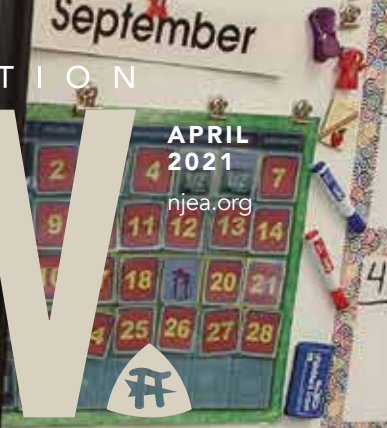


# REVIEW

*an education and advocacy resource*



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EXPLORING  
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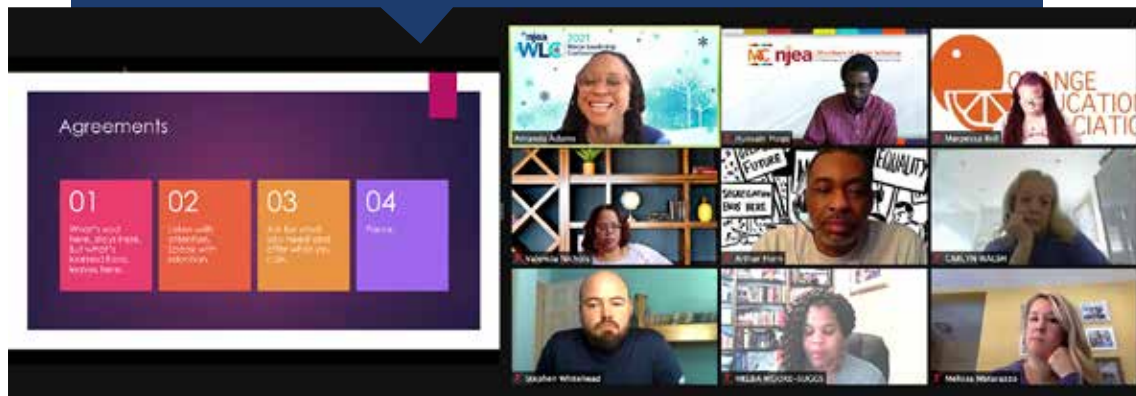
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NJEA members and staff participate in a discussion during the **NJEA Winter Leadership Conference workshop**, Advocating for Trauma Informed Care in Our School. From top and l-r: Amanda Adams, Hussain Haqq, Marpessa Bell, Valencia Nichols, Arthur Horn, Carlyn Walsh, Stephen Whitehead, Melba Moore-Suggs and Melissa Matarazzo.

# I AM NJEA



In December 2019, the students of Karen Carter, a **Wallkill Valley Education Association** member, visited the residents at Bristol Glen Assisted Living in Newton. Unable to visit this year, they have been pen-pals with the residents since September. For the last two years, Carter's students have also written Valentine's Day cards to U.S troops in conjunction with New York's NASH 94.7 country music station.



NJEA member **Theresa Kerney** and Rep. **Tom Malinowski** speak to each other in Polish following a press conference at Rowan College of South Jersey in Deptford marking the expansion of access to educators for the COVID-19 vaccine. Malinowski had referenced his Polish heritage during the press conference while noting the frigid temperatures that day. Kerney, a cosmetology teacher at the Gloucester County Institute of Technology, was among the first New Jersey educators to receive the COVID-19 vaccine when access was expanded. See Page 20.



Sheila Caldwell, BSN, RN, CSN-NJ, the school nurse at **Cliffwood Elementary School** in the Matawan-Aberdeen School District, receives her second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. She posted this photo of herself on the NJEA Member of Color Facebook page.

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## VOTE



### 10 | NJEA OFFICER ELECTION: MEET THE CANDIDATES

Three candidates are vying for the office of NJEA secretary-treasurer in this month's NJEA elections. On these pages you'll hear directly from the candidates as well as see the experience they will bring to the office. Elections are conducted by mail-in ballot. Your ballot should have already arrived in the mail.



### 26 | YOUNG PEOPLE OF CHARACTER

Young People of Character (YPOC) is a character-building club at Loring Flemming Elementary School in Gloucester Township. It is built on four pillars: love of self, love of family, love of school and love of community. The club is evidence of the adage that one never knows where the influence of a teacher ends. YPOC was founded on the inspiration of its creator's experiences in his childhood sixth-grade classroom.

BY ANGEL SANTIAGO



### 32 | VISIONS CREDIT UNION SUPPORTS STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS

Visions Federal Credit Union has committed to a \$1 million grant to NJEA to be used for the benefit of NJEA members and their students. Payable over 10 years, the first installment of the grant will support the creation of the NJEA Racial and Social Justice Institute. Credit unions have a long history of support for educators, and with a branch inside Leonia High School, Visions is building career opportunities for students.

BY DAWN HILTNER AND SUE VIGILANTE



### 34 | EXPLORING CHILDHOOD WITH HIGH SCHOOLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS

"Be the teacher you wish you had" is the motto at the core of Exploring Childhood, a course at Morris Knolls High School where high schoolers prepare and deliver lessons to preschoolers. The tech savvy high school students were an asset to the program when it was forced to go virtual in March of 2020.

BY LAURA RICHARDS





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## \$6.4 billion

**Gov. Phil Murphy's proposed state contribution to the pension system. The \$6.4 billion keeps Murphy's promise to contribute 100% of the actuarially determined contribution, and does so a year earlier than planned. As it strengthens our pension system, the governor's decision to make the full contribution early will save taxpayers \$861 million over the next 30 years.**

Source: Budget in Brief: Summary of Budget Recommendations, Fiscal Year 2022.

**NJEA REPORT OF AUDIT 54**  
*Sept. 1 2019 - Aug. 31, 2020*



## GOOD NEWS

### Best in nation in giving children educational opportunities

New Jersey ranks #1 in the "Education Dimension" of the latest Opportunity Index, which rates access to educational opportunities based on birth location.

Source: Opportunity Nation & Measure of America. Opportunity Index 2018: Summary of Findings for States and Counties. 2019. [opportunityindex.org](http://opportunityindex.org)



## On the cover

New Jersey State Teacher of the Year Angel Santiago developed a program at Loring Flemming Elementary School called Young People of Character. Pictured here are students at Loring Flemming prior to the pandemic. See pages 26-31.

**PHOTO BY**  
Angel Santiago



# VOLUME 94 NUMBER 09

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NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

# REVIEW

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## MEMBERSHIP

Active professional: \$991 (full time); \$198.20 (full time \*low-earner); \$495.50 (part time); \$495.50 (on leave); \$198.20 (part time \*low-earner). Active supportive \$483 (full time); \$96.60 (full time \*low-earner); \$241.50 (part time); \$96.60 (part time \*low-earner); \$241.50 (on leave). Retired professional: \$87; \$1,080 (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*. \*Low earner threshold 2020-21 is \$21,200.



# CREATING GREAT VALUE FOR MEMBERS

In this issue, you'll find one of the most important pieces of information about how your union functions and how your hard-earned dollars are spent. The NJEA audit is printed annually in the April issue of the *NJEA Review* to provide members with a detailed look at the state of the union's finances. This is your union and the more you know about it and how it functions, the more likely you are to take an active role in the organization—and a robust, active membership is the only way that unions succeed.

Education is fundamentally a collaborative profession. We rely on each other to educate and care for our students, providing them with the academic, social, emotional and health foundations they need and that can be built upon each subsequent school year.

In much the same way, unions are fundamentally collaborative. We need each member to play their role, to be educated about the rights and responsibilities of union membership, and to bring in people who may feel disengaged so that our combined strength brings about the change that we all need to see in our schools and in our state.

Rest assured that at every level of this union we take seriously the financial contributions members make. It is vitally important that your dues are spent in a responsible way that reflects the priorities of our members. We are proud to provide great value for every single dues dollar.

Advocating for our members' pensions and health benefits, professional interests, negotiating and enforcing high-quality contracts, providing advocacy training and professional development opportunities are just some of the ways that NJEA supports our members' interests. But there are many, many other programs and projects that improve the quality of life for our members and the students we serve. Our union is strong because of our members and we are proud to reflect their values with every dues dollar.

*Marie Blistan*



NJEA President Marie Blistan and GCIT Teacher Theresa Kerney. Kerney was among the first educators in New Jersey to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. See Page 20.

## OFFICERS ONLINE

### MARIE BLISTAN

Facebook

@MarieBlistan: Proud to be with our members in Gloucester County for the launch of the vaccination access for our educators! NJEA Deputy Executive Director Kevin Kelleher, GCEA Pres and VP, Sue Clark and Ryan Griffin, and NJEA Gov Relations Chair Tina Dare were on hand to witness this event. Thank you to Governor Murphy, Senate Pres Sweeney, Congressmen Norcross and Malinowski, Acting Commissioner Allen-McMillan, and Commissioner Persichilli for your work and support to get our state and schools closer to normal! We appreciate your help and collaboration, and we look forward to working out a plan that prioritizes access for all educators, prek-college, throughout our state of New Jersey!!

On Mar. 9, Blistan shared an article highlighting Gov. Murphy's decision to grant educators priority access to COVID-19 vaccines. In this post, Blistan celebrates the newly granted status and thanks some of the instrumental political leaders who paved the way for this change.

### SEAN M. SPILLER

Twitter

@SpillerforNJEA: Congratulations @NASA! Perseverance has landed. Way to go science!

On Feb. 18, Sean M. Spiller congratulated NASA for landing its first-ever remote-controlled vehicle on Mars. The robot, Perseverance, can send high-quality images of the red planet back to Earth. Spiller, a high school science teacher, celebrated the out-of-this-world accomplishment with all his Twitter followers.

### STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

@SteveBeattyNJEA: Thank you Governor Phil Murphy for demonstrating your continuing commitment to public education in NJ and our great NJ public educators. Making the full \$6.4B pension payment for the first time in over 25 years! An additional \$700m to our schools, investing in early childhood education and all the way to higher education!

On Feb. 23, Steve Beatty celebrated arguably the most pro-public education state budget in history, proposed by Gov. Murphy. The proposed budget expands education funding through a wide variety of ways, including increased school funding, increased access to early childhood education and expanded access to tuition-community college. Perhaps most notably, the governor, who NJEA has endorsed for re-election as the Democratic gubernatorial candidate in the June 8 primary, announced he would be making the full \$6.4 billion pension payment one year ahead of schedule.



# KNOW. LEAD. ACT.

## ATTENTION COUNTY AND LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

### HERE'S A GREAT GIFT IDEA FOR YOUR RETIREES-TO-BE

Do you know an NJEA member who is retired or about to retire? The move to retirement can be an exciting time, but it's even better when the New Jersey Retirees' Education Association (NJREA) has your back.

NJREA is a diverse, vibrant organization that helps retirees transition to an exciting time in their lives. From social events and activities to information and resources and money-saving opportunities and travel discounts, NJREA membership is an essential tool to make the most from retirement.

#### Benefits of membership

When you join NJREA, you belong to one of the largest retired public school employee organizations in the nation as well as maintain your membership with NJEA, NEA-Retired, and your County Retired EA (this can be in the county in which you worked or in which you reside, or you can pay to join both).

In addition, you will receive the award-winning NJREA Newsletter, a quarterly publication that keeps you informed about your pension, medical benefits and more. You will also receive the NJEA Review, which has a section on retiree issues every month, and all NEA retiree publications. In addition, [njea.org/njrea](http://njea.org/njrea) has a vast array of resources, but you must be a member to log in.

You will receive assistance from NJEA professional staff on pension and medical benefits questions, in addition to assistance on all retirement concerns. This service is only available to dues-paying NJREA members.

Members also receive personal Legal Services – free consultation and 30% discount on services; Buyer's Edge, Inc.—guaranteed best prices negotiated on your behalf on major purchases; NEA Members Insurance Trust—term life insurance; association-sponsored auto and home insurance; NJEA Member Discount Program; ACCESS discounts; lowest prices on eyewear; NJEA travel discounts, and NEA financial programs.

Interested? Email John Carlson, NJREA second vice-president at [jcarlson@njea.org](mailto:jcarlson@njea.org) to learn how to buy your retirees the gift of NJREA membership.

## NJEA OPPOSES EDTPA AS CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

NJEA is strongly opposed to the continued use of edTPA as a requirement for obtaining New Jersey teaching certification. In addition to NJEA's overall concerns about the use of high-stakes standardized assessment in education generally, the edTPA poses serious equity issues related to both cost and technology access. As with other areas of assessment, NJEA believes that locally developed formative and summative measures are far superior to one-size-fits-all commercially developed products like edTPA.

While NJEA believes it's important for teachers to have strong pedagogical practices and use data to drive decisions, edTPA does not reflect day-to-day teacher experiences. EdTPA completion is a long, complicated process that takes time away from more effective teaching and learning exercises. Further, the final edTPA product is scored by one individual at Pearson whose subjective judgements can sabotage the career of a promising educator.

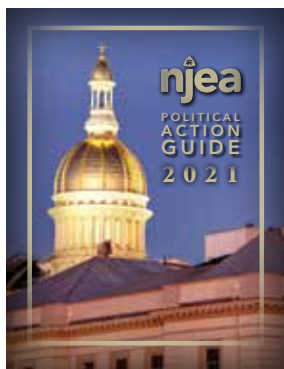
During the pandemic, preservice educators have been working with experienced teachers under adverse conditions that sometimes change daily. Preservice and novice teachers are gaining valuable experiences and insights during the pandemic that cannot be reflected in a standardized assessment

*This high stakes testing environment  
is exactly what NJEA opposes.*

instrument like edTPA that was not normed to these modes of teaching.

Not only is edTPA an arduous process, but it is yet another cost students must pay out-of-pocket. College and university students pay \$300 to create an edTPA account with Pearson. If students do not pass, they must pay another fee to retake either a section or the entire assessment. This high-stakes testing environment is exactly what NJEA opposes. Teaching candidates already pay high college tuition and spend upwards of \$1,000 to pay for Praxis exams and various fees associated with being a full-time student teacher. EdTPA is yet another expense that does not contribute to the effectiveness of the preservice teacher.

NJEA has collected ample anecdotal evidence from our preservice, alternate route and current teacher members since the implementation of edTPA. That evidence bears witness, even prior to the pandemic, to the overwhelming burdens and unreasonable financial hardships that result from mandating that assessment. At a time when New Jersey is appropriately focused on equity in education and is working to diversify our teacher workforce, edTPA exacerbates existing inequities and serves as a further obstacle to otherwise highly skilled and qualified teaching candidates. EdTPA is wrong for New Jersey and is an impediment to maintaining the teacher workforce our students need and deserve.



## GET YOUR 2021 NJEA POLITICAL ACTION GUIDE

NJEA members know that as educators and advocates, it is our responsibility to engage in political action. To make that responsibility easier, NJEA's Government Relations Division has produced a digital Political Action Guide that contains the information you need to influence your

elected leaders, from your local school board to the U.S. Congress. You can download the guide at [actioncenter.njea.org](http://actioncenter.njea.org).





## REGISTER FOR THE COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS WORKSHOP

### May 1 on a virtual platform

Learn ways to keep your members informed and ready for action by attending the virtual NJEA Communications Tools Workshop on Saturday, May 1 at 9 a.m.

The NJEA Communications Tools Workshop is the perfect place for local and county association editors, social media teams and public relations committee members to strengthen their message development and delivery skills.

The day begins with a brief opening program followed by two hourlong workshop sessions.

The schedule and workshop choices will be:

**9-9:20 a.m.** – Opening session

**9:25-10:25 a.m.** – Session One

- NJEASites User Roundtable – NJEASites users will discuss features of the platform, share feedback and hear about digital tools available with the latest WordPress theme. This workshop is for local and county associations already using NJEASites.
- Newsletters – Acquire tips and tricks to produce top-notch publication and get your members to read what you write.
- Social Media for Local Associations – Learn how to set up and manage Facebook and/or Instagram pages for your local association.

**10:40-11:40 a.m.** – Session Two

- NJEASites Digital Tools: Sendy Creator – Learn how to use Sendy Creator to email your members. Note: To use Sendy, you need an NJEASites website in the latest Ocean theme, and an email address

At the 2018 Communications Tools Workshop, attendees practice their new smartphone photography skills.



at your website's domain. This workshop is for associations already using NJEASites.

- Smartphone Photography 101 – Learn the key principles of taking compelling, sharable photos on your phone.
- Let's Give Them Something to Talk About – Learn how to tell a compelling story using video. We will guide you on how to compose a great shot and conduct a powerful interview that you can edit and share. Bring your cellphone, computer and any camera equipment you plan to use.

### Registration

Register at [njea.org/commtools](http://njea.org/commtools). The deadline to register is April 26.

Challenge Yourself  
Challenge Your Students  
**Change the World**



NEW JERSEY CENTER  
FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

NJCTL, a nonprofit charitable organization founded by NJEA, is the #1 producer of U.S. physics teachers and licensed by New Jersey as an Institution of Higher Education.

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[njctl.org/challenge](http://njctl.org/challenge)  
[info@njctl.org](mailto:info@njctl.org)



"On my first day in office, if elected, I will review the dues structure and language from the Bylaws and Constitution to present a process at the Delegate Assembly to freeze, limit or cap the NJEA dues for the next two years of my term. As you review my qualifications from above, it is clear that I, Denise King, have extensive experience guiding, advising, and managing at the local, county, and state levels. It is

from these capacities and successful leadership that I am your candidate!" – Denise King

"Denise King is a dynamic leader, excellent communicator, exceptionally knowledgeable and an advocate for members. We agree." –Sarah Reichenbecher, FREA President; John Napolitani, MCEA VP; Jo-Anne Montanti, NJEA County Executive; Gail Maher, WTEA President, Mike Reilly, TOEA President; Lois Yukna, MCEA President, Len Sobel, MCREA President; Erin Wheeler, MCVEA President; Sue Davis, NJEA County Executive; Brian Geoffroy, PCA President; Pam Falocco, UFREA President; Tim Simonitis, PEA President; Jay Graham, HTEA VP Michael McDonald, MHCA President

## Candidate for NJEA Secretary-Treasurer

# Denise King

### Educational Position – Holmdel Township Public Schools

- K-12 Art Teacher
- Mentor and Cooperating Teacher
- School Re-Opening Committee
- District Instructional & Building Council
- Scheduling / DEAC / Evaluation Committee
- Yearbook Advisor duties including budgeting and marketing

### Education

- M.A. in Art, William Patterson University
- B.A. in Art and Elementary Education, Goucher College

### Holmdel Township Education Association

- President
- Vice President
- Negotiations Committee
- Grievance Committee Chair
- Association Representative
- Legislative Action Chair
- LAFAP Applications
- PRIDE

### Monmouth County Education Association

- President
- Budget Committee
- Scholarship Committee
- Collective Bargaining Council

### New Jersey Education Association

- UniServ Consultant
- Delegate Assembly
- PAC Operating Committee
- Congressional Contact Committee
- Health Benefits Committee
- Art Educators of New Jersey

### National Education Association

- NEA Representative Assembly Delegate
- NEA Health & Safety Symposium Representative

# NJEA elections begin April 1

## Vote now: ballots must be received by noon April 15

NJEA will hold its elections in April for NJEA's statewide officers and county (and other unit) representatives. This year, approximately one-third of the Executive Committee and approximately one-half of the Delegate Assembly and Delegate Assembly Alternates will be elected.

Information provided by the candidates running for NJEA secretary-treasurer will appear in this edition *NJEA Review*.

Balloting is conducted with the assistance of an outside vendor. A ballot and a postage-paid return envelope are sent to each member. The ballot will come via first class mail at the address currently on file. A paper ballot will be used. Complete instructions for voting will be contained in the ballot mailing. To be counted, voted ballots must be mailed to the address specified in the ballot mailing. Ballots sent to any other address will not be counted.

Elections will be held between April 1 and noon of April 15. In order to be counted, ballots **must be received** at the address indicated in the ballot mailing no later than noon on April 15.

Current NJEA vice president, Sean M. Spiller, was the only candidate for president and was declared elected to that position for the 2021-23 term. Current NJEA secretary-treasurer, Steve Beatty, was the only candidate for vice president and was declared elected to that position for the 2021-23 term.

For complete elections rules and procedures, visit [njea.org/njeaelections](http://njea.org/njeaelections).





"Our union thrives when we advocate for ALL members—creating opportunities, protecting rights, and fighting for what our members deserve. As a local president, I recognized the need for my members to have a safe workspace, so I organized a successful job action to keep my members protected. I saw a need to uplift the voices of ALL members in NJEA, so I created the Visions and Voices initiative, highlighting women in education, ESPs,

and strategies for organizing around COVID. Our members deserve leaders with the courage and experience to take action. That is what a union is all about!" – *Petal Robertson*

Petal can bring us together to fight for our priorities. We need her on the state level organizing us into an unstoppable force. – *Sue Butterfield, President, Passaic County EA*

She advocates for equity and diversity in both active and retired union leadership and will listen, evaluate and offer guidance – *Judy Perkins, President, New Jersey Retirees EA*

Petal knows how to bring people together to get the best for all members. – *Sue Clark, President, Gloucester County EA*

## Candidate for NJEA Secretary-Treasurer

# Petal Robertson

### Educational Position – Montclair Public Schools

- High School English Teacher Committee
- Yearbook Advisor duties including budgeting and marketing

### Education

- M.A Secondary Education
- BA English
- BA Communications

### Montclair Education Association

- President
- Vice President
- Negotiations Chair
- Restorative Justice Coordinator
- Social Chair
- Association Representative

### Essex County Education Association

- NJEA Delegate Assembly Representative for Essex County
- Budget Committee Member
- Human and Civil Rights Committee Member

### New Jersey Education Association

- Executive Committee Member
- Strengthening Locals Committee
- Pandemic Relief Sub-Committee
- NJEA PAC Operating Committee
- Ch. 78 Steering Committee

### National Education Association

- NCUEA New Local Presidents Trainer
- NEA Panel Presenter on Racial Justice

### Other activities

- Creator of Visions and Voices Member Roundtable Discussions
- NJEA Members of Color Network Facilitator
- NEA CAPE grant recipient
- Restorative Practices Facilitator
- Creator of Montclair Community Conversations
- Racial Justice work with Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest
- Diversity and Inclusion Facilitator for Bank of NY Mellon Global Strategy and Product Management



"Kudos to us—teachers, ESPs, and retirees—our commitment has made New Jersey's school system the best in the nation! We must continue our social justice journey while collaborating to strengthen our dedication to members. Investing in our future—Early Career members and Aspiring Educators—sustains our profession. When members' voices guide budget decisions, our shared priorities become a reality, and membership will mean more than just 'paying

dues.' Building on internal relationships to educate and engage all units of our Association to fight unfair attacks and uphold our belief in quality public education for all students makes us STRONGER." – *Brenda Brathwaite*

"When joining the Budget Committee, Brenda approached me to help her learn the budget, now she is READY to use that knowledge as Secretary-Treasurer. Great idea!" – *Peter Helff, Higher Education - Bergen County*

"CSTANJ appreciates Brenda's support of the CSforAll initiative, a collaborative effort for equitable CS education. CSTANJ looks forward to working with Brenda and NJEA to prepare teachers implementing CS Standards 2022."

