

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

# REVIEW

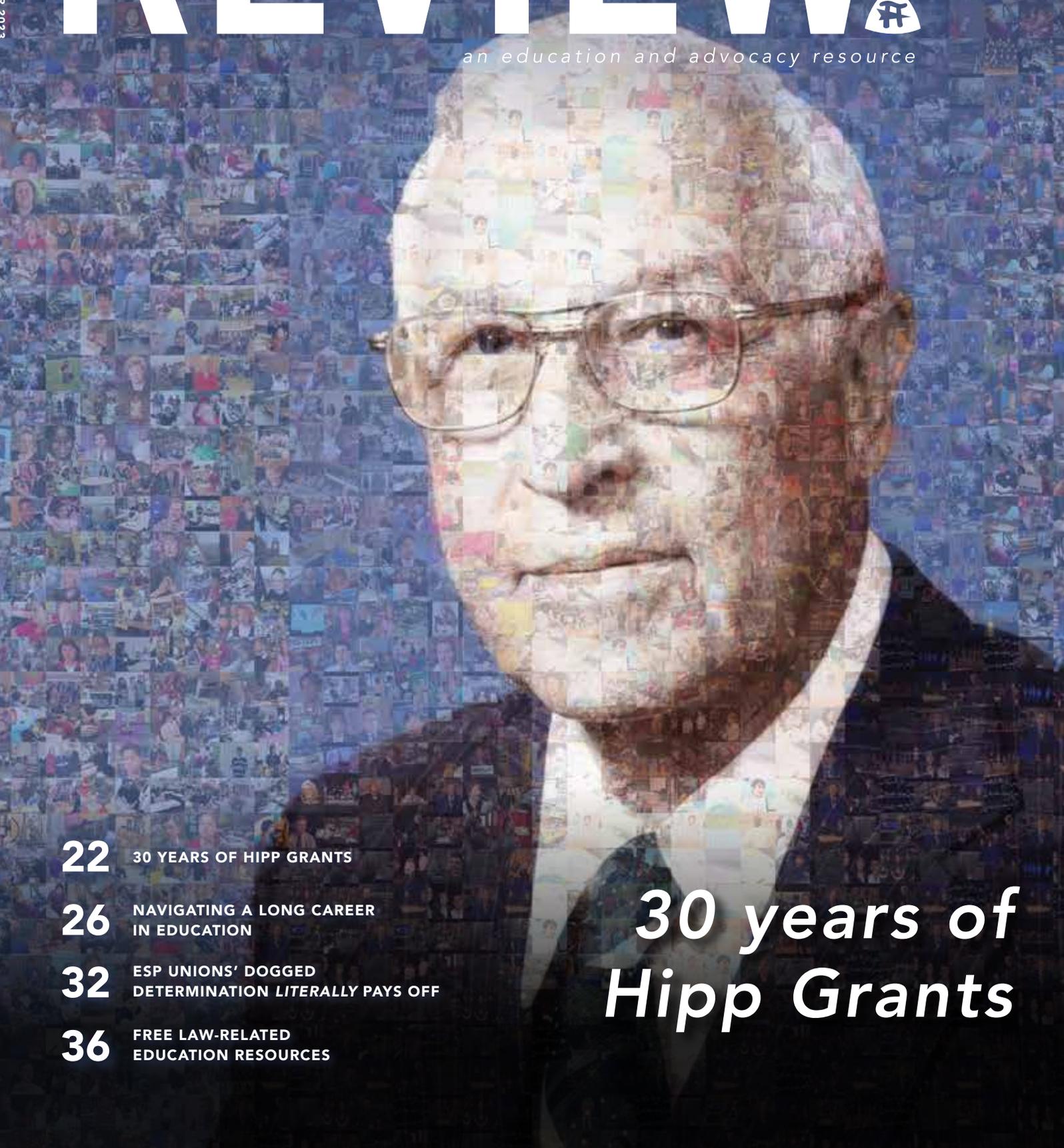
SEPTEMBER  
2023

njea.org



an education and advocacy resource

REVIEW  
SEPTEMBER 2023



**22** 30 YEARS OF HIPPI GRANTS

**26** NAVIGATING A LONG CAREER  
IN EDUCATION

**32** ESP UNIONS' DOGGED  
DETERMINATION *LITERALLY* PAYS OFF

**36** FREE LAW-RELATED  
EDUCATION RESOURCES

## 30 years of Hipp Grants



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Aiat Oraby of the Paterson EA at the NJEA Summer Leadership Conference.



Deptford EA members Shannon Pizzuta, Michelle MacLacklin, and Jonathan Ayer at the NJEA Impact Conference.

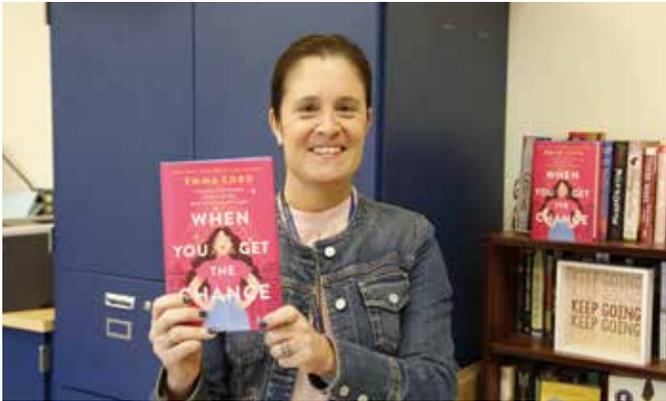


NJREA members Linda Behm, Judy Strollo, Toni Guerra and Brian McLaughlin lobbying legislators at the Statehouse.



Rosalyn Kim of the Bergen County Vocational-Technical Schools EA at the NJEA Summer Leadership Conference.

# FEATURES



## 22 | 30 YEARS OF HIPP GRANTS

In 1993, NJEA's Executive Committee founded the NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education. Thirty years later, the foundation has awarded 460 grants totaling more than \$2.49 million to public school employees across the state for innovative programs that benefit New Jersey's public schoolchildren. Learn more about the grant foundation's history and the broad variety of projects it has funded.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



## 26 | NAVIGATING A LONG CAREER IN EDUCATION

At one end of the spectrum, we've all seen the increasing difficulty of attracting and retaining certified staff and educational support professionals in public schools. But at the other end of the spectrum are educators who have worked in public schools for longer than many NJEA members have been alive. Read the stories of Raymond Bangs (49 years), Marie DeMaio (61 years), Paul Tillman (47 years) and Nancy Siegel (57 years), and be inspired by what keeps them going.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



## 32 | ESP UNIONS' DOGGED DETERMINATION LITERALLY PAYS OFF

Like many of their colleagues around the state, members of the East Orange Educational Support Professional Association (EOESPA) and East Orange Maintenance Association (EOMA) remained in the school buildings as most other staff worked remotely in the midst of the pandemic during the state of emergency. But in June 2020, the East Orange School District informed EOESPA and EOMA members that, beginning that July, they would no longer receive state-of-emergency pay. The board hadn't anticipated how hard EOESPA and EOMA would fight back.

