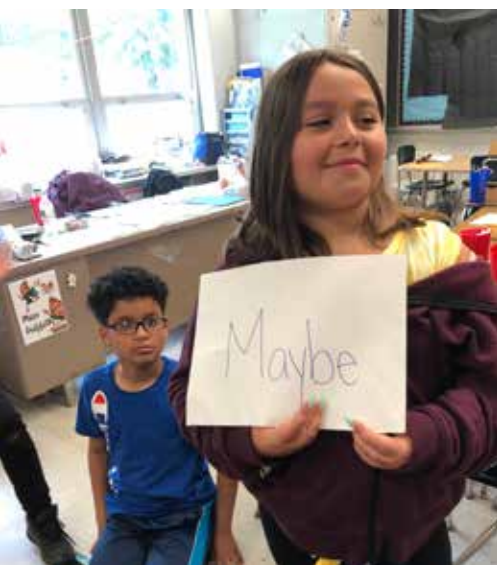
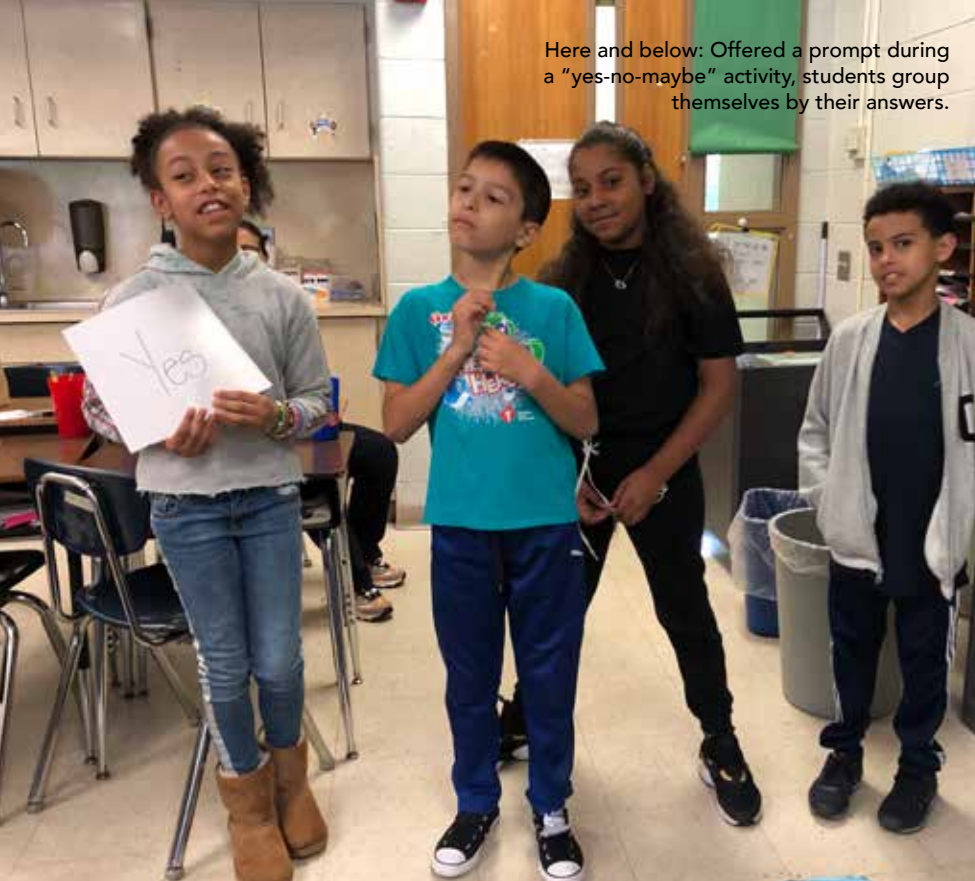
Examples of prompts that students would consider in a yes-no-maybe format include:

- Pat saw \$5 on floor, picked it up and kept it. It was not worth trying to return it. Do you agree?

*Maurice J. Elias, Ph.D., is a professor of psychology at Rutgers University, where he is the director of the Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab (secdlab.org) and co-director of both The Collaborative Center for Community-Based Research and Service (engage.rutgers.edu) and the Academy for Social-Emotional Learning in Schools (SELinSchools.org). He is the co-author of *The Joys and Oys of Parenting*, *Boost Emotional Intelligence in Students: 30 Flexible, Research-Based Activities to Build EQ Skills*, and the forthcoming *Nurturing Students' Character*. He can be reached at melias@psych.rutgers.edu.*

Samuel Nayman is clinical psychology doctoral student in Dr. Maurice Elias's Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD) Lab. Nayman is committed to creating greater opportunities for people to achieve their potential, by way of policies and interventions that target social-emotional and character skills.

Here and below: Offered a prompt during a "yes-no-maybe" activity, students group themselves by their answers.



- All students should pass through metal detectors in school to ensure safety for everyone.
- I would have protested against what England did to the colonies.
- Leaders should rule with a strong hand. (In an eighth-grade curriculum, this may be in relation to ancient Rome)
- I would not have brought the U.S. into World War I.
- If no one knows who sent the messages, it's OK to say negative things about others on social media.

Respectful debate

Respectful debate deepens students' perspective-taking by having students rotate and debate both sides of an issue.

Students work with their peers to research and persuasively argue for and against a position in a debate. They respectfully listen to their classmates, paraphrase opposing arguments, and check for understanding. This helps further students' perspective-taking, empathy, emotion regulation, communication and critical-thinking skills.

Students learn to entertain multiple perspectives by switching sides and reading nuanced articles. They are encouraged to consider using respectful debate skills in their personal lives.

Examples of debate topics that have been used in New Jersey classrooms include:

- The actions taken at the Boston Tea Party were the best way to respond to the situation faced by the colonists.
- A country should never go to war.
- When classmates act in ways that show unhealthy hygiene, you have an obligation to say something to them.

PLAN

PLAN is the most integrative and comprehensive of the STAT instructional strategies. The goal of PLAN is to help students internalize a problem-analysis and action-planning strategy they can use in response to a wide range of situations.

Classes can use PLAN with a historical issue,

social injustice or current event, or an in-school or out-of-school problem, such as bullying, gangs, substance use, cheating on tests, and exclusion. PLAN stands for:

- **P:** Create a **problem description** that defines the issue being discussed.
- **L:** Brainstorm a **list of options and pros/cons** to solve the problem.
- **A:** Develop and act on an **action plan** to solve the problem.
- **N:** **Notice successes** as part of ongoing feedback and refinement.

Students internalize the PLAN strategy through the repetition of a wide range of examples. PLAN has been developed and piloted most extensively in middle school for use with social studies curricula—where it is strongly aligned with standards—and for school and community issues, such as including other students, clean water, constructive student social action versus ineffective complaining. Applications have been made for high schools and elementary schools, as well as for use in language arts. These applications are standards-aligned.

Fourth-grade teacher Melissa Nestor uses PLAN during her class's morning meetings at Washington Elementary School in Summit. She takes real problems, such as loud noise levels and frequent illnesses, and works through the issues using the framework. The idea of using a framework is to help students learn to take a problem-solving approach to issues of concern. That includes improving health habits and determining ways to reduce the spread of germs among students.

"I use PLAN as an anchor and refer back to it at other points during the school day," Nestor says. "PLAN helps students feel more invested in the changes they have made in the classroom."

Washington Elementary School Counselor Andrea Sadow uses STAT principles in the classroom and in individual counseling with third-through fifth-graders. She encourages teachers to try STAT approaches and finds that while they are not dramatically different from what they are already doing, the consistent skill-building strategy is having an impact on students.

"In a classroom, unprompted, I have started to hear students using the phrase, 'I respectfully disagree,'" Sadow reports.

Grace Rivetti, formerly a school counselor at Parsons Elementary School in North Brunswick, also serves as a STAT ambassador to many teachers in her school. She finds ways to bring STAT instructional strategies into every grade level and encourages teachers to embed STAT into various subject areas, such as social studies and language arts, where students can take the perspective of various characters as they read about problems and conflicts in stories. Rivetti also uses PLAN as a format for peer mediation conversations. Rivetti is now a school counselor in Cranford.

“In the classroom, I notice students really listening and starting to grasp the concept of perspective-taking,” Rivetti notes. “Students can understand other points of view even if they don’t agree and show mutual respect. They take it seriously.” 🏠

Try STAT for yourself

Materials providing guidance and lesson plans for all STAT strategies can be downloaded at secdlab.org/STAT. The materials also include a detailed document showing STAT alignment with social studies standards.

Attend STAT workshop at NJEA Convention

Want to learn more? Attend the NJEA Convention workshop titled, “Build Citizenship, Civility, Perspective, Purpose and EQ in Social Studies,” on Thursday, Nov. 7, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in Room 301 of the Atlantic City Convention Center. See Page 33 of your NJEA Convention Program for details.

You may also visit the STAT booth located on the Exhibit Hall floor at Booth 918.

Those downloading will be asked to agree to provide periodic feedback on their use of STAT to the Lab and to support refinements and gathering of specific application examples to share with others. Those working with STAT materials who have questions can contact the Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab at stat.secdlab@gmail.com.

The STAT Team at Rutgers consists of Sam Nayman, who is the project director; Crystal Molyneaux, Alicia LaRose, William Maier and Molly Stern, who are STAT school consultants; and Maurice Elias, Arielle Linsky, and Sara Taylor, who are the SECD Lab’s director, associate director, and research coordinator, respectively.

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STAT SAMPLE LESSON

The Vietnam War and the right of students to protest

(This example helps teachers meet NJ state social studies standards, including 6.1.12.D.12.d and 6.1.12.D.12.e)

This lesson uses PLAN, which stands for problem description, list of options, action plan, and notice successes, a problem solving and social action framework that students can apply to any problem they encounter, including a historical issue they would like to analyze (or re-analyze) and consider alternative solutions for a social injustice or current event they would like to address, or a current school-related problem or issue they want to help solve (e.g., bullying, gangs, substance use, cheating, lack of inclusion). The PLAN framework builds students' problem solving, empathy, perspective taking, emotion regulation, and communication skills. It helps students become more engaged and develop strategies to think about and act on a wide range of historical, social, civic, and school issues.