– *Daryl Detrick, Computer Science Teachers Association of NJ - Advocacy Chair*

## Candidate for NJEA Secretary-Treasurer

# Brenda Brathwaite

### Educational Position – Atlantic City Public Schools

- Eighth-Grade Math & Algebra I Teacher

### Education – Stockton University

- Ed.D. Candidate in Organizational Leadership
- M.A./B.A., Elementary Math Education
- B.A., Economics

### Atlantic City Education Association

- Treasurer
- LAT Chair
- Building Representative
- Action Committee
- Grant Writer

### Atlantic County Council of Education Associations

- 1st and 2nd Vice President
- PRIDE Chair
- Communications Chair

### Other activities – NJ Superior Court

- Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage (ACMV) Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement
- ACMV Juvenile Justice Improvement Committee
- Juvenile Conference Committee, Family Division

### New Jersey Education Association

- Chair, Amistad Stakeholders Group
- Chair, NJDOE State Professional Learning Committee
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Task Force
- Budget Committee
- Communications Consultant
- Congressional Contact Committee
- Delegate Assembly
- Dues Task Force
- Executive Committee
- NEA Issues Committee
- Pandemic Relief Funds Subcommittee
- Political Action Committee (PAC) Operating Committee
- Professional Development Committee
- Property and Personnel Committee
- Resolutions Committee, Senior Member

### National Education Association

- Chair, Resolutions Committee-Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee
- Board Black Caucus
- Board of Directors
- Delegate NEA-RA, 2008-2020
- ESP Conference Presenter
- Facilitator, Confronting White Nationalism in Schools
- Facilitator, Leaders for Just Schools
- Read Across America Committee



This September, I will be honored to serve as your NJEA president as we stand together celebrating our accomplishments and facing our challenges. As the first African American man to be president of NJEA, I am proud to follow in the footsteps of Judy Owens, the first, and until now only, African American person to be president of NJEA. Our association will remain a leader in advocating for our profession, protecting our members' interests and demanding the conditions needed for student success. Working together, we will always be among the top states in the nation for public education and champions for economic, social and education justice. Thank you for your support." – Sean M. Spiller

## NJEA President-elect

# Sean M. Spiller

### Educational Position – Wayne Township Public Schools

- High School Science Teacher

### Education

- M.S. Ramapo College
- B.A. Rutgers College/Rutgers University

### Wayne Education Association

- President
- Vice President
- Grievance Committee
- Government Relations Committee
- Public Relations Committee
- Safety and Security Committee
- Strike Avoidance and Negotiation Committee
- NJEA Union School

### National Education Association

- State Officers Association
- NEA Charter Taskforce Member
- NEA Vice President Training Committee
- NEA Community Schools Committee
- NEA Audit Committee

### New Jersey Education Association

- Liaison to New Jersey Teacher of the Year program
- Ex-officio to all NJEA Committees
- NJEA Vice President
- NJEA Secretary-Treasurer
- NJEA NEA Candidate Screening Committee Chair
- NJEA Member Voices Podcast Host
- NJEA Delegate Assembly Ethnic Minority Representative

### Other activities

- Mayor, Montclair, N.J.
- Chair: Sustainable Jersey for Schools Health and Wellness Task Force
- Vice President: Work Environment Council (WEC)
- Board Member: Project Re-Direct Youth and Family Services
- Member: NJTV Community Advisory Board
- NJCA Board Member
- Governor's NJ State Public Bank Committee Member
- NJ Black Issues Conference Board Member
- NJ Community Schools Coalition Board Member
- NJ Working Families Board Member
- CCSSO's Diverse & Learner Ready Teachers Initiative Committee Member
- NAACP Life Member
- Spearheaded Runaway Income Inequality Partnership—designed to close the gap



"I continue to be grateful for the confidence NJEA members placed in me four years ago when you elected me your secretary-treasurer. I will honor that confidence as I become your NJEA vice president in September. Remaining steadfast in fighting for the rights of members and students, committed to a better today and a brighter tomorrow for our schools and communities with New Jersey educators, leading the way is our way!" – Steve Beatty

## NJEA Vice President-elect

# Steve Beatty

### Educational Position – Bridgewater-Raritan Public Schools

- High School Social Studies Teacher

### Education

- M.A. Art of Teaching, Marygrove College
- B.A. History, Rutgers University
- Cornell University Industrial & Labor Relations school – Labor Relations Collective Bargaining Certificate
- Rutgers University Labor Relations School – Public Sector Labor Relations Certificate Program

### Bridgewater-Raritan Education Association

- President
- 2nd Vice President
- Chair: Grievance
- Negotiations Team; chief association representative;

### Somerset County Education Association

- President
- 2nd Vice President
- Government Relations Committee
- Legislative Action Team Chairperson
- Association Representative

### National Education Association

- Delegate: NEA Representative Assembly
- N.J. Chair for PAC Fundraising
- NCSEA Representative

### New Jersey Education Association

- Liaison: NJREA
- Liaison: NJEA LGBTQ+ Initiative and SOGI Committee
- Past Chair: Government Relations Committee
- Chair: NJEA Budget Committee
- Secretary-Treasurer, County Presidents Council
- Gubernatorial Screening Committee
- NJEA Delegate Assembly
- Pension Fellow
- NJEA Union School

### Other activities

- ACEs Task Force Chair
- SEL4NJ Liaison
- Overall educator recruitment – emphasis on BIPOC through work with Center for Future Educators and NJACTE
- 200K Conversations Initiative
- Rutgers Labor Management Collaborative
- REAL – Member Advisory Council
- Leaders for Just Schools State Coordinator
- Liaison for NJREA, Higher Education, and NJEA Preservice
- Healthy Schools Now Steering Committee/Coalition Member
- NJSBA Task Force on Post Pandemic Academic and Social Emotional Support
- Milken Foundation Educator Award Panelist



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# COOL STUFF

## YOGI BERRA MUSEUM OFFERS ENGAGING, VIRTUAL, LIVE LEARNING



The Yogi Berra Museum and Learning Center, located on the campus of Montclair University, is offering a variety of live virtual field trips, educational programs and professional development opportunities to support educators during the pandemic. The museum's sports-based education initiatives promote the values that made Hall of Famer Yogi Berra—respect, excellence, perseverance and teamwork—through interdisciplinary and series programs. The museum's hands-on, interactive, live field trips (grades 4-12)—now offered remotely—include these content areas: STEM; Poetry/Spoken Word; Standing Up/Civil Rights; and Discover Greatness: The History of the Negro Leagues. Online lesson plans and professional development for teachers of middle and high school students include topics addressing race, gender, immigration and financial literacy through the lens of sports. In support of Yogi's legacy of acceptance and inclusion, the Yogi Berra Museum and Learning Center holds a policy that no school or group will be turned away by an inability to pay for programs. All programs are low-cost, and scholarships are available to ensure access for all. Visit [yogiberramuseum.org/learn](http://yogiberramuseum.org/learn) or email Jenny Pollack, education director, at [pollackj@montclair.edu](mailto:pollackj@montclair.edu) for more information.



## RUTGERS SCIENCE EXPLORER INVESTIGATES CELLS

Certain cells in our bodies have the unique ability to change and develop into different types of cells. They are called stem cells. If you and your students want to learn more about the unique abilities of stem cells, the way scientists are working to use these cells in the lab, and to meet a scientist, sign up! For more information, contact the program at [rusciencebus@gmail.com](mailto:rusciencebus@gmail.com). You can learn more at [sciencebus.rutgers.edu](http://sciencebus.rutgers.edu) and by searching "Rutgers Science Explorer" on Facebook and Instagram.



## TOUGH TIMES? AID-NJEA CAN HELP

The AID-NJEA helpline has served NJEA members and their families for over 10 years. NJEA members and their families have access to this free and confidential service 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Educators and school counselors are on the line from noon until 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and until 6 p.m. on Fridays to provide peer-to-peer support and information to callers. In addition, University Behavioral Health Care provides mental health professionals who answer the helpline during all other hours for 24/7 coverage.

Callers seeking help from AID-NJEA can count on:

- Help from a staff of Education Support Specialists experienced in education and trained in behavioral health
- Immediate personal response — a "real voice" with no buttons to push
- Access to thousands of resources from the AID-NJEA Information Directory
- High quality help by telephone with personal, family and school-related demands.

Why handle tough times alone? Whether you are a new teacher, a support staff member, or a retired school employee, AID-NJEA has people on the line who can provide guidance and information to help. Dial 866-AID-NJEA (243-6532) or email [helpline@njea.org](mailto:helpline@njea.org).

AID-NJEA is a program or partnership between the New Jersey Education Association and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care.

## NEA'S SCHOOL ME PODCAST

The National Education Association's "School Me" podcast empowers seasoned educators to use their years of experience and wisdom to help early career and preservice educators get started on the right foot. If you're new to education, the School Me podcast brings you advice from educators who have been there, done that. Get educator-focused advice, classroom management tips, lesson plan ideas, and inspiring stories to help strengthen your career.

To start listening visit [nea.org/schoolme](http://nea.org/schoolme) or search "School Me" and from wherever you listen to podcasts.





# How to *write* for the NJEA Review

## WHAT CAN I SUBMIT FOR PUBLICATION?

### Feature article

*Review* feature articles address areas of interest to NJEA members. This is an opportunity to help your colleagues improve their skills by describing a successful approach or strategy. A feature article should range between 1,400 and 2,000 words. Remember to use subheads to break up sections; consider listing resources or tips as a separate sidebar.

### Letter to the editor

Respond to content that has appeared in the *Review* by submitting a letter to the editor that is about 250 words or less. A letter/email must be received by the 10th of the month in order for it to appear in the subsequent issue (e.g., Sept. 10 for the October *Review*).

### Quick tip

Do you have a great idea regarding classroom management? A better way to complete a mundane task? A favorite website? An app you and your students can't live without? The *Review's* "Bulletin Board" column includes quick tips from experts like you. Submissions should be 250 words or less.

### Speak out

This occasional column lets members opine about a hot topic in education. If you have strong feelings about a current issue that would be of interest to other members, speak out in an essay of 650 words or less.

### I Am NJEA

Are you involved in a local, county or state association activity such as a workshop, a rally, a meeting, a protest or other event? Consider snapping a few photos to be considered for this page, which consists primarily of photos and captions of members engaged in association activities. Make sure your local president is informed if you are sending photos from local association events and activities.

### Proud moments

Has your local association used Pride funds to promote our great public schools? Send a brief description and your best photo to [ProudMoments@njea.org](mailto:ProudMoments@njea.org).

### Toolbox

If you have a great way to incorporate technology to boost student learning, consider writing about it in the "Toolbox" column. Share your expertise in 1,000 words or less.

## HOW DO I SUBMIT FOR PUBLICATION?

### Submitting content

Email submissions to [njeareview@njea.org](mailto:njeareview@njea.org). Be sure to include your name and contact information, the name of your district and what you do there, the name of your local association, as well as the name and contact information of your local association president. Submissions for the Proud Moments page can be sent to [proudmoments@njea.org](mailto:proudmoments@njea.org).

### The review process

You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your submission, but the review process can take several weeks. Please be patient; the editor will get back to you and let you know if we will use your submission. You may be asked to revise the piece but will be given specific suggestions on what needs to be changed.

If your submission is not accepted for publication in the *Review*, don't be discouraged! While your article may not be right for the *Review*, it may be appropriate for another publication. All submissions, even letters to the editor, may be edited for length, style and content.



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# NJ SUPREME COURT RECOGNIZES PUBLIC BENEFITS OF RELEASE TIME ARRANGEMENTS

BY KAITLYN DUNPHY, ESQ.

NJEA and its public-sector union allies recently earned a big win in the New Jersey Supreme Court. On Feb. 3, the state Supreme Court ruled that local boards of education are permitted to pay the salaries of full-time-release association leaders who are on release time to perform association-related work.

The lawsuit, *Rozenblit v. Lyles*, was filed in January of 2017 by two Jersey City taxpayers and backed by the Goldwater Institute, a conservative and libertarian organization. Moshe Rozenblit and his fellow plaintiff alleged that boards of education do not have the authority to pay school district staff for the performance of release-time work. Specifically, they claimed that school boards lack the authority to do so under the education laws that govern them, and that the practice is an unconstitutional use of taxpayer money prohibited by the state constitution's Gift Clause.

The plaintiffs in the case challenged a provision in the collective bargaining agreement between the Jersey City Education Association and the board of education in which the district pays the salary and benefits to the full-time release local association president and his or her designee. The challenge threatened similar practices in local associations throughout the state, both for NJEA affiliates and even for other public-sector unions. It is a practice that has existed across the state for decades.

In August of 2019, the Appellate Division of the Superior Court ruled against JCEA and the Jersey City Board of Education and in favor of Rozenblit. The state Supreme Court reversed that

“  
*The efforts and service of our local association leaders, whether they have negotiated release time or not, are essential to the smooth operation of New Jersey's public schools.*”

decision. Now the release time practice has been sanctioned by the highest court in the state. The state Supreme Court found that the education laws permit boards of education to pay salaries and benefits for staff members on release time under their broad powers to grant leaves of absence. As a result, the contractual provisions providing for release time are valid and enforceable.

## RELEASE TIME SERVES A PUBLIC PURPOSE

The court found that the practice is constitutional, rejecting the plaintiffs' arguments that the payment of salaries and benefits to release

time staff were unconstitutional “gifts.” The focus of the court's inquiry was whether the payment of release time served a public purpose. Because the court found that it does, it concluded that release time provisions were not an unconstitutional use of public funds.

The public benefits of release time are numerous and were recognized by the court in its opinion. Release time promotes the prevention and settlement of labor disputes. Release time leaders often mediate disputes and resolve conflicts between the district and members, both individually and collectively. They contribute to the processing and resolution of grievances, as well as the clarification of and compliance with school policies. They also help to promote labor stability and enhance the delivery of public services, such as through their collective bargaining work.

These are only some examples of how release time benefits the members of the bargaining unit, as well as the employer's interests, through facilitation of effective and harmonious labor management relationships.

The many benefits of release-time arrangements were clearly and decisively recognized by the New Jersey Supreme Court in this landmark case. This is consistent with long-term practices throughout the state and with what NJEA has always known to be true—that the efforts and service of our local association leaders, whether they have negotiated release time or not, are essential to the smooth operation of New Jersey's public schools. 🇺🇸

*Kaitlyn Dunphy is an associate director of NJEA Legal Services and Member Rights in the NJEA Executive Office. She can be reached at [kdunphy@njea.org](mailto:kdunphy@njea.org).*



# NJEA Report

## NJEA honors achievement at ESP Conference



### KIMBERLY SCOTT-HAYDEN HONORED AS ESP OF THE YEAR

At the NJEA Educational Support Professionals (ESP) Conference, held virtually on Feb. 6, Kimberly Scott-Hayden was honored as the 2021 NJEA Educational Support Professional of the Year. She is an inventory control clerk and an assistant to the supervisor of Security Services for the East Orange School District. A 1988 graduate of East Orange's Clifford J. Scott High School, she has been employed by

the district since 1995.

Scott-Hayden was featured in the February 2021 edition of the NJEA Review. See [njea.org/a-lifetime-of-giving](http://njea.org/a-lifetime-of-giving).

Scott-Hayden's work touches every student in the district. She is responsible for handling all assets for the district that are \$200 or above. She ensures supplies are properly inventoried and tagged, she works with her four colleagues to ensure that shipping and receiving, mail, and in-district supplies for students including paper, pencils, and computers are delivered, barcoded, logged in and distributed appropriately.

Scott-Hayden is also the chair of the NJEA Human and Civil Rights Committee and is an active member of the NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group. The state's Amistad mandate is intended to teach the history of Africans and African Americans in the United States and their role in building this nation. The NJEA Amistad Stakeholder Group, created in 2018, is a coalition of education stakeholders representing educators, parents, school and district administrators, education advocates and the New Jersey Department of Education, which seeks to ensure that the mandate is fully implemented.

"As chair of the NJEA Human and Civil Rights Committee, we included all our Equity Alliance chairs as part of that work; we all needed a seat at the table," Scott-Hayden said. "I brought the information about Amistad to my district when it first became law. We are 90 percent African American in our district and our staff is very diverse, but we have not done what we needed to do to educate our students about the role Africans and African Americans have played in American history."

NJEA President Marie Blistan presented the award to Scott-Hayden.

"Kim has made her career out of ensuring all those around her are inspired to work," Blistan said. "She brings people together, lifts them and helps them move forward. She makes the world around her a better place, and it shows."

### COUNTY ESPS OF THE YEAR HONORED

The NJEA ESP of the Year is selected from among the County ESPs of the Year submitted by county education associations across the state.

Calling it an honor to introduce the County ESPs of the Year, NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller said, "As the pandemic has shown us, our educational support professionals are essential to the success of our schools, picking up and completing tasks well beyond job descriptions, to make sure our students and staff remain safe in such precarious times. We are number one in the nation, because our entire school community cares about each child from the minute they are picked up at their home, to healthy breakfasts and lunches, to clean buildings, to beautiful schools, and working Chromebooks."



Scott Elliott and Ruth Cahill

### RUTH CAHILL NAMED FRIEND OF ESP

At the conference, Ruth Cahill, an English as a second language teacher at Phillipsburg Elementary School, was named the 2021 Friend of ESP.

In presenting the award, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty explained that the Friend of ESP Award may be bestowed upon any

person or organization whose leadership, acts, dedication, commitment and support on the statewide level have proven that person or organization to be a true friend of and advocate for ESPs and their contributions to public education and students.

"Ruth is a fierce advocate for her ESP colleagues," Beatty said. "She is known for her compassion, both in and out of the classroom."

Cahill was nominated by Scott Elliott, a paraprofessional at Phillipsburg Elementary School, where he has worked closely with her, both during the regular school day and in a federally funded after-school program known as REACH, at Phillipsburg Middle School. Elliott noted that Cahill respects ESPs as colleagues, ensuring they have a say in her lessons, incorporating their ideas into her instruction.

"This powerhouse is not only a champion for the students she teachers, but she is an advocate for educational support professionals as well," Elliott said. "Ruth puts her heart and soul into public education and shows that she puts others first in their time of need."

Putting others first was at the forefront in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, when Cahill rolled up her sleeves in Staten Island and Brooklyn to clean up wet drywall, while she opened her heart to offer emotional support to those devastated by the storm. Cahill went to both boroughs as a volunteer with her church, and she credited her experience with the Phillipsburg Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) with preparing her to be an effective volunteer. Cahill has been a volunteer with CERT, which assists emergency responders, for more than eight years.

A graduate of New Jersey's Irvington Public Schools, Cahill has been a member of the Phillipsburg Education Association since March of 2001. During that time, she has served in many capacities as an educator and community activist.

Cahill decided to pursue a career in education at an early age, graduating from C.W. Post College of Long Island University with a double major in education and French while obtaining her K-12 certification in French. She went on to earn K-12 ESL certification at Kean University and pursue a master's degree in English as a second language, also from Kean.

"I have personally seen the crucial impact of ESPs in every aspect of education," Cahill said. "They are often not recognized for their talents, skills and contributions to our school district."

Cahill makes sure to educate her students, her fellow educators and administrators on the contributions of ESP to the school community.

"I try to be a positive addition to their lives," Cahill concluded.

# THE COUNTY **ESP**s OF THE YEAR



## **Bergen**

Irene Grala, Secretary  
Leonia Education  
Association



## **Gloucester**

Christine Eiserman,  
Paraeducator  
Greenwich Township  
Education Association



## **Passaic**

Carol Occhuzzi, Secretary  
Wayne Education  
Association



## **Burlington**

Sandra Boegly, Secretary  
Tabernacle Education  
Association



## **Hudson**

Michael Calderara,  
Maintenance  
West New York  
Education Association



## **Somerset**

Patricia Willenbrock,  
Instructional Assistant  
Somerville Education  
Association



## **Camden**

Barbara Sacchetti,  
Paraprofessional  
Gloucester City  
Education



## **Hunterdon**

Ruth Stieh,  
Paraprofessional  
Clinton Township  
Education Association



## **Sussex**

Elizabeth Yaden,  
Paraprofessional  
Frankford Township  
Education Association



## **Cape May**

Gary O'Shea, Custodian  
Lower Township  
Education Association



## **Morris**

Connie Young, Staff  
Assistant  
Morris Hills Regional  
District Education  
Association



## **Union**

Tonya Scott-Cole,  
Secretary  
Roselle Education  
Association



## **Cumberland**

Temika Langston-Myers,  
Paraprofessional  
Bridgeton School  
Employee Association



## **Mercer**

Patricia Jones,  
Administrative Assistant  
Robbinsville Education  
Association



## **Warren**

Susanne Waldt,  
Paraeducator  
Greenwich Township  
Education Association



## **Essex**

Kimberly Scott-Hayden,  
Inventory Control Clerk  
East Orange Maintenance  
Association



## **Monmouth**

Michael Marino,  
Custodian  
Freehold Education  
Association



# Vaccines for educators launched at Rowan College of South Jersey



Theresa Kerney, a cosmetology teacher at the Gloucester County Institute of Technology, speaks to the importance of vaccinating educators.

At the Rowan College of South Jersey COVID-19 Mega-Vaccination Site, Gloucester County Institute of Technology Teacher Theresa Kerney was among the first educators in the state to receive the COVID-19 vaccine on Saturday, March 6, as the state kicked off the eligibility period for teachers, educational support professionals (ESPs) and childcare professionals. Other educators who were among the first at the RCSJ site were Joanne Walton, Danielle Davis, April Crowley, Lawrence Hurley and Suzanne Belding.

At a press conference following the six educators' shots, NJEA President Marie Blistan and Kerney joined Gov. Phil Murphy, Senate President Steve Sweeney, Rep. Donald Norcross, Rep. Tom Malinowski, acting Commissioner of Education Angelica Allen-McMillan, and Commissioner of Health Judy Persichilli to mark the occasion. Kerney spoke first and introduced the governor.

"I've been an educator for 34 years, and this pandemic has been the most challenging, stressful time for all those years of teaching," Kerney said. "Providing this vaccination opportunity to teachers and support staff will greatly reduce the danger that COVID-19 currently presents to everyone in New Jersey. It will allow educators across the state to continue working safely and provide our students with the great education they all deserve."

**“Educators who have not yet scheduled their vaccinations, may go to [covid19.nj.gov/vaccine](https://covid19.nj.gov/vaccine) to access registration information.”**

Offering a dose of reality in the midst of the optimism created by the vaccines, Murphy announced the number of new infections, hospitalizations and deaths caused by COVID-19 as of March 6. The broader availability of the vaccine, he said, will move those numbers in a better direction.

"What we are witnessing today is about doing what is best for Theresa and her colleagues not just here but around the state, and what is best for all of our educational communities in getting all of our schools back open safely for in-person instruction," Murphy said. "These have always been our goals. This is the goal I set out when I announced on Monday that it was time for our educators and educational support professionals to get up to bat for their vaccinations."

Murphy noted that enabling educators vaccinated will require flexibility in the scheduling of appointments.

"There are many thousands who are newly

eligible, and we can't expect them to simply walk away from their students mid-lesson for an appointment," Murphy said. "Working across the board, and at all levels, we will have in place the vaccination program that works best for our educators, from hours that don't eat into the school day to dedicated lanes at mega-sites."

Blistan noting the significant impact of educator vaccinations for everyone in the state.

"It's great to be here with fellow educators to witness them getting the vaccine and the relief and excitement they have of seeing their students more regularly inside of our classrooms and our schools," Blistan said. "With 1.4 million students and well over 200,000 adults working in our schools, by vaccinating all of our educators we are making New Jersey safer."

Blistan also lauded Murphy's proposed state budget for the coming fiscal year.

"He has put funds in place that will not only get us through now, but that will take care of our students' needs when we come back full time and we are completely out of this pandemic," Blistan said.

She thanked Sen. Sweeney for his responsiveness to the needs of school buildings, particularly regarding ventilation systems. She also thanked Sweeney, along with Sen. Teresa Ruiz and the governor, for increased internet access for families, getting electronic devices into the hands of students who needed them.

"They followed through in unprecedented ways, and I think there's no one in this country who did more than those three individuals did to make sure that our students had those devices."

Blistan noted more higher education staff must be added to the list of those eligible for the vaccine.

"I urge all of us on this stage to work together so that this vaccine will also be accessible to them right away," Blistan said.

Educators who have not yet scheduled their vaccination, may go to [covid19.nj.gov/vaccine](https://covid19.nj.gov/vaccine) to access registration information.



# Governor's proposed budget includes first full pension contribution in 25 years

FY 2022 state budget investment in the pension system is \$6.4 billion

Gov. Phil Murphy's Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget proposes the first full actuarially determined contribution (ADC) pension payment since 1996. In the ninth year of a 10-year ramp up to the state's full pension contribution, the state was due to pay 90% of the ADC in FY 2022 with the first 100% contribution in FY 2023.

The recommended contribution, including contributions from the State lottery, totals approximately \$6.4 billion. Starting to make the full payment will save New Jersey taxpayers \$861 million over the next 30 years.

The budget also makes significant allocations for state aid to public education from pre-kindergarten

through higher education.

"We applaud Gov. Murphy's strong, progressive budget," said NJEA officers, President Marie Blistan, Vice President Sean M. Spiller and Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty in a joint statement. "It prioritizes support for students, helps New Jersey families and keeps the promises the state made to the educators who make our schools the best in the nation. In a time of unprecedented challenges, this budget points to a brighter future for our children and for all New Jersey residents."

The proposed FY 2022 budget makes good on the governor's promise to public employees by including an additional \$1.6 billion to meet the

goal of a full state pension contribution a year earlier than initially planned.

The combined pension contributions by the Murphy administration in four years will roughly total an unprecedented \$18 billion, which is \$9.4 billion more than the prior governor contributed over two terms.

"The pension funding is certainly welcome news to public employees, who have made their full required contributions every one of those 25 years and who deserve the pensions they have earned through their careers of service to our state," the officers said.

## NJ educators, students crowned reading champs



**Erin Porter's Ocean City Primary School second grade students—dubbed "Team Porter"—were crowned New Jersey Primary Conference Champions in this year's READBowl.**

When it comes to rising to meet a challenge, New Jersey students are never ones to shy away. Educators and students in three New Jersey schools proved that once again as they participated in the annual READBowl earlier this year and emerged as reading champions.

The READBowl, hosted by Super Bowl Champion and acclaimed children's author Malcolm Mitchell through his Read with Malcolm literacy initiative, is the hottest global reading competition for PreK-8 students. Each year, the READBowl commences on the day of the NCAA National Football Champions and runs for four

weeks, concluding on Super Bowl Sunday, as it challenges students from around the world to increase their reading minutes.