BY CHRISTY KANABY



## 36 | FREE LAW-RELATED EDUCATION RESOURCES

Established in May 1958 as the charitable and philanthropic arm of the New Jersey State Bar Association, the New Jersey State Bar Foundation strives to help people of all ages better understand the laws that affect them every day. Learn about the abundance of resources and professional development opportunities the foundation has to offer.

BY TAYA ROS

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## THE NUMBER

# \$10,000

The amount you could receive in a grant from the Hipp Foundation



It's the 30th anniversary of the NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education, so now is a good time to remind you that public school employees in New Jersey can apply to receive grants between \$500 to \$10,000 for innovative programs that benefit New Jersey's public schoolchildren. Applications are due every March 30. Learn more at [njea.org/hipp](http://njea.org/hipp).

Source: NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education

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## NJEA BUDGET SUMMARY

Fiscal year ending Aug. 31, 2024

GOOD

NEWS

## First in the nation

NJ public schools are the first in the nation to mandate the incorporation of K-12 climate change education across content areas a priority. Learn more at [NJClimateEducation.org](http://NJClimateEducation.org).

Source: New Jersey State Board of Education





Over 30 years, more than 460 NJEA Frederick L. Hipp grants have been disbursed to educators across the state. We took photos from a sampling of those Hipp projects and created an homage to Dr. Hipp, a visionary leader who believed in the power of public education and public school employee unions.

**PHOTO BY**  
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# REVIEW

180 W. State St., P.O. Box 1211, Trenton, NJ 08607-1211 • 609-599-4561 • [NJEA.org](http://NJEA.org)

President: Sean M. Spiller | Vice President: Steve Beatty | Secretary-Treasurer: Petal Robertson  
Executive Director: Kevin Kelleher | Deputy Executive Director: Denise Graff Policastro

## Organizational Directory

### NJEA headquarters, Trenton

To reach any of the offices at headquarters, call NJEA's main number, 609-599-4561.

**Executive Office:** includes NJEA's statewide officers and the offices of the Executive Director; Human Resources; Human and Civil Rights, Equity and Governance; Legal Services; Organizational Development; and the Labor Management Collaborative.

**Business Division:** includes the offices of Accounting and Finance; Information Systems, Facilities, Mailroom and Production; Membership; and Comptroller.

**Communications Division:** responsible for all aspects of the association's communications efforts, both internal and external. The division produces the *NJEA Review* and [njea.org](http://njea.org); manages the Hipp Foundation and assists local and county affiliates with internal and external communications.

**Government Relations Division:** includes the Office of Policy and Politics, which addresses legislation, administrative code, policy and advocacy at a statewide and federal level, and the Office of Member and Political Organizing, which works with members at the county and local level to organize around local, state, and federal issues that affect public education.

**Professional Development and Instructional Issues:** assists members and local and county affiliates with instructional issues and professional learning. The division also monitors state level and school level implementation of administrative code as promulgated by the New Jersey Department of Education.

**Research and Economic Services:** Provides information to support state and local association programs and activities, including collective bargaining and policy analysis. Offers guidance on retirement issues and administers NJEA Member Benefits.

### UniServ regional offices

Provides extensive field services to members and local and county affiliates throughout the state, including negotiations assistance, contract administration and grievance adjudication, member organizing and local member consultation and representation. UniServ field representatives train local leaders and assist in the coordination of NJEA and NEA resources. UniServ regional offices are organized under four zones.

#### UniServ South

Reg. 1-3  
Director's office  
856-234-0522

Region 1 (Atlantic and Cape May counties):  
609-652-9200

Region 2 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties):  
856-628-8650

Region 3 (Burlington and Camden counties):  
856-234-2485

#### UniServ Central

Reg. 7-9, 11, 13 and 29  
Director's office  
732-287-6899

Region 7 (Ocean County):  
732-349-0280

Region 8 (Mercer County):  
609-896-3422

Region 9 (Monmouth County):  
732-403-8000

Region 11 (Middlesex County):  
732-287-4700

Region 29 (Higher Education):  
609-689-9580

#### UniServ Northeast

Reg. 15, 19-21, and 25  
Director's office  
973-321-3221

Region 15 (Union County):  
908-709-9440

Region 19 (Hudson County-North and Newark):  
201-861-1266

Region 20 (Hudson County-South):  
201-653-6634

Region 21 (Essex County, except Newark):  
973-762-6866

Region 25 (Bergen County):  
201-292-8093

#### UniServ Northwest

Reg. 13, 17, and 27  
Director's office  
973-347-0911

Region 13 (Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren counties):  
908-782-2168

Region 17 (Morris and Sussex counties):  
973-515-0101

Region 27 (Passaic County):  
973-694-0154

### MEMBERSHIP

Active professional: \$1,038 (full time); \$207.60 (full time \*low-earner); \$519 (part time); \$519 (on leave); \$207.60 (part time \*low-earner). Active supportive: \$505 (full time); \$101 (full time \*low-earner); \$252.50 (part time); \$101 (part time \*low-earner); \$252.50 (on leave). Retired professional: \$93; \$1,170 (retired life). Retired ESP: \$48; \$585 (retired ESP life); Preservice \$17. 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 2023-24 is \$22,500.





# PRESIDENT'S *Message*

## A lifelong commitment to educational excellence

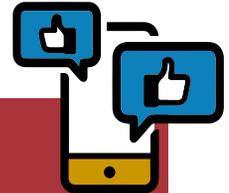
One of the benefits of working in education is the opportunity for several new beginnings each year. In January, everyone turns a new page, but for those who work in education, September is the start of a whole new book, and every Monday is a chapter.

Committing our professional lives to a career in public education means that we are always reaching for a very ambitious goal: nothing short of educational excellence for every student. The beginning of a new school year is a fresh start that inspires us to recommit to that goal and imagine how we can achieve it—as individuals, and together as a statewide school community.

One of the best ways to enhance our personal practice is to observe how others embrace challenges and develop programs and activities that benefit our students. For 30 years, the NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Educational Excellence has provided a pathway for public school employees to create and lead their own projects to reach students in new and unique ways. After 460 grants and \$2.49 million in funding, the Hipp grant program, named for legendary NJEA Executive Director Dr. Frederick L. Hipp, has had a profound impact on educators and students across the state. In this issue, we share just a few of the stories that make the Hipp grant program so successful, but you can learn more at [njea.org/hipp](http://njea.org/hipp).