Below is an example of a STAT lesson applied to an issue whose importance was amplified by the Vietnam War, namely, the right of students to protest.

Topic: Students and Speech (*Tinker v. Des Moines*, 1969)

Background¹ :

Tinker v. Des Moines is a historic Supreme Court ruling from 1969 that cemented students' rights to free speech in public schools.

Mary Beth Tinker was a 13-year-old junior high school student in December 1965 when she and a group of students decided to wear black armbands to school to protest the war in Vietnam. The school board got wind of the protest and passed a preemptive ban. When Mary Beth arrived at school on Dec. 16, she was asked to remove the armband and was then suspended.

Four other students were suspended as well, including her brother John Tinker and Chris Eckhardt. The students were told they could not return to school until they agreed to remove their armbands. The students returned after the Christmas break and filed a First Amendment lawsuit.

Represented by the ACLU, the students and their families embarked on a four-year court battle that culminated in the landmark Supreme Court decision.

On Feb. 24, 1969, the court ruled 7-2 that students do not "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate."

The court found that the First Amendment applied to public schools, and school officials could not censor student speech unless it disrupted the educational process. Because wearing a black armband was not disruptive, the court held that the First Amendment protected the right of students to wear them.

continued on next page...

¹Background description taken from: <https://www.aclu.org/other/tinker-v-des-moines-landmark-supreme-court-ruling-behalf-student-expression>

...continued from previous page

Young people's freedoms

The court's majority opinion, written by Justice Abe Fortas, went on to affirm the freedom that young people have under the Constitution:

In our system, state-operated schools may not be enclaves of totalitarianism. School officials do not possess absolute authority over their students. Students... are possessed of fundamental rights which the State must respect, just as they themselves must respect their obligations to the State... In the absence of a specific showing of constitutionally valid reasons to regulate their speech, students are entitled to freedom of expression of their views.

There are still limits on what students can do in public schools. Under the ruling, students can't violate rules that aren't targeted at expression—like attendance policies—as long as their school is applying the rules equally, regardless of whether students have broken them to protest or for other reasons. And students can't "materially disrupt" the functioning of their school, though what's considered disruptive can depend on the situation."

Consider the problem from different perspectives, using the PLAN framework:

Problem Description: *Identify and think about the problem from multiple perspectives.*

- Compare and contrast the different perspectives of the school and students about the Vietnam war and about the nature of protest. What are some of the events of the time or in the media that may have helped inform the perspective of the school and students?
- What were the issues, from each perspective?
- Who were the key participants in this controversy?

List Options: *Create and analyze the possible solutions to the historical perspective.*

- What would have been some other possible ways for the school to solve the issues from their perspective? What about the students?
- What were the ultimate choices that the school and students made?
- What options did they consider to be acceptable ways to resolve the problem? What did they ultimately decide? What might you have done had you been in the students' place?

Action Plan: *Create your own action plan.*

- How did the students carry out their plans? How did the school carry out their plans?
- What obstacles did they encounter? What might they have done differently?

Notice Successes: *Evaluate the effectiveness of your solution and the historical solution.*

- How did the issue work out for the students and the school? Were there any consequences for students then?
- What can be learned from their experience that would be relevant to the present?
- What might encourage you to engage in activism in your community or at school? Are there issues about which you would consider engaging in protest? What might discourage you from protesting like the students in the above case? What might encourage you?

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UNDERSTANDING NJEA PAC'S ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

On Nov. 5, New Jersey voters will head to the polls to elect 80 members to the New Jersey General Assembly. State government has a profound impact on what happens in New Jersey's schools. That's why the NJEA Political Action Committee (PAC) carefully screens all candidates for statewide public office.

NJEA PAC prides itself on having a sound, fair, and democratic process leading up to the endorsement of a candidate. The purpose of the process is to identify the candidates most supportive of NJEA's legislative program. Endorsing and electing candidates who support NJEA's goals significantly increases the association's ability to pass favorable legislation and stop negative legislation.

THE SCREENING PROCESS

ESTABLISHING A SCREENING COMMITTEE

PAC screening committees are established for each Legislative District (LD). Each committee includes members of the NJEA PAC Operating Committee who represent their respective counties and the New Jersey Retirees' Education Association (NJREA) legislative county chairperson.

Screening committees also include NJEA Government Relations Committee and Congressional Contact Committee members from the counties involved, the county president, and NJEA Executive Committee members from the counties involved.

EVALUATING THE CANDIDATES

For November elections, screening committees generally invite candidates for an interview in the summer. Prior to meeting the candidates, the committee reviews completed NJEA questionnaires submitted by the candidates and if they are incumbents, their voting records.

Each candidate's screening session lasts up to an hour, allowing time for candidates to make a presentation and answer screening committee questions. Questions are based upon the issues described above and concerns of NJEA members in the respective counties.

When evaluating the candidates, screening committees consider candidates' positions on issues and electability. For incumbents, committees also consider legislative voting records, committee

assignments, leadership positions, sponsorship of pro-public education legislation, and accessibility to NJEA members.

ENDORSING THE CANDIDATES

The screening committee does not make the final endorsement. Rather, it recommends a position to be considered by the NJEA PAC Operating Committee.

To make its recommendation, the legislative district screening committee discusses the merits of each candidate. The committee may recommend the endorsement of one candidate in a race, recommend no endorsement, or recommend a "your choice" option, which indicates that multiple candidates are in agreement with NJEA's goals and positions.

The 125-member NJEA PAC Operating Committee consists of NJEA's officers, the NJEA Executive Committee, the county association presidents, the NJEA Government Relations Committee, the Congressional Contact Committee, the president of NJEA Preservice, the NJREA legislative chairperson, and two NJREA regional legislative chairs.

For the November general election, the NJEA PAC Operating Committee usually meets in the beginning of August, but this year delayed the meeting to the end of August to further assess the commitment of each candidate to legislation that will provide Chapter 78 relief and job justice for ESPs. The committee reviews the recommendations of the screening committees and votes to determine who will become NJEA PAC-endorsed candidates.

On the pages that follow are photos and statements from the legislative candidates who upon completion of the process were endorsed by NJEA PAC.

LD 8



RYAN PETERS (R)

New Jersey's teachers, support staff and school personnel need someone fighting for them, not elected officials who only care about doing the bidding of political party bosses. I've spent my time in Trenton being their voice, and I am honored to have the NJEA stand beside me.



ERIN WHEELER (D)

As a teacher and local association president, I understand the impact the Legislature has on our jobs, our pay and our retirement. I will work to protect educators, educational support professionals, schools, students and our communities. We need a teacher in Trenton. Who better to stand up for us, but one of us?

LD 11



JEAN STANFIELD (R)

As sheriff, I organized a gun buyback to get dangerous weapons off the street and a youth police academy focused on safe communities and schools. Education is the noblest of professions, and I am honored to earn the support of those who dedicate their lives to it.



JOANN DOWNEY (D)

As a mom with two kids in the Freehold Township public schools, I know that when we put our students first, we all win. With the hardworking educators and educational support professionals of NJEA by our side, we will continue to fight for our students and taxpayers to get the education they deserve.

LD 9



SARAH COLLINS (D)

Public employees have been paying too much for health care and legislators are doing nothing. It is time we saw relief from Chapter 78. As a member of the Assembly, my first duty will be to get S-4114 out of committee and brought to a full vote.



ERIC HOUGHTALING (D)

It is an honor to have the support of the thousands of teachers and educational support professionals who make Monmouth County such a great place to live and raise a family.

LD 10



EILEEN DELLA VOLLE (D)

Throughout my education, teachers and educational support professionals (ESP) impacted me in many ways. This education allowed me to escape from poverty. I believe teachers and ESP are the backbone of our country. I believe we should respect the dignity of educators. I support public education and democratic values.



ROBERT CLIFTON (R)

As a father of two public school students, one of whom is a special needs student, I will fight to prevent the outsourcing of educational support professionals, and I support Chapter 78 reforms. I will also fight for fair school funding. Under S-2, the school districts in my legislative district will lose over \$70 million in funding.

LD 12



RONALD DANCER (R)

I have been a consistent voice and vote for NJEA-supported legislation. I support A-5814 and am a sponsor of A-4352, which would cap health insurance contributions at a percentage of salary, not premium. I sponsored A-3395 to protect school employees from subcontracting during a collective bargaining agreement and A-3664 to provide due process and job protection for ESPs. I introduced legislation to restore all state school aid to schools in my legislative district.

LD 13



SERENA DIMASO (R)

I am running for re-election in the 13th Legislative District. I'm a mom first. I'm a legislator. I'm a first responder. Our schools and our students are invaluable. I've stood up on the Assembly floor to fight for them numerous times. I would be honored to continue to fight for another term.



*GERARD SCHARFENBERGER (R)

As a former mayor, freeholder and adjunct professor for nearly 23 years at Monmouth University, I understand the crucial role that education plays in the community. I want to be the type of legislator that brings this experience to ensuring fair, common sense legislation for the betterment of educators, students and taxpayers alike.



*BARBARA SINGER (D)

As the daughter of teachers, the education/union combination was the basis of our lives, making the NJEA support that much more meaningful to me. I look forward to the opportunity to represent our educators and support professionals, and to helping them achieve the rewarding careers and benefits that my family experienced.

LD 14



DANIEL BENSON (D)

I could not be prouder to have earned an NJEA endorsement for re-election this year. The support of educators and support professionals from across the state of New Jersey means a great deal to me. I look forward to continuing to work to ensure that our educators have the resources they need to maintain our high standards for public education.