Maintaining its football theme, the end of each READBowl week signifies the end of a quarter. After teams input their weekly reading minutes, students are invited into virtual locker rooms where they watch videos from mystery guests who are well-known authors, athletes and celebrities.

Andrea Sarney, an eighth-grade teacher at the Roy W. Brown Middle School in Bergenfield, and her students were crowned the READBowl's New Jersey's Middle Conference Champions. Sarney said the READBowl was fun for her

students and generated extra excitement because it coincided with the four weeks leading up to the Super Bowl.

"I wanted to do something out of the box to motivate my students to read," said Sarney. "The locker room experience introduced students to different people outside of the typical school environment."

New Jersey Elementary Conference Champions were led by Susan Murray, a fifth-grade educator, and her colleague Karyn Benchoff, at the Brigantine Elementary School. Murray heard about the READBowl on social media and was

inspired by Malcolm's message that "...reading didn't come easy to him, but he worked hard at reading because it helps you succeed in life."

After watching Malcolm's videos, her students were excited to join the READBowl.

"We encourage our students to read at least 120 minutes weekly," Murray said. "The READBowl motivated them to read so much more, and it was lots of fun!"

Erin Porter's Ocean City Primary School second grade class—dubbed "Team Porter"—were crowned New Jersey Primary Conference Champions in this year's READBowl. Porter explains how the reading event was more than just another reading assignment to her students during this difficult time.

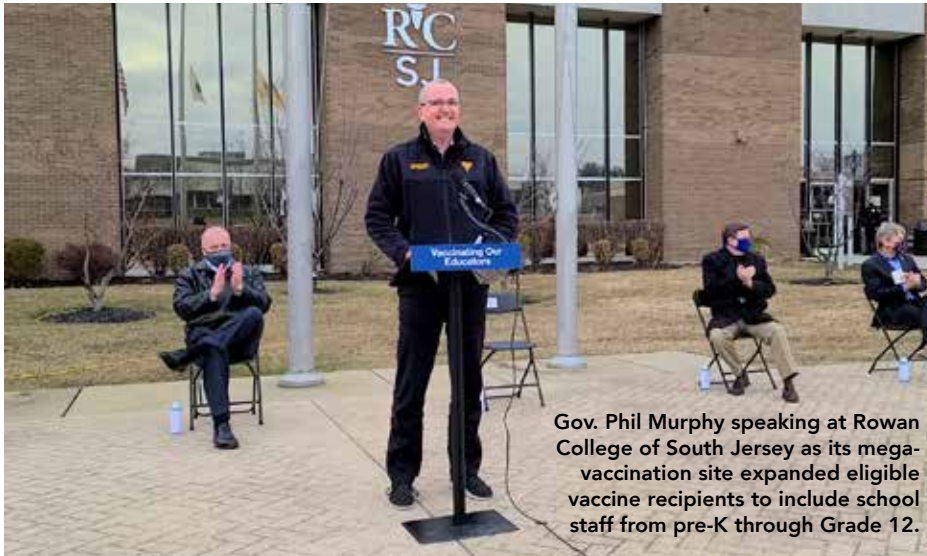
"Malcolm is an inspiration to all types of readers, especially those who struggle," Porter said. "My students were encouraged by his words to do their best and work hard to reach their goals. Participating in READBowl was a great incentive for my students, and it helped encourage more reading at home while we were in a hybrid learning model."

NJEA is proud to partner with Malcolm and his Share the Magic Foundation as part of its Read Across-NJ efforts, and congratulates the 2021 READBowl NJ State Champions. Keep reading, New Jersey!

To learn more about the READBowl, as well as two other upcoming events, READCamp and READMarathon, visit [readwithmalcolm.com](http://readwithmalcolm.com).

# State investment in public education tops \$20 billion

An \$18.1 billion budget investment in pre-k through Grade 12 and a \$2.6 billion investment in higher education



Gov. Phil Murphy speaking at Rowan College of South Jersey as its mega-vaccination site expanded eligible vaccine recipients to include school staff from pre-K through Grade 12.

**“Murphy’s first three years in office have seen the slowest rate of property tax increase of any administration in over 20 years.”**

The proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget furthers Gov. Phil Murphy’s historic commitment to education. Murphy’s four budgets will have increased direct pre-K through 12 spending statewide by nearly \$1.5 billion. Additionally, the FY 2022 budget strives to make higher education more attainable for more New Jersey residents.

Increasing school funding is critical to helping municipalities deliver property tax relief. Because of historic investments in education during Murphy’s first three years in office, New Jersey residents have seen the slowest rate of property tax increase of any administration in over 20 years.

“Gov. Murphy’s commitment to funding schools has paid dividends already,” said NJEA officers, President Marie Blistan, Vice President Sean M. Spiller and Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty in a joint statement. “From investing in early childhood education, to closing the digital divide, to making higher education more accessible and more affordable to more families, this budget is a boon to our state and will keep us strong and competitive as we rebuild and move forward from the pandemic. Millions of families who choose New Jersey as a great place to raise children will reap the benefits.”

Since taking office, Murphy has substantially increased investments in public schools, putting New Jersey on the path to fully funding the school

funding formula. If approved by the Senate and Assembly, the FY 2022 budget will:

- Increase formula aid by \$578 million, ensuring that the next two steps of the path to full funding are taken.
- Provide \$25 million more for Extraordinary Special Education Aid.
- Create a new \$50 million Stabilization Aid program.
- Fund a new \$75 million Capital Maintenance and Emergent Needs program.
- Continue to invest \$4.5 million in school-based wraparound services.

The investment in education will allow districts to make smart investments in their communities to meet the unique needs of their students and educators, an especially critical priority as districts manage challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. School districts will be able to use state funds in conjunction with federal resources to address pandemic-related lesson remediation, stand up mental health programs, train educators, and remediate buildings, among other uses.

## INVESTING PRE-K

Programs for our youngest learners have proven to be among the smartest investments we can make in our future, with pre-K investments shown

to have a seven-fold return on investment. This budget would expand the state investment in pre-K by \$50 million, including \$26 million for new programs.

To prepare for the expansion of pre-K, the New Jersey Department of Education has approved over 6,500 preschool seats in over 100 new districts, with 1,800 seats in 25 new districts expected.

## INVESTING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This budget would make higher education more attainable for more New Jersey families and further assist colleges by allocating an additional \$50 million to fund The Garden State Guarantee, which provides two years of free college or university tuition at a four-year institution to students with household incomes of less than \$65,000.

It invests \$27 million in Community College Opportunity Grants (CCOGs), which provide tuition-free community college for eligible students. It also advances the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) through an investment of \$51.8 million, an increase of \$2.8 million, and fully funding undergraduate slots in the program for the first time in decades. Finally, the budget increases aid to community colleges by an additional \$5 million.



# Kenilworth book vending machine makes reading the reward

KEA and Harding School PTO team up to share the joy of literacy

By Leslie Bedford, Kenilworth EA vice president



Students from Harding Elementary School record a video to promote a new book vending machine in their school, dressed as possible characters in the books they'll read.

In September 2019, before we knew about the impending pandemic, our superintendent Kyle Arlington shared an article with me about a unique vending machine—one that dispensed books. It came with an incentive program for students: earn gold coins and use them to purchase books from the machine.

As an additional promotion, student artwork can be used to form a wrap around the vending machine that personalizes it for the school.

I immediately thought of our kind and generous PTO at Harding School. They've used their precious budget to purchase carts for science kits, help fund the supplies to paint the interior walls of the whole school to look like a gameboard with characters from favorite stories, and fund yearly assemblies. But the year went on and my work on this project got pushed farther down the infamous to-do list.

Then we went into quarantine.

As the 2019-20 school year ended, I starting to regroup from the virtual learning experience. I was thumbing through the now much longer to-do list. My eyes fell on the vending machine and I decided it was time for some research.

I called a wonderful man named Ken at Global Vending who could not have been more helpful or cheerful during the pandemic. After getting a price,

I reached out to Mr. Arlington, Kathleen Murphy our principal at the time, and Mr. Bubnowski, our vice principal, to ask if I could pursue it with the PTO.

With the personalized artwork the vending machine would cost about \$5,000, almost the exact figure that our PTO allots for assemblies. I asked PTO President Gerri Colon and Vice President Alessandra Bonacchi if we could reallocate the funds to pay for the vending machine. They jumped on it!

## TALENTED HARDING FAMILIES PROMOTE ART CONTEST

We planned an art contest via social media to solicit entries to be considered for the vending machine's wrap. But how could we promote an art contest during a pandemic? Fortunately, we have some very gifted families in our school community. We tapped into the video-making talents of the Rivera family and the acting chops of the Singleton family.

The Rivera twins, Adriana and Carly, and Devin Singleton were all students in my class last year. When I called them, they eagerly agreed to participate in the video. You can watch the video at [bit.ly/hardingartcontest](https://bit.ly/hardingartcontest).

## KENILWORTH EA DONATES BOOKS

It took about 12 weeks to get the vending machine.

The machine is loaded with books that were donated by the Kenilworth Education Association and purchased by the school. Each teacher will come up with a way for a child in her class to earn that magic gold coin.

On Jan. 28, 2021, we invited the students whose artwork is featured on the machine and the students who were in the art contest video along with a parent, the board, and the administration to the Book Machine Bonanza—with everyone safely distanced and masked. These students were the first to drop that special gold coin to get a book!

At the end of the day, we want to encourage a love of reading and have something positive to look forward to. We wanted to try something positive, exciting, and of course tied to reading to help everyone through this difficult time. With help from the whole school community, we have.



The KEA Pride table. KEA purchased books to be placed in the vending machine.



# Protecting children and youth

## Educators are partners in prevention of child abuse and neglect and mitigating adverse childhood experiences

By Christine Norbut Beyer, M.S.W.

April is national Child Abuse Prevention Month. At the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (NJDCF), we recognize the vital and special role that teachers play in the lives of children and youth throughout the year.

As teachers and educational support professionals, you ensure that students are academically engaged and prepared for their educational journey and future success. As child advocates, you are very often the primary nonfamily member who has great insight into a child's safety and their overall well-being. You are often among the first to become aware that there may be circumstances or stressors in a family that have an impact on the child. As one of our key system partners, you are often one of the leading reporters of child abuse and neglect to the state's hotline.

However, with many children still not physically reporting to school or childcare programs, regularly visiting friends or family in the community, or seeing school nurses and pediatricians for routine physical checkups, it is so much more difficult for reporters to spot the warning signs—and so much more critical for families to be directed to the services and supports they may need to thrive.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult on at-risk children and families, including families with:

- Infants and toddlers
- Children with disabilities
- A history of addiction or mental illness
- A history of violence
- Economic/housing insecurity

More than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen that at-risk children and families aren't the only ones struggling. Families who may have never needed to access social services and supports are also finding themselves grappling with COVID-19-related challenges and stressors, such as unemployment, reduced work hours, food insecurity, health worries, childcare concerns, and so much more.

Research is already demonstrating the emotional and mental health toll the pandemic is having on children and youth, with many experiencing increased anxiety and depression



**APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH**

**PREVENTING ABUSE ISN'T A PROFESSION. IT'S A MORAL IMPERATIVE.**

During these uncertain times of social distancing **MANY** children are at-risk.

**#bridgethegap**

**It IS your business.**  
**Everyone in NJ is a mandated reporter.**

**Call 1-877-652-2873 to report suspected abuse or neglect. Be a hero to a child in need!**



as a result of social distancing, isolation, and the reduced amount of time spent with their peers and other social supports.

In child welfare, we have long recognized child abuse and neglect as one of the defined adverse childhood experiences (or ACEs). ACEs are not a new concept. The term was coined during a landmark study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente in the 1990s. The initial study surveyed more 17,000 HMO members in Southern California regarding their childhood experiences and current health and well-being metrics. The

study found a correlation between adversity and trauma in childhood, and poor outcomes into adulthood.

It found that individuals who experienced four or more defined episodes of adversity in childhood were more likely to experience chronic health problems, cardiovascular problems, depression and other mental health challenges, relationship issues and social challenges, job and financial instability, chronic absenteeism, substance use and more.

In follow-up research, the CDC determined that about 61% of adults surveyed across 25 states had

experienced at least one type of ACE, and 1 in 6 adults had experienced four or more ACEs. In a report released by The New Jersey Funders ACEs Collaborative, it is estimated that 40% of children in New Jersey have experienced at least one ACE, and 18% experienced multiple ACEs.

NJEA has been working closely with nationally renowned ACEs trainer, Dave Ellis, who is heading up New Jersey's Office of Resilience as an Executive on Loan, funded by the Turrell Fund, The Nicholson Foundation and Burke Foundation.

In February, Gov. Phil Murphy launched a statewide ACEs Action Plan, which serves as a blueprint to shepherd and to guide public/private, collaborative work across the state to prevent, mitigate and eliminate ACEs. The action plan facilitates greater cooperation and coordination

across agencies and stakeholders because collectively, we can realize greater progress than we can alone. To read it, go to [bit.ly/3vhoicx](http://bit.ly/3vhoicx).

Adversity is seen and felt across the entire socioeconomic spectrum. It is not a rural, suburban or urban problem; it's not a Black, Latinx or a white problem. It's not rich or poor. It's a societal problem that can be resolved with awareness, trauma-informed and healing-centered practices.

We know that positive relationships, and therapeutic and affirming experiences can help people with ACEs to heal and can mean the difference between overcoming adversity or being overcome by it. Sometimes, just one caring, nurturing and safe relationship with an adult—such as a teacher, classroom aide, or other trusted school employee—can be all that a child

needs to build up their stores of resilience and avoid the long-term effects of ACEs.

As the state's child welfare agency, our work is varied. Yes, we are the state agency tasked with investigating incidents of child abuse and neglect. But as a child- and family-serving agency, the NJDCF also offers a wide range of supports to children and families who may be struggling due to life circumstances.

To prevent child abuse and neglect—to prevent and address ACEs—we must stay vigilant and work together. As teachers and educational support professionals, you can be proactive in helping children who may be at-risk of being abused or who, if not at-risk, may very well only need a caring individual and someone to link them to family support services.

## Resources

Here are some proactive steps you can take and the many resources available. We hope that, as an "essential worker," educator, and caring individual, you will share these resources as needed with the children and families that you believe may need help. This can help prevent child abuse and further our collective mission of keeping all New Jersey families safe, healthy, and connected.

### Contact the State's Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline To report Child Abuse and Neglect

If you do suspect child abuse or neglect, you must call the child abuse hotline: 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873). Remember, all New Jersey citizens are mandated reporters.

### To help families access the agency's supports/services

The Division of Child Protection and Permanency can also offer voluntary support and helping services to families. If a parent, or someone on their behalf, calls the State Central Registry and describes their family situation and current needs, information on those various helping resources will be provided. The call center number is 1-877-652-2873.

### NJ's Family Success Centers

Family Success Centers are "one-stop" shops that provide wraparound resources and referrals to supports for families at no cost. There are 57 FSCs in New Jersey and at least one in every county. Locate them at [nj.gov/dcf/families/support/success](http://nj.gov/dcf/families/support/success).

### NJ Child Assault Prevention

New Jersey Child Assault Prevention (NJCAP) provides training and resources to children and parents. NJCAP's printed/downloadable materials assist parents and teachers in safeguarding and preventing child abuse. These are specific to the various age levels and are available in Spanish as well. Visit [njcap.org](http://njcap.org).

### Call 2-1-1

General helping resources are listed at [nj211.org](http://nj211.org). One suggestion for this site is to type in "parent support" and choose "topic" for your type of search. This will provide a list of parent groups, child abuse support groups and a group for bereaved parents.

### NJ Resource Net

Find various services, agencies and activities, by county, at [njresourcenet.org](http://njresourcenet.org).

### Parent Link

New Jersey has a comprehensive list of agencies and hotline numbers at the "Parent Link" website: [nj.gov/njparentlink/hotlines](http://nj.gov/njparentlink/hotlines). Of special note for stressed parents is the Parents Anonymous Family Helpline, 1-800-THE-KIDS (1-800-843-5437). And, for new parents, or parents of children with special needs, contact the NJ Family Health Line, 1-800-328-3838.

### Behavioral Health Services for Children

If a child or teen is experiencing emotional or behavioral distress, families can call the Department of Children and Families' Children's System of Care, 1-877-652-7624.

### Posters and Resources from DCF

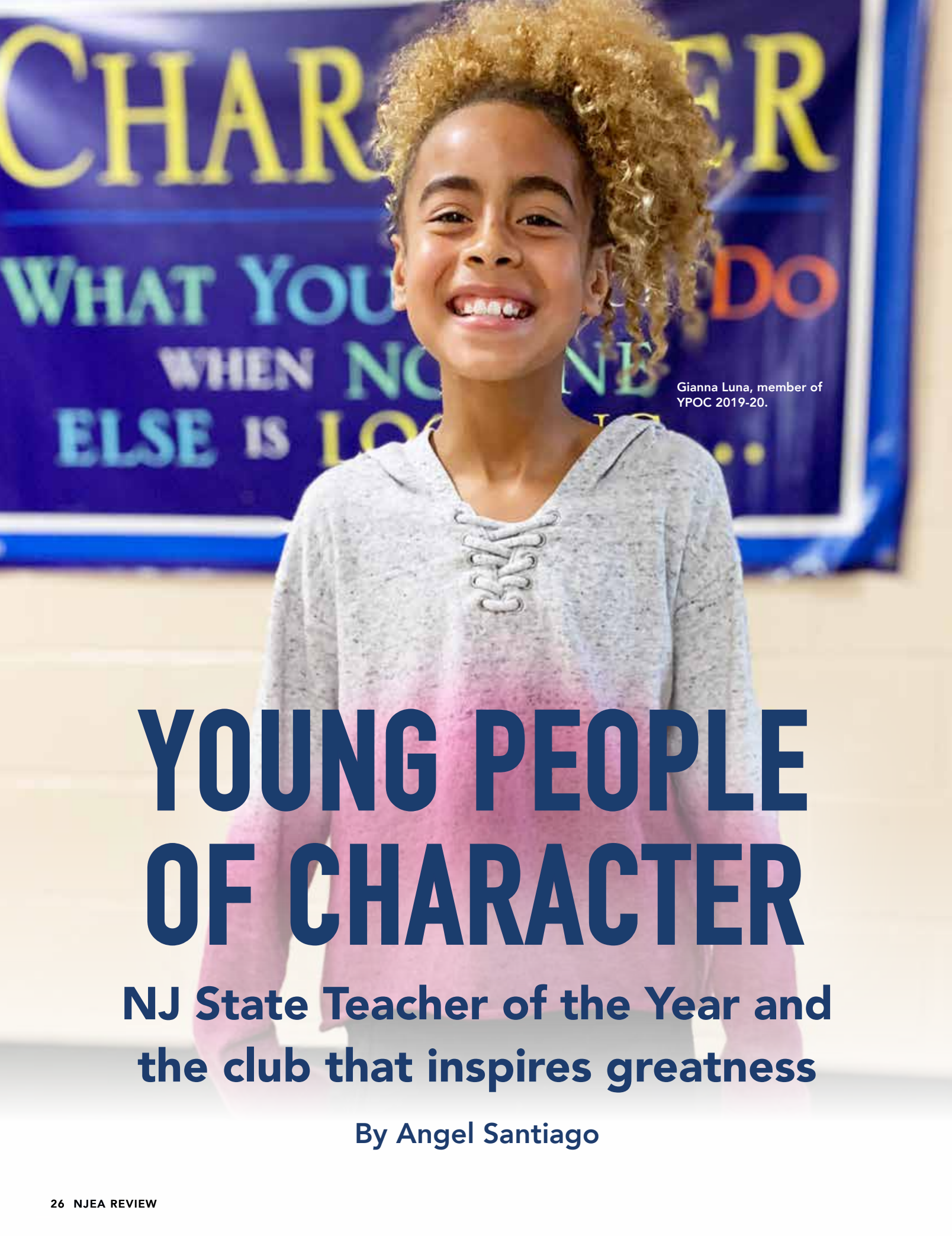
We urge you to stay alert to the signs of potential abuse and neglect and to find creative, discreet ways to allow children or youth to signal their need for intervention. These posters, available at [bit.ly/3eu3Nnf](http://bit.ly/3eu3Nnf), can help teachers and other professionals that may interact with children to know the signs. One of the posters includes a QR code ([bit.ly/3lhfsXN](http://bit.ly/3lhfsXN)) that can be used by teachers as a virtual background or email signature.

### Crisis Text Line

Kids and families can also access this crisis line: Text "NJ" to 741741 to connect to a trained counselor to help defuse a "hot moment" or crisis.

### 2NDFLOOR

2NDFLOOR is a helpline for youth. They can access this service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can call or text 1-888-222-2228. Its website, [2ndfloor.org](http://2ndfloor.org), has an online messaging board to communicate with someone who can help.



Gianna Luna, member of  
YPOC 2019-20.

# YOUNG PEOPLE OF CHARACTER

**NJ State Teacher of the Year and  
the club that inspires greatness**

**By Angel Santiago**



## THE INSPIRATION

I was a shy kid in elementary school. After first-grade, my grades improved but I was not nearly as outgoing a person as I am today. I was self-conscious and always afraid that I was doing something wrong. This same sentiment continued into middle school. Fortunately, it didn't last too long.

In my sixth-grade year at Vineland's Veterans Memorial School, I was placed in Mark Melamed's homeroom. Melamed was a renowned educator throughout the Vineland Public School District known for his work with his Gabriel Project. Several years prior to my sixth-grade year, Melamed created the Gabriel Project, a foundation that brought children from developing nations to the United States for life saving heart surgery.

Melamed saw something in several of us. Although the entire class participated in the service projects that Melamed weaved into his lesson plans, a core of that class would remain involved for years after we left sixth grade. Jessy Lopez, Atyia Arthur, Sean Shropshire, Brad Harrison, Donny Tharp, Michael Albano, and Steven Schimmel: I know these names may not mean much to anyone reading this, but to me, this was one of the greatest benefits of the Gabriel Project—lifelong friends.

We all came from different parts of Vineland, from Center City to the farms of East Vineland, but we had one common goal: making the world a better place. We didn't just do our schoolwork together—on weekends, afterschool, and during breaks, we lived together. We helped save a life together.

After our public school education, most of us went off to college. My best friend Brad and I went touring and pursuing a career in music but stayed involved in a limited role with the Gabriel Project. The project flourished and Melamed's creation became an entity that involved celebrities and prominent members of the community.

When I came back to Vineland to pursue my teaching career, Melamed was the first to lend a hand. He offered his classroom for many of my observational hours. During my student teaching, Melamed informed me that he was ill. I knew it was severe, but this man moved mountains, and I was sure he could overcome this obstacle.

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*Angel Santiago is the 2020-21 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year. He is a fifth-grade teacher at Loring Flemming Elementary School in Gloucester Township. He can be reached at [njstoy21@gmail.com](mailto:njstoy21@gmail.com).*

Melamed succumbed to his battle with pancreatic cancer in the summer of 2013. The future of the Gabriel Project was in limbo. Melamed's brother Ken, his longtime friend and confidant Debbie Albano, and I decided to keep the project afloat. We did well for a few years. We held yearly events that were successful, but nowhere near the scope of what Melamed had built. This was his creation, and to continue the project in the same vein, without his many years of experience, would be next to impossible.

In 2017, we decided to put the Gabriel Project on hiatus. I felt somewhat defeated and guilty. I was a new dad trying to navigate teaching and a part-time job. During the same time, I had aspirations of starting an after-school club at the school in Gloucester Township where I now taught: Loring Flemming Elementary School.

The idea of Young People of Character, or YPOC, had been something that I had pondered for a couple of years. The absence of the Gabriel Project left a void that I needed to fill, and it was

about time for me to bring something of my own to the table and there was no better time than the present to get the club fully functional.