I want to wish each of you a happy, successful and enriching school year. We have so much to be proud of in New Jersey, and our public schools continue to lead the nation in almost every indicator. That is a testament to your hard work and constant striving for excellence.

In Unity,



### SEAN M. SPILLER

Facebook

@SpillerforNJEA: I am heartbroken at the news of Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver's passing today. She was a trailblazer, a social justice champion and a fierce advocate for her constituents throughout her long career of public service in New Jersey. She will be deeply missed. My thoughts are with her loved ones in this time of loss.

On Aug. 1, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller honored the memory of Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver.

### STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

@SteveBeattyNJEA: Fantastic session one at #SLC2023 and on to session two! Thank you to all the members and staff participating and engaging on the issues towards a more perfect Union!

On Aug. 7, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty shared a Facebook reel with highlights from the first session of the NJEA Jack Bertolino Summer Leadership Conference. The weeklong event, split into two three-day sessions, prepares current and future local and county association leaders to be even more effective advocates for their members.

### PETAL ROBERTSON

Facebook

@PetalforNJEA: Wrapping up a weekend with NEA exploring more ways to build an even more inclusive RA team for next summer. Thank you to my team, which consisted of Deputy Executive Director Denise Policastro and Manager of NJEA Human/Civil Rights, Equity & Governance Gary Melton. NEA Executive Committee member Christine Sampson-Clark made a guest appearance too. Not sure what the NEA-RA is all about? Don't be afraid to ask. We want to see you there.

On Aug. 13, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson shared photos from a meeting in Washington with the National Education Association (NEA) to ensure that all voices are represented at the NEA Representative Assembly (NEA RA). The NEA RA is held annually in July and is the NEA's highest governing body. Every state affiliate sends delegates to the NEA RA—with NJEA typically sending between 500 to 600 members. All NJEA members are eligible to nominate themselves to be a delegate. The January edition of the NJEA Review will have all the details. Next year's NEA RA will be held in Philadelphia July 1-7.

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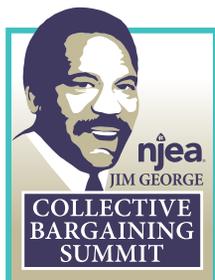
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# The ADVOCATE

## RESOURCES FOR YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION



### Attend the Jim George Collective Bargaining Summit

The N.J.E.A. Jim George Collective Bargaining Summit will be held Oct. 20-21 at the Doubletree Hotel and Conference Center in Somerset.

The annual summit is an opportunity for local associations to come together for training opportunities that benefit members at the bargaining table.

Visit [njea.org/cbsummit2023](http://njea.org/cbsummit2023) to register.

### Nominate a Local Association for Bargaining Excellence

A local association that has demonstrated excellence in collective bargaining will be honored at the summit with the 2023 Jim George Collective Bargaining Award. Those nominated will also be recognized.

#### Criteria

A local qualifies for nomination by meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Bargained one or more new contractual provisions not already found in another affiliate's contract.
- Conducted an extraordinary community-organizing effort that resulted in a settled agreement.
- Used the bargaining process to propel new members into association involvement and leadership positions.
- Achieved a particularly good settlement, in comparison to state averages, in salary increases, benefits, professional development, and/or member protection and follows best practices for salary guides.

#### Nomination

Local associations can be nominated by any N.J.E.A. member or N.J.E.A. staff member. To nominate a local, visit [njea.org/cbaward](http://njea.org/cbaward). To be considered for the 2023 Jim George Collective Bargaining Award, settlements must be ratified by both parties between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. Nominations are due Sept. 8, 2023.

### Mark your calendar

The N.J.E.A. Educational Support Professionals (ESP) Conference and the N.J.E.A. Health and Safety Conference will be held at the same time and in the same place. While the location is yet to be determined, mark your calendar for **Feb. 2-4, 2024**, so you don't miss it.

### Nominations reminder for Equity Alliance Conference awards

Nominations are open for four awards that will recognize advocacy and achievement in equity and justice. The awards will be presented at N.J.E.A.'s Equity Alliance Weekend to be held on Jan. 12-13, 2024.

Five of N.J.E.A.'s highest awards will be presented during the N.J.E.A. Dr. Martin Luther King Human and Civil Rights Celebration, held at the conclusion of the Equity Alliance Weekend.

- **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human and Civil Rights Award:** This award is conferred by the N.J.E.A. Human and Civil Rights Committee.
- **Equality Champion Award:** This award is conferred by the N.J.E.A. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee.
- **Elizabeth A. Allen Women in Education Award:** This award is conferred by the N.J.E.A. Women in Education Committee.
- **Dr. Judith Owens Spirit Award:** This award is conferred by the N.J.E.A. Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee.
- **Urban Educator Activist Award:** This award is conferred by the N.J.E.A. Urban Education Committee.

Nomination forms and documentation for any of these five awards are due **Oct. 31, 2023**.

For awards criteria and to make a nomination, go to [njea.org/equitynominations](http://njea.org/equitynominations).

For more information, contact Colleen Lopez at [clopez@njea.org](mailto:clopez@njea.org) or 609-599-4561, ext. 2290.

# COOL STUFF

## A+ EFFORT

### CHRISTINE CITO HONORED AS 2023 NJEA FRIEND OF ESP



Phillipsburg Spanish Teacher Christine Cito has been named the 2023 NJEA Friend of ESP. The NJEA Friend of Educational Support Professionals (ESP) Award is 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 ESP and their contributions to public education and students.

"Now, more than ever, working with our ESP colleagues is so powerful," Cito said. "ESPs provide students with additional support, inside and outside the classroom. It's not just academic support, either. It's emotional and social, as well."

Cito's career in education has spanned nearly 40 years. While she has taught in other districts, she was born and raised in Phillipsburg and has a strong connection to the community and its schools.

"Christine Cito is truly an advocate for all ESPs," said Scott Elliott, NJEA ESP Committee representative from Warren County. "It's extra special to see her finally be recognized for all of her hard work and dedication over the years."

NJEA is currently accepting nominations for the 2024 NJEA Friend of ESP and Career Achievement Awards. Go to [njea.org/esp](https://njea.org/esp) for more information.