WAYNE DEANGELO (D)

I am honored to receive the support and endorsement of the NJEA and its over 200,000 members. I look forward to continuing to stand with the teachers and educational support professionals of NJEA as we continue to fight for the fair compensation of all of its members.

LD 15



VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON (D)

It's an honor to be endorsed by NJEA, which works on behalf of our teachers and educational support professionals every day. Supporting our educators' rights and our students' rights across New Jersey is one of my top priorities. I will always be a staunch ally of our educators and, when re-elected, will continue to fight for them every day in Trenton.



ANTHONY VERRELLI (D)

Our children attend some of the best public schools in the nation. That is in no small part thanks to our exceptional educators. NJEA is incredibly effective in representing New Jersey's educators to make sure they have an environment where everyone involved thrives. New Jersey's educators are my brothers and sisters in organized labor, and I will always fight to do right by them.

*Indicates that these two candidates were deemed to be qualified for endorsement for one seat.

LD 16



ROY FREIMAN (D)

I am honored to have received the endorsement of my local educators. Whether at home with my wife who is a teacher or out in the community, I hear every day about the struggles that educators are facing: growing classroom sizes, inadequate resources and rising health care costs that continually reduce their take-home pay. Yet educators are still providing a world-class education.



NANCY PINKIN (D)

I would like to thank the members of NJEA for their continued support. I will continue to commit myself to ensuring that our schools can offer the best services to our children and young adults, and that this state continues to support and protect the women and men that make their education a possibility.

LD 19



ANDREW ZWICKER (D)

New Jersey has the best public school system in the country. We have that distinct honor because of the hard work and dedication of our teachers and support professionals. I am grateful to receive the endorsement of NJEA, and we will continue to work together to ensure that all NJ students have access to the highest quality education in the world.



CRAIG COUGHLIN (D)

As a product of public schools, I am a staunch believer that public education is the “great equalizer.” Our system provides an efficient, free and thorough education to all students regardless of any demographic and our society has the moral obligation to provide and protect this aim at all costs.

LD 17



JOSEPH DANIELSEN (D)

I am extremely grateful to accept the NJEA endorsement. As the son of a former educator, I am grateful to know that my efforts on the Assembly Education Committee have been appreciated. School employees are the backbone of our democracy. I will continue to strive for and support legislation that improves the quality of salary, benefits, and working conditions for all school employees.



YVONNE LOPEZ (D)

I firmly believe that a strong education is the foundation for future success in all endeavors. Our current public education system is one of the most important assets we maintain as a state and across the country. Protecting the quality and competency of this system for all students must always remain a top priority.

LD 18



ROBERT KARABINCHAK (D)

Our communities are fortunate to send our families to some of the best public schools in the country thanks to the passion and dedication of our state’s teachers and educational support professionals. When we invest in the protections and interest of our school staff, we advance the success of our schools.



JAMEL HOLLEY (D)

As a product of a New Jersey public education, I feel compelled to advocate for enhanced working conditions, job security and pensions for our teachers and educational support professionals. I look forward to working together to make lasting, sensible reform that will provide teachers with resources necessary to set-up for success as they prepare our children for bright futures.

LD 20



ANNETTE QUIJANO (D)

I'd like to thank the teachers, educational support professionals, and all of the NJEA members for their service to the students of New Jersey as well as their endorsement in this election.



JAMES KENNEDY (D)

As a long-time supporter of NJEA and spouse to a former Rahway Public Schools teacher, I hope to make sure New Jersey remains the best state for education in the nation. I will continue to be an advocate in the Legislature for school funding, pensions and health benefits, and ensuring we provide the proper support for teachers, staff, and students at all public schools.

LD 21



JON BRAMNICK (R)

As a graduate of Plainfield public schools and parent of two Westfield public school alumni, I know the importance of strong public schools. I am proud to stand with the NJEA to ensure every teacher and education professional receives the support they need to provide a world class education to every New Jersey student.



DEANA LYKINS (D)

The men and women who teach and support the next generation of leaders are the backbone of our society. Honoring your life's work means keeping promises and compensating you appropriately. I want to fight for the education system we all need and deserve. Please help me become that fighter for LD 24.

LD 25



NANCY MUNOZ (R)

New Jersey has the best schools in the nation thanks to the tireless work of teachers and educational support professionals. Standing with the NJEA, I look forward to working together to ensure every New Jersey student receives the best education possible.



LISA BHIMANI (D)

I come from a family of educators and know how important their hard work is to the success of our students. I'm honored to have the support of NJEA PAC. I will fight every day to ensure our schools get their fair share of funding and our educators and support staff receive the hard-earned benefits they deserve.

LD 22



LINDA CARTER (D)

Thank you, NJEA, for your endorsement on my candidacy as a member of the New Jersey General Assembly. As a classroom teacher serving in the General Assembly, I look forward to proudly standing with my fellow teachers and educational support professionals to ensure our voices are heard.



ANTHONY BUCCO (R)

I am proud to stand with New Jersey's educators and school support staff on Chapter 78 reform, collective bargaining rights, and proper funding for our classrooms and communities. As a parent of two public school employees and friend to teachers across this state, you will always have an ally in me in Trenton.

LD 26



CHRISTINE CLARKE (D)

As an environmental advocate, a grassroots organizer, a mother-of-four and a product of our public schools running to advance clean energy jobs, protect clean air and water, improve health care, and legislate with empathy, I know the crucial role educators play in meeting long-term policy goals. I appreciate NJEA's endorsement and look forward to being an advocate for us in Trenton!

LD 28



RALPH CAPUTO (D)

I have supported public schools as a teacher, administrator and legislator. My record reflects these principles: full SFRA funding for all school districts, collective bargaining, sensible—rather than over-the-top—testing that is not the only tool to evaluate teachers, full pension funding, and Ch. 78 relief from undue health benefit costs. I am committed to promote educational initiatives that improve public education.



BETTYLOU DECROCE (R)

Our hard-working educators deserve our strong support, and that requires the state maintaining public confidence in how we spend more than \$13 billion each year on education services. I have always taken a bipartisan approach to resolving issues that come before the Legislature. We are at our best when we work to reach consensus to solve problems in this state.



CLEOPATRA TUCKER (D)

I would like to thank NJEA and its members for their support of my reelection. I will continue to support legislation that will protect the rights of teachers and educational support professionals and promote equal quality education for all students in New Jersey.

LD 27



MILA JASEY (D)

Educators are among our most important and valuable professionals. For too long they have not been accorded the respect, admiration and economic parity they so deserve. It is they who are responsible for our state's number one ranking nationwide, and they are owed a tremendous debt of gratitude. I stand with New Jersey's educators and am honored to receive the endorsement of NJEA.

LD 30



SEAN KEAN (R)

I am very pleased to again receive the endorsement of the New Jersey Education Association. I believe that teachers and school support staff play an invaluable role in the growth and education of our children. As such, it is important that your hard work and contributions are acknowledged and that you are compensated fairly.



JOHN MCKEON (D)

I am honored to receive NJEA's endorsement. Our schools are the nation's best because the tremendous work of our educators. They provide a quality education and prepare students for college and careers. I will continue to ensure our public schools remain one of our state's most valuable assets.



EDWARD THOMSON (R)

New Jersey has the best public schools and the most outstanding education professionals in the country. I look forward to continuing to work with NJEA to support our dedicated education professionals, who play a critical role in the development of our young people and are a vital part of our economic viability.

LD 31



ANGELA MCKNIGHT (D)

Throughout my years serving in the General Assembly, I have maintained my commitment to advocating for the active and retired educators and educational support professionals who provide a quality education to the students in our state. I look forward to returning to Trenton to help maintain and improve public education so that our children are prepared for a successful future.



NICHOLAS CHIARAVALLOTI (D)

I appreciate your confidence in me and recognition of my track record of fighting for our public educators, students, educational support staff, and making sure that LD 31 gets its fair share of funding. As the son of a retired educator, it is easy for me to understand the dedication and sacrifice it takes to be a public school teacher.

LD 33



ANNETTE CHAPARRO (D)

I am grateful to once again receive the trust and backing of NJEA, which proudly represents so many hardworking educators in New Jersey. I look forward to partnering with my fellow legislators to address the many issues facing educators, including Ch. 78 health care relief, the ESP Job Justice bills, and protecting the pensions and benefits of New Jersey educators.



RAJ MUKHERJI (D)

I am humbled by this endorsement by our educators. The well-being of our teachers and support staff is imperative in ensuring the high-quality education that New Jersey children deserve.

LD 32



ANGELICA JIMENEZ (D)

I am very proud to once again receive the endorsement of the New Jersey Education Association. This outstanding organization provides a voice to educators throughout our state, and I look forward to continuing to work with NJEA to ensure our students receive the top-quality education they deserve.



PEDRO MEJIA (D)

I am very proud to receive NJEA's endorsement. As an immigrant, I know the importance of a good education, and I will fight hard so that all New Jersey children have access to the top-quality education that our education professionals and educational support professionals provide. I promise to remain a forceful advocate for the educators and children of New Jersey.

LD 34



THOMAS GIBLIN (D)

I am grateful to once again receive the trust and backing of NJEA, which proudly represents so many hardworking educators in New Jersey. I look forward to partnering with my fellow legislators to address the many issues facing educators, including Ch. 78 health care relief, the ESP Job Justice bills, and protecting the pensions and benefits of New Jersey educators.



BRITNEE TIMBERLAKE (D)

Education establishes the foundation of our society. That is why I strongly believe that every student should be granted access to a high quality, affordable education. We must protect and enhance the experience of both teachers and students in our schools. I am committed to improving the classroom experience and will continue to be a staunch advocate for students and educators.

LD 35



SHAVONDA SUMTER (D)

I look forward to the expansion of solutions to support our educators, educational support professionals and students. Collectively, we will prepare policies and funding alternatives to ensure that New Jersey has the best teachers and education system in our country. This vision can only be achieved with strong leadership.