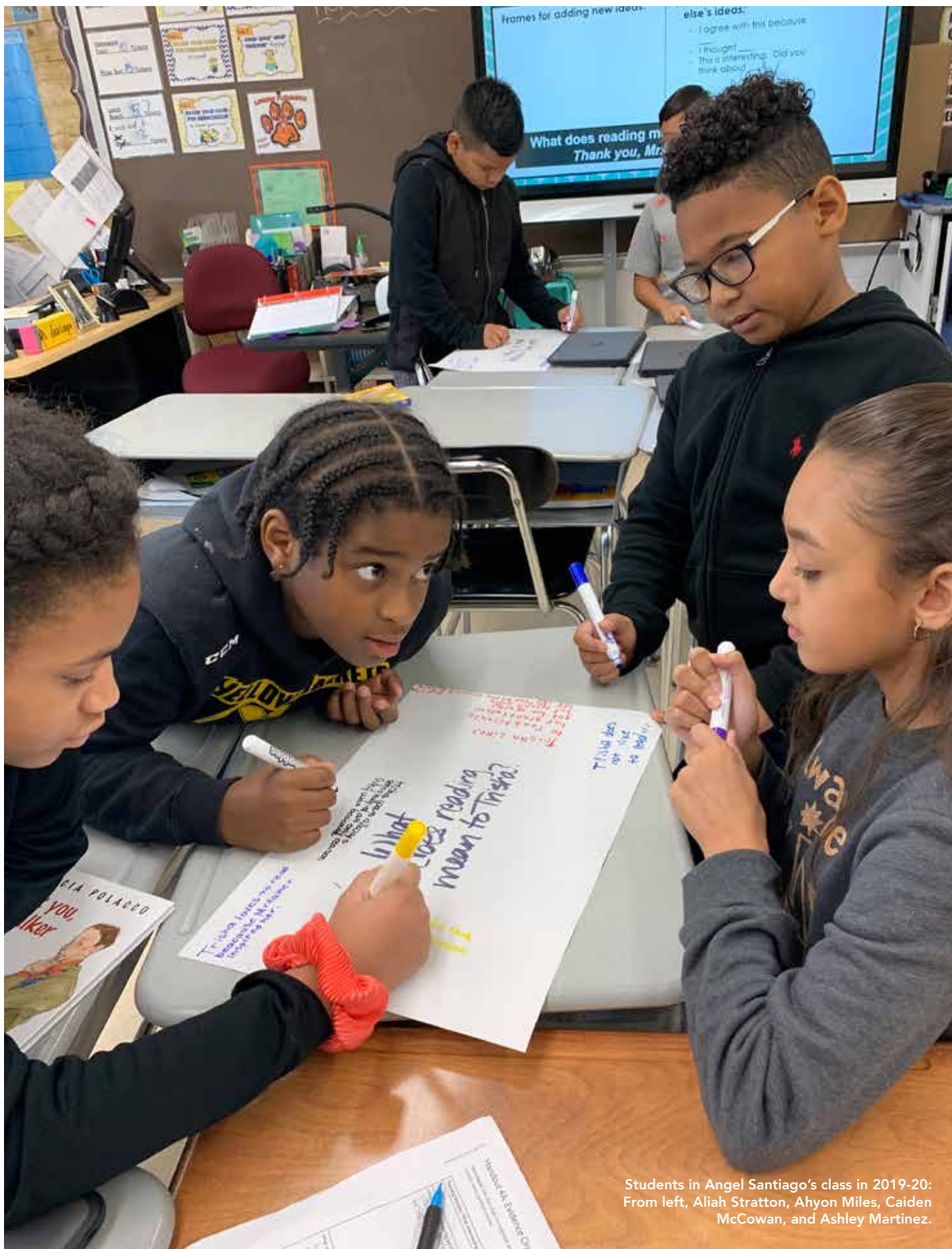
## THE MODEL

Though Melamed's Gabriel Project offered me the inspiration of community service, I wanted YPOC to be something that I could grow with. After some discussion with my administration, online research, and digging into the community, I had several different models I wanted to develop.

Reaching at-risk students was something I wanted to address. Being a member of Loring Flemming's data team gave me an opportunity to see some of the data related to our at-risk students. Like many schools, we had an overrepresentation of males of color who were being referred for special education services. That demographic jumped out as an area of concentration. Although, young men of color were those who were most affected, I saw others who were in need as well. I found this to be an opportunity for my students



Caiden Corsi (l) and Colin Morris, members of YPOC in 2019-20.



Students in Angel Santiago's class in 2019-20:  
From left, Aliah Stratton, Ahyon Miles, Caiden  
McCowan, and Ashley Martinez.





Gloucester Township teachers (l-r): Roy Hester, Angel Santiago, Anibal Castro, Makema Grimes, and Karen Bennett.

to learn from one another despite their economic or academic situations.

When we discuss leadership, the focus should be on a diverse group of individuals leading us because, essentially, our future leaders should reflect the population that they serve. I had to take a long hard look at the demographics of Loring Flemming.

The community of Loring Flemming is a microcosm of the state of New Jersey. In one township, we have students who come from communities that are considered upper-middle class, while less than a mile away, we have students who come from neighborhoods well below the poverty threshold. These students ate lunch together, worked in academic groups together, and played together at recess.

This offered clarity to my mission. I wasn't going to concentrate on just one demographic. That's not how inclusiveness works. I was going to have kids from all different walks of life, academic abilities, genders, ethnicities and behaviors work together for some common goals: to build self-esteem, to better their lives at home, to take pride in their school, and to build the foundation to become the leaders of tomorrow. Most importantly, they would do this together, despite their differences. These common goals became the pillars of YPOC.

## THE PILLARS

### *Love of self*

In a club that would run for eight weeks, tackling self-esteem was our initial priority. There is one common thread that all the most effective leaders in our world share: confidence. Preadolescent students struggle with this concept.

Whether it be the media, racial or economic biases, or systemic conditioning, the world is built to knock us down at an early age. Let's face it, if we cannot learn to love ourselves, or tune out the negativity of the world, then we cannot afford the energy to help others.

In 2017, before social-emotional learning (SEL) was built into our curricula at Loring Flemming, YPOC served a similar purpose. We focused on goal setting, positive affirmations and self-talk. Students wrote letters to their future selves highlighting their goals, offering encouragement, and lastly, thanking their future selves for all of their accomplishments and hard work.

During remote learning, we tried something a bit different. Scrolling through teacher-created content on the app TikTok, I found a teacher by the name of Donovan Hall from Oakland, California. He specializes in emotional growth with his sixth-grade students. To watch Hall interact with his students is inspiring to say the least. He

understands his students and their backgrounds. There are several instances where Hall knows that his students must help watch their siblings, so he invites the younger siblings to his remote-learning classroom.

I invited Hall to come to one of our YPOC sessions on Zoom. We held an hourlong session on positive affirmations, self-love and feeling good about ourselves. There were questions that prompted my YPOC students to uncover the issues that held down their confidence levels. Hall as also offered some exercises that helped my students to reach a higher level of self-love. All in all, this YPOC session was well received and could not have come at a better time.

### *Love of family*

Family is important to me, but family is a very fluid concept. The nuclear family is no longer a common configuration, so whenever we involve families in our activities, we include anyone who is considered family by the students.

The students of YPOC have participated in many events with a family mindset behind them. They have written family chore coupons to motivate themselves to become better family members. Two of our favorite schoolwide family-oriented events that YPOC helps with are Donuts with Dudes and Muffins with My Lady.





Santiago's students Tavares Avery (l) and Joseph Madden in 2019-20 with a third-grader at Loring Flemming Elementary School.

“

*I was going to have kids from all different walks of life, academic abilities, genders, ethnicities, and behaviors, work together for some common goals.*

These two events were established by a committee of Loring Flemming educators and Principal Aaron Rose. They are a modification of Donuts with Dad and Muffins with Mom, being sensitive about the array of different family configurations within our school. These events continue to grow every single year. The YPOC kids help with breaking down after the event is over, as well as chaperoning kindergarteners to their classes once school begins. The news covered the event and one of our students was interviewed about it. Those are the moments that will last a lifetime.

#### **Love of school**

Our students spend much of their lives inside our school building. Taking pride in our school is one of the pillars that I think to be essential. It is also one of the pillars that I believe transcends all school environments and can be used for any character-building club.

Last year, we had a great group of students who worked very well together. In collaboration with the custodial staff, YPOC embarked on a two-session mission to beautify the school. The custodial staff provided us with the proper supplies, and we swept, scrubbed and mopped the floors and tables for our fellow classmates in the fourth and fifth grades.

The following week we scanned acres and acres of the school grounds and picked up trash that was lying on our playgrounds and our fields.

Although these acts were simple, they found a new appreciation for those professionals who rarely get any recognition: our custodial staff.

#### **Love of community**

Lastly, but most importantly, is our commitment to community service. Since its founding, YPOC has worked toward the culminating event of our club year: Gloucester Township's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

In the years prior to COVID, our students would don their YPOC shirts and invite their families and friends to all participate in different service activities within the Gloucester Township community. Every year for MLK Day of Service, the students of YPOC made thousands of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, created homemade cards, and participated in numerous activities to help those who are in need. Last year, one of our members even won a service medal.

The most inspirational aspect of that day is for my students to witness the power of what can happen when you bring a community together for a common goal and how they became a part of that power.

#### **CHALLENGES**

Although starting a service or character-building club can be a rewarding endeavor, there are some challenges that accompany the process. First and foremost, you must look at your local

demographics. The challenges that face different communities and grade levels can vary.

In your elementary grade levels, some of the concepts around character building and community service can be abstract, which means you will have to teach them. This can take time and planning. But this type of club would lend a needed enrichment to the SEL skills we are currently injecting into our daily lessons.

Planning, especially for the young ones, is essential. Parents, guardians and family members must be informed for the students to get the most out of their experience. We are very fortunate to have transportation in our district, but for some of the events that were held off school grounds, there were some challenges with attendance. The Remind app, or any other parent communication application, can help mitigate transportation issues.

Funding can be an issue. I usually get shirts for my students and acquiring the funds can be tricky. I have seen some clubs raise funds for various reasons, but there always seems to be red tape when it comes to acquiring funds for any project. I understand why: districts want to make sure everything is by the book and that they cannot be held liable for misuse of the funds.

On top of that, each district has different procedures about acquiring funding. Proper documentation of any funds acquired is essential. Depending on how big the project is, this can be a job unto itself. There is help out there. There are tons of stakeholders who are willing to donate to your cause. You just have to make them aware of what you need.

The number of students participating can be tricky to navigate as well. It may seem that the



Ava Cooper, a YPOC member from 2019-20, was the winner of Gloucester Township's Martin Luther King Jr.'s Day of Service Award.



Watch this video to learn more about YPOC at [njea.org/ypoc](http://njea.org/ypoc).

larger the group, the better. Although I wish I could have everyone in YPOC, I believe the efficacy of its lessons start to dwindle when the group is too large.

When you have a large group, planning, organizing, communicating, and acquiring funds all become more difficult. Finding a manageable number of students is key. The sweet spot for me is around 15-20 upper-elementary-aged students. That number may vary if you facilitate a club in middle school or high school, but the key here is to make it manageable.

Let's face it, our jobs are tough enough as it is. Set up your group for success early on. That could mean just tackling one or two projects to ensure a successful outcome. It is better to do one or two things well, than to do multiple projects with limited success.

### THE FUTURE OF YPOC

Remote learning has been tough. It has caused most of our in-person community service projects to be cancelled. With the pandemic looming, the easy decision would have been to postpone our club until next year. Yet, that was never even an option for me, nor for my students. I must also commend Loring Flemming with moving forward virtually with all of its clubs.

We just wrapped up our YPOC club for this year, and we had to become very creative. I saw this as an opportunity to invite leaders of the community to share their experiences with my YPOC students. We had guests such as Donovan Hall, the aforementioned TikTok SEL teacher. In addition, a teacher from my hometown, Chris Hannah, and his deaf dog, Cole, gave a presentation about standing up for those who may be different. Hannah also helped us partner with the Vineland Veterans Home to deliver holiday cards that the YPOC students had made.

Some of my students, with permission from their parents, even joined me in donating to a human voice bank, offering our voices so that individuals who suffer from medical conditions that affect their voices can have a vocal option that matches their appearance.

There are some benefits to the remote connections we had this past year. As YPOC continues to grow and find more and more of an identity, I see a future where local and state government leaders, social justice advocates, and other global entities can visit the club's students without leaving their offices or homes. I see my students, connecting with other students from around the country working on a service project virtually.

As I look forward, the possibilities to change this world for the better are virtually limitless. 🌐



# Visions Credit Union commits \$1 million to NJ students and educators

By Dawn Hiltner

At the 2021 NJEA Equity Alliance on Jan. 16, NJEA President Marie Blistan announced that Visions Federal Credit Union has committed to a \$1 million grant to NJEA to be used for the benefit of NJEA members and their students. The grant will be payable over 10 years, beginning in 2021. The first installment of the grant will support the creation of the NJEA Racial and Social Justice Institute under NJEA's newly-created Office of Human and Civil Rights.

"NJEA is thankful to have Visions Federal Credit Union as our partner in public education," Blistan said. "As educators, we help shape society. We have a great responsibility to instill compassion, courage, and conviction in the young people we teach and help our members meet the diverse and changing needs of our student population. Visions is helping make our vision of more equitable public schools a reality."

The goal of the NJEA Racial and Social Justice Institute is to stand in solidarity in teaching on the issues of systemic racism, institutional racism, environmental racism, colorism, homophobia, and all other forms of inequity. The institute will provide high-quality training and workshops for educators, students, families and communities. It will also work to support local initiatives

in public schools and county colleges.

Visions Federal Credit Union (FCU) has been serving the North New Jersey community since its 2012 merger with Paragon FCU in Bergen County and further expanded in the market with the 2014 merger of Tri-Co FCU, serving Morris, Warren, and Sussex counties. It has strong roots supporting educators and is excited to expand these opportunities to impact all educators in New Jersey, notably with the first installment being invested in the creation of the NJEA Racial and Social Justice Institute.

"Visions wanted to make a splash and a big impact across the state of New Jersey," said Tyrone Muse, president and CEO of Visions FCU. "An investment of this size has the capability to make some real change, and when faced with a decision, partnering with NJEA was a no-brainer. Their vision for the institute has the capability to impact every educator and student in the state of New Jersey."

The NJEA grant is part of Visions Federal Credit Union's Visions Cares program ([visionsfcu.org/cares](http://visionsfcu.org/cares)), which is responsible for over \$1 million in annual contributions to the communities they serve, as well as a work-force volunteer program that yields thousands of volunteer hours annually.

The credit union also created the Visions Loves Educators program ([visionsloveseducators.com](http://visionsloveseducators.com)), a collection of products, services, and grants tailored to the needs of educators.

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*Dawn Hiltner is an associate director in the NJEA Communications Division. She can be reached at [dhiltner@njea.org](mailto:dhiltner@njea.org).*

At Leonia High School for the opening of a branch of Visions Federal Credit Union, from left: NJEA Field Rep Rich Loccke, Leonia EA President John Sassi, NJREA member Sue Vigilante, and NJEA Associate Director for Member Benefits Beth Buonsante.





# Visions Credit Union has longstanding partnership with NJ educators

By Susan Vigilante



The ribbon-cutting ceremony at Leonia High School for Visions's first in-school branch in New Jersey.

My involvement with Visions Federal Credit Union begins with the story of TriCo Federal Credit Union, which was founded in 1936 in a closet in Morristown High School. A group of nine teachers got together and, with \$50 each, they formed a credit union for teachers. Over the years the credit union grew to include education employees in Morris, Sussex and Warren Counties.

When I was first hired as a teacher more than 50 years ago, I was advised to join TriCo because they had the best rates and benefits for teachers. "Get your mortgage and car loan there," was the advice from the district business administrator and from my local association president. I was also told to sign up for the summer savers program, a benefit TriCo offered teachers so that they could have a paycheck over the summer.

At that time, TriCo offered scholarships and helped the county associations in various ways to promote learning and financial literacy. TriCo had only one office at the time, and educators from across several counties came to that office for their banking needs.

In the early 1980s I was invited to join the TriCo Board of Directors, only the second woman to do so. Serving on the board of TriCo was a privilege. I witnessed genuine community collaboration. The board's members were all educators in the beginning, and association members were central to the core values of TriCo. TriCo employees would visit schools and come to association meetings to share offerings available to educators. During this time offices were opened in Sussex and Warren counties.

In 2014, TriCo merged with Visions Federal Credit Union, formerly known as IBM Credit Union. Visions is headquartered in Binghamton, New York, serving eastern Pennsylvania and Bergen, Passaic, Morris, Sussex and Warren counties with local offices in all of those areas. Since the merger, Visions has continued the programs that had been set in motion by TriCo.

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*Susan Vigilante is an NJREA member and former president of the Morris County Council of Education Associations and the Morris Plains Education Association. Prior to her retirement, she was a teacher at Borough School in the Morris Plains School District.*

Because Visions is a much larger credit union, the level of programming has grown exponentially. Prior to merging with TriCo, Visions had also acquired Paragon Credit Union in Passaic, another educator-friendly credit union.

In addition to having the president of the Morris County Council of Education Associations serve on its board of directors, Visions has instituted an advisory council made up of educators and local business leaders. One of the main goals of Visions is to promote education.

## STUDENT-STAFFED CREDIT UNION OPENS IN LEONIA HIGH SCHOOL

In early 2020, Visions opened an in-school branch in Leonia High School, its first such branch in a New Jersey school, although it has facilities in schools in New York and Pennsylvania. Student tellers are trained and given the opportunity to earn money and scholarships.

For the faculty, Visions has a fast, efficient, and completely private opportunity to bank without leaving the building. Each of the schools worked with their colleagues at the branch to design their ideal credit union branch so it meets their exact needs. In-school credit unions are just one of the ways that Visions supports students and the education community.

While TriCo had a very positive relationship with NJEA, Visions has been able to expand its support for students and educators. Because Visions believes in the educational and networking opportunities available at the NJEA Convention, Visions has a program that funds expenses for first-time NJEA Convention attendees.

Giving resources to expand programs, bringing inspirational speakers to schools, instituting mini-grants in its Visions Loves Educators Program, and providing scholarships for future educators are just a few more examples of Visions Federal Credit Union's commitment to educators.

Ty Muse, CEO of Visions, has pledged his commitment to the education community and constantly speaks of his excitement at the opportunity to work with NJEA. With this impressive donation to NJEA, Visions is clearly communicating its commitment to our students, our members, social justice and the power of education to change lives. From our shared history to the present, our collaboration with Visions is truly transforming lives. 🏡



Watch how Visions is bringing services right to members' worksites and providing opportunities for students at [njea.org/visions](https://njea.org/visions).

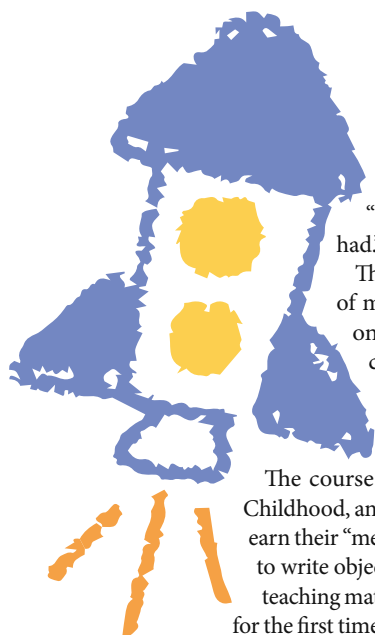


# Exploring childhood with high schoolers and

# preschoolers

By Laura Richards





“Be the teacher that you wish you had.”

That quote stands alone on the wall of my classroom. Last March, it took on new meaning, not only for my colleagues and me, but also for the high school students in my class who were learning to teach young children.

The course that I teach is called Exploring Childhood, and in this class high school students earn their “merit badges” of teaching by learning to write objectives, create lesson plans, prepare teaching materials, and to teach young children for the first time. As the teacher of these “teachers” and the group of 3 to 5-year-olds that they instruct, I have the rare opportunity of seeing the enthusiasm for learning and discovery that is only found in the minds and hearts of young children. But the real privilege of my position is watching a teacher take form.

As you step through the wooden door of my classroom, you can feel an atmosphere of warmth and excitement. Inside you will find a very special place where children have their first days of school and high school “teachers” have their last days of high school. It’s a beautiful parallel. Where else would you find the head cheerleader on the carpet pretending to play kitchen alongside a happy 4-year-old?

In my classroom there are paintbrushes and school glue, tears and hugs, letters and numbers, dramatic play and circle time, mystery readers and snack time, and show and tell for both high school teachers and their young students. It is a place where diversity is welcomed and celebrated.

Our classroom library exists not only in our classroom but also virtually, and it is stocked with books created by the high school “teachers.” These beautiful picture books are what we have come to call “awareness stories.” Each introduces a form of diversity, such as various cultural beliefs and practices, LGBTQ families/topics, autism, illness, loss, learning disabilities, and any other topic that a high school student taking this class might feel is important to introduce to a young child.

One of the high school students from the 2019-20 school year, Jenna Harmke, wrote about growing up with hearing loss, and her book was published at the end of the school year. It is available on Amazon. It is even proudly displayed in her audiologist’s office for young children to read so that they might find comfort and understanding on their own journey with hearing loss. Our classroom library, like our classroom, is a window into the world beyond

and exploration of the lives and hearts of those within.

Exploring Childhood is a class with so many layers. It is a beautiful masterpiece with exquisite moving parts and even after traveling a great deal of the world, the view from my classroom door is still by far one of the most beautiful things that I have ever seen.

After reflecting on taking this class, one of my most dedicated young high school teachers, Caroline Tenberge said:

*“You create an amazing family in this class. I remember feeling so loved in this class, from the teacher, my friends, and people you don’t even know. Everyone just loves each other. The preschoolers look forward to seeing you every single day. It’s really just an amazing environment that is not comparable to any other class that I’ve taken, and I wouldn’t trade it for the world.”*

#### THE EAGLE’S NEST

When March 11, 2020, sent the world and our school in quarantine, my tenacious group of high school “teachers” remained committed to the education and development of their preschool-aged students. Without the backdrop of our happy classroom, the high schoolers took bits and pieces of what they liked about how their own teachers were teaching them virtually. They added to that countless hours of research to develop a robust virtual classroom for the young children. Circle time, show and tell, and learning continued as the high schoolers fearlessly incorporated new technologies into their online lessons.

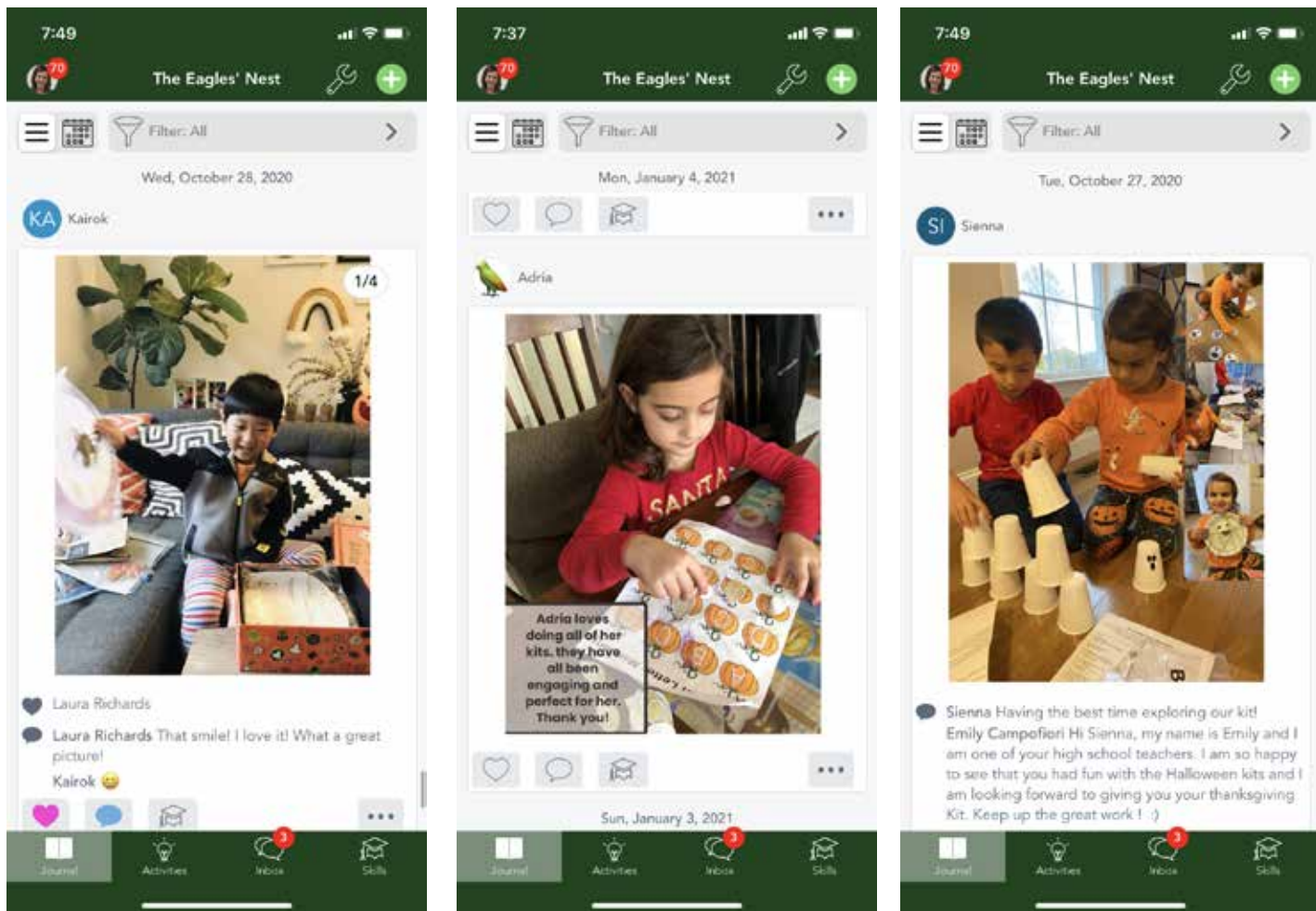
It became quite clear that the reason our virtual classroom became so successful was because the high schoolers knew firsthand what the needs of the young children were, and they responded to them with dedication and passion. When I asked one of the high school teachers what made her such a great teacher she repeated a line we often say in class, “You’ve got to Maslow before you Bloom, even if it’s on Zoom.”