### NJSIAA'S A COACH FOR ALL SEASONS CAMPAIGN

Each month, the New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJISIAA) will feature a deserving coach who gives their time all year—coaching multiple sports over multiple seasons. Take a minute to consider anyone throughout your program that fits that description and nominate them at [bit.ly/njsiaa-cfas](https://bit.ly/njsiaa-cfas). Share the link below so others can submit nominations as well.



### GOT CIVICS? FREE PUBLICATIONS FOR CLASSROOM USE

Check out the New Jersey State Bar Foundation's FREE civics materials which include *The Bill of Rights Up Close*, *Beyond the Bill of Rights* and the *Bill of Rights Bulletin* (all available in print or for download). Our two subscription-based publications, *The Legal Eagle* (a legal newspaper for kids) and *Respect* (a diversity and inclusion newsletter) are published three times a year. Visit [publications.njsbf.org](https://publications.njsbf.org) to browse our library, order free copies for your classroom or download individual articles. Learn more about all that NJSBF has to offer in its feature article this month, beginning on Page 36.

# THE NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF KINDERGARTEN EDUCATORS WELCOMES ALL PRIMARY GRADE TEACHERS

*By Mary Louise Hyman, NJAKE past president, Veronica Murillo,  
NJAKE president, and the NJAKE Executive Board*



The New Jersey Association of Kindergarten Educators (NJAKE), an NJEA affiliate, has produced many rich resources for teachers throughout the past 59 years. NJAKE invites you to join us, as we approach our 60th birthday for all the reasons below and more.

NJAKE was established in 1964 and continues to grow networks of dedicated professionals. Our number one goal is to make every kindergarten and primary grade classroom the best educational experience for all children and educators, relying on a strong base of proven research and tried-and-true classroom strategies.

Challenges, particularly educating the whole child in a developmentally appropriate manner, are often daunting for educators and parents—especially now, as the magnitude of these challenges has greatly increased since March 2020.

Early childhood educators are the ones who plant the seeds and expand the roots of children's learning through well-planned cognitive, physical and social activities in prekindergarten through Grade 3 classrooms. You do this with utmost care in your meticulously designed classrooms, brimming with researched-based, carefully thought-out and engaging learning centers. These centers, so rich in learning, address the multiple, cross-curricular objectives you strive to teach, all while meeting the individual needs of every child.

There are no words and no accolades fitting enough to thank you for paving the way and saving the day for each and every child entrusted to your care. During the many months of the pandemic, devoid of personal contact with your precious young students, you figuratively held their hands and the hands of their parents, while carefully guiding them to navigate unfamiliar territory.

One child at a time, you continue to make this world a better place.

And NJAKE is here to help you.

**We look forward to meeting you this school year, starting with our annual Fall Conference on Saturday, Oct. 7 from 8:30 to noon in Cranford. Visit [NJAKE.net](http://NJAKE.net) for all the details.**

## **NJAKE is for more than kindergarten teachers**

Although NJAKE began with kindergarten teachers back in 1964, it has evolved into an association of educators from all grade levels. Most are from grades PreK to 3 because these are the early-learning years. Many from the higher grades are parents of young children, seeking to learn sound principles of early childhood education. Superintendents, principals, curriculum coordinators, directors and other administrators became members over the years, as well.

All educators seeking accurate information concerning the varied needs the young child and the best ways to address these needs will benefit from membership and involvement in NJAKE. Conferences and motivating workshops throughout the year feature outstanding early childhood teachers, authors and presenters in the field of early learning.

Your enthusiasm will spark as you share outstanding workshops with amazing early childhood colleagues who bring numerous innovative ideas and strategies back to their districts. Together, we assist in the ongoing construction of engaging, creative and productive prekindergarten through Grade 3 classrooms—years that set the trajectory for a child's educational future.

We look forward to meeting you this school year, starting with our annual Fall Conference on Saturday, Oct. 7 from 8:30 to noon in Cranford. Visit [NJAKE.net](http://NJAKE.net) for all the details.

NJAKE retains the same affordable low-cost dues for educators as follows:

- Regular annual membership: \$25
- Retired educator membership: \$10
- Student membership (copy of current college/university ID required): \$10

For additional information about NJAKE, visit [NJAKE.net](http://NJAKE.net). 🏠

## The magic of listening

### Meet 2022 Hunterdon County ESP of the Year Theresa Bruno

For 25 years, Theresa Bruno has been a constant in the lives of Readington Township's children. She began her career in education as a substitute in the district many years ago. A teacher encouraged her to apply for a position as an aide. She ended up working in a first-grade classroom helping with reading and phonics, but her great passion was working with students with autism.

"I work with students with oppositional defiant disorder," Bruno said. "One of the reasons I felt drawn to this is my daughter has three children with autism. I truly believe that working in the district and being trained has helped me with my grandchildren."

Bruno sees one of her grandsons every day in her current position at the middle school. He is part of a Life Skills class and every Friday, and the students deliver breakfast to staff. He always makes sure he delivers his grandmother's meal.

Bruno develops a special connection with the students she serves. She was at the elementary school for 22 years, but when a child in her care needed her, she agreed to move up with him to the middle school.

"They felt I was the best fit to help him," Bruno said. "It was hard to leave what was familiar to me, but I went anyway. There were a lot of people who made assumptions about the student, but he and I just connected. We both love music, so we had that in common. All he wanted was someone to listen to him."

One of Bruno's students with autism wrote a speech when they honored Bruno at a school board meeting. His words brought tears to her eyes.

Bruno's impact is felt in the classroom and in every other part of her life. She adopted her older sister's child when Bruno's sister moved to Arizona and the child didn't want to leave. She is also her brother's caregiver and helps him manage his health issues.

Bruno volunteers with Starfish, a local charity in the community that helps families in need. At Christmas, they provide food. Bruno and the other paraprofessionals adopt



a family or two at Christmas. They try to get everything on their lists and they urge other organizations to support Starfish's outreach.

"I love my job," Bruno said. "I'm a people person and I have a lot of history in this district. I attended these schools and I still live in the district."

Bruno is honored to be the 2022 Hunterdon County ESP of the Year, but her first reaction was shock.

"I had seen so many people get this honor before," she said.

But perhaps the secret to Bruno's success isn't really a secret at all.

"One vice principal observed me and he asked, 'Terry, I want to know what your magic is.' I said, there is no magic. Most of these kids just want to be listened to, and that's what I provide." 🏠

## In the driver's seat

### Meet Burlington County 2022 ESP of the Year Marijean Andl

Marijean Andl is the perfect illustration of the phrase, "small but mighty." As a school bus driver and the president of the Lenape District Support Staff Association, she carries weighty responsibilities with a smile and is clearly the person people turn to when they find themselves in need.