LD 37



GORDON JOHNSON (D)

This November, I am asking for your support to continue my service in the Assembly. If elected, I will continue to fight for our public schools, ensuring that every child can receive a quality education. New Jersey's future is bright, and I hope to continue my part in shaping it.



BENJIE WIMBERLY (D)

I am a 28-year veteran of Paterson Public Schools. My wife is a first-grade teacher in the district. I have always been an advocate for our youth and a quality public education for all students. You can count on me to fight for educators, who make a child's life better through education and, with that comes the fight for pensions and health care. I will continue that fight.



VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE (D)

Throughout my career in the General Assembly, I have been committed to advocating for public workers in New Jersey. I have sponsored several pieces of legislation aimed at supporting both teachers and educational support professionals. I am a sponsor of legislation that would provide job security to educational support professionals as well as legislation that would provide relief from Chapter 78.

LD 36



CLINTON CALABRESE (D)

Education is critical for individual success as well as social and economic development. New Jersey's schools are ranked number one in the country, and we have our hardworking teachers and ESPs to thank for our success and for the positive impact their efforts have on our students and our state.

LD 38



LISA SWAIN (D)

I am thrilled to have the NJEA's support. Assemblyman Chris Tully and I have fought hard to make sure our district's schools receive their fair share of school funds, and we are proud to say we have brought over \$20 million back for our teachers, school staff, and students.



GARY SCHAER (D)

As the original sponsor of the Chapter 78 relief bill, I am honored to receive this endorsement from NJEA. I hope to continue protecting the interests of our educators and educational support professionals. They are the ones who make New Jersey schools the best in the nation.



CHRIS TULLY (D)

Throughout my career in the General Assembly, I have been committed to advocating for public workers in New Jersey. I have sponsored several pieces of legislation aimed at supporting both teachers and educational support professionals. I am a sponsor of legislation that would provide job security to educational support professionals as well as legislation that would provide relief from Chapter 78.

LD 39



JOHN BIRKNER JR. (D)

Our public schools are the backbone of what makes New Jersey great. I will always support the students, parents, teachers, and educational support professionals who make up our public school community. I'm ready and eager to get to Trenton and join in the work of repairing the damage that eight years of the Chris Christie administration did to our public schools.



GERALD FALOTICO (D)

I believe our great public schools are one of the very best things about living in New Jersey. John and I are committed to working every day in the Legislature to ensure that our teachers and educational support professionals are treated with fairness and dignity.

LD 40



CHRISTOPHER DEPHILLIPS (R)

I am honored to have the support of NJEA and its more than 200,000 educators, retirees, and college students who are tirelessly working toward making our state's educational system among the top rated in the United States. I am fully committed to addressing declining pay and improving the quality of life for all educators.



KEVIN ROONEY (R)

I am truly honored and humbled to have received the endorsement of the New Jersey Education Association for another term in the General Assembly. New Jersey's highly ranked schools are a direct reflection of our teachers and educational support professionals. I look forward to working with NJEA for the next two years.

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY

SHOULD SAVE MONEY AND BE GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH TOO

BY DOROTHY WIGMORE

EFFICIENCY DONE CORRECTLY

Energy efficiency and net-zero energy are great ideas. So too are “sustainability” and “indoor air quality” (IAQ). They all matter with a climate crisis.

Good IAQ affects how school staff members do their jobs and how students perform. It also affects comfort, health and well-being. The four key factors of good IAQ are:

- Bringing in, filtering/cleaning, and distributing adequate unpolluted outdoor air.
- Maintaining acceptable temperatures and relative humidity.
- Getting rid of airborne toxins.
- Preventing mold.

IAQ is important enough that New Jersey has a standard about how to prevent problems in schools.

Saving money with energy efficiency includes short-term practices such as better lights that are turned off when people aren't around, and longer-term pay-offs such as solar panels or geothermal heating. Good sealing or insulation in design or retrofitting also helps.

But too often, energy efficiency leads to lousy indoor air, causing “building-related nonspecific symptoms,” sometimes called “sick building syndrome.” People start complaining about headaches, fatigue, nausea and/or eye, nose, throat, and skin problems that disappear when they are away from the building.

“To conserve energy, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) reduced its standard for how much air is needed to come from outside, and, all of a sudden, these IAQ problems started popping up,” says John Oudyk, a Canadian occupational hygienist who has dealt with the hazard for many years.

Windows that wouldn't open replaced ones

that did. Teachers lost control of fresh air in their classrooms. The goal was to reduce the costs of bringing air into the building.

But less fresh air led to people getting sick, partly thanks to recirculating air with hazardous chemicals. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)

As buildings become tighter by design, it's even more critical to pay attention to what you're putting into buildings and ventilate them properly.

from new flooring, building materials, or cleaning products, added to the unhealthy mix. Recently, there have been concerns about semi-volatile organics (SVOCs), which emit hazardous vapors slowly for longer times that also lead to asthma and long-term health problems, such as endocrine disruption. (See bit.ly/iaqsvocs.)

Money-saving efforts continue today. The Sustainable Jersey for Schools PowerSave program is designed to help schools save money and energy and educate students about energy efficiency. Participating school districts can accomplish these goals, provided they don't turn off their ventilation systems after school hours, or during the summer. Otherwise, they may face a variety of problems, including high humidity levels

that lead to mold.

“It's still happening,” Oudyk says. “People shut down the ventilation system too early at the end of the day and don't flush it out. Then nighttime custodians working with fairly toxic chemicals are not getting any ventilation. If you're cleaning a bathroom with no ventilation, you could argue it's almost a confined space.”

Sometimes the IAQ problem is in one school area. For example, north-facing classrooms won't get solar heat, so they don't need extra cooling and won't get outdoor air on hot days in the new energy-saving variable air volume systems.

“But the other classrooms likely are still getting cooling and the exhausts get combined, so the problem of no fresh air in that classroom is diluted,” Oudyk explains. “It looks like the CO2 levels for the whole building are OK, but they aren't.”

Carbon dioxide (CO2) levels can indicate how well fresh air circulates. The cut-off—often 700 parts per million—is not about making someone sick, but about how much fresh outdoor air enters a space.

“Monitor the CO2 or other things to make sure you don't have these energy efficiency casualties, such as pockets of unique IAQ problems,” Oudyk advises.

Ventilators under classroom windows aren't affected by what happens in other spaces, but they

Dorothy Wigmore is a long-time health and safety specialist, trained in occupational hygiene, ergonomics, work organization/stress and education. A Canadian, she has also worked in the U.S. and Mozambique, and been involved in efforts to prevent and deal with job-related hazards for many years.

The U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) warns:

While turning the system off may save energy, depending on outdoor conditions, it often increases demand on the HVAC system when it is turned back on. Essentially, the equipment has to operate longer and harder to reach desired indoor temperature and humidity set-points. It can also create issues with condensation if humidity levels indoors become elevated during the “off” periods. This is particularly true in areas with warmer climates. (cdc.gov/niosh/topics/indooenv/hvac.html)

need to be inspected, maintained and cleaned regularly. Poor IAQ may occur if a ventilator’s outdoor air intakes have been turned off for “energy efficiency,” ventilation has been blocked by leaves or litter, or idling bus exhaust draws fumes inside.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Occupants’ experience is the gold standard to determine IAQ. Oudyk says. The ASHRAE Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality standard (62.1-2016) says “acceptable indoor air quality” has no “known contaminants at harmful concentrations” and “a substantial majority (80% or more) of the people exposed do not express dissatisfaction.” The key is to properly survey school staff and teachers and accommodate particularly sensitive people. (See the “Tools and Resources” sidebar.)

Some schools are moving to variable air volume or other sensor or demand control systems. They often use the CO₂ concentration to determine when fresh air is required. However, the sensors need to be in the right place, including meeting rooms and north-facing rooms.

“As buildings become tighter by design, it’s even more critical to pay attention to what you’re putting into buildings and to ventilate them properly,” says the Healthy Building Network (HBN) Collective Impact Director Billy Weber.

The HBN and Living Building Challenge are examples of organizations paying attention to those materials, indoor air quality and energy efficiency. HBN guides about less toxic upgrades and insulation/air-sealing materials provide options to toxic materials such as spray foam insulation products and help cost out the options. The

Living Building Challenge certification program incorporates long-term net-zero energy goals, healthy air, and occupant health and productivity.

WHAT SHOULD LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS DO?

Organize a meeting to talk about IAQ issues and related concerns. Beforehand, get a copy of the district’s IAQ program. Discuss how to get a policy that ventilation systems operate whenever someone is in the building or room. Inspect the building with the health and safety committee. Use body and workplace maps to gather symptom information and pinpoint trouble spots.

Learn about less toxic building material and cleaning options and provide information to members. See “Cleaning Schools Without Making People Sick” in the September 2019 *NJEA Review*. You can also find the article at njea.org by searching the article’s title.

Support members with IAQ concerns. Notify the school nurse and district IAQ program “designated person” about the complaint, asking for their help and co-operation.

Join Jersey Renew, which works on state-based policy solutions to climate change. You’ll learn more about the organization at jerseyrenews.org.

Tools and resources

Healthy Building Network:

- “A Guide to Healthier Upgrade Materials,” bit.ly/eeupgradehealthy
- “Guidance for Specifying Healthier Insulation and Air-Sealing Materials,” bit.ly/eeinsulatehealthy

International Living Life Institute. “Living Building Challenge 4.0. A Visionary Path to a Regenerative Future,” 2019, living-future.org/lbc4

New Jersey Department of Health, New Jersey Indoor Air Quality Standard (N.J.A.C. 12:100-13), bit.ly/peoshiaq

NJEA: Organizing for better indoor air quality. An NJEA guide for local association action. njea.org/download/1787/

Occupational Health Clinic for Ontario Workers/Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety: AirAssess app, at ohcow.on.ca/airassess.html



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A CLOSER LOOK ...at honoring our veterans



Veterans Day is Nov. 11 and many schools and communities engage in projects and activities to honor their service and sacrifice throughout the year. To survey the broad selection of show segments “Classroom Close-up NJ” has produced about honoring veterans and educating students about their service, visit classroomcloseup.org, click on drop-down menu under “Categories” and select among the multiple subject areas.