As the 2020-21 school year approached, I added a SafeSitter certification for all high school students that took Exploring Childhood so that upon the completion of this course, the high schoolers could have a real-life credential that could help them pursue babysitting jobs and continue their exposure to working with young children.

I also changed the name of the program offered to the







Using the Seesaw app, preschoolers, their teacher and their high school “teachers” stayed connected during remote learning.

preschool-aged children through the class to The Eagle’s Nest. Our school mascot is the Golden Eagle, and it seemed fitting, as our principal, Ryan MacNaughton, encouraged the student body to “protect the nest” and remain vigilant about following the health and safety precautions advised by the CDC for in-person learning.

Knowing that the young children would not be able to join the Exploring Childhood class in person, a robust and innovative plan was offered to the families of young children who were willing to join The Eagle’s Nest program for this unprecedented school year.

Monthly learning kits were added to the online and virtual learning offerings that the high school “teachers” provided to young children enrolled in the Eagle’s Nest program. Each month, the high school “teachers” work tirelessly to compile lessons and activities that focus on the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development of a preschool-aged child.

Each kit is custom tailored to the learning needs of a specific child and this year we welcomed special education students whose parents sought out additional enrichment for their child.

The kits prepared by the high school “teachers” are the epitome of differentiation. Each kit matches a specific child’s developmental needs, which are as diverse as apraxia, autism,

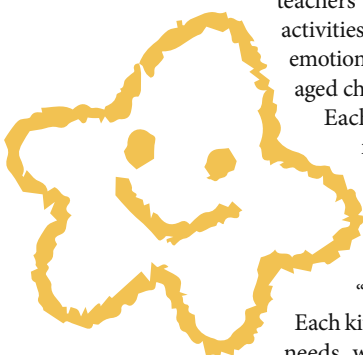
developmental delays, and other areas, including kits for the typically developing preschool-aged child. Neurodiversity is a proud component of the curriculum of Exploring Childhood, and the high school “teachers” bring their knowledge, love, and experiences together to create the perfect kit for their preschool-aged students and their families.

### COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES

The high school “teachers” study the effectiveness of their activities through postings that the young children’s parents provide on SeeSaw. Personalized Zoom lessons, recorded lessons, and virtual storytime have all been a key component of the Eagle’s Nest program. Even the storytime recordings are personalized to the learner as the high school students are taught to engage and interact with young children while reading. In early October, after learning how to read to young children in Exploring Childhood class, Anna Torres took first place in a “Virtual Read Aloud” competition offered through Future Career and Community Leaders of America.

The high school “teachers” report that one of the most rewarding byproducts of teaching online and sending home the monthly learning kits is the addition of parental participation and communication. The high school “teachers” comment on what is posted by the parents of the young children on SeeSaw and the parents often reply giving the high school student valuable feedback on the lessons and the materials that they prepared for that parent’s child.

Adding the parents into the learning process has been rich and rewarding for the high schoolers as it creates a strong partnership and increases learning and understanding for the preschool-aged child. Keila Aquino-Lobato, a



high school “teacher,” describes the experience:

*“You’re making the lessons and you are teaching the lessons to actual children who are learning. You’re working with other high school ‘teachers’ and your teacher is there 100%. You just really work on your character in this class. When you take this class, your eyes are opened to things that you never would have considered before.”*

When the world turned to online learning, the high schoolers were uniquely qualified to be exceptional teachers for the young children in The Eagle’s Nest program. While so many felt lost and alone, the relationships the high schoolers forged with the parents and young students grew and flourished. The relationship between the high schoolers and their young students was synergistic. It gave the high schoolers purpose and allowed for them to see the world beyond their immediate view. For the young children, it provided a constant in a changing and scary world.

Like so many of my professional colleagues, I continue to grow and adapt my teaching to meet the unique educational climate of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some days, I learn from my students as much as they learn from me. The lessons that they teach me are always unexpected and often quite often pivotal.

As the circumstances surrounding the education of students continue to change as we navigate through the pandemic, what makes a teacher a great teacher does not change. That lesson was made clear as I watched my high schoolers continue to teach and inspire their young students. They truly became the teachers that they wished that they had.



**Emily Farese, a junior, prepares manipulative pieces for a St. Patrick’s Day activity that she is working on for her preschool-aged learners. Each kit is highly personalized; no two are alike!**



**Sophomore Elisabeth McMahon demonstrates the safety protocols that go into the creation of the monthly learning kits.**

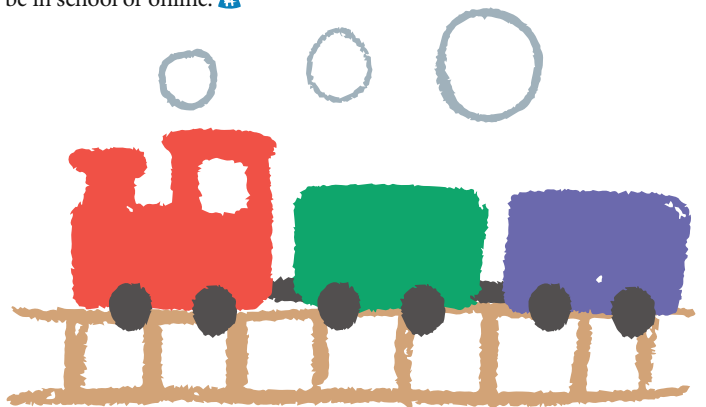
## LEAVING THE NEST

In Exploring Childhood, the year always concludes with the high school “teachers” writing their wishes for the “graduating” preschool age students. In many ways, all are leaving “the nest,” the graduating high schoolers, those high schoolers advancing to the next grade, and the young children who took part in the Eagle’s Nest program. When asked what it was about this class that made it so special, high school student Erika Wasserman said:

*“I love this class with all my heart. I walked out of class everyday feeling so confident, excited for the next class. Just to see those kids, to teach those kids, to create lesson plans, to see their gears turn and to know that they are going to school or logging on to see me. It feels good being that role model for them and to learn what it takes to be a good teacher.”*

As it turns out, “being the teacher that you wish you had,” was exactly what was needed to carry this class of high school “teachers” and their young students through such uncertain times. Whenever I read that quote, I am reminded about what it was that made me want to be a teacher many years ago.

It meant something to me then and continues to mean something now. It is a reminder that teachers are a constant for their students. Teachers are a child’s strong and steady anchor as they navigate the tumultuous seas of childhood and/or adolescence, and the impact of such a teacher resonates with students long after they have left their classroom, whether that classroom be in school or online. 🏠





# FROM IMPOSSIBLE CHOICES TO IMPROVED VENTILATION

## ESP experiences in the pandemic

By Dorothy Wigmore

It's not easy being an educational support professional (ESP) in this pandemic. For many ESPs, too often, it's a hard choice: paychecks or staying home to protect themselves and others.

That's one of two messages from some NJEA members talking about their experiences during the pandemic. The other is that the "chickens are coming home to roost" so to speak—some districts finally are dealing with long-time ventilation issues.

### PAYCHECKS OR PROTECT YOUR FAMILY?

The education sector is not on the federal list of "essential workers," despite the many efforts to keep students in school buildings. Still, many ESPs kept doing their regular jobs—maintaining buildings, preparing and delivering food, providing security, and more.

"My security and maintenance people have been coming to work nonstop," says Kimberly Scott-Hayden, NJEA's ESP of the year for 2021. "They've been in the building since last March and still are. There's nothing we can do remotely and earn a paycheck."

Scott-Hayden is president of the East Orange Maintenance Association and an inventory control clerk who works with the Security Services

supervisor. As the pandemic started, she had to identify vendors for protective gear and other materials.

"Things were so crazy at the start, with the unknowns, people were saying 'Do I risk my life to support my family or stay at home and be safe?'" Scott-Hayden recalled. "We're still trying to navigate the unknown."

"People need to be able to pay their bills to survive, but without the laws to protect those things, they feel like they are between a rock and a hard place," she says.

"It's a crap shoot when it comes to fresh air," says James Frazier, a school security guard and former president of the Union Township Education Association. "But you have to provide for your families, go to work. Every day, I need to worry about what I'm bringing home."

Frazier's job has changed too. He now helps with food distribution, while watching the building where it's prepared, doing wellness checks with students, and helping to "figure out what students need to be successful in a virtual environment." Too often, he and others in his local association have paid for their own protective gear because they worry about their contact with the public.

Studies show the pandemic has reinforced these kinds of inequities connected to the intersection of race, poorly paid jobs, inadequate housing and health.

Using pre-pandemic data, one reported that 42.0 to 51.4% of all school employees in the country met the CDC definition of (potentially) having increased likelihood for severe COVID-19. A

recent study about COVID-19 related deaths among California workers found "excess" death rates among many categories, including teaching assistants, grounds maintenance workers, security guards, office and administrative staff, and various types of "cooks;" their data only covers March to October 2020, before the second wave. A Canadian study reached similar conclusions, saying that those "who continued to serve the essential needs of society throughout COVID-19 shouldered a disproportionate burden of transmission and deaths."

### VENTILATION IN THE LIMELIGHT

The pandemic's effect on schools also has been a wake-up call for the public, who may not know that schools are up to four times more densely occupied than many offices, or about the hazards staff face. More and more members of the public are appalled by what they're learning about the state of their schools.

"As tradespeople, we get a look behind the curtain and see firsthand the long-term effects of neglect," says Chris James. "The pandemic has exposed deficiencies in multiple areas in the infrastructure of our aging buildings."

A carpenter in the Bridgewater-Raritan School District, and a Region 13 NJEA UniServ consultant, he also has not stopped working. His district is one that has improved its infrastructure after the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) used the state's Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) standard to require school opening plans "(e)nsure that indoor facilities have adequate ventilation".

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*Dorothy Wigmore is a long-time health and safety specialist, trained in occupational hygiene, ergonomics and "stress." A Canadian, she also has worked in the U.S. and Mozambique, focusing on prevention and worker participation to solve job-related hazards..*





**NJEA ESP of the Year Kimberly Scott-Hayden at the East Orange School District.**



**NEA Director James Frazier speaks at the 2018 NEA RA.**



**Bridgewater-Raritan's Chris James making deliveries in October 2020.**

"The amount of work that had to be done over the summer to get our exhaust fans to the point where they should have been—it's mind boggling they were in that condition," he says.

"All too often, districts are reactive, not proactive, despite the IAQ standard. It's really general, with no minimum requirements," James says.

"If preventive maintenance programs were required and done, there would be improved IAQ, we'd have universal procedures to follow and document, and long-term savings for taxpayers," he says. "Right now, each district is left to their own interpretations of the standard; unfortunately, some operate like it's the Wild West."

He wants the IAQ standard and government

pandemic materials to be more specific about requirements and documentation so enforcement is possible.

"We want to make the place safe, the best it can be, to keep everyone safe," James says. "I believe that the guidelines and standard were devised for that, but they're not practical. Everything is acceptable. There's nothing you can hold them to. You almost have to win in the court of public opinion."

Frazier has also noticed work on ventilation in his district.

"Finally, a lot of things that were neglected for ages are being addressed in public school buildings, including some of the ventilation issues

that our association fought for, for years and years, so that the environment is comfortable for the students to learn and staff to do their jobs. There's still lots to do."

A long-standing issue—standards for comfortable temperatures—is one on his list.

"But why does it take a pandemic?" Frazier asks. "We're the experts in our field, we know how the schools should be run, what needs to be fixed." 🏠

## Studies referenced in this article

"The Risk Of Severe COVID-19 Within Households Of School Employees And School-Age Children," [bit.ly/383a453](https://bit.ly/383a453).

"Excess mortality associated with the COVID-19 pandemic among Californians 18–65 years of age, by occupational sector and occupation: March through October 2020," [bit.ly/3kHkFlI](https://bit.ly/3kHkFlI).

"A disproportionate epidemic: COVID-19 cases and deaths among essential workers in Toronto, Canada," [bit.ly/3b9tMy3](https://bit.ly/3b9tMy3).

New Jersey Public Employee Indoor Air Quality Standard N.J.A.C. 12:100-13.1 (2007): [bit.ly/njdoliaq](https://bit.ly/njdoliaq)

## Resources

Achieving health and safety wins in a pandemic

[njea.org/achieving-health-and-safety-wins-in-a-pandemic](https://njea.org/achieving-health-and-safety-wins-in-a-pandemic)

All in this together?

[njea.org/all-in-this-together](https://njea.org/all-in-this-together)

Health and Safety Committees  
Knowledge + Action = Change  
[njea.org/hscommittees920](https://njea.org/hscommittees920)

New Jersey Public Employee Indoor  
Air Quality Standard N.J.A.C.  
12:100-13.1 (2007): [bit.ly/njdoliaq](https://bit.ly/njdoliaq)

# HAVE YOUR STUDENTS SHOW THEIR LEARNING WITH GOOGLE SLIDES

By Laurie Floyd

One of the many challenges teachers have had since March 2020, is how to take our existing assignments, assessments and projects and make them work in the remote/hybrid world. One tool that can help with that is Google Slides. Students can use the available tools in the app, as well as free add-ons, Chrome extensions and outside websites to create products that show their learning in creative ways.

Rather than the students merely creating a Slides presentation with bullet points, or worse yet, long (often copied) text, students can create things such as infographics, memes, graphic organizers, flow charts, and labeled and interactive images that will force them to process and present their learning in a different and creative format. Students can include links to their citations or to further information and embed voice files and video clips as well.

Students can show their creativity and learning with icons, colors, shapes, emojis, images, and of course, text. Older students can even create “make your own adventures,” animated gifs, comic books, museum and town “tours,” “flipbooks,” and even videos.

## SLIDES FOR EVERY GRADE AND SUBJECT AREA

Almost every grade-level and subject-area teacher can have students create Slides. Some practical uses would be to have a history student create a timeline of events with added images and audio files to explain the importance of their listed events. Language arts students can create a children's book or flipbook to explain the moral of a story that they have read. Art students can create a virtual museum of their own work or of a specific style of art. Science students can make an animated gif of a process. World language students can insert an image and then add text boxes to label

the objects in the image in a different language or add an audio file describing what is happening in the image.

## BASIC SKILLS IN SLIDES

Some basic skills in Slides that allow you and your students to create things like infographics, memes, timelines and flow charts, etc. include:

- Resize the slide. Click File→Page set up. A box will pop open. Click on the arrow next to “Widescreen 16:9” and choose “Custom.” Change the numbers in the boxes to something like 8.5 x 11 (portrait) or 11 x 8.5 (landscape).
- Inserting shapes, text boxes, and lines and arrows for content. Use the Insert tab or the menu ribbon.
- Adding more fonts to use. Click on the small arrow next to the font name in the menu ribbon and then click “Add more fonts.”
- Change the color of a shape, border, or font with the options in the menu ribbon.
- Changing the background color. Click Slide→Change background. A color or an image can be added to the background.
- Inserting videos, audio files, and images. Click on the Insert tab. Videos can be added from your Drive or YouTube. Audio files need to be already in your Drive to be added to a Slide presentation.
- Inserting a premade, but editable, diagram. Click on the Insert tab. A panel will open on the right in order to choose what type of diagram you want to insert. Once inserted, it can be edited with text, more shapes, or different colors.
- Inserting a link. Click on the Insert tab or the link symbol on the menu ribbon.

- Download your Slide as a pdf or jpeg or png file. File→Download as and then choose how you would like the file downloaded.

## ADVANCED SKILLS IN SLIDES

Some more advanced Slides skills needed that allow students to create things like virtual museums, animated gifs or videos, “flipbooks,” make your own adventures, etc. include:

- Rotate, order, and/or group images or shapes by using the Arrange tab.
- Change the transparency of a shape or image. For a shape, click on the “Fill color” icon and choose “Custom.” For an image, click on the image and then “Format options” in the menu ribbon.
- Add links to other slides in the presentation to make a home button and/or a make your own adventure book. Highlight an image, shape, or words, and then click on the Insert link button. Rather than pasting in a link, click on “Slides in this presentation.”
- Crop images by double-clicking on an image.
- Crop videos by clicking on “Format options” in the Format tab or the menu ribbon.



*Laurie Floyd is the technology teacher coach for Howell High School in the Freehold Regional HS District (Monmouth County). She is the webmaster for the Freehold Regional Education Association. She can be reached at [laprofloyd@optonline.net](mailto:laprofloyd@optonline.net).*



- Adding and using add-ons and Chrome extensions. Within Slides, click on the Add-ons menu and choose “Get add-ons.” Chrome extensions can be added from the Chrome Webstore. (Note: Some districts may block adding extensions or add-ons in their Google administrator settings.)

If you need help learning some of these skills, look up “Google Slides training.” Google has a Workspace Learning Center with “cheat sheets” and tips. And of course, there are always YouTube videos to learn how to do a lot of these skills as well.

#### ADD-ONS, EXTENSIONS AND WEBSITES

Below are some add-ons, extensions, and websites that can help you and your students be more creative.

##### Add-ons

- **Creator Studio** to create videos or animated gifs from your Slides.
- **Unsplash Images** for copyright-free professional looking images.
- **FlatIcon Icons** for Slides and Docs for 1000s of icons and graphics that can be added to Slides and Docs.
- **Paletti** for cool theme color combinations.

##### Extensions

- **Bitmoji** to add your own bitmoji to your Slides
- **Color Pick Eyedropper** allows you to select color values from any image or website (so that you can match it to a font, fill, or background color).


##### Websites

- **Vocaroo.com** to make quick audio recordings that can be saved into your Google Drive and then inserted into a Slides presentation.
- **Bensound.com** royalty-free music files that can be downloaded and used in Slides presentations.
- **Cooltext.com** for different style texts that can be copied and pasted into Slides.
- **Thenounproject.com** for images and icons that can be copied and pasted into Slides.
- **Giphy.com** for animated gifs and “stickers” to be added to your Slides.
- **Getemoji.com** for emojis.
- **Openclipart.org** copyright-free clipart, especially helpful if creating a comic book or flipbook.

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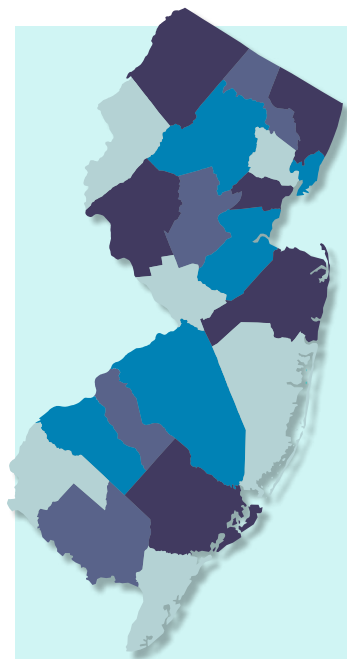


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## SEXTING, CYBERBULLYING AND THEIR DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES

This timely and informative program includes a conversation with Felicia Farber, Esq., author of the multi-award-winning novel *Ice Queen*, a true-to-life romantic

suspense tale that focuses on an innocent high school junior who gets caught up in a sexting scandal and discovers that the very laws that are meant to protect her end up turning her into a criminal.

Social media and other enhanced communications can complicate our lives and present serious dangers for teens and tweens. In particular, laws related to sexting and cyberbullying are often outdated or inadequate and can put adolescents in precarious situations. *Ice Queen* highlights some of these critical 21st-century issues created by rapid advancements in technology.

Join the New Jersey State Bar Foundation (NJSBF) as Felicia Farber is interviewed by New Jersey State Bar Association President and certified criminal trial attorney Kimberly Yonta. Then, Yonta will lead a roundtable discussion with a panel that includes Felicia, Dr. Stuart Green, a licensed clinical social worker and director of New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness; Michael F. Kaelber, Esq., coordinator for Online Course Development, LEGAL ONE, NJPSA FEA; and Karen Painter Randall, a certified civil trial attorney and chair of the Connell Foley Data Privacy Group. Together they will explore the dangerous cyber behaviors of children who inadvertently run afoul of our laws both in and out of school.

Professional development certificates are available for educators.

To register for the webinar, which will be held virtually on Thursday, April 22 from 9:30-11:30 a.m., visit <http://conta.cc/3esNzuk>.

## 2021 NJTESOL/NJBE VIRTUAL SPRING CONFERENCE

### *Equity for Language Learners*

Three prominent keynote speakers and a special guest speaker, Dr. Stephen Krashen, will be featured at this year's NJTESOL/NJBE Virtual Spring Conference to be held May 25, 26, and 27. The keynotes are Dr. Jose Medina (Meeting the Needs of Emergent Bilinguals), Jane Hill (Language and Discourse for English Language Learners), and Dr. Kate Seltzer (Translanguaging Practices of Emergent Bilinguals). All three days will include matters of general interest, content

area instruction, bilingual/ESL Pre-K through 12, higher ed, teacher ed, adult ed, K-12 administrators, dual language/biliteracy, and the new 2020 WIDA Standards. There is one rate for all three days. Registration includes one free year of membership. There will be over 20 presentations each day (pre-recorded presentations followed by live Q&A sessions). Each paid attendee will have three-month access to all conference presentations on demand. Explore the virtual sponsor and exhibit halls. Learn about the latest products and services.

Visit [njtesol-njbe.org/spring-conference](http://njtesol-njbe.org/spring-conference) for more information and to register. For other conference questions email Sandee McBride at [conference-coordinator@njtesol-njbe.org](mailto:conference-coordinator@njtesol-njbe.org) or Michelle Land at [vice-president@njtesol-njbe.org](mailto:vice-president@njtesol-njbe.org).

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT LEARNING.NJEA.ORG

The NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division has developed guidance on a number of issues and has recorded a series of webinars addressing a wide variety of issues being brought forth by our members.

The webinars address a variety of topics, including but not limited to:

- Conversations on equity and inclusivity
- Professional growth
- Health and safety
- Tools for working remotely
- Information management
- Working safely and maintaining privacy in a remote environment
- Online pedagogy

All topic areas have webinars designed for educational support professionals (ESPs), certificated staff, or both. Live presentations are recorded and stored at [learning.njea.org](http://learning.njea.org) as a professional development resource.

Members seeking to earn a certificate of attendance for participating in a live webinar, should log on to [njea.org](http://njea.org) to ensure that their profiles are up-to-date, especially your email address. Certificates will be automatically added to your "My PD Transcript."

Later, when signing into the webinar, provide your full name and email address matching the information in your NJEA profile. Remain for the duration of the event. For certificated staff, be sure to work with your district administrator/supervisor to update your Professional Development Plan (PDP) to include webinar content.

To access the webinars and resources, and for more information, visit [learning.njea.org](http://learning.njea.org).



# Cyberbullying concerns for students during the pandemic

How remote learning, increased screen time, and a considerable decrease in socialization affects students

*By Janet L. Royal*

By the time you read this article, we will have had more than a year of instruction and learning in a pandemic environment. Schools in New Jersey first closed in mid-March 2020. Since then some opened either fully or partially, then some had to close again because of COVID-19 cases—an ever-changing scenario that has been stressful for teachers, students and parents in a way that we could never have predicted.

With the increased time that students are spending online for school, there comes an increased potential for cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined as intentional and recurring detriment perpetrated through computers, cellphones and other electronic devices. Although this is different than in-person bullying, it is just as traumatizing—and often worse.

Some students have figured out workarounds that enable conversations between students without the teachers' knowledge. Such bullying includes, but sadly isn't limited to, exclusion, harassment, outing, dissing, and trickery. Here are some examples:

- Taking/sharing photos on social media to shame classmates.
- Sending damaging comments in the chat feature during virtual class.
- During virtual class, or even after class, using apps or gaming sessions to berate or embarrass classmates.
- Online posting of delicate, private or upsetting information without consent.
- Creating fake profiles to hide one's real identity with the intention of cyberbullying.
- Logging onto another person's social networking account and impersonating them, posting inappropriate content in their name.

In addition, not all students have access to a space in their home that they would want their classmates or teachers to see. They may even have to stream from a car or shelter if their family has been displaced, exacerbating issues of inequity and emphasizing disparities. Consequently, students may experience anxiety, depression and isolation. They may not turn on video their video or complete assignments.

Having conversations including students and parents will go a long way to minimizing cyberbullying in your virtual space, and in helping you gain

insight into the ways in which your students choose to interact in a virtual space. Often simply taking the time to talk will reveal what is really going on with the "bully" and will inform decisions about how to proceed to help all parties. Students should know that it's OK for them to report online bullying to their parents and their teachers without repercussions. This can happen by creating an environment of mutual respect in the classroom and teaching online etiquette.