Andl began her career as a bus driver in Philadelphia. A neighbor asked her to take the driving test with her, something that tickled both of them since Andl is quite petite—4 feet, 11 inches, she'll tell you—but Andl passed the test and her neighbor didn't.

At the time, Andl was caring for her baby niece, whom she had taken in. She wanted a job that would fit her schedule and that would provide much-needed health benefits. She got the benefits, but soon found that driving a bus for the busy school district would be very time-consuming.

"I've been with the Lenape District for 20 years," Andl said. "I love my job. I love the students. I love watching them grow throughout the year, although it can be grueling. There are ups and downs. I drive kids to and from school, I do sports, field trips, weekend trips, and we take kids to and from work programs, and special education bus runs."

Andl draws on many skills as a bus driver, some of which the mother of four children clearly honed at home.

"It takes patience to be a successful school bus driver," Andl said. "This is my calling. It takes understanding and a certain kind of stare. You look at them and let them know, 'OK, this is enough.' You need to understand that every kid is different. Kids don't realize that I can hear and see all of it; everything that's going on. I get to learn about them without them actually telling me. I try to think about how to handle any issues knowing what they've got going on."

Andl points out that bus drivers see students where they live, and teachers rarely, get that perspective.

"I know if their parents are home when they get off the bus," Andl said. "They're high school students, but I often feel that kids need you the most during those years. I see if they have a dog or a cat greeting them at the door. I know what kind of house they live in; if they're poor or well-off. You can pull up to the richest house but you see no one is



home. Seeing this side of our students' lives gives me an understanding of where they're coming from."

Andl brings that same understanding and compassion to her role as the association president. She represents 107 members and works hard to ensure good communication across different job sites and schedules. The association is heavily involved in community outreach and has supported Operation Yellow Ribbon, a program that "stuffs the bus" for military personnel. This activity that is even more meaningful as she prepares for her son to join the Marines.

In addition, they support numerous Pride projects to build connection with the community. They collect flowers to donate to the elderly in nursing homes on Valentine's Day, and much more.

Andl is honored to have been named the 2022 Burlington County ESP of the Year.

"I'd rather not be in the limelight, but I was very happy that people thought I was deserving," Andl said. "I don't look at myself like that. I'm here to help people and move on. I felt a little shy about it. I'm my own worst critic. But I felt humbled and happy they felt that way about me. And appreciated." 🙏

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# Expanded use of sick days for school employees

By Kaitlyn Dunphy, Esq.



On July 3, 2023, Gov. Phil Murphy signed into law P.L. 2023, c. 95, which expands the allowable use of sick days for public school staff. Member advocacy was key to NJEA's success in getting this expansion of sick leave passed.

Under the prior law, the 10 annual statutory sick days were limited to use for a member's own illness, injury, or disability, or if they needed to quarantine because of their or a household member's exposure to a contagious disease. Now, sick days can still be used for those purposes, but now can also be used:

- To recover from, or for the diagnoses or treatment of a health condition (mental or physical) or for preventative medical care.
- To care for a family member who is sick, injured, needs diagnosis, treatment, or care of a condition (mental or physical) or needs preventative medical care.
- To care for yourself or a family member who needs assistance due to being a victim of domestic or sexual violence, such as needing medical attention, services, counseling, to relocate, or for legal services or proceedings.
- For bereavement of a family member (up to 7 days).
- To attend a child's school-related conference, meeting, function or other event at the request of a school staff member or a meeting related to the child's health condition or disability.
- If a child's school or daycare is closed by the order of a public official, or due to a state of emergency or public health emergency.

Family members are defined broadly, to include children, grandchildren, siblings, spouses, domestic partners, civil union partners, parents, grandparents and those close relations that are the equivalent of a family relationship (blood relation not necessary). Children, as defined by this law, include biological, adopted, or foster children,

stepchildren, legal wards, or the child of a domestic partner or civil union partner.

This law does not reduce, diminish, or adversely affect any collectively bargained rights. For example, if family illness days and/or bereavement leave are included in your local collective bargaining agreement, it is NJEA's position that those days remain in addition to the 10 statutory sick days per year.

## Notification requirements

If the need to use sick leave is foreseeable, at least seven calendar days advance notice is required. If it's not foreseeable, notice should be given as soon as practicable—if the employer has notified employees of this requirement. The employer may prohibit foreseeable sick leave on certain dates. Reasonable documentation can be required if unforeseen sick leave occurs on those dates.

The Earned Sick Leave regulations require employers to have a business justification for designating those "certain dates" and to provide reasonable notice of those dates. It's possible that similar regulations could be adopted interpreting this law.

## Documentation of sick days

If sick leave is used for three or more consecutive days, the employer may require reasonable documentation to verify that the days are being used for a permissible purpose. For those taking care of a sick family member, signed documentation from the health care provider will meet this requirement. For the closure of a child's school or daycare, a copy of the order of the public official or health authority is sufficient documentation.

For victims of domestic or sexual violence, reasonable documentation will depend upon the reason for leave, but could be from the court, agency, social worker, law enforcement, counselor, attorney or other professional who is assisting the individual.

Regulations may be promulgated to implement this law. NJEA Legal Services will keep NJEA staff and membership abreast of any updates. 

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*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

## Get ready for Statewide Student Support Services

NJ4S launches in September 2023

By Sanford Starr

As educators, administrators and students begin the new school year, the Department of Children and Families' Division of Family and Community Partnerships (NJDCF) is working closely with the 15 New Jersey Statewide Student Support Services (NJ4S) Hubs to begin offering services and resources to support youth mental wellness.

### What is NJ4S?

NJ4S is a new initiative, launching the 2023-24 school year, that represents one part of a multilayered strategy to improve youth mental health and wellness. It utilizes a hub and spoke model that centralizes the coordination and dissemination of a menu of services to schools and other community-based locations, or "spokes," as requested by schools.

### How does NJ4S work?

NJ4S has 15 regional hubs, each associated with a group of school districts. The hubs are the organizational centers for prevention-oriented services, such as prevention of bullying, suicide, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse. They will utilize the School District Needs Index, a ranking of districts, to prioritize service requests, provision and capacity issues.

Prevention specialists and mental health professionals will be dispatched from the hubs to offer services to students along local spokes within the integrated network, which can include schools as well as other trusted sites within the community, such as public libraries, faith-based groups and community centers.

NJ4S is intended to supplement, not replace, any social-emotional learning curriculum and/or mental health supports already in place in schools and the community and fill in the gaps where services or prevention strategies are needed, but not already offered.

It's important to note that the NJ4S hubs, not the state, are the coordinators and connectors to student wellness services. They are guided by local voice and a local advisory board.