Three of those segments are highlighted below.

ROLLING THUNDER

Somerville High School students honor Rolling Thunder, a group that advocates for veterans’ rights. The vets explain to the high school students what it’s like to be drafted, how they felt coming back from combat, and the sacrifices they made for their country. The school created a permanent display to honor Robert Scherdin, a Somerville High School graduate who was killed in action. His body was never recovered.



DADDY'S HEART

Cliffside Park teacher Michael Ryan helped three students self-publish a book about families dealing with PTSD. Madeline Murillo, Angela Kohout and Elizabeth Sagi wanted to show the challenges of not only the veterans suffering from PTSD, but also the impact on their families. What started as a classroom assignment soon grew into a published book.

TAKE A VET TO SCHOOL

There is no better way to learn about Veterans Day than to spend time with a real veteran. The students at Toms River’s Hooper Avenue Elementary School celebrate Veterans Day by inviting veterans into their school to share their stories of service. The program begins with students and veterans participating in a flag-raising ceremony. Then the veterans - who have served in World War II, Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom, among other conflicts - visit classrooms to tell their stories and answer students’ questions. Winner of the 2014-15 New York Emmy.



Thousands of “Classroom Close-up NJ” segments are viewable and downloadable at classroomcloseup.org. A searchable database makes finding an entire show or individual segments on any topic easy.

WATCH CCU ON NJTV



classroomcloseup.org

NJEA’s “Classroom Close-up NJ” has won 16 Emmy® awards. It inspires and educates the public about the great things happening in New Jersey public schools. The show airs on Sundays on NJTV at 7:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Visit classroomcloseup.org to watch individual segments or the entire show. On Twitter, follow @CCUNJ and “like” the show at [facebook.com/crcunj](https://www.facebook.com/crcunj). On Youtube, visit [youtube.com/c/classroomcloseup](https://www.youtube.com/c/classroomcloseup). On Instagram, search Classroom Close Up.



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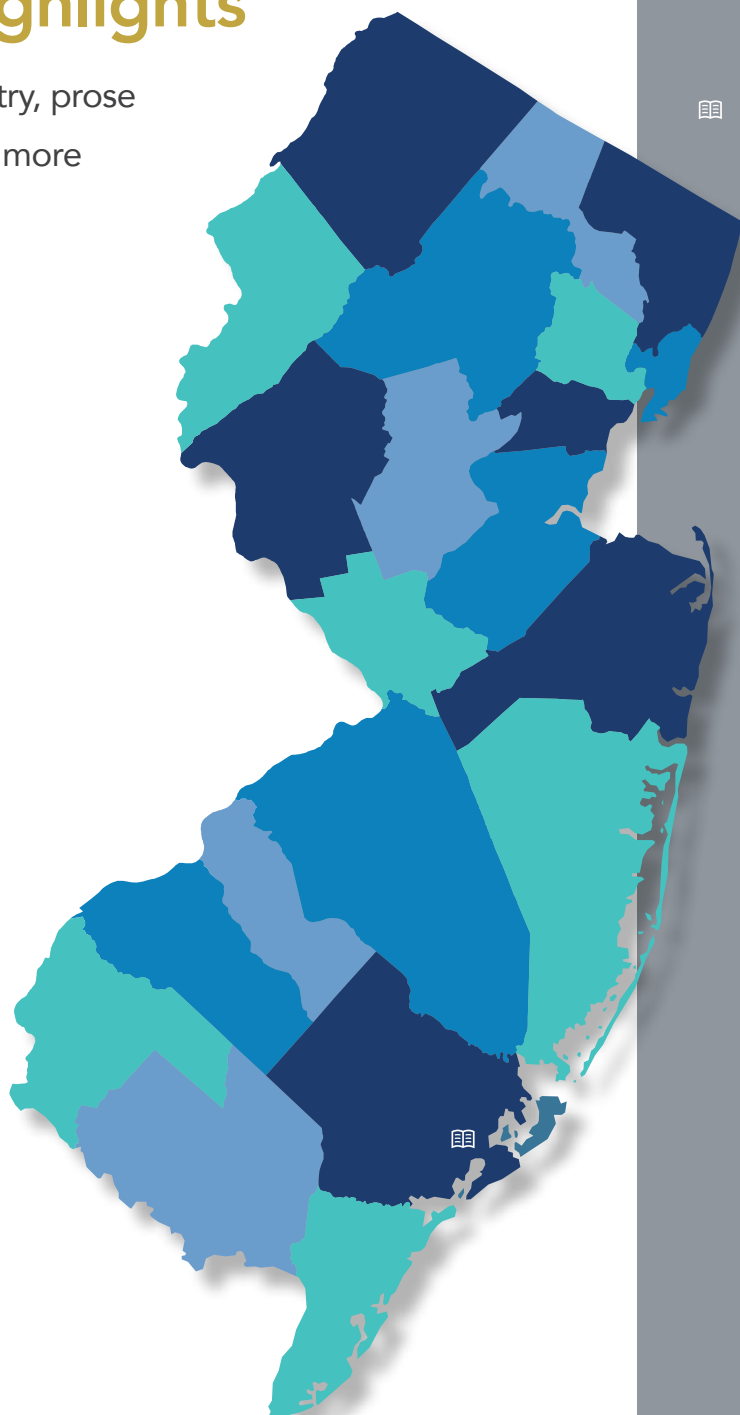
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This workshop has been endorsed by NJEA's Professional Development Institute and is also posted on njea.org. Those seeking endorsement of a professional development experience that they will provide should call NJEA's Professional Development Division at 609-599-4561.

WINTER POETRY & PROSE GETAWAY

The Winter Poetry & Prose Getaway is a three-day conference where educators hone their creative writing skills and expand their teaching strategies. Held at the Seaview Hotel near Atlantic City, Jan. 17-20, the Winter Poetry & Prose Getaway is presented by Murphy Writing of Stockton University. Now in its 26th year, the Getaway is known for its challenging and supportive workshops featuring small classes led by award-winning professionals. Pulitzer Prize winner Yusef Komunyakaa and National Endowment for the Arts fellow Denise Duhamel are this year's special guests.

The event was founded by NJEA/NJREA member Peter Murphy in the belief that when writers leave behind the distractions of their busy lives to gather in an encouraging community, they can make important breakthroughs in their art. Over the last two decades, the Getaway has become one of the oldest and largest writers' conferences in the winter season, attracting more than 200 writers from across the country.

The author of seven books and chapbooks, Murphy has received awards and fellowships from the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Yaddo and the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars.

The Getaway is offering seven new workshops in poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, memoir and free-writing. Each offers craft discussion, writing prompts, writing time, feedback, motivation and inspiration.

The registration fee ranges from \$450 to \$525. South Jersey teachers may be eligible to have their districts pay their tuition for the Winter Poetry & Prose Getaway. Early registration and Stockton alumni discounts are available. Additionally, scholarships are being offered.

REGISTRATION ENDS JAN. 12.

For more information, contact Stephanie Cawley at stephanie@murphywriting.com or 609-626-3594. Visit www.stockton.edu/wintergetaway for registration information.

MORE TO LEARN

ATTEND NJAMLE CONFERENCE

The New Jersey Association for Middle Level Education (NJAMLE) invites educational professionals in all content areas and specialties to its annual conference centered on the theme, "Better Together!"

The conference takes place March 13 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Kean University. The day includes a welcome breakfast, keynote address, three workshop sessions, lunch and an awards program.

The keynote will be delivered by Adam Welcome, who has been an elementary school teacher and principal and the director of innovation for a district with 35,000 students. Welcome was Principal of the Year for his region.

The fee to attend this conference is \$99 for NJAMLE members and \$139 for nonmembers. For current college students, the fee is \$29.

To register and for more information, visit njamle.org/annual-conference-2020. For questions, email requac@njamle.org.

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Education Information Session

Monday, November 18th, 2019 | 7pm-8pm | Hackettstown NJ

To register: CentenaryUniversity.edu/Graduate

To learn more, visit
CentenaryUniversity.edu/Graduate
 or contact the Graduate Admissions
 Office at 1-877-236-4723



NJREA BENEFITS COVERAGE WHILE TRAVELING

Traveling around the world, discovering new places and meeting interesting people are big perks of retirement. As frequent travelers know, one of the most important elements to consider when planning a successful vacation is factoring in your safety and well-being.

Before you go away, familiarize yourself with customs and traditions—and health restrictions—of the country of your destination. In many cases, traveling may require a physical checkup and certain vaccinations several weeks prior to departure.

ARE YOU COVERED?

Even if you are in good health and have taken steps against potential ailments, illness during traveling can happen. In many countries your current health insurance may not cover you against unforeseen circumstances during traveling and will require additional coverage to protect yourself and members of your family.

To learn more about your benefits coverage

when traveling out of the country, visit shbp.horizonblue.com/node/7407. To get more detailed information about what is offered through Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield's Blue Shield Global Core visit bit.ly/bcbglobal or call 800-810-2583 or collect at 1-804-673-1177. Please have your membership ID card.

MEDICARE/MEDICARE ADVANTAGE WHILE TRAVELING

Medicare and Medicare Advantage follow the same guidelines and generally do not cover any services provided by doctors and hospitals outside the U.S. Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans only pay for in-patient hospital, doctor or ambulance services in some foreign countries in very rare cases. It may include coverage on board a ship within U.S. territorial waters, but if the ship is more than six hours away from any U.S. port, the coverage is invalid.

Additionally, Medicare drug plans don't cover prescriptions that are filled outside of the country.

For a detailed explanation on what is covered, visit the Medicare website at medicare.gov/coverage/travel.