Every district already has a bullying policy in place and there should be on-going conversations about it so that everyone is clear about what bullying is, what the consequences of bullying are, and how bullying can negatively affect individuals and groups now and in the future. Make sure you always keep the school counselor in the loop. Be sure to adhere to your school district's incident-reporting policies and procedures.

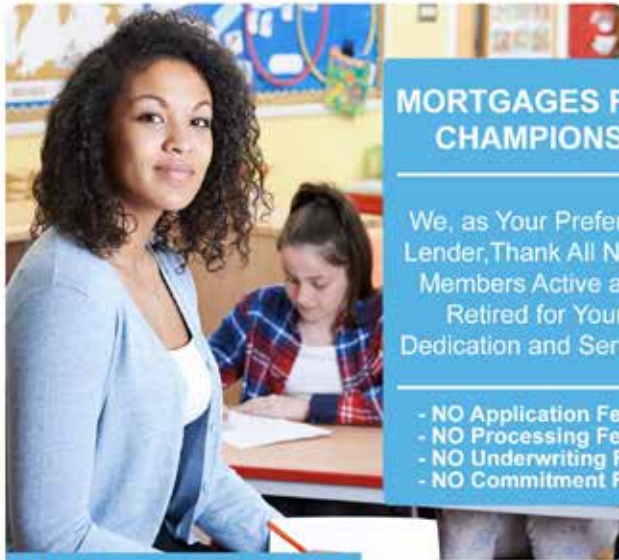
Realizing that this new situation, which has caused instruction to move from the classroom to the home, has been a learning curve for educators and students alike and brought a level of stress that has affected everyone. We all have to find ways to be creative and even step out of our comfort zones in order to get through this. There is light at the end of the tunnel and working together, we will make it.




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*Janet L. Royal is an associate director in the NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division and is the coordinator for the annual NJEA Convention. She can be reached at [jroyal@njea.org](mailto:jroyal@njea.org).*

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# Every school needs a certified school library media specialist

By Beth Thomas

The digital divide has been an issue in education for years. It's been magnified during the pandemic. A lot of conversation about closing this divide centers on ensuring that all New Jersey students have access to a device and reliable Wi-Fi. This is an important step. However, it will not close the divide. While devices and Wi-Fi will give students access to the internet, many students are lacking the educator who is uniquely qualified to teach them how to navigate the deluge of information they will encounter: a certified school library media specialist (SLMS).

Certified SLMSs instruct students on information literacy: how to search for, evaluate and synthesize information, how to use digital resources to create their own content, and how to do all of this ethically and responsibly. The revised New Jersey Student Learning Standards now include a standard for Information and Media Literacy, a subject and skill set that SLMSs are certified to teach.

SLMSs go beyond the walls, literally and figuratively, to teach students how to be insightful and critical users of information. They guide students in becoming responsible digital citizens, they foster a love of reading in students because they know the perfect books to put in their hands at just the right time, and they provide students access to enrichment experiences such as maker activities. SLMSs also support their colleagues' professional development and the curricula of the entire school.

SLMSs are certified, via accredited graduate programs, to do all of the above and their expertise is integral in developing career-and-college-ready students. Furthermore, the instruction they provide contributes to creating an informed electorate, something that is more vital than ever given the impact of information illiteracy we have seen in the last four years.

After reading about all of the roles SLMSs fill, one would think that every school would be staffed with a certified SLMS. Unfortunately, too many

students in New Jersey do not have access to this educator. There are many districts with either no SLMS or just one who is assigned to thousands of students and several school buildings, making it nearly impossible for them to be effective in working with students and staff. This is the case in many low-economy districts.

Additionally, a number of districts hire consultants, enlist parent volunteers, or have other noncertified staff run their libraries. Many have shuttered the library completely or reconfigured it into classrooms or labs. Districts are hiring educators for positions that do not have New Jersey Department of Education-endorsed certification, and NJASL has been hearing from members who have been forced to abandon their programs to cover classes, cover duty periods or monitor study halls.

Library budgets are being cut and money is being reallocated to add to classroom libraries—libraries that do not have the breadth or depth of a school library and that are available to only the students in that classroom. Furthermore, the books in these collections are typically sold by vendors as classroom sets and, in my own experience, I have seen collections that included nonfiction books about the solar system that were published in the early 1990s.

SLMSs work with every student and teacher in their building and provide access to a current and diverse, professionally-curated collection of resources that supports the entire curricula of the school and every level of learner, from English language learners to striving readers to students who read years beyond their grade levels. They utilize professional journals to ensure that the highest quality resources are purchased, and I can assure you that any book on the solar system published in the 1990s would have been weeded from the collection after Pluto lost its designation as a planet.

The essential tools of computer devices and internet access will be of little value if students do not understand how to best navigate, locate and evaluate information. The internet is more than Google.

Furthermore, the lack of instruction on how to use information contributes to what researcher Johannes J. Britz calls "information poverty." To break this cycle of information poverty and achieve full information equity, students deserve more than simple access to devices and internet connectivity. They deserve to have the services of a certified school library media specialist. Then real information equity can be achieved.

Sources: Hall, Tracie. "Necessary Trouble: Eradicating Information Poverty." American Libraries. Sept. 1, 2020. <http://bit.ly/3crFt2P>

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*Beth Thomas is the president of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL), which is the statewide organization for school library media specialists and is an affiliated organization of NJEA. NJASL's mission is to ensure that every student in every school in New Jersey is served by a certified full-time school library media specialist and has access to the technology and other resources needed. Learn more at [njasl.org](http://njasl.org).*



**Early Career  
Network**

# MEMBER BENEFITS OFFERS SAVINGS FOR ALL MEMBERS

**Early career members should check it out**

BY BRIAN REILLY, SETON HALL UNIVERSITY, PRESERVICE NJEA RELATIONS CHAIR

The first couple of years in a new profession is a whirlwind, and this could not be truer for educators. Education requires a lot of dedication and commitment, but from seeing students' smiling faces throughout the day to watching them grow into great people who can change the world, there are many rewards to being an educator. However, as NJEA members, you are also rewarded financially for this dedication. NJEA Member Benefits is a program available only to NJEA members. It is one way to thank you for all your dedication and commitment to educating and crafting future leaders.

I encourage early career members to take advantage of NJEA Member Benefits. These early career years in the life an NJEA member are filled with major life events such as buying a car or a house while dealing with student loan debt. This is where Member Benefits come in to provide discounts on a number of services from everyday trips to retail stores to big-ticket items. With the help of Member Benefits, the financial strain caused by these significant life events is lessened because of all the amazing programs that are offered.

## SAVE ON CAR AND HOME AND WHAT YOU PUT IN THEM

For large purchases such as cars or appliances, Buyer's Edge, Inc. is the place to shop. With its heavily discounted prices and great services, Buyer's Edge is a great resource for all members. The people at Buyer's Edge value what educators do for their students, so they try to make the process as easy as possible. They have toll-free numbers available for each program, and they are always trying to help find new ways to save members money. Learn more and find those phone numbers at the NJEA Member Benefits website (see sidebar).

## SAVE ON INSURANCE

After buying a car, members need insurance, and Member Benefits has options for insurance as well.

California Casualty, the only auto-home insurance program endorsed by NEA and sponsored by NJEA, is here to help. California Casualty and its auto and home and insurance programs help provide educators with unbeatable prices and the coverage they need. The combination of Buyer's Edge, Inc. and California Casualty helps early career members as they navigate those exciting life events.

## HELP FOR THESE CHALLENGING TIMES

NJEA Member Benefits also offers a disability insurance plan that is open to all members through Prudential. There are different plan options available to members based on age and the duration of the chosen plan.

With the COVID-19 pandemic placing a higher burden on the mental health of members, Member Benefits has AID-NJEA here to help. AID-NJEA is a 24/7 member helpline available to NJEA members free of charge. You can call it at 866-AID-NJEA (866-243-6532). It is a confidential service staffed with trained active and retired educators offering peer support, with mental health professionals on hand ready to help if needed. No matter what you are struggling with or what you need, AID-NJEA is there for you.

## TAKE YOUR SAVINGS NATIONAL

Being a NJEA member means you are also a National Education Association (NEA) member. This enables you to take advantage of all NEA Member Benefits has to offer. For all members, but especially early career members, the NEA Student Debt Navigator, powered by Savi, is a great resource. Savi helps members by conducting a student loan checkup to help find areas of debt forgiveness and savings for educators. NJEA members are able to use this service for free for one full year.

NEA Member Benefits also offers an online discount marketplace powered by Rakuten. Rakuten is an online service that provides discounts on everyday purchases. Some of the

many participating locations include Target, DELL, and Kohl's. As an NEA member, you are entitled to special member-only discounts and savings that are not available to others through Rakuten.

NEA Member Benefits also offers complimentary life insurance to its members. To register, a member simply names their beneficiary at [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com).

## AFTER THE PANDEMIC, SAVE ON OUTINGS

Once the pandemic and the precautions needed to keep us all safe are lifted, Member Benefits will be there to help you get the most out of the opportunities that await you. Discounted tickets to Hershey Park and Morey's Piers and Water Park might just be for you. Premium Seat USA is also an option for members who want discounted tickets to sporting events, concerts and theater events.

There are always new Member Benefits arising, so be sure to check the NJEA and NEA Member Benefits website and social media pages for updates. Be sure to also check out the NJEA Member Benefits Facebook page for more updates and giveaways in the future. 🏠

## NJEA and NEA Member Benefits

**[memberbenefits.njea.org](http://memberbenefits.njea.org)**

Visit [memberbenefits.njea.org](http://memberbenefits.njea.org) to access all the offers described above and more. You find links there to NEA Member Benefits as well.

## AID-NJEA

**[njea.org/aidnjea](http://njea.org/aidnjea)**

AID-NJEA is a free, confidential 24-hour telephone helpline for school staff members and their families. You can call 866-AID-NJEA (243-6532) or email [helpline@njea.org](mailto:helpline@njea.org).



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### ✓ Update Your Beneficiaries

During initial employment and upon enrolling in new programs, you may recall being asked to designate beneficiary(ies) for your pension and life insurance plans. As life-changes—such as birth, marriage or death of a beneficiary—occur, we often forget to update our information for our pension and life insurance.

Visit [memberbenefits.njea.org](http://memberbenefits.njea.org) for a checklist and instructions on how to update these important financial assets.

### ✓ Try the vipHomeLink App

vipHomeLink is a home management app that will simplify your homeownership experience by helping you:

- Stay organized. The app stores all your home's information and documents (warranties, insurance policies, etc.) in a highly secure Home Profile for easy personal access.
- Keep on top of routine, but necessary, home maintenance with personalized reminders and recommendations based on your Home Profile.
- NJEA members get 50% off a one-year subscription (one year is \$48). Visit [memberbenefits.njea.org/viphomelink](http://memberbenefits.njea.org/viphomelink).



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# TRANSITIONING FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO UNIVERSITY

BY CAITLYN MULLER, STOCKTON UNIVERSITY GRADUATE

Let me be honest, I have never been good at math. After third grade—once math did not just consist of plugging in numbers in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division formulas—I started to struggle. I am currently a junior at Seton Hall University majoring in early special education and social and behavioral science. With the few math classes I've had to take in these majors, I still struggled.

In the spring semester of my sophomore year, I taught a third-grade math lesson at Far Hills Country Day School that was observed by one of my professors. I was nervous for many reasons, but the two main reasons were that math is not my strong suit and that my first observed lesson in the previous fall semester did not go as well as I would have hoped.

To settle the doubts I had about my upcoming observation, I decided to truly apply myself in math and mathematics instruction. In one of my courses, Teaching Math in the Classroom, I committed myself to taking excellent notes and to asking pointed questions about how to create a successful lesson.

Coincidentally, the professor I had for that course was the same professor who had supervised my earlier less-than-stellar lesson. She knew my weak spots and what I needed to work on, so I took her notes from my previous lesson and her notes in class and incorporated them into my new lesson. The most beneficial thing I took away from the course was that to make a lesson successful and engaging, you must incorporate the students' interests. That changed the game for me.

At the time of my student teaching placement, all that my third-graders would talk about was "squishes," which are soft toys that resemble animals, food and other objects of interest to children. So it was squishes that I incorporated into my lesson. The objective was for students to be able to estimate sums

in word problems by rounding numbers to the nearest hundred and place the sums on a number line.

I started my lesson with an anecdote about how the family I have been babysitting has a lot of squishes just like the ones they had in their classroom.

"I need your help with estimating about how many squishes this family has," I told them.

The students' faces lit up immediately, not only because I was talking about squishes but because I wanted their help. Almost every student volunteered to come to the board and estimate the number of squishes this family had and place the value on the number line. I created guided practice experiences, partner worksheets and exit slips with word problems that included some of the students' names. They smiled from ear to ear.

I ended this lesson with a completely different view of myself as an educator. I felt confident, successful and effective. This may sound a bit dramatic for a third-grade math lesson about rounding numbers to the nearest hundred, but it reinforced for me why I went into this profession. The smiles on the students' faces made me believe that they had forgotten they were even in a math class. They were just having fun. They were engaged, asking questions and eager to complete each problem handed to them.

I could not help but think about when I was their age and how I felt about math. My own third-grade experience with math caused me to question my intelligence from then until today. Now I wonder if my years-long lack of confidence in math could have been avoided if only I had had a teacher who took the time to get to know their students' interests and incorporate them into their lessons. While I can't change the past, I can change the future for students like me and incorporate their world into the classroom. 🍌

## Advice for transferring

- Explore university course catalogs.
- Talk to an adviser.
- Research required exams and portfolios, such as Praxis and edTPA.
- Be attentive about what courses to take in community college to ensure they transfer to your preferred university.
- Do not be afraid to switch your major.
- Follow your own timeline in your college experience.

## What I wished I'd known

- Seminar courses are required courses for most degrees.
- Minors are obtainable along with degrees and certificates.
- Obtaining multiple endorsements with the teaching license provides specialization in multiple grade levels/subjects.
- Praxis study material and edTPA handbook manuals are significant to succeeding.
- There are many educational organizations available to join.



## *Classroom Close-up NJ looks back at*

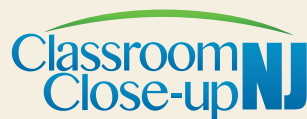
# Poetry Meets Percussion

Samsel Upper Elementary School students in Parlin meet once a week for 16 weeks to work with professional artists on percussion and poetry.

Young Audiences helps schools recovering from Superstorm Sandy restore their spirits through an afterschool program called Sandy Relief Arts Education Program. The goal was to get children to talk about their experiences with the storm and the losses that they suffered. The program encourages and cultivates students' original creativity, confidence and performance.

The Young Audiences Arts for Learning is the nation's largest arts in education learning network. An NJEA Pride in Public Education grant funded materials for the percussions and other items.

You can view the segment by visiting [classroomcloseup.org](http://classroomcloseup.org) and searching Poetry Meets Percussion.



Over its 25-year run, NJEA's Classroom Close-up NJ has won 16 Emmy® Awards. While it is no longer producing new episodes, it has a treasure trove of content that inspires and educates the public about the great things happening in New Jersey public schools – and it is a valuable resource for educators.

Watch Classroom Close-up on NJTV. The show airs on Sundays at 7:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., and 7:30 p.m. Follow @CCUNJ on Twitter and Facebook at [facebook.com/crcunj](https://facebook.com/crcunj) and visit [www.classroomcloseup.org](http://www.classroomcloseup.org).





## ENROLLMENT IN MEDICARE

As required by law, retired members or their dependents who qualify for the School Employees' Health Benefits Program (SEHBP) state-paid, post-retirement medical benefits, or those more recent retirees who may be contributing a percentage of the premium and are eligible for Medicare, must enroll in both Medicare Parts A and B. Medicare Part A is paid for while actively employed and Part B is paid for during retirement, usually through a deduction in retirees Social Security checks.

State law requires the SEHBP to reimburse these eligible retirees and their dependents for the cost of enrolling in Medicare Part B.

Most members and their dependents will qualify for Medicare benefits under one of the following four conditions:

- Have reached age 65.
- Have received Social Security disability benefits for 24 months.
- Have end-stage renal disease.
- Have ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.)

Members currently receiving Social Security retirement benefits will be automatically enrolled in both Medicare Part A and Part B. They do not need to contact anyone. They will receive a package in the mail three months

before their 65th birthday with the new Medicare card.

However, members who are 65 but who are not receiving Social Security retirement benefits will need to actively enroll in Medicare. Members should sign up for Medicare online at [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) or via [ssa.gov](https://www.ssa.gov) approximately three months prior to turning 65.

To continue post-retirement medical benefits without interruption, when Medicare-eligible members or dependents receive their Medicare cards they must send a copy of the card to show proof of enrollment in Parts A and B to the Division of Pensions and Benefits. If this is not done before they are eligible for Medicare, their health benefits could be temporarily terminated. More importantly, retirees enrolled in SEHBP should not sign up for alternate supplemental Medicare coverage. Enrollment in another plan would result in the loss of SEHBP coverage.

The Division of Pensions will send a reminder letter to those who are about to qualify by means of turning 65. However, the Division of Pensions will not send a reminder letter to those who qualify by the other identified means.

Any questions about this process should be directed to the Division of Pensions and Benefits at 609-292-7524.

## Around the counties

### BURLINGTON COUNTY

**REA** will hold its spring general membership meeting via Zoom on Thursday, May 13. Emails will be sent with the link to attend meeting. To attend, call Doriann Dodulik-Swern at 856-722-8952.

### CAMDEN COUNTY REA'S

next meeting will be held via Zoom on Thursday, May 6. Please check the CCREA newsletter for more details. To attend, call Gary Milby at 856-574-4212 or Sue Ronca at 856-816-1289.

### The GLOUCESTER COUNTY

**REA** will host its spring meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, May 11. Zoom links will be sent out a couple days prior to the meeting. To attend, contact Denise McDermott at 609-513-4812 or [denisemcd4@comcast.net](mailto:denisemcd4@comcast.net).

### The MIDDLESEX COUNTY

**REA** for its end of the year luncheon on Thursday, June 10 at the Grand Marquis in Old Bridge. MCREA scholarship awards will be presented. The cost is \$34. To attend, contact Anne Chomko at 732-675-1734.

### MORRIS COUNTY REA

welcomes you to its scholarship fundraiser on Friday, April 23 at the Birchwood Manor in Whippany. The cost is \$48. To attend, contact Cheryl Doltz at 973-818-1353.

The MCREA also will hold its spring meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, May 12 and its scholarship awards luncheon on Wednesday, June 9, both at the Birchwood Manor. The cost for each is \$35. To attend either, contact John Beekman at 973-514-1080.

### The OCEAN COUNTY REA

will hold its next meeting/luncheon on Thursday, May 13 at Jack's Lobster Shanty in Point Pleasant Beach. The cost is \$28. To attend, contact Janice Sovinee at 732-477-1711.

### WARREN COUNTY REA'S

next meeting/luncheon will be held on Wednesday, June 2 at the Hawk Pointe Country Club in Washington. The cost is \$30. To attend, contact Vicki Rhinehart at 908-319-1995.

*Due to COVID-19 concerns and restrictions, all meetings/events are subject to change. For questions, call your county REA.*



## NJREA DELEGATE COUNCIL/ INFORMATIONAL MEETING

**Thursday, April 22 at 10 a.m.**

NJREA members are invited to join the NJREA officers and Delegate Council for this virtual meeting to get the latest news on upcoming events and issues affecting retirees.

Topics:

- Health benefits news
- NJ Primary Election and NJEA PAC endorsements
- NJREA's Fall Meeting and Annual Convention
- Newly elected NJREA Officers for the 2021-23 term

The registration link goes live on April 7 at [njea.org/njrea](http://njea.org/njrea).

Register early as capacity is limited.

## A GREAT GIFT IDEA FOR RETIREES-TO-BE

**Attention county and local presidents:**

Do you know an NJEA member who is retired or about to retire? The move to retirement can be an exciting time, but it's even better when the New Jersey Retirees' Education Association (NJREA) has your back.

When you join NJREA, you belong to one of the largest retired public school employee organizations in the nation as well as maintain your membership with NJEA, NEA-Retired, and your County Retired EA (this can be in the county in which you worked or in which you reside, or you can pay to join both).

In addition, you will receive the award-winning *NJREA Newsletter*, a quarterly publication that keeps you informed about your pension, medical benefits and more. You will also receive the *NJEA Review*, which has a section on retiree issues every month, and all NEA retiree publications. In addition, [njea.org/njrea](http://njea.org/njrea) has a vast array of resources, but you must be a member to log in.

You will receive assistance from NJEA professional staff on pension and medical benefits questions, in addition to assistance on all retirement concerns. This service is only available to dues-paying NJREA members and all of the services available through NJEA Member Benefits.

Interested? Email John Carlson, NJREA second vice-president at [jcarlson@njea.org](mailto:jcarlson@njea.org) to learn how to buy your retirees the gift of NJREA membership.

## Commitment to EDUCATORS.

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  - ABD Pathway
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- M.A. in Instructional Leadership
- M.A. in Special Education
- M.Ed. in Educational Practice (Online)
- M.Ed. in Literacy Instruction
- Teacher of Students with Disabilities Certification
- **NEW!** - English as a Second Language (ESL) Certification
- **NEW!** - Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant (LDTTC) Certification
- Supervisor Licensure



### Upcoming start dates for 2021:

Summer 1 - May 10th / Summer 2- June 28th / Fall- August 30th

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



Changing the face of retired public school employees

# Join the New Jersey Retirees' Education Association

NJREA represents over 26,000 retired certificated and educational support professionals (ESP), with active local associations in all 21 counties.



- ✓ Maintain access to NJEA/NEA Member Benefits discounts.
- ✓ Stay informed about health benefits, pensions and more through our newsletter, website, meetings and annual NJREA Convention.
- ✓ Participate in philanthropic activities organized by our county associations.
- ✓ Continue to support and represent New Jersey's public schools.

## Want to learn more?

609-599-4594, ext. 4123

[njrea@njea.org](mailto:njrea@njea.org)

[njea.org/njrea](http://njea.org/njrea)



Annual, Lifetime and Pre-Retirement Lifetime membership includes membership in NJREA, NJEA, NEA-R and your county association. The membership year runs from Sept. 1 – Aug. 31. Membership cards are issued each September. Dues vary by county. Annual dues may be paid by credit card, with an automatic renewal option. An installment plan is available for lifetime and pre-retirement lifetime dues.



Sandra H. *Class of 2007*

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Intellectual Disabilities

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Here's the good news: You don't have to!

In as little as 12-18 months, you can earn your certification through NJEXCEL, the Foundation for Educational Administration's school leadership certification program.

**All Courses Now Online Until We Can Safely Return**



# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

## YEARS ENDING AUG. 31, 2020 AND 2019

### TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF NJEA

We have audited the accompanying consolidated financial statements of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) which comprise the consolidated statements of financial position as of Aug. 31, 2020, and the related consolidated statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the consolidated financial statements.

#### Management's responsibility for the financial statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these consolidated financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

#### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these consolidated financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan

and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the consolidated financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to NJEA's preparation and fair presentation of the consolidated financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of NJEA's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the consolidated financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

#### Opinion

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the New Jersey Education Association as of Aug. 31, 2020, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

#### Report on summarized comparative information

We have previously audited NJEA's 2019 consolidated financial statements, and we expressed an unmodified audit opinion on those audited consolidated financial statements in our report dated Dec. 17, 2019. In our opinion, the summarized comparative information presented herein as of and for the year ended Aug. 31, 2019 is consistent, in all material respects, with the audited consolidated financial statements from which it has been derived.