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*Sanford Starr is an assistant commissioner in the New Jersey Department of Children and Families.*

### How will schools access NJ4S services?

NJ4S includes three levels of service:

- Universal Prevention Services
- Evidence-based Prevention Interventions
- Assessment and Brief Intervention – Universal prevention services will be available to all students without any need for application.

Schools must apply to receive evidence-based prevention interventions, and assessment and brief intervention services for their sixth through 12th graders (middle and high schools). To access prevention and brief intervention services, an application must be submitted by the school's designated NJ4S representative for consideration.

### Mythbusters

#### **Will students and families have to travel to the hub for services?**

No one will need to travel to a hub to receive services. Services will be "pushed out" to spoke locations in the community: schools, community centers and other places identified through hub advisory board input.

#### **My school district already has great youth mental wellness programming. We don't want to change it.**

Participation in NJ4S is optional. Any existing school-based wellness program can remain in place. Tier 1 services will be available for any student/family that wants to participate. School districts may opt to apply for NJ4S Tier 2 or Tier 3 support.

#### **My school district is in a more rural part of the state/county. All the resources typically go to the urban/ more densely populated parts of the region.**

#### **Will NJ4S do the same?**

NJ4S directs hubs to provide Tier 1 programming universally in the region. Tier 2 and 3 support will be provided to districts that request it based on need, as identified in the DCF Student Need Index created in response to P.L. 2021, Chapter 323. This index controls for population size.

For more information about NJ4S and updates, visit [nj.gov/dcf/nj4s.html](http://nj.gov/dcf/nj4s.html) often.



## Spike Lee, Ani DiFranco, Danya Ruttenberg, and Alisha DeLorenzo to headline NJEA Convention

This year's NJEA Convention features an exciting lineup of in-person keynote speakers to complement and enrich your overall experience in Atlantic City Nov. 9-10. In addition to these exciting keynotes, the hundreds of professional and career development opportunities that are the hallmark of the NJEA Convention continue this year.

### Spike Lee

Thursday: 9:30-10:30 a.m.



Spike Lee needs no introduction. In person, the provocateur and media icon is never at a loss for words. As one of the most outspoken African American voices, he talks candidly, and with authority, about issues of race in mainstream media and Hollywood,

using, as a backdrop, a rare behind-the-scenes look at his celebrated body of work, whose images of racial division and understanding have ingrained themselves on the popular consciousness for decades now.

### Ani DiFranco

Thursday: 3-4 p.m.



Widely considered a feminist icon, Grammy winner Ani DiFranco is the mother of the DIY (Do It Yourself) movement, being one of the first artists to create her own record label in 1990. While she has been known as the Little Folksinger, her music has

embraced punk, funk, hip-hop, jazz, soul, electronica and even more distant sounds. Her collaborators have included everyone from Utah Phillips to legendary R&B saxophonist Maceo Parker to Prince. She has shared stages with Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Pete Seeger, Kris Kristofferson, Greg Brown, Billy Bragg, Michael Franti, Chuck D. and many more.

### Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg

Friday: 9:30-10:30 a.m.



Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg is an award-winning author and writer who serves as Scholar in Residence at the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW). She was named by *Newsweek* and *The Daily Beast* as a "rabbi to watch" and one of the top 50 most influential

women rabbis. She's also been listed as a faith leader to watch by the Center for American Progress, received the Lives of Commitment Award from Auburn Seminary, has been a *Washington Post* Sunday crossword clue (83 Down) and called (in her younger days) a wunderkund of Jewish feminism by *Publishers Weekly*.

### Alisha De Lorenzo

Friday: 3-4 p.m.



Alisha De Lorenzo is a licensed therapist, certified high-performance coach and experienced speaker. She works at the intersection of individual and collective efficacy helping people do family, community and work in ways that are expansive and value our unique

identities and contributions, instead of leaving them to the margins. From keynote speeches to coaching, her mission remains the same: to help move the future forward with a mattering mindset by making sure that everyone feels seen, heard, valued and like they matter.

## NJEA PAC endorses 95 candidates for Nov. 7 election

### 78 Democrats and 17 Republicans endorsed for Legislature

NJEA's 125-member political action committee has voted to endorse 95 legislative candidates for election this Nov. 7. Those endorsements include 29 Senate candidates and 66 Assembly candidates, with 78 endorsements for Democratic candidates and 17 for Republican candidates.

NJEA PAC voted on the recommendations of local interview teams from each legislative district (LD). There were no endorsements in LDs 23, 24, 26 and 29

The complete list of endorsements are:

- **LD 1:** Erik Simonsen (R) for Assembly
- **LD 2:** Vincent J. Polistina (R) for Senate and Donald A. Guardian (R) for Assembly
- **LD 3:** John J. Burzichelli (D) for Senate and Heather Simmons (D) and Dave Bailey (D) for Assembly
- **LD 4:** Paul D. Moriarty (D) for Senate and Cody Miller (D) and Dan Hutchison (D) for Assembly
- **LD 5:** Nilsa I. Cruz-Perez (D) for Senate and William W. Spearman (D) and William F. Moen Jr. (D) for Assembly
- **LD 6:** James Beach (D) for Senate and Pamela R. Lampitt (D) and Louis D. Greenwald (D) for Assembly
- **LD 7:** Troy Singleton (D) for Senate and Herb Conaway Jr. (D) and Carol A. Murphy (D) for Assembly
- **LD 8:** Latham Tiver (R) for Senate and Anthony Angelozzi (D) and Brandon E. Umba (R) for Assembly
- **LD 9:** Brian E. Rumpf (R) for Assembly
- **LD 10:** Emma Mammano (D) for Assembly
- **LD 11:** Vin Gopal (D) for Senate and Margie Donlon (D) and Luanne Peterpaul (D) for Assembly.
- **LD 12:** Robert D. Clifton (R) and Alex Sauickie (R) for Assembly
- **LD 13:** Victoria A. Flynn (R) for Assembly and Paul Eschelbach (D) for Assembly
- **LD 14:** Linda R. Greenstein (D) for Senate and Wayne P. DeAngelo (D) and Tennille McCoy (D) for Assembly
- **LD 15:** Shirley K. Turner (D) for Senate and Verlina Reynolds-Jackson (D) and Anthony S. Verrelli (D) for Assembly
- **LD 16:** Andrew Zwicker (D) for Senate and Roy Freiman (D) and Michelle Drulis (D) for Assembly.
- **LD 17:** Bob Smith (D) for Senate and Joseph V. Egan (D) and Joe Danielsen (D) for Assembly
- **LD 18:** Patrick J. Diegnan Jr. (D) for Senate Robert J. Karabinchak (D) and Sterley S. Stanley (D) for Assembly
- **LD 19:** Joseph F. Vitale (D) for Senate Craig J. Coughlin (D) and Yvonne Lopez (D) for Assembly
- **LD 20:** Joseph P. Cryan (D) for Senate and Annette Quijano (D) and Reginald W. Atkins (D) for Assembly
- **LD 21:** Jon M. Bramnick (R) for Senate and Michele Matsikoudis (R) for Assembly; Elizabeth Graner (D) and Nancy F. Munoz (R) are Your Choice candidates for Assembly
- **LD 22:** Nicholas P. Scutari (D) for Senate and Linda S. Carter (D) and James J. Kennedy (D) for Assembly
- **LD 25:** Anthony M. Bucco (R) for Senate and Aura K. Dunn (R) for Assembly
- **LD 27:** John F. McKeon (D) and Alixon Collazos-Gill (D) for Assembly
- **LD 28:** Renee C. Burgess (D) for Senate and Cleopatra G. Tucker (D) and Garnet R. Hall (D) for Assembly
- **LD 30:** Pending
- **LD 31:** Angela V. McKnight (D) for Senate and Barbara McCann Stamato (D) and William B. Sampson IV (D) for Assembly