FILING A CLAIM

Doctors and hospitals outside of the U.S. are not required to file Medicare claims. In the event you must see a doctor, use an ambulance, or go to a hospital while traveling abroad, you must pay upfront for the services. Make sure to ask those providers for an itemized bill for their services.

For all claims, submit the following information:

- Name and address of provider.
- Provider's tax identification number.
- Name of patient.
- Date of service.
- Diagnosis.
- Type of service.
- CPT 4 code.
- Charge for each service.
- Rate of Exchange at the time of the service.
- Must include an English translation, as necessary.



The **New Jersey Expedited Certification for Educational Leadership (NJEXCEL)** Program is offered by NJPSA's Foundation for Educational Administration (FEA). NJEXCEL is the state-approved, innovative, non-traditional **certification program** with distinct models leading to a Certificate of Eligibility for Principal, Supervisor, Director of School Counseling Services, or School Administrator.

New Cohorts begin each January and July in the following locations:

- North - Parsippany-Troy Hills, NJ
- Central - FEA Conference Center in Monroe Twp., NJ
- South - Timber Creek High School in Erial, NJ



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To learn more about the NJEXCEL certification program and get started, call (609) 860-1200 or visit www.njexcel.org

Eligible services will be reviewed and reimbursed without the need to submit the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) from Medicare.

WHERE TO SUBMIT CLAIMS

If you have a Horizon plan, whether Medicare is your primary provider or not, when you return home, submit a claim to the School Employees' Health Benefits Program (SEHBP).

If you are in an Aetna plan, whether it's Medicare Advantage or not, submit a claim to Aetna. Once it's completed, send the form to the address on your Aetna/Medicare Card.

Remember to make copies of all your receipts and itemized bills from your provider. Be sure to include your ID number on each receipt and bill. Any materials submitted cannot be returned to you.

TIPS FOR TRAVELERS

No matter when or where you travel, medical needs can arise. Here are some tips to ensure that you are prepared in the event of an emergency:

- Bring copies of all your prescriptions and your doctor's contact information. Stow them in your carry-on luggage to keep the information close by and reduce the possibility that they can be lost.
- Visit the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov/travel, which offers information on the recommended or required vaccinations, as well as up-to-date details on country-specific illnesses or other potential health risks.
- Consider buying travel medical insurance for all the things medical insurance will not cover.

NJEA and NJREA continue to work closely with the National Education Association and several health insurance companies on options for additional medical coverage for our members traveling abroad. Be sure to check future issues of the NJREA Newsletter or njea.org for updated information as it becomes available.

Around the counties

For questions, call your county REA.

For trip details, check the county newsletter.

ATLANTIC COUNTY next meeting/luncheon will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 3 at the Mays Landing Country Club in Mays Landing. The cost is \$27. To attend, call Linda Young at **609-226-6202**.

THE REA OF CAPE MAY'S next meeting/luncheon will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 18 at the Alf's Restaurant in Wildwood. The cost is \$25. To attend, call Sharon Popper at **609-602-0046**.

Join **CUMBERLAND REA** for its holiday meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, Dec. 11 at the Greenview Inn at Eastlyn Golf Course in Vineland. The cost is \$30. To attend, call Irene Savicky at **856-863-8424**.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY REA'S holiday meeting/luncheon will be held on Thursday, Dec. 12 at Nicolosi Catering in Woodbury. The cost is \$25. To attend, call Candy Zachowski at **856-228-6854**.

HUNTERDON COUNTY REA welcomes you to its holiday meeting/brunch on Tuesday, Dec. 10 at Platform One in Flemington. To attend, call Ray Braun at **215-264-4624**.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY REA invites you to its holiday meeting/luncheon on Thursday, Dec. 5 at the Grand Marquis in Old Bridge. The cost is \$32. A local public school choir will provide the entertainment. To attend, call Anne Chomko at **732-675-1734**.

MONMOUTH COUNTY REA welcomes you to its holiday celebration/luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 10 at the Colts Neck Inn in Colts Neck. The cost is \$30. To attend, call Sue Shrott at **732-995-7754**.

Join **MORRIS COUNTY REA** for its holiday meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, Dec. 11 at the Hanover Manor in East Hanover. Mad Jazz from Madison will be the entertainment. The cost is \$35. To attend, call John Beekman at **973-936-2242**.

OCEAN COUNTY REA'S next meeting/luncheon will be held on Thursday, Dec. 12 at the Days Hotel by Wyndham in Toms River. The cost is \$28. To attend, call Janice Sovinee at **732-477-1711**.

PASSAIC COUNTY REA welcomes you to its meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, Dec. 4 at the Brownstone House in Paterson. To attend, call Kitty Sausa at **201-445-7577**.

The **SALEM COUNTY REA** will hold its holiday luncheon on Thursday, Dec. 16 at the Woodstown Diner. The Woodstown High School Chamber Choir will be the entertainment. The cost is \$17. To attend, call Rosemma Ward at **856-467-4796**.

SUSSEX COUNTY REA will hold its next meeting/luncheon on Monday, Dec. 2 at the Lafayette House in Lafayette. Harmony in Motion, an a cappella chorus group, will provide the entertainment. The cost is \$33. To attend, call Linda Adams at **973-714-1646**.

WARREN COUNTY REA'S next meeting/luncheon will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 4 at the Hawk Pointe Country Club in Washington. The cost is \$30. For more information, visit wcrea-njea.org To attend, call Vicki Rhinehart at **908-319-1995**.

The state of standardized testing

Where we are and what happens next

BY DR. CHRISTINE MILES

New Jersey's statewide standardized assessment system has been in an ever-changing state over the past year and a half. While Gov. Phil Murphy campaigned on getting rid of PARCC, many factors have come into play to prevent this from happening.

In July 2018, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) proposed to the State Board of Education new regulations governing standards and assessment. This proposal would have reduced the excessive amount of standardized testing at the high school level to the federally mandated minimum—one English/language arts and one mathematics assessment. Over the next several months, NJEA provided testimony in support of the NJDOE's proposed changes and called for a transition away from PARCC and PARCC-like assessments. More than 2,000 NJEA members and parent advocates submitted letters in support

of the proposed regulations to the State Board.

At the State Board's September 2018 meeting, however, Sen. Teresa Ruiz, D-Essex, chair of the Senate Education Committee, addressed the State Board, calling for it to oppose the NJDOE's proposal. Sen. Ruiz contended that the months-in-the-making proposal, grounded in evidence from the NJDOE's Statewide Assessment Outreach Tour, needed to be "slowed down." The State Board tabled its vote on the proposed regulations yet another month.

In October 2018, the NJDOE's proposal was heavily amended by the State Board, resulting in a reduction of testing requirements from three years of testing at the high school level to two years of testing at the high school level. The State Board moved the proposal forward in the process and was scheduled for final adoption of the regulations in January 2019. However, that final adoption would never come to be.

On Dec. 31, 2018, the New Jersey Superior Court issued a ruling in a years-long case brought by the Education Law Center (ELC), the American Civil Liberties Union-NJ, and others. ELC and the other plaintiffs challenged the existing standards and assessment regulations on the grounds that the regulations did not align with current state law on exit testing. The Superior Court ruled in

ELC's favor, striking down the regulations.

Between January and June 2019, the Murphy administration and ELC reached an agreement, a consent decree, to offer pathways to graduation for the classes of 2019 through 2022. This allowed students to continue to use the alternate graduation assessment pathways (SAT, ACT, ASVAB, Accuplacer, etc.) to fulfill New Jersey's exit testing statutory requirements. But, where does that leave the Class of 2023 (the current freshmen class) and the classes that follow?

Fast forward to September 2019, when the NJDOE once again proposed regulations governing standards and assessment, with a "notice of substantial change" to the October 2018 proposal. The proposal allows for a reduction of required testing at the high school level, while also transitioning away from PARCC/NJSLA. [In October 2018, the NJDOE rebranded the PARCC as the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) and reduced testing times by 25% for the Spring of 2019.] This proposal would institute testing as outlined in the chart below.

The State Board was slated to vote on these proposed regulations at its Oct. 2 meeting. Concerned that a majority of the State Board currently supports increased testing, NJEA and other statewide education organizations

Dr. Christine Miles is an associate director in the NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division. She can be reached at cmiles@njea.org.

THIS PROPOSAL WOULD INSTITUTE TESTING AS OUTLINED HERE:

	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade
School Year 2019-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NJSLA ELA9 • NJSLA End-of-Course Math 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NJSLA ELA10 • NJSLA End-of-Course Math 	
School Year 2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NJSLA ELA 9 • NJSLA End-of-Course Math 		
School Year 2021-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Generation Assessment: ELA 9 • Next Generation Assessment: End-of-Course Math 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Generation Assessment: ELA • Next Generation Assessment: Math

The proposal allows for a reduction of required testing at the high school level, while also transitioning away from PARCC/NJSLA.

representing superintendents, principals and supervisors, school boards, and other stakeholders sent a joint letter to the State Board in support of the proposed changes, which reduce testing. NJEA members sent hundreds of letters to the State Board, calling for reduced testing requirements and sharing personal stories of just how negatively these assessments affect student mental health, instructional time, and teaching and learning in our buildings for weeks on end.

The State Board voted to table the discussion of the proposed regulations to provide the board with additional time to explore unanswered questions and concerns it had with the proposal. As of press time, the State Board was exploring dates to hold a special meeting in late October dedicated solely to discussing and voting upon the proposed regulations on standards and assessment.

If the State Board fails to act on the proposed regulations by Nov. 6, the timeline for the proposal will expire, leaving our current seventh-, eighth- and ninth-graders without clarity on what will be required of them to fulfill New Jersey's exit testing requirement.

For the most current information on New Jersey's statewide assessment system visit njea.org. To become a member-activist on assessment issues, please contact NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues at 609-599-4561.

For the most current information on New Jersey's statewide assessment system visit njea.org.