#### Novak Francella, LLC

Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania  
Dec. 14, 2020

### NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	August 31			August 31	
	2020	2019		2020	2019
<b>ASSETS</b>			<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$21,098,056	\$13,755,956	Liabilities		
Receivables			Accounts payable	\$3,127,085	\$4,789,673
Membership dues	787,497	161,931	Unremitted NEA dues	574,788	572,930
Due from National Education Association	87,610	245,734	Accrued expenses	256,285	261,252
Contributions receivable	7,000	7,000	Deferred revenue	988,681	1,144,389
Advances to employees	57,315	59,690	Current maturity of capital lease obligations	105,944	345,519
Accrued investment income	106,355	152,349	Long-term liabilities	490,513	542,325
Total receivables	1,045,777	626,704	Accrued vacation	6,889,450	6,210,411
Investments - at fair value	153,997,100	149,859,153	Accrued postretirement benefit cost - other	127,897,944	154,320,150
Prepaid expenses and other assets	1,674,587	2,344,072	Accrued pension cost	36,500,027	46,660,247
Fixed assets - at cost			Total liabilities	176,830,717	214,846,896
Land and building improvements	29,580,404	26,702,383	Net assets		
Computer equipment	6,290,891	7,259,159	Without donor restrictions	\$10,745,865	\$(35,689,777)
Furniture, equipment and vehicles	5,089,592	4,862,004	Board-designated restrictions	3,439,033	3,139,042
	40,960,887	38,823,546	With donor restrictions	4,555,630	357,445
Less: accumulated depreciation	(23,205,162)	(22,755,825)	Total net assets	18,740,528	(32,193,290)
Net fixed assets	17,755,725	16,067,721	Total liabilities and net assets	\$195,571,245	\$182,653,606
Total assets	\$195,571,245	\$182,653,606			

**NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**  
**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES**  
**YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2020 AND 2019**

	2020			2019	
	Without Donor Restrictions	Board-Designated Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Total
<b>REVENUE</b>					
Membership dues	\$123,207,015	\$ -	\$ -	\$123,207,015	\$120,786,922
Pride dues	12,290,045	-	-	12,290,045	12,096,813
National Education Assn. grants and reimbursements	5,712,114	-	-	5,712,114	6,360,304
Conferences	418,528	-	-	418,528	762,931
Convention	498,405	-	-	498,405	539,792
Investment income, net	11,228,485	285,758	-	11,514,243	3,171,548
Member benefits income	101,136	-	-	101,136	80,543
Publication income	242,509	-	-	242,509	231,535
Teacher Leader Academy administrative fee income	90,000	-	-	90,000	-
Contributions	-	116,245	-	116,245	12,874
Disaster Relief Fund	15,000	-	-	15,000	14,000
Other income	74,848	-	-	74,848	78,156
Net assets transferred to other funds (released from restrictions)	(12,066,320)	-	12,066,320	-	-
Total revenue	<u>141,811,765</u>	<u>402,003</u>	<u>12,066,320</u>	<u>154,280,088</u>	<u>144,135,418</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
Program services					
Governance	5,933,979	-	-	5,933,979	6,020,705
Executive org development	12,154,002	-	-	12,154,002	6,903,974
UniServ					
Regional offices	26,092,706	-	-	26,092,706	24,385,209
Field office	6,716,723	-	-	6,716,723	7,516,748
Legal services	12,996,632	-	-	12,996,632	13,857,770
Communications	6,398,949	-	-	6,398,949	6,038,297
Professional development	4,966,484	-	-	4,966,484	4,599,418
Research and economics	5,897,623	-	-	5,897,623	5,904,089
Government relations	3,960,706	-	-	3,960,706	3,942,288
Conventions	2,153,817	-	-	2,153,817	2,792,314
Organizational services	7,189,924	-	-	7,189,924	6,728,683
Campaign					
Organization Project	-	-	7,867,835	7,867,835	3,615,274
Pride	12,463,855	-	-	12,463,855	11,000,365
Frederick L. Hipp Foundation	102,012	-	-	102,012	106,642
NJEA Affiliates Risk Purchasing Group	106,849	102,012	-	208,861	252,390
Disaster Relief	15,000	-	300	15,300	16,130
Total program services	<u>107,149,261</u>	<u>102,012</u>	<u>7,868,135</u>	<u>115,119,408</u>	<u>103,680,296</u>
ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL					
Executive office	4,895,250	-	-	4,895,250	\$4,652,288
Business division	14,628,066	-	-	14,628,066	12,559,642
Depreciation and amortization	2,487,072	-	-	2,487,072	2,318,121
Gain (loss) on disposal of fixed assets	-	-	-	-	13,360
Deferred compensation	966,085	-	-	966,085	340,303
Total administrative and general	<u>22,976,473</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>22,976,473</u>	<u>19,883,714</u>
Total expenses	<u>130,125,734</u>	<u>102,012</u>	<u>7,868,135</u>	<u>138,095,881</u>	<u>123,564,010</u>
INCREASE IN NET OPERATIONS ASSETS	11,686,031	299,991	4,198,185	16,184,207	20,571,408
PENSION AND POST RETIREMENT -RELATED					
Charges other than service cost	34,749,611	-	-	34,749,611	(89,682,632)
net increase (decrease)	46,435,642	299,991	4,198,185	50,933,818	(69,111,224)
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	(35,689,777)	3,139,042	357,445	(32,193,290)	36,917,934
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	<u>\$10,745,865</u>	<u>\$3,439,033</u>	<u>\$4,555,630</u>	<u>\$18,740,528</u>	<u>\$(32,193,290)</u>

**NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES  
YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2020**

	<u>Governance</u>	<u>Executive Organizational Development</u>	<u>Uniserv Regional Offices</u>	<u>Uniserv Field Office</u>	<u>Legal Services</u>	<u>Communications</u>	<u>Professional Development</u>	<u>Research and Economics</u>	<u>Gov't Relations</u>	<u>Conventions</u>
Personnel	\$1,717,220	\$3,222,645	\$23,918,426	\$2,774,732	\$1,117,670	\$4,599,537	\$3,488,354	\$5,479,160	\$3,481,363	\$ -
Administrative	539,031	8,096	80,123	100,782	-	25,975	-	82,739	46,249	316,215
Facilities	97,474	55,497	2,094,157	24,512	31,136	405,536	4,726	83,711	16,516	246,461
Conventions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,555,421
Communications	10,336	3,157	-	-	-	1,215,447	-	34,814	7,726	-
Legislative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	408,852	-
Consultants	-	-	-	2,458,835	-	142,839	986,456	170,578	-	-
Membership services	3,171,020	8,864,607	-	1,357,862	11,847,826	1,737	486,948	45,597	-	35,720
Governance	129,026	-	-	-	-	7,613	-	-	-	-
Campaign	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Committees	269,860	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
General	12	-	-	-	-	265	-	1,024	-	-
Disaster Relief Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation and amortization	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred compensation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<u>\$5,933,979</u>	<u>\$12,154,002</u>	<u>\$26,092,706</u>	<u>\$6,716,723</u>	<u>\$12,996,632</u>	<u>\$6,398,949</u>	<u>\$4,966,484</u>	<u>\$5,897,623</u>	<u>\$3,960,706</u>	<u>\$2,153,817</u>

## HELP PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES

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1-800-727-3414, Option 3, or visit  
[www.educators-insurance.com](http://www.educators-insurance.com).



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Organizational Services	Campaign: Garden State Forward	Pride	Frederick L. Hipp Foundation	NJEA Affiliates Risk Purchasing Group	Disaster Relief Fund	Total Program Services	Executive Office	Business Division	Other	Total Admin. and General	Total Expenses
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$15,931	\$ -	\$ -	\$49,815,038	\$3,281,390	\$9,983,824	\$ -	\$13,265,214	\$63,080,252
-	-	-	3,487	-	-	1,202,697	622,664	1,720,870	-	2,343,534	3,546,231
5,973	-	-	-	-	-	3,065,699	62,338	2,922,806	-	2,985,144	6,050,843
-	-	-	1,483	-	-	1,556,904	-	-	-	-	1,556,904
-	-	12,462,928	-	-	-	13,734,408	-	-	-	-	13,734,408
-	-	-	-	-	-	408,852	-	-	-	-	408,852
-	-	-	-	-	-	3,758,708	-	-	-	-	3,758,708
7,183,951	-	927	81,111	208,861	-	33,286,167	926,908	-	-	926,908	34,213,075
-	-	-	-	-	-	136,639	-	-	-	-	136,639
-	7,867,835	-	-	-	-	7,867,835	-	-	-	-	7,867,835
-	-	-	-	-	-	269,860	-	-	-	-	269,860
-	-	-	-	-	-	1,301	1,950	566	-	2,516	3,817
-	-	-	-	-	15,300	15,300	-	-	-	-	15,300
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,487,072	2,487,072	2,487,072
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<u>966,085</u>	<u>966,085</u>	<u>966,085</u>
<u>\$7,189,924</u>	<u>\$7,867,835</u>	<u>\$12,463,855</u>	<u>\$102,012</u>	<u>\$208,861</u>	<u>\$15,300</u>	<u>\$115,119,408</u>	<u>\$4,895,250</u>	<u>\$14,628,066</u>	<u>\$3,453,157</u>	<u>\$22,976,473</u>	<u>\$138,095,881</u>

## GRADUATE STUDIES

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**Together, we'll do this.**

**NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS  
YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2020 AND 2019**

	2020	2019
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Cash received from		
Members' dues and representation fee payers	\$122,425,741	\$120,903,907
Members' Pride dues	12,290,045	12,096,813
National Education Association	5,872,096	7,054,823
Conventions, conferences and other sources	1,559,046	1,715,499
Investment income	5,434,328	6,794,810
Cash paid for personnel costs	(65,200,113)	(64,289,383)
Cash paid to suppliers, vendors and service providers	(72,793,798)	(61,983,932)
Interest paid	(80,016)	(84,294)
Grants paid	(41,664)	(83,799)
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>9,465,665</u>	<u>22,124,444</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Payments for the purchase of fixed assets	(4,175,077)	(2,991,051)
Payments for the purchase of investments	(18,076,021)	(73,245,258)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	<u>20,233,478</u>	<u>57,086,396</u>
Net cash used for investing activities	<u>(2,017,620)</u>	<u>(19,149,913)</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Principal payments on capital leases	<u>(105,945)</u>	<u>(345,530)</u>
Net cash used for financing activities	<u>(105,945)</u>	<u>(345,530)</u>
<b>NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>	7,342,100	2,629,001
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>		
Beginning of year	<u>13,755,956</u>	<u>11,126,955</u>
End of year	<u>\$21,098,056</u>	<u>\$13,755,956</u>

# NEED HELP?

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**WHY HANDLE TOUGH  
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practical advice, direction, ideas and resources  
from those who have walked in your shoes.**



**NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
AUGUST 31, 2020 AND 2019**

**NOTE 1. NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**Type of Activity** - The New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) was established to promote the education interests of the State; to promote equal educational opportunity for all students; to secure and maintain for the office of teaching its true position among the professions; and to promote and guard the interests of employees who are in employment categories eligible for membership, exclusively in the State of New Jersey.

**Method of Accounting** - The financial statements are prepared using the accrual basis of accounting.

**Basis of Presentation** - NJEA reports the amounts for each of two distinct classes of net assets and changes therein - net assets with donor restrictions and net assets without donor restrictions.

**Basis of Consolidation** - The consolidated financial statements include the accounts of the New Jersey Education Association, the Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education, Inc., Garden State Forward, NJEA Affiliates Risk Purchasing Group, and the Bolivar L. Graham Intern Foundation, Inc. NJEA maintains a political action committee as a separately segregated fund. The assets, liabilities, and activity of this related fund are not included in the accompanying financial statements. All significant intercompany account balances have been eliminated in consolidation.

**Comparative Financial Information** - The accompanying financial statements include certain prior-year summarized comparative information in total but not by net asset class. Such information does not include sufficient detail to constitute a presentation in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP). Accordingly, such information should be read in conjunction with our audited financial statements for the year ended August 31, 2019, from which the summarized information was derived.

**Investments** - Investments in fixed income mutual funds, equity mutual funds, international equity mutual fund, and short-term investments and real estate mutual fund are carried at fair value as provided by the investment manager, which generally represents quoted

market prices or net asset value of the mutual funds as of the last business day of the year. The investment in the real estate mutual fund carried at estimated fair value as provided by the investment manager. The real estate limited partnership and hedge funds of funds are carried at estimated fair value based on the net asset value of the limited partnerships as provided by SEI the investment manager.

**Membership Dues** - Membership dues are recognized as revenue based on the membership period covered by the individual member's dues. Allowance for uncollectible accounts is considered unnecessary and is not provided.

**Fixed Assets** - Fixed assets are stated at cost. Major additions are capitalized while replacements, maintenance, and repairs which do not improve or extend the lives of the respective assets are charged to expense on a current basis. Depreciation and amortization of fixed assets are computed using the straight-line method at rates calculated to allocate the cost of the applicable assets over their estimated useful lives, which are generally from two to fifteen years on furnishings, fixtures, vehicles, and equipment, and from ten to fifty years on buildings and improvements. Depreciation and amortization expense totaled \$2,487,072 for the year ended August 31, 2020 and \$2,318,121 for 2019.

**Deferred Revenue** - Deferred revenue consists of exhibit fees, National Educational Association (NEA) grants and reimbursements, membership dues, subscriptions, and advertising received in advance.

**Cash** - For purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents are considered to be amounts in bank checking accounts and overnight sweeps accounts, subject to immediate withdrawal.

**Functional Allocation of Expenses** - The costs of providing the various programs and other activities have been summarized on a functional basis in the consolidated statements of activities. Expenses directly attributable to a specific functional area of NJEA are reported as expenses of those functional areas.

# NOTE 1. NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

**Net Assets with Board-Designated Restrictions** - NJEA records applicable membership assessments, gifts, and other assets as additions to the net assets with board-designated restrictions of the Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education, Inc. Investment income from the Foundation's investments is restricted for use for the Foundation's program service. The Foundation was organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes to advance and improve the quality of education and the teaching profession in New Jersey through the study, creation and funding of innovative programs or projects which will further educational and instructional excellence. It is intended that grants for all Foundation programs or projects will be funded by earnings from the Foundation's investments.

NJEA records all applicable contributions to Garden State Forward as net assets with donor restrictions of NJEA. The purpose of Garden State Forward is to make independent expenditures regarding New Jersey candidates, or support of committees or organizations that make only independent expenditures regarding such candidates. Garden State Forward is funded by contributions from NJEA.

**Net Assets with Donor Restrictions** -- NJEA records all applicable contributions and donations received from members, the general public, and NJEA affiliates for the NJEA Disaster Relief Fund (the Disaster Relief Fund) (formerly the Hurricane Sandy Back to School Fund) as net assets with donor restrictions of NJEA. These contributions and donations can only be used for either a direct benefit to a member such as replacing belongings lost as a result of the

hurricane or for general support to a school such as replacing damaged books, repairs, etc.

Contributions from NJEA to the Disaster Relief Fund are unrestricted contributions that are designated for the Disaster Relief Fund. These contributions can be for either a direct benefit to a member or for general support to a school. Contributions from the NJEA Member Benefits Fund to the Disaster Relief Fund are net assets without donor restrictions contributions that are designated for the Disaster Relief Fund. These contributions can only be used for a direct benefit to a member and cannot be used for general support to a school.

**Estimates** - The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

**Reclassification** - Certain reclassifications have been made to prior year amounts to conform to the current year presentation.

**New Accounting Pronouncements** - In May 2014, FASB issued ASU 2014-09 - Revenue from Contracts with Customers (Topic 606). The objective of the disclosure requirements in the Topic is for an entity to disclose sufficient information to enable users of financial statements to understand the nature, amount, timing, and uncertainty of revenue and cash flows arising from contracts with customers. In accordance with the modified retrospective approach, the comparative information has not been restated and continues to be reported under the accounting standards in effect for those periods. Adoption of the ASU did not have a material

effect on the financial statements.

In March 2017, FASB issued ASU 2017-07 - Improving the Presentation of Net Periodic Pension Cost and Net Periodic Postretirement Benefit Cost (Topic 715). The objective of the disclosure requirements in this Topic is for an employer to disaggregate the service cost component from the other components of net periodic benefit cost. Service cost must be presented in the same line item(s) as other employee compensation costs and are generally included above the line in total expenses. All other components of net periodic benefit cost must be presented in the statement of activities separately from the service cost component and outside a subtotal of income from operations. These other components generally include interest cost, expected return on plan assets, and amortization of prior service cost. Adoption of the ASU increased certain 2019 compensation expense line items by \$7,301,875 but, overall, did not have a material effect on the financial statements.

## NOTE 2. RECEIVABLES

Amounts due from the NEA represent funds due on various projects and programs supported in total or in part by NEA.

Advances to employees represent initial expense advances made to employees. Upon termination or retirement, a final expense reconciliation is required for all amounts advanced.

## NOTE 3. INVESTMENTS

The following summary presents the cost and fair value for each of the investment categories as of August 31, 2020 and 2019:

	2020		2020	
	Cost	Fair Value	Cost	Fair Value
<b>WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS:</b>				
Fixed income mutual funds	\$75,793,882	\$76,921,836	\$75,576,633	\$75,913,788
Equity mutual funds	29,997,305	35,320,154	31,965,537	34,570,714
International equity mutual fund	24,893,152	28,721,526	22,513,718	24,175,203
Short-term investments	261,807	261,804	243,067	243,066
Mortgage-backed security	98,264	37,458	122,625	53,241
Real estate limited partnership	3,967,865	7,960,497	5,243,762	10,814,008
Alternative investments	892,432	1,006,952	558,933	593,457
Total without donor restrictions	<u>135,904,707</u>	<u>150,230,227</u>	<u>136,224,275</u>	<u>146,363,477</u>
<b>WITH BOARD-DESIGNATED RESTRICTIONS:</b>				
Fixed income mutual funds	1,518,729	1,477,688	1,245,682	1,226,185
Equity mutual funds	1,519,950	1,476,270	1,732,576	1,555,823
International equity mutual fund	551,567	642,905	501,286	539,461
Real estate limited partnership	196,417	170,010	104,916	174,207
Total with board-designated restrictions	<u>3,786,663</u>	<u>3,766,873</u>	<u>3,584,460</u>	<u>3,495,676</u>
Total investments	<u>\$139,691,370</u>	<u>\$153,997,100</u>	<u>\$139,808,735</u>	<u>\$149,859,153</u>

Investment income for the years ended August 31, 2020 and 2019 consisted of the following:

	2020	2019
<b>WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS:</b>		
Interest and dividends	\$ 5,655,958	\$7,050,319
Realized and unrealized gain (loss) on investments	6,193,112	(3,383,313)
Investment fees	(620,585)	(536,571)
	<u>\$ 11,228,485</u>	<u>\$ 3,130,435</u>
<b>WITH BOARD-DESIGNATED RESTRICTIONS:</b>		
Interest and dividends	\$246,431	\$361,930
Realized and unrealized gain (loss) on investments	48,161	(312,178)
Investment fees	(8,834)	(8,639)
	<u>\$ 285,758</u>	<u>\$41,113</u>



**NOTE 4. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS**

The framework for measuring fair value provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (Level 1) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (Level 3). The three levels of the fair value hierarchy are described as follows:

**Basis of Fair Value Measurement:**

**Level 1** - Inputs to the valuation methodology are unadjusted quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets that NJEA has the ability to access.

**Level 2** - Inputs to the valuation methodology include: quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets; quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets; inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability; inputs that are derived principally from or corroborated by observable market data by correlation or other means.

If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

**Level 3** - Inputs to the valuation methodology are unobservable and significant to the fair value measurement.

The asset's or liability's fair value measurement level within the fair value hierarchy is based on the lowest level of any input that is significant to the fair value measurement. Valuation techniques maximize the use of relevant observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs.

**FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS AT AUGUST 31, 2020**

	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Fixed income mutual funds	\$ 78,399,524	\$ 78,399,524	\$ -	\$ -
Equity mutual funds	36,796,424	36,796,424	-	-
International equity mutual funds	29,364,431	29,364,431	-	-
Short-term investments	261,804	261,804	-	-
Real estate mutual funds	207,468	-	207,468	-
Total assets in the fair value hierarchy	145,029,651	\$ 144,822,183	\$ 207,468	\$ -
Investments measured at NAV (A)	8,967,449			
Total investments	\$ 153,997,100			

**FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS AT AUGUST 31, 2019**

	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Fixed income mutual funds*	\$ 77,139,973	\$ 77,139,973	\$ -	\$ -
Equity mutual funds**	36,300,744	36,300,744	-	-
International equity mutual funds	24,714,664	24,714,664	-	-
Short-term investments	243,066	243,066	-	-
Real estate mutual funds	53,241	-	53,241	-
Total assets in the fair value hierarchy	138,451,688	\$ 138,398,447	\$ 53,241	\$ -
Investments measured at NAV (A)*	11,407,465			
Total investments	\$ 149,859,153			

\* The Association has corrected the presentation of SEI GPA IV Fund within the Plan's portfolio investments fair value measurements for 2019. The investment, which was valued at \$593,457, was previously classified as a Level 1 investment and has now been presented as an investment measured at NAV.

\*\* The Association has corrected the presentation of balanced mutual fund within the Plan's portfolio investments fair value measurements for 2019. The investment, which was valued at \$6,373,401, has now been presented as an equity mutual fund.

(A) In accordance with Subtopic 820-10, certain investments that are measured at fair value using the net asset value per share (or its equivalent) practical expedient have not been classified in the fair value hierarchy. The fair value amounts presented in this table are intended to permit reconciliation of the fair value hierarchy to the amounts presented in the Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits.

The availability of observable market data is monitored to assess the appropriate classification of financial instruments within the fair value hierarchy. Changes in economic conditions or model-based valuation techniques may require the transfer of financial instruments from one fair value level to another. In such instances, the transfer is reported at the beginning of the reporting period.

For the years ended August 31, 2020 and 2019, there were no transfers in or out of levels 1, 2 or 3.

The unfunded commitments and redemption information are as follows at August 31, 2020:

	2020 Fair Value	2019 Fair Value	2020 Unfunded Commitments	2019 Unfunded Commitments	Redemption Frequency	Redemption Notice Period
Real estate limited partnership:						
SEI Core Property Fund	\$ 7,960,497	\$ 10,814,008	\$ -	\$ -	Quarterly	65 days*
Hedge funds of funds:						
SEI GPA IV Fund	1,006,952	593,457	2,007,466	2,340,966	N/A	N/A
	<u>8,967,449</u>	<u>\$ 11,407,465</u>				

\* - Withdrawal request is capped at 90% with a 10% holdback in escrow until the completion of the fund's annual audit.

The investment objective of the SEI Core Property Fund is to invest in a diversified pool of private investment vehicles that invest in commercial real estate. The investment objective of SEI GPA IV Fund is to invest in a diversified pool of global private asset funds.

The SEI Core Property Fund is measured at fair value net of management and incentive fees or allocations payable to the investment and fund managers, without adjustment by NJEA, based on the net asset value (NAV) per share or NAV equivalent as of August 31, 2020 and 2019, respectively.

The SEI GPA IV Fund is measured at fair value net of administrative expenses and underlying fund expenses, without adjustment by NJEA, based on the NAV or NAV equivalents as of August 31, 2020 and 2019, respectively.

**NOTE 5. FIXED ASSETS**

The following is a summary of fixed assets by category as of August 31, 2020 and 2019:

Category:	2020	2019
Buildings and Building improvements		
180 West State Street	\$ 14,594,155	\$ 14,190,885
186-190 West State Street	5,595,203	5,555,320
176 West State Street	2,744,522	451,491
172 West State Street	2,147,457	2,147,457
Regional offices	<u>2,987,411</u>	<u>2,845,574</u>
Total buildings and building improvements	28,068,748	25,190,727
Land	1,511,656	1,511,656
Computer equipment	6,290,891	7,259,159
Furniture, equipment, and vehicles	<u>5,089,592</u>	<u>4,862,004</u>
Total fixed assets	40,960,887	38,823,546
Less: accumulated depreciation	<u>(23,205,162)</u>	<u>(22,755,825)</u>
Net fixed assets	<u>\$17,755,725</u>	<u>\$16,067,721</u>

**NOTE 6. OBLIGATIONS UNDER OPERATING LEASES**

NJEA is obligated under certain leases accounted for as operating leases. For the years ended August 31, 2020 and 2019, rent expense relating to these leases amounted to \$1,952,182 and \$1,753,998 respectively. As of August 31, 2020, the future minimum rental payments required under these non-cancelable operating leases are as follows:

Year Ending August 31,	
2021	\$ 1,144,754
2022	897,182
2023	663,221
2024	586,692
2025	601,548
Thereafter	<u>1,793,706</u>
Total	<u>\$ 5,687,103</u>

Under the normal course of operations, NJEA expects to continue to lease the facilities and equipment or similar facilities and equipment covered under such leases beyond the expiration of the current agreements.

**NOTE 7. LONG-TERM LIABILITIES**

Long-term liabilities as of August 31, 2020 and 2019 consist of deferred compensation arrangements of one former NJEA president totaling \$389,924 and \$345,519, respectively, and obligations under capital leases totaling \$206,534 and \$552,053 as of August 31, 2020 and 2019, respectively.

At August 31, 2020, the fixed assets under capital leases had an original cost of \$1,765,208 and accumulated amortization of \$1,557,812. \$259,210 of amortization was charged to expense during the year ended August 31, 2020.

At August 31, 2019, the fixed assets under capital leases had an original cost of \$1,984,005 and accumulated amortization of \$1,298,602. \$434,250 of amortization was charged to expense during the year ended August 31, 2019.