## Important election dates

- **LD 32:** Raj Mukherji (D) for Senate and John Allen (D) and Jessica Ramirez (D) for Assembly.
- **LD 33:** Brian P. Stack (D) for Senate and Gabriel Rodriguez (D) and Julio Marenco (D) for Assembly.
- **LD 34:** Britnee N. Timberlake (D) for Senate and Carmen Morales (D) and Michael Venezia (D) for Assembly
- **LD 35:** Nellie Pou (D) for Senate and Benjie Wimberly (D) and Shavonda E. Sumter (D) for Assembly
- **LD 36:** Paul A. Sarlo (D) for Senate and Gary S. Schaer (D) and Clinton Calabrese (D) for Assembly
- **LD 37:** Gordon M. Johnson (D) for Senate and Ellen J. Park (D) and Shama A. Haider (D) for Assembly
- **LD 38:** Joseph A. Lagana (D) for Senate and P. Christopher Tully (D) and Lisa Swain (D) for Assembly.
- **LD 39:** Jodi Murphy (D) for Senate and John Vitale (D) and Damon Englese (D) for Assembly
- **LD 40:** Kristin M. Corrado (R) for Senate and Christopher P. DePhillips (R) and Al Barlas (R) for Assembly

### Oct. 17

#### Voter registration deadline for general election

Online registration and printable registrations forms can be found at [vote.nj.gov](http://vote.nj.gov). Not sure if you're already registered? Visit [vote.nj.gov](http://vote.nj.gov) to find out.

### Oct. 28-Nov. 5

#### Early voting period

This new option enables all registered voters to cast their ballot in person, using a voting machine, during in-person early voting period prior to Election Day. Find your county's early voting locations at [vote.nj.gov](http://vote.nj.gov).

### Oct. 31

#### Deadline to apply for a mail-in ballot by mail for general election

For a vote-by-mail application, go to [vote.nj.gov](http://vote.nj.gov). Complete and mail the application as early as possible, ideally well before Nov. 1.

### Nov. 6 – by 3 p.m.

#### Deadline for in-person mail-in ballot applications for general election

Visit [vote.nj.gov](http://vote.nj.gov) for details on how to apply in person for a vote-by-mail ballot.

### Nov. 7

#### General election

To find your polling location check the sample ballot you received from your county board of elections or visit [vote.nj.gov](http://vote.nj.gov). This is also the deadline by which the post office must receive mail-in ballots for the general election. It is also the deadline for in-person submission of general election mail-in ballots to county boards of election.

## PENSION UPDATE

TOTAL PENSION FUND:  
\$90.47 BILLION

The totals below reflect market values as of May 31, 2023, and for comparison, March 31, 2023. The figures, which are rounded, may not reflect the current market values of some alternative investments through the period noted, because of lags in reporting under industry standards.

All reports and financial statements are posted on the Division of Investments' website at [nj.gov/treasury/doinvest/index.shtml](http://nj.gov/treasury/doinvest/index.shtml).

	May 31, 2023		March 31, 2023	
	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation
Global Growth	\$50.97	56.34%	\$50.98	57.09%
Income	\$15.75	17.67%	\$15.77	17.66%
Real Return	\$7.38	8.15%	\$7.51	8.41%
Defensive	\$14.32	15.83%	\$13.23	14.82%
Other	\$1.82	2.02%	\$1.80	2.02%
Total	\$90.47	100%	\$89.30	100%

# Advocacy and professional development all summer long

Just because it's summer, NJEA members don't sit still. Throughout the summer there were opportunities for members to advocate for the profession and to develop their professional and career skills.

Starting before the school year ended, members attended the first-ever NJEA Carol Watchler LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference in May. They kicked off the summer in early July at the NEA Representative Assembly in Orlando. The NEA RA sets policy for the National Education Association. It draws thousands of delegates from across the nation, with hundreds coming from New Jersey, which sends one of the largest delegations.

Later in July members grew their professional skills at the NJEA Impact Conference and the NJEA RISE Conference. RISE stands for Radical Imagination Summit for Educators. They ended the summer with the NJEA Jack Bertolino Summer Leadership Conference—a weeklong advocacy training program for current and future local, county and state association leaders.

Here are a few photos from each event. View many more photos at [flickr.com/njea/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/njea/).





6.



7.



8.



9.



10.

1. Carol Watchler, a lifelong social justice activist, educator, and leader, addresses the first-ever NJEA Carol Watchler LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference on May 12.
2. Members of the NJEA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Committee with Carol Watchler and NJEA's officers, President Sean M. Spiller, Vice President Steve Beatty, and Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson at the NJEA Carol Watchler LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference in May.
3. Front to back: Union County EA Vice President Tonya Scott-Cole, Union County EA President James Frazier Jr., and Union County EA Vice President Michael Boyd at the NEA Representative Assembly in Orlando.
4. From left: Somerville EA President Sharon Gornick, Irvington EA Treasurer Lauren Greenfield, and Orange EA Webmaster Sidney Flournoy during a digital communication tools seminar at the NJEA Jack Bertolino Summer Leadership Conference in August.
5. The NJEA Leadership Committee works all year to plan the NJEA Jack Bertolino Summer Leadership Conference as well as the Winter Leadership conferences.
6. Paterson EA member Talena Queen during the NJEA Radical Imagination Summit for Educators (RISE) Conference on July 13. Queen is a member of the NJEA Human and Civil Rights Cadre and the Poet Laureate of Paterson, New Jersey.
7. Pleasantville EA member Tamar Lasure-Owens speaking at the NJEA Radical Imagination Summit for Educators (RISE) Conference on July 13. Lasure-Owens is a member of the NJEA Human and Civil Rights Cadre and a statewide leader in the implementation of the New Jersey Amistad Curriculum mandate.
8. NJEA's officers at the opening session of the Jack Bertolino Summer Leadership Conference in August. From left: Vice President Steve Beatty, President Sean M. Spiller, and Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson.
9. Union Township history teacher Nicholas Ferroni at the NJEA Impact Conference on July 12, where he led interviews with educators. Ferroni is nationally recognized as a teacher and social activist.
10. Millburn High School dance teacher Arvin Arjona delivering the keynote address at the NJEA Impact Conference on July 12. He is renowned nationwide for his expertise in dance and his dedication to fostering inclusive learning environments.