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NORTH

FEB 21-22, 2020
Sheraton - Parsippany
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JAN. 10

CENTRAL

MARCH 6-7, 2020
Hilton - East Brunswick
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JAN. 24

WORKSHOPS

1. Presidents' Roundtable
2. Legal Issues Affecting School Employees
3. Preparing for Negotiations—Collective Bargaining
4. Grieve, Don't Gripe—Contract Enforcement
5. AR—Key to a Strong Organization
6. Bargaining Health Benefits
7. Building Your Power Through Political Organizing **NEW**
8. Salary Guides—What All Members Should Know **NEW**
9. Health and Safety Committees—An Ounce of Prevention or "One More Thing" to do?
10. Economic Inequality—Understanding the Common Cause of Threats to Public Education
11. From Impasse to Impassioned—A Guide for Local Action Teams **NEW**
12. X's & O's for Local Leaders **NEW**

➔ njea.org/wlc

For more information & registration materials,
see your local president or visit the website.

EXPERIENCING THE CLASSROOM PRACTICUM AND SUBBING

BY SACHEL S. BISE, CENTENARY UNIVERSITY

I could tell you that I have had four years of experience in the classroom, not including all the volunteering I did throughout high school. But the truth is, I never really got close to experiencing what it was like to be a real teacher until last year when I started working as a substitute teacher. Whenever I was in a practicum experience, the students behaved differently, and I had more control. After all, the cooperating teacher was

I started subbing so I could gain experience in the classroom while making some extra money. I had no idea what I was in for.

always present—it's good to have backup.

I started subbing so I could gain experience in the classroom while making some extra money. I had no idea what I was in for. My first assignment found me in an inclusion class. The co-teacher took charge and I mostly walked around and monitored students. But that changed quickly the next time I went to the high school.

I was assigned to a woodworking class, which was, by far, the most difficult assignment I have ever experienced. It had me rethinking the grade levels I would want to teach. The students were noisy and disruptive, and they would not stay seated or focused, no matter what I tried to do. I was met with responses such as “No one’s taking you seriously” and “Just shut up already.” Somehow, I summoned a certain strength and put my foot down. I started taking away phones, quieting the students and disciplining them when necessary.

For my entire college career, I had it in my head that I wanted to teach high school English because I could teach Shakespeare. Anyone who has met

me knows that I love Shakespearean literature. I even went overseas for an expensive program at the University of Oxford to learn more. I spent my 21st birthday in the Bard’s birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon.

My love of Shakespeare was driving my decision to teach high school, but I could not ignore certain signs that were pulling me in a different direction. Every experience I had subbing in a middle school was nothing but positive. I connected better to those students and always left feeling like I had done something right that day.

My most recent experience as a substitute at the middle school was troubling, but it taught me an important lesson. I had a student write negative things about himself. I called the guidance counselor, so he could speak to someone. I realized how scary and real these issues are in schools and proceeded to engage all classes in a positivity circle—an activity where students gather in a circle and go around saying positive things about themselves and the person next to them. The students realized this exercise made them feel good. It made me realize that I am meant to be teaching at the middle school level.

I’m very new to practicum, which is a whole other ballgame. I am in the high school level, because that was where I thought I should be at the

time of my placement. Practicum is rewarding, but it’s also challenging. While I feel like the students do not yet entirely respect me, I know they are taking unique concepts out of my lessons. I design my lessons so that my students have some choice and opportunities to put in a part of themselves.

After grading student responses from one recent lesson, I was amazed by all the wonderful thoughts that arose from it. What a miraculous feeling to have taught something that sparked a new thought. I wrote a positive note on every single paper and tried to motivate the students to continue to think bigger and challenge themselves.

I spend my time trying to gain other types of classroom-like experience. In addition to substitute teaching and my practicum, I am a full time-student and a tutor. I always try to learn more and help children.

With all of my experiences, good and bad, I realize that I am truly meant to be a teacher. I want to be that person who high-fives the students as they walk into the classroom. I want to be that person who makes them want to come to school every day. I want to be that person that makes them see how special each of them is and how important they are to the world.

I want to make a difference. 🙌



The NJEA Convention offers many opportunities for NJEA Preservice members, including workshops on landing a job and an inside look at your first year in the classroom. See Page 21 of the NJEA Convention Program or visit njeaconvention.org.



NJEA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

MINUTES OF NOV. 8, 2018

The NJEA Delegate Assembly met on Nov. 8, 2018, at the Atlantic City Convention Center, Atlantic City, N.J., at 6:00 p.m. President Marie Blistan presided.

Roll call was taken. There were 115 out of 124 delegates present. Alternates were seated as follows: O'Malley for Bowman (Burlington); Niessner for Zahn and Blake for vacancy (Camden); Dubroski for Gitto (Hunterdon); Hicks for Siegel and Carpenter for Williams (Mercer); Strzykalski for Lewandowski (Middlesex); Brache for Rodrick (Monmouth); Staples for Ruch (Ocean); Fadden for Ferrante (Passaic).

Absent was representative Lawler (Union).

Lori Lalama (Passaic) delivered the inspirational message and led the body in the flag salute.

Blistan asked if there was objection to adopting the agenda with flexibility. There was no objection.

The chair introduced three candidates for NEA Executive Committee and the NJEA Apprentices, who attended the meeting as guests.

ELECTION OF HEARING, CENSURE, AND EXPULSION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The chair explained the eligibility and procedures for electing four members to the Hearing, Censure, and Expulsion Committee, and opened the floor for nominations. Laurie Hodge (Higher Education) nominated Mecheline Farhat (Higher Education); Andrea Pastore (Hudson) nominated Edwinta Rhue (Hudson); Tamara Beatty (Burlington) nominated Patricia Bland (Burlington); Susan Morgan (Ocean) nominated Annette Ruch (Ocean). After asking three times for additional nominations, with none offered, the chair closed nominations. Based on there being four nominees for four positions, with the required representation, the chair declared the four nominees elected by acclamation.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Blistan addressed the following topics in her report:

- The passing of long-time leaders Tom Favia and Jim Gavitt, and the tragic shooting death of a Jersey City student. The body observed a moment of silence.
- The results of elections held two days prior to the meeting.
- The passage of legislation to force county college

employees into the State Health Benefits Program, which is on the governor's desk.

- The governor's new economic policy agenda.
- New regulations transitioning away from PARCC.
- The new Pride ads that are appearing on TV and social media.
- An update on progress toward a New Business Item on charter schools, including the appointment of an NJEA Task Force on Charter Schools that is expected to report at the next meeting.
- The naming of eight Blue Ribbon Schools in New Jersey by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Awards earned by Sue Butterfield (Passaic) and Jacqui Greadington (Essex).

The chair introduced Tina Dare (Gloucester) and Patti Kebrdle (Passaic), who reported on plans developed by the PAC Fundraising Committee they are co-chairing.

The chair called on UniServ-South Director Patrick Manahan and Plainfield EA President Eric Jones, who gave an update on NJEA's Chapter 78 Relief/ESP Job Justice Campaign.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Spiller reported on NJEA's efforts to fight the expansion of charter schools until appropriate legislation can be adopted to prevent charters from siphoning resources from traditional public schools. He encouraged delegates to turn out with other members to upcoming hearings on the issue conducted by the State Department of Education.

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Steve Beatty presented his report, which was provided to the delegates in advance of the meeting.

NONDELEGATE SPEAKERS

The following nondelegate members were provided an opportunity to address the body:

Michael Byock (Essex) spoke about the need to address growing work demands and class sizes for members, which are driving many out of the profession.

Ron Greco (Hudson) thanked the NJEA leaders and staff who worked on the campaign to elect all four of the board of education candidates endorsed by the Jersey City EA. He also emphasized the need for NJEA to fight for Chapter 78 relief.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ed Richardson reported on the status of two anti-union cases against NJEA in federal court, the need to enforce the Workplace Democracy Enhancement Act (including the right of local associations to receive data on all bargaining unit employees from their districts), and the Executive Committee's approval of NJEA's new Teacher Leader Academy.

He noted the retirement of UniServ-Northwest Director Al Ramey and thanked him for his 26 years of service on the NJEA staff, and introduced Mayrose Wegmann, who will succeed Ramey. He also introduced the assistant director of for the NEA Northeast Zone, Lisa Nentl-Bloom, who was attending the meeting as a guest.

Finally, Richardson noted the upcoming retirement of Executive Assistant/Office Manager Karen Berry, and thanked her for many years of service to NJEA.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The body received reports without recommendations from the following:

- Elections
- Exceptional Children
- Leadership
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty presented the Budget Committee report with a recommendation. Mike Kruczek (Warren) moved approval of the recommendation. The motion was duly seconded. The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Chris Cannella moved New Business Item 1: That whenever NJEA holds an event where members will be in attendance, it will make available at least one gender-neutral restroom. The motion was duly seconded. Following discussion, Cannella agreed to refer the item to committee, and there was no objection.

Chris Cannella moved New Business Item 2: NJEA will condemn in the strongest terms the leaked U.S. Department of Health and Human Services memo that seeks to redefine sex in federal law as a "person's status as male or female based on immutable biological traits identifiable by or before birth." The motion was duly seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Anthony Rosamilia (Essex) noted the election of endorsed candidate Mikie Sherrill in Congressional District 11, where she is the first woman ever and the first Democrat in 30 years to be elected there.

Carrie Odgers Lax (Passaic) thanked Kevin Kelleher and Mike Salerno, of the Research staff, for the successful rollout of the new Medicare Advantage plan for retirees.

At 8:12 p.m., Ryan Griffin (Gloucester), moved to adjourn. The motion was duly seconded. The motion carried.

Submitted by:
Edward Richardson
Executive Director



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1. Share your personal email address with the Member Benefits Committee member from your county.
2. When you receive emails from your county Member Benefits Committee member, simply decide what information you think should be shared and how to share it among the members in your local. You are the judge of what information may be beneficial to all or a subset of your members.
3. You will become an authority on member benefits, helping to inform your peers on opportunities to save money.