The following is a schedule by years of future minimum lease payments required under these capital leases with the present value of the net minimum lease payments as of August 31, 2020:

Year Ending August 31,	
2021	\$ 122,369
2022	<u>105,846</u>
Total minimum lease payments	228,215
Less: Amount representing interest	<u>(21,681)</u>
Present value of net minimum lease payments	<u>\$ 206,534</u>

**NOTE 8. DISCLOSURES ABOUT PENSION AND OTHER POSTRETIREMENT BENEFIT PLANS**

NJEA has a defined benefit pension plan covering substantially all employees. Under terms of the plan, eligible employees contribute 3.50% of their salaries and NJEA contributes an amount that is based on the recommendation of the consulting actuary. NJEA has multiple non-pension postretirement benefit plans. The plan provides postretirement medical and life insurance covering substantially all employees. NJEA reports in accordance with U.S. GAAP.

	Pension Benefits		Other Benefits	
	2020	2019	2020	2019
Projected benefit obligation at August 31	\$ 497,339,683	\$ 468,998,400	\$ 237,198,650	\$ 244,695,099
Fair value of plan assets at August 31	<u>460,839,656</u>	<u>422,338,153</u>	<u>109,300,706</u>	<u>90,374,949</u>
Funded status	<u>\$(36,500,027)</u>	<u>\$(46,660,247)</u>	<u>\$(127,897,944)</u>	<u>\$(154,320,150)</u>
Accumulated benefit obligation at August 31	<u>\$ 440,490,256</u>	<u>\$ 415,370,781</u>	<u>\$ 237,198,650</u>	<u>\$ 244,695,099</u>
Accrued benefit cost recognized in the consolidated statement of financial position	<u>\$(36,500,027)</u>	<u>\$(46,660,247)</u>	<u>\$(127,897,944)</u>	<u>\$(154,320,150)</u>

Amounts recognized as deductions from net assets include:

	Pension Benefits		Other Benefits	
	2020	2019	2020	2019
Prior service (credit) cost	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (19,126,956)	\$ (23,885,070)
Net loss	<u>128,930,606</u>	<u>137,472,511</u>	<u>79,974,597</u>	<u>102,543,350</u>
	<u>\$ 128,930,606</u>	<u>\$ 137,472,511</u>	<u>\$ 60,847,641</u>	<u>\$ 78,658,280</u>

The amounts that will be amortized from net assets into net periodic benefit cost over the next fiscal year are:

	Pension Benefits		Other Benefits	
	2020	2019	2020	2019
Prior service (credit) cost	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (4,758,114)	\$ (4,758,114)
Net gain	7,039,266	8,133,512	4,812,355	6,652,465

Weighted average assumptions at August 31

	Pension Benefits		Other Benefits	
	2020	2019	2020	2019
Discount rate	2.70 %	3.00 %	2.70 %	3.00 %
Expected return on plan assets	7.50	7.50	8.00	8.00
Rate of compensation increase	6.58	6.58	6.58	6.58

The expected return on plan assets was determined by review of historical rates of return on assets similar to those in the Plans' portfolios.

## NOTE 8. DISCLOSURES ABOUT PENSION AND OTHER POSTRETIREMENT BENEFIT PLANS (Continued)

	Pre-65 Plans			
	Grandfathered Plan			New PPO
	Age	Traditional	PPO	
For measurement purposes, the per capita costs of covered health care were assumed to be the following:	55	\$ 16,737	\$ 16,158	\$ 15,760
	60	20,096	19,385	18,897
Post-65 Plans				
	Age	0/0/0 Plan	0/7/7 Plan	
	65	\$ 13,079	\$ 10,142	
	70	14,008	10,769	
	75	14,777	11,289	
	80	15,364	11,686	

The healthcare trend rate has a significant effect on the amounts reported. If the assumed rate increased by one percentage point, that would increase the liability as of August 31, 2020 and 2019 by \$43,993,107 and \$35,167,996, respectively.

	Pension Benefits*		Other Benefits	
	2020	2019	2020	2019
Service Cost *	\$ 11,886,278	\$ 8,862,919	\$ 6,554,278	\$ 5,492,117
Interest Cost	13,998,408	16,028,863	6,654,169	7,936,562
Expected return on plan assets	(31,176,760)	(28,387,187)	(6,990,018)	(6,207,751)
Amortization of net loss/(gain)	8,644,204	5,029,323		
Amortization of prior service cost/(credit)			(4,758,114)	(4,758,114)
Recognized net actuarial loss (gain)	19,419		5,167,176	3,198,981
Net periodic benefit cost	\$ 3,371,549	\$ 1,533,918	\$ 6,627,491	\$ 5,661,795

\* Service cost is allocated to personnel compensation for each respective expense line item.

The following table sets forth the changes in Plan assets as of August 31, 2020 and 2019:

	Pension Benefits*		Other Benefits	
	2020	2019	2020	2019
Actual return on plan assets	\$ 52,104,304	\$ 51,298,974	\$ 9,912,402	\$ 314,079
Employer contributions	5,000,000	5,000,000	15,239,058	15,358,458
Plan participant contributions	1,125,463	1,128,041	-	-
Benefits paid	(19,452,053)	(18,514,661)	(6,225,703)	(5,774,428)

The Pension Plan's expected long-term rate of return on assets assumption for 2020 and 2019 is 7.5%. The Other Postretirement Plan's expected long-term rate of return on assets assumption for 2020 and 2019 is 8%. As defined in FASB ASC 715, this assumption represents the rate of return on plan assets reflecting the average rate of earnings expected on the funds invested or to be invested to provide for the benefits included in the benefit obligation. The assumption has been determined by reflecting expectations regarding future rates of return for the investment portfolio, with consideration given to the distribution of investments by asset class and historical rates of return for each individual asset class.

## Changes Since the Prior Valuation

The discount rate assumption for the postretirement benefit plan was changed from 3.00% as of August 31, 2019 to 2.70% as of August 31, 2020. The base mortality tables were changed from the RP-2014 Total Dataset Headcount-Weighted Mortality Tables to the Pri-2012 Headcount-Weighted Mortality Tables. The mortality improvement scale was changed from the 2019 SSA projection scale to the 2020 SSA projection scale.

NJEA is recognizing the liability for an Officers' Compensation Plan during the year ended August 31, 2020. By policy, if the State denies NJEA Officers' pension service credit in its Public Employees System, NJEA provides a non-qualified deferred compensation benefit that is actuarially determined to be equivalent to the amount of public pension benefit he or she would have received based on such service credit. Beginning in 2011, the State has limited service credit to five years. As of August 31, 2020 and 2019, the projected benefit obligation liability was \$1,056,212 and \$932,178, respectively.

NJEA's overall strategy is for its Plans to invest in securities that will achieve a rate of return sufficient to meet or exceed the benefit plans' actuarial interest assumption. In general, NJEA's goal for its Plans is to maintain the following allocation ranges:

	Pension Benefits	Other Benefits
Equity securities	50%	65%
Debt securities	34%	30%
Real estate	8%	5%
Opportunity investment	8%	-



## NOTE 8. DISCLOSURES ABOUT PENSION AND OTHER POSTRETIREMENT BENEFIT PLANS (CONTINUED)

Following is the information about the fair value measurements of the Pension Plan's assets:

The framework for measuring fair value provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (Level 1) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (Level 3). The three levels of the fair value hierarchy are described as follows:

## Basis of Fair Value Measurement:

## FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT AT AUGUST 31, 2020

		<u>Total</u>	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>
Level 1 - Inputs to the valuation methodology are unadjusted quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets that the Plan has the ability to access.	U.S. Government and Government Agency obligations	\$ 48,574,536	\$48,574,536	\$ -	\$ -
	Mutual Funds *	332,078,049	332,078,049	-	-
Level 2 - Inputs to the valuation methodology include: quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets; quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets; inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability; inputs that are derived principally from or corroborated by observable market data by correlation or other means.	Interest bearing cash	<u>1,746,890</u>	<u>1,746,890</u>	-	-
	Total assets in the fair value hierarchy	382,399,475	<u>\$382,399,475</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
	Investments measured at NAV	<u>78,440,181</u>			
	Total investments	<u>\$460,839,656</u>			

\* One mutual fund accounts for 45.5% of net assets at August 31, 2020.

If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

## FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT AT AUGUST 31, 2019

		<u>Total</u>	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>
Level 3 - Inputs to the valuation methodology are unobservable and significant to the fair value measurement.	U.S. Government and Government Agency obligations	\$ 46,319,104	\$ 46,319,104	\$ -	\$ -
	Mutual funds*	306,606,530	306,606,530	-	-
	Interest bearing cash	<u>1,746,711</u>	<u>1,746,711</u>	-	-
	Total assets in the fair value hierarchy	354,672,345	<u>\$354,672,345</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
	Investments measured at NAV	<u>73,364,459</u>			
	Total investments**	<u>\$428,036,804</u>			

\*\* Amount excludes amount due to broker for \$5,698,651

(A) In accordance with Subtopic 820-10, certain investments that are measured at fair value using the net asset value per share (or its equivalent) practical expedient have not been classified in the fair value hierarchy. The fair value amounts presented in this table are intended to permit reconciliation of the fair value hierarchy to the amounts presented in the Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits.

The SEI Opportunity Collective Fund and SEI Core Property Collective Investment Fund are measured at fair value, without adjustment by the Plan, based on the net asset value (NAV) or NAV equivalent as of August 31, 2020.

In accordance with relevant accounting standards, the unfunded commitments and redemption frequency information and redemption notice periods are as follows at August 31, 2020 and 2019:

	<u>2020 Fair Value</u>	<u>2020 Unfunded Commitments</u>	<u>Redemption Frequency</u>	<u>Redemption Notice Period</u>
Common collective trust funds - hedge fund of funds:				
SEI Special Situations Collective Fund	\$ 33,561,292	\$ -	Biannually	95 days*
SEI GP Asset IV CIT	5,892,806	11,767,906	N/A	N/A
SEI GP Asset V CIT	403,286	15,599,569	N/A	N/A
Common collective trust fund - real estate:				
SEI Core Property CIT	<u>38,582,797</u>	<u>-</u>	Quarterly	65 days#
Total	<u>\$ 78,440,181</u>	<u>\$27,367,475</u>		

**NOTE 8. DISCLOSURES ABOUT PENSION AND OTHER  
POSTRETIREMENT BENEFIT PLANS (CONTINUED)**

	2020 Fair Value	2020 Unfunded Commitments	Redemption Frequency	Redemption Notice Period
Common collective trust funds - hedge fund of funds:				
SEI Special Situations Collective Fund	\$ 32,431,869	\$ -	Biannually	95 days*
SEI GP Asset IV CIT	3,476,754	13,127,906	N/A	N/A
Common collective trust fund - real estate:				
SEI Core Property CIT	<u>37,455,836</u>	<u>-</u>	Quarterly	65 days#
Total	<u>\$ 73,364,459</u>	<u>\$ 13,127,906</u>		

\* - Withdrawals may be limited to 20% of the net asset value of the fund on any given redemption date in circumstances where the fund's Trustee believe that any such redemption could compromise the ongoing performance or operations of the fund.

# - Withdrawals may be limited to 25% of the net asset value of the fund on any given redemption date in circumstances where the fund's Trustee believe that any such redemption could compromise the ongoing performance or operations of the fund.

The investment objective of the SEI Special Situations Collective Fund is to invest in a diversified strategy of hedge fund of funds.

The investment objective of the SEI Core Property Collective Investment Trust is to invest in funds that acquire, manage, and dispose of commercial real estate properties.

Following is the information about the fair value  
measurements of the Other Postretirement Plan's assets:

FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS AT AUGUST 31, 2020				
	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Fixed income mutual funds	\$ 18,971,540	\$ 18,971,540	\$ -	\$ -
Equity mutual funds	40,623,424	40,623,424	-	-
International equity mutual funds	38,126,083	38,126,083	-	-
Balanced mutual funds	10,979,659	10,979,659	-	-
Short term security	6,000,000	6,000,000	\$ -	\$ -
	<u>\$ 114,700,706</u>	<u>\$ 114,700,706</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS AT AUGUST 31, 2019				
	Total*	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Fixed income mutual funds	\$ 16,580,301	\$ 16,580,301	\$ -	\$ -
Equity mutual funds	33,578,313	33,578,313	-	-
International equity mutual funds	30,676,481	30,676,481	-	-
Balanced mutual funds	8,948,084	8,948,084	-	-
Short term security	590,546	590,546	\$ -	\$ -
	<u>\$ 90,373,725</u>	<u>\$ 90,373,725</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

\*Excludes accrued income of \$1224.

The amount expected to be contributed to the plans  
for the fiscal year beginning September 1, 2020 for  
pension benefits is \$6,000,000. Benefits expected to  
be paid during the ensuing four years and thereafter are  
approximately as follows:

	Pension Benefits	Other Benefits
2021	\$ 19,759,998	\$ 6,776,214
2022	20,350,511	7,113,315
2023	20,874,202	7,672,027
2024	21,432,049	7,926,562
2025	22,052,827	8,277,418
2026-2030	<u>117,261,683</u>	<u>47,186,716</u>
	<u>\$ 221,731,270</u>	<u>\$ 84,952,252</u>

**NOTE 9. LITIGATION**

Certain claims, suits, and complaints arising in the ordinary course of business have been filed or are pending against NJEA. In the opinion of NJEA's management and legal counsel, the ultimate outcome of these claims will not have a material adverse effect on the financial position of NJEA.

**NOTE 10. TAX STATUS**

NJEA is a not-for-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey and is qualified under the provisions of Section 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code as a labor organization exempt from Federal income tax.

The Bolivar L. Graham Intern Foundation, Inc., the Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education, Inc., and the NJEA Affiliates Risk Purchasing Group are not-for-profit organizations incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey. They are qualified under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are exempt from Federal income tax.

Garden State Forward is a qualified organization under Section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code which provides for the exemption from Federal income tax of "exempt function income" of a political committee that is a separate segregated fund of an exempt organization which is not a political organization. Contributions received are exempt function income provided that the receipts are primarily expended for an exempt function, which is described in Note 1, or for some or all of its administrative expenses. However, interest income, if any, will be taxed.

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require management to evaluate tax positions taken by NJEA and recognize a tax liability if NJEA has taken an uncertain position that, more likely than not, would not be sustained upon examination by the U.S. Federal, state, or local taxing authorities. NJEA is subject to routine audits by taxing jurisdictions; however, there are currently no audits for any tax periods in progress. Typically, tax years will remain open for three years; however, this may differ depending upon the circumstances of NJEA.

**NOTE 11. CASH CONCENTRATIONS**

NJEA places its cash with institutions deemed to be creditworthy. Cash balances may, at times, exceed insured deposit limits. As of August 31, 2020, NJEA had cash totaling \$20,581,216 in excess of FDIC insured coverage. This included the cash maintained in overnight sweeps accounts which invest in money market mutual funds which are not insured by the FDIC.

**NOTE 12. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS**

NJEA has a common officer with the New Jersey Education Association Member Benefit Fund (the Member Benefit Fund). During the years ended August 31, 2020 and 2019, the Member Benefit Fund donated \$15,000 and \$14,000, respectively, to the NJEA Disaster Relief Fund.

NJEA has common officers with the New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning (the Center). During the years ended August 31, 2020 and 2019, NJEA donated \$750,000 each year to the Center for the purpose of providing professional learning experiences, resources, and research to educators.

**NOTE 13. LONG-TERM CAPITAL ASSETS**

Management has elected to designate a portion of NJEA's investments and investment income for the purchase of long term capital assets. As of August 31, 2020 and 2019, investments designated for this purpose totaled \$47,347,567 and \$43,255,618, respectively. Investment income earned on the designated investments totaled \$4,087,836 and \$502,065 for the years ending August 31, 2020 and 2019, respectively.

**NOTE 14. RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES**

NJEA invests in various investments. Investments are exposed to various risks such as economic, interest rate, market, and sector risks. Due to the level of risk associated with certain investments, it is at least reasonably possible that changes in the values of investments will occur in the near term and that such changes could materially affect the amounts reported in the Consolidated Statements of Financial Position.

The liabilities for accrued pension cost and accrued postretirement benefit cost - other are based on certain assumptions pertaining to interest rates, inflation rates, and participant demographics, all of which are subject to change. Due to uncertainties inherent in the estimations and assumptions process, it is at least reasonably possible that changes in these estimates and assumptions in the near term would be material to the financial statements.

# Full-Tuition Scholarships in Orton-Gillingham Teacher Training

These scholarships for educators – each valued at \$10,200 – are offered at New Jersey's Children's Dyslexia Centers. Both the scholarships and centers are funded through the generosity of the Scottish Rite Masons. All classes and practica are offered at these five locations: **Burlington, Northfield, Tenafly, Hasbrouck Heights, and Scotch Plains.**

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**[fdue.edu/dyslexia](http://fdue.edu/dyslexia)**



**NOTE 15. AVAILABILITY AND LIQUIDITY**

The following represents NJEA's financial assets available within one year of the statements of financial position date for general expenditures at August 31, 2020 and 2019:

	2020	2019
Financial assets available within one year:		
Cash	\$ 21,098,056	\$ 13,755,956
Receivables	1,045,777	626,704
Investments	<u>153,997,100</u>	<u>149,859,153</u>
Total financial assets	176,140,933	164,241,813

Less amounts unavailable for general expenditures:

Net assets with board-designated and donor restrictions	<u>7,994,663</u>	<u>3,164,042</u>
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Financial Assets available to meet general expenditures within one year	<u>\$ 168,146,270</u>	<u>\$ 161,077,771</u>
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Excess cash maybe invested in savings accounts and short-term money markets.

**NOTE 16. NET ASSETS**

Net assets with board-designated restrictions were as follows for the year ended August 31, 2020 and 2019:

	2020	2019
Specific Purpose		
F.L. Hipp Foundation	<u>\$ 3,439,033</u>	<u>\$ 3,139,042</u>
Total financial assets	<u>\$ 3,439,033</u>	<u>\$ 3,139,042</u>

Net assets without donor restrictions for the year ended August 31, 2020 and 2019 were as follows:

	2020	2019
NJEA General Fund	\$ 10,444,853	\$ (35,990,789)
B.L. Graham Foundations	1,012	1,012
F.L. Hipp Foundation	300,000	300,000
NJEA Affiliates Risk Purchasing	18,964	32,320
Eliminations	<u>(18,964)</u>	<u>(32,320)</u>
Total financial assets	<u>\$ 10,745,865</u>	<u>\$ (35,689,777)</u>

Net assets with donor restrictions for the year ended August 31, 2020 and 2019 were as follows:

	2020	2019
Garden State Forward	\$4,196,795	\$ (1,690)
NJEA Disaster Relief Fund	<u>358,835</u>	<u>359,135</u>
Total financial assets	<u>\$4,555,630</u>	<u>\$357,445</u>

Net assets released from net assets with board-designated restrictions for the year ended August 31, 2020 were \$12,066,320.

**NOTE 17. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS**

NJEA has evaluated subsequent events through December 14, 2020, the date the financial statements were available to be issued, and they have been evaluated in accordance with relevant accounting standards.

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# STAFF NEWS

## HIRES AND PROMOTIONS



NJEA congratulates **JENNIFER RAIKE** on her promotion to regional director of NJEA UniServ Central on March 3. UniServ Central includes Ocean, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Ocean counties and NJEA's Higher Education unit.

Raika initially joined NJEA staff in January 2014 as a UniServ field representative in the Region 7 office in Toms River after teaching for 20 years as a middle school math teacher in the Henry Hudson School District. While teaching, Raika served as the president of the Henry Hudson Regional Education Association for 10 years. From 2011 until her full-time employment with NJEA, Raika was employed by NJEA as a part-time UniServ consultant in the Region 7 office.

Raika holds a bachelor's degree in Mathematics/Elementary Education from Georgian Court University. She lives in Eatontown with her husband, Chris. They are the proud parents of two daughters, Rebecca and Hannah and one son, Christopher, and his wife, Adriana.

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for more information go to [NJEA.org](https://njea.org)

# APRIL & beyond

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings and events are virtual.

**4/1-15**

**NJEA Elections**  
See Pages 10-12

**4/10**

Saturday

**Higher Education  
Conference**

**4/10**

Saturday

**NJEA Preservice  
General  
Membership  
meeting**

**4/14**

Wednesday

**NJEA Executive  
Committee  
meeting**

**4/15**

Thursday

**NJEA PAC  
Operating  
Committee  
meeting**

**4/17**

Saturday

**NJEA T.E.A.CH.  
Conference**

**5/1**

Saturday

**Communications  
Tools Workshop**

**5/14**

Friday

**NJEA Executive  
Committee and  
County Presidents  
Council meetings**

**5/15**

Saturday

**NJEA Delegate  
Assembly meeting**

**6/4**

Friday

**NJEA Executive  
Committee  
meeting**

## deadlines

**4/1** Higher Education  
Conference  
Event date: April 10

**4/10** NJEA T.E.A.CH.  
Conference  
Event date: April 17

## Employment Opportunities at NJEA

Questions? Call the NJEA Human Resources  
office at 609-599-4561.

NJEA is an equal opportunity employer.

Visit [njea.org/jobs](https://njea.org/jobs).



## NJEA Preservice

### General Membership Meeting and Officer Nominations

**April 10**  
**10-11:30 a.m.**  
**Virtual**

NJEA Preservice officers and chairs will deliver  
reports on their work during the 2020-21  
membership year.

Nominations will be taken for the 2021-22 officer  
positions: President, Vice President, Secretary

Registration for this virtual event is required  
at [njea.org/psmtg21](https://njea.org/psmtg21).

# A DAY MORE THAN 25 YEARS IN THE MAKING

...and one year ahead of schedule



On June 12, 1994, tens of thousands of NJEA and public employee union members filled W. State Street to protest Gov. Christine Todd Whitman's pension maneuvers.

It's been a long time coming.

For the first time since 1996, New Jersey is poised to make its full actuarially determined state contribution (ADC) into the pension system in Fiscal Year 2022. This is thanks to Gov. Phil Murphy making good on his promise to be the governor who would finally fully fund the pension system.

The proposed payment comes as a welcome surprise. Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, which begins this July, is the ninth year of what had become a ten-year ramp up to full pension funding. The first full payment wasn't expected until FY 2023.

After more than two decades of pension

underfunding by governors from both parties, the state has spent nearly a decade gradually increasing its payments into the pension system. Under Ch. 78, passed in 2011, Gov. Chris Christie had promised to ramp up to full payments over seven years. He promised to pay one-seventh of the ADC in FY 2012, two-sevenths in FY 2013, and so on.

It didn't take long for Christie to break that promise. With his eyes set on a White House where he'd never live, Christie announced in May 2014 that he did not intend to make the legally required four-sevenths payment—reducing it to fourth-tenths of the ADC—even as he demanded more concessions from public employees. Christie shortsightedly believed that attacking public employees, and reducing their hard-earned benefits, was his clearest path to the presidency.

Paying the full ADC this year is good not only for those in the pension system, it is good for all New Jersey residents. As taxpayers it will save us \$861 million over the next 30 years. Murphy is demonstrating true leadership and a foresight that has long been missing when it comes to pension funding.

Gov. Christine Todd Whitman did not demonstrate such foresight when she became the first in a long series of governors to use for other purposes funds that should have gone into the pension system. Her pledge to cut state taxes by 10% a year for three consecutive years helped her narrowly win the governorship in November 1993.

Whitman paid for those tax cuts through maneuvers that lowered the state's ADC to the pension system. When those maneuvers did not yield enough to pay for her tax cuts, she simply stopped making the state's full contribution to the pension system in FY 1997.

The long-term impact of her administration's

cuts was predicted at the time in editorials and analyses.

Montclair native and New York Times columnist Bob Herbert wrote on Feb. 22, 1995, "Mrs. Whitman and the long-term interests of New Jersey appear to be at odds. The governor won election by promising tax cuts, and any further advances in her career will be powered by her ability to 'deliver' on that promise. Like most politicians, her eyes are on the short term: today's budget, tomorrow's election."

Writing for the Washington Post, Malcolm Gladwell reported on Sept. 5, 1994 that Whitman's team made the audacious claim that the pension system was overfunded. He noted that then state Treasurer Brian Clymer contended that "we were basically creating a windfall for future taxpayers at the expense of today's taxpayer."

After multiple governors of both parties followed in Whitman's pension-underfunding footsteps, we now know that there was no such windfall for those of us who became those future taxpayers, and that the pension was never overfunded. In fact, Gladwell's 1994 column was right on target, reporting that Henry Raimondo of Rutgers' Eagleton Institute said, "[Whitman] has effectively slowed down the amount of money going into the system, and in around 2010 the liability to New Jersey taxpayers is going to grow dramatically."

The pension payment required to meet the full ADC in the coming fiscal year proves this prediction beyond doubt. Had Whitman and every governor who followed her made the full ADC, this year's state contribution would have been about \$750 million, rather than the \$6.4 billion required in FY 2022. Raimondo would have had 6.4 billion reasons to say, "I told you so."

Murphy's willingness to look beyond "today's budget and tomorrow's election" is a foresight we have sorely needed for a long time. If over the next 25 years, New Jersey's governors and legislators follow in Murphy's footsteps rather than Whitman's, future residents of the state will reap the long-term benefits of doing what is right, rather than what is expedient. 🌱



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