HOLIDAY IDEAS

Consider using Member Benefits in your quest to stretch holiday spending dollars. Here are some sources that can be found at memberbenefits.njea.org:

- Buyer's Edge, Inc offers significant discounts on cars, appliances, furniture, jewelry, luggage, exercise equipment, and more.
- Plum Benefits offers discounts on event tickets.
- The travel page has links to discounted hotels, car rentals, and airport parking.

*Member Discount Program and Access:

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NOVEMBER & beyond

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11/6

Wednesday

NJEA Executive
Committee
and County
Presidents'
Council Meetings

11/6-7

Wed. & Thurs.

NJREA
Convention

11/7

Thurs.

NJEA Delegate
Assembly meeting

11/7-8

Thurs. & Fri.

NJEA
Convention

12/9

Monday

NJEA Executive
Committee
Meeting

1/3

Friday

Executive
Committee
and County
Presidents'
Council Meetings

1/4

Saturday

Delegate
Assembly

1/10-11

Fri. & Sat.

Equity
Alliance
Conference

1/24-25

Fri. & Sat.

Winter
Leadership-
South

1/31-2/2

Fri. to Sun.

ESP
Conference

**Save
the
Date**

NJEA
Educational
Support
Professionals
Conference

**Jan. 31-
Feb. 2, 2020**

Friday to Sunday
2020

njea
esp
Educational Support Professionals

deadlines

12/1 NJEA Equity Alliance Conference
Event date: Jan. 10-11

12/6 Winter Leadership Conference-South
Event date: Jan. 24-25

1/3 Educational Support Professionals
Conference
Event date: Jan. 31-Feb. 2

1/10 Winter Leadership Conference-North
Event date: Feb. 21-22

1/24 Winter Leadership Conference-Central
Event date: March 6-7

More Testing *Does Not* Equal Higher Standards

We are all familiar with the adage, “You cannot fatten a pig by merely weighing it.” Despite this, policymakers in our state and throughout the country insist on focusing their energies on increased standardized testing. Their common, yet misguided, argument is that standardized tests are the primary means of uncovering achievement gaps and enhancing equity for historically marginalized populations. However, standardized assessment does not enhance equity; it reinforces inequity.

Equality assumes that everyone benefits from the same supports, while equity provides everyone with the support that they need to succeed. Our current statewide assessment system does not allow for districts or educators to provide our students with these supports. Instead, the state

Standardized assessment does not enhance equity; it reinforces inequity.

allocates over \$30 million a year on testing, a significant portion of which is dedicated to unnecessary testing at the high school level.

New Jersey’s current statewide assessment system goes far beyond the federal requirements for testing under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). While ESSA requires annual testing in math and English/language arts for grades 3 through 8 and once in high school, New Jersey’s Administrative Code (N.J.A. C. 6A:8 Standards and Assessment) currently requires students to be tested in grades 9, 10 and 11.

Beyond these increased requirements, students are subjected to countless hours of testing across grades 3 through 11. In the 2017-18 school year, New Jersey’s students engaged in 73.5 hours of statewide standardized testing across grades 3-11. This equates to 98 forty-five-minute class periods

of lost learning opportunities over a student’s academic career or three years’ worth of a once per week elective period where students could be cultivating their knowledge, skills, understanding and competency in a vocation, trade or area of passion.

Midway through the 2018-19 school year, the New Jersey Department of Education reduced testing timeframes by approximately 25%, resulting in 57.5 hours of testing across grades 3-11. With this reduction, the state of New Jersey still requires more statewide standardized testing than any other state in the nation.

Dr. Arthur VanderVeen, CEO of New Meridian, the company that is contracted by the state of New Jersey to license our New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA, formerly known as the PARCC) urged the State Board of Education members to shift their focus away from testing.

“The more important indicator of post-secondary readiness is the curriculum and not the assessment,” VanderVeen told the board. “States should be focusing on ensuring a rigorous sequence of courses instead of focusing on an assessment.”

Dr. VanderVeen’s company profits heavily from New Jersey’s statewide assessment system and a reduction in testing would significantly reduce his bottom line. Yet, even he urges the state to focus their energies elsewhere.

Proponents of increased testing argue that without yearly assessments, we will have no gauge as to whether students are career and college ready. As educators, we know this to be false. State regulations provide an overview of the requirements for students to graduate. Students are required to take and pass 120 credits worth of coursework, demonstrate performance on locally designed and administered assessments, and meet attendance standards. Districts can independently add on to these requirements as well.

When pro-testing parties argue that standardized testing indicates whether or not students are ready for college and career, those

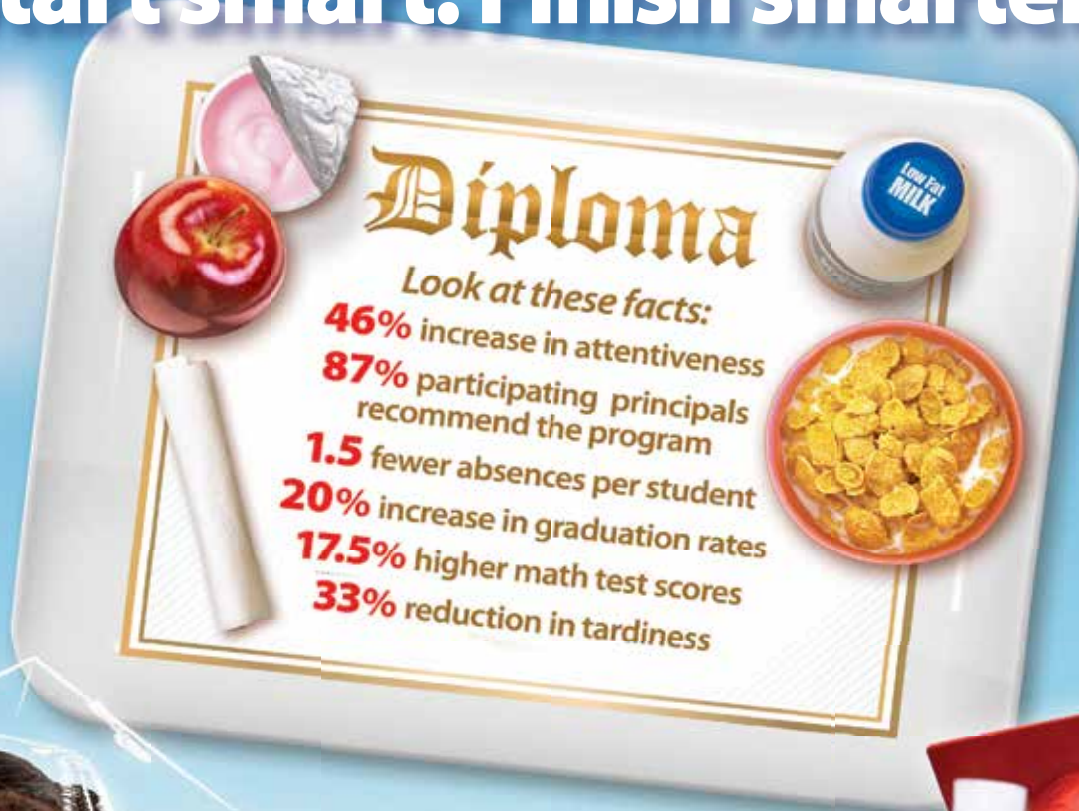
steeped in the research and practice know that this is an ill-informed misconception with significant consequences for our students. There is no research basis in the claim that PARCC/NJSLA will help reduce the common concern that too many students are not college ready and require remedial course work. Nor is there research that shows PARCC/NJSLA performance is a predictor of future success.

There is, however, research that confirms that a student’s transcript (high school grades) is what makes a high school diploma truly meaningful and gives the most accurate picture of a student’s readiness for college and career. (See FairTest, 2009. “High School Grades Better Predictors of College Graduation.” *FairTest Examiner*. See also Hiss, William, 2014. “Defining Promise: Optional Standardized Testing Policies in American College and University Admissions.”)

If we truly want to ensure that our students are career and college ready, we must create a system that cultivates the knowledge, skills and understanding students need to be successful in life beyond high school. Passing a standardized assessment does not indicate whether or not one will be successful in any given career. What successful performance on statewide standardized assessment does indicate is a reflection of the income levels of the community in which a student resides.

It’s time for the state of New Jersey to provide students and schools across our wonderfully diverse state with the supports that we need to thrive. By reducing statewide standardized testing, we can put the emphasis back on teaching and learning and reallocate a significant portion of the statewide assessment budget to provide social, emotional, and community-based supports to our students. If we truly want to enhance equity for our students and increase our standards, our policies and practices must match our words. 🏡

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SAVE THE DATE

EQUITY ALLIANCE CONFERENCE NJEA'S PREMIER SOCIAL JUSTICE EVENT

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human and Civil Rights Celebration AWARDS:

THE EQUITY ALLIANCE IS:

- The Human and Civil Rights Committee
- The Women in Education Committee
- The Urban Education Committee
- The Exceptional Children Committee
- The Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Committee
- The Minority Leadership & Recruitment Committee

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human and Civil Rights Award
 - Elizabeth A. Allen Women in Education Award
 - Equality Champion Award
 - Judith Owens Spirit Award

FRIDAY – JANUARY 10, 2020

Dinner, Opening Session, Entertainment

SATURDAY – JANUARY 11, 2020

Workshops, Lunch, Reception, Exhibits

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human and
Civil Rights Celebration



SATURDAY SPEAKER:
KERON BLAIR
*Author, Advocate,
and Speaker*



**SATURDAY
ENTERTAINMENT:**
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Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity • Minority Leadership & Recruitment

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FRIDAY & SATURDAY JAN 10-11, 2020

Registration for workshops and the Human and Civil Rights Celebration will be open November 1, 2019 and will be available for print at njea.org/eac.