## NJEA FREDERICK L. HIPPI GRANTS FUND MEMBER-LED INITIATIVES

*By Kathryn Coulibaly*

In 1993, NJEA's Executive Committee founded the NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education. Thirty years later, the foundation has awarded 460 grants totaling more than \$2.49 million to public school employees across the state for innovative programs that benefit New Jersey's public schoolchildren.

The only foundation of its kind in New Jersey, the Hipp Foundation supports initiatives to promote excellence in education. Grants are awarded from \$500 to \$10,000, depending on the scope of the project. The annual deadline is March 1.

### **Who is Dr. Hipp?**

The grant program is named in honor of Dr. Frederick L. Hipp, a powerhouse executive director who built NJEA into the union and professional association it is today.

Dr. Hipp joined NJEA staff as a spokesperson and organizer in 1941 and became the executive director in 1946.

For the next 32 years, he led NJEA through profound changes, from social movements to political upheaval to organizational change. Under his direction, NJEA would enjoy the most dramatic growth in its history. Membership ballooned from 27,000 to 110,000. Not only were there

more members to serve, but a greater number of services were offered, precipitating a need for more staff, which grew from three to 159 people over the course of his leadership.

Dr. Hipp was an educational and labor visionary who helmed NJEA through the 1968 passage of the New Jersey Employer-Employee Relations Act, which guaranteed collective bargaining for unionized public employees, and the 1975 Public School Education Act, a law seeking to ensure the constitutional right to a thorough and efficient education, as well as many others.

Dr. Hipp passed away in 1991 at the age of 83. Two years later, NJEA honored Dr. Hipp's legacy by naming the grant program in his honor.

### **Innovation in educators' hands**

One of the unique aspects of the Hipp grants is that the funding belongs to the educator who applies for the grant. The district superintendent and local association

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*Kathryn Coulibaly is the associate editor of the NJEA Review and provides content and support to [njea.org](http://njea.org). She can be reached at [kcoulibaly@njea.org](mailto:kcoulibaly@njea.org).*

**One of the unique aspects of the Hippi grants is that the funding belongs to the educator who applies for the grant.**

president sign off on the grant application, but once the grant is awarded, it goes to the educator. In other words, if an educator is transferred to another building, or even moves districts, they take the grant with them and can implement it there.

Hundreds of educators and thousands of students have benefited from Hippi grants. Here are just a few stories about their projects.

**A longtime grant winner**

Sue Ort has been one of the most successful Hippi grant applicants. Since 1998, she has won 20 to 25 grants (it's hard to keep track once you hit double digits). For Ort, an elementary teacher in Washington Township, Morris County, the most rewarding part of the projects she runs is seeing the impact on students.

"I have seen my students become more verbal and fearless," Ort says. "They are so excited about the activities that they don't even realize how much they are learning until later. So many of these activities allowed the students to build a newfound sense of accomplishment and willingness to try anything."

Collaborating with various colleagues, Ort has done projects that incorporated fairy tales, nursery rhymes, puppetry, the theme of kindness, reading, writing, publishing, robotics and coding, oral language expression, recycling, science, weather, and building and construction. She has used Hippi grant funds to purchase a miniature donkey, a miniature horse, a wallaby, greenhouses, plants, seeds, puppets, iPads, and a massive amount of literature, cubelets and more.

Ort began working on projects with a colleague, Caryl Eissing, who was the first person who mentioned the Hippi grants to her. Later on, Ort worked with preschool teacher Denise Scairpon. Eventually, Scairpon's daughter, Amanda Miranda, became a teacher and Ort's collaborator.

**A family tradition of grant writing**

Miranda was in high school when her mother and Ort began winning Hippi grants. When she became a teacher of students on the autism spectrum, she knew she wanted to apply for a grant to help expand her students' educational opportunities.

Miranda has won eight to 10 grants on a variety of topics, and the impact on her students has been universally positive.

"Through these grants, my students became self-



**A vintage photo of Caryl Eissing (l), Denise Scairpon, and Sue Ort (seated) for their 2005 grant, "Project EGG: Everything Grows through Growing."**

confident, excited about learning, and have learned many life skills that will continue to benefit them throughout the years to come," Miranda says. "Watching one of my students on the autism spectrum become more social and begin to make friends through these grants has been simply amazing to witness firsthand."

**Inspiring a love of reading**

Lisa McGhee, a Princeton Middle School teacher, wanted to find a way to inspire a love of reading in her students. She won four Hippi grants over several years to create literacy projects that included book clubs, author visits and purchasing books that her students would enjoy reading.

"Since these students were always told they were 'poor' readers, they lost their interest in reading," McGhee says. "During the book clubs, the students used comprehensive strategies to read high interest books for enjoyment."

**Podcasting project**

Hillsborough High School social studies teacher Robert Fenster wrote a grant for a podcasting project called Prejudice & Pride.

"The Hippi grant allowed my students to develop an array of skills in the podcasting arena," Fenster says. "But more importantly, it gave them a venue to express themselves on topics that were profoundly important to their identities as they tackled subjects not covered in school, such as code switching, biracial adoption and colorism. They will long remember the work that empowered them and that they chose to do on their own volition."

# Apply for an NJEA HIPP Grant

**Got a great idea?  
Get it funded!**

Applications are due March 1, 2024, but start now! Go to [njea.org/hipp](https://njea.org/hipp) to read about past projects and get ideas and inspiration. Sign in to the application portal for Frequently Asked Questions, tips and tutorials on how to write the strongest grant possible.



## Golf and gardening grants

Northern Valley Regional High School District special education teacher Catherine Troia-Slutzky and her collaborator Robyn Ivey wanted to fund programs that helped include their students in the greater educational community and get them to participate in activities that other students do. Thanks to two HIPP grants funded over several years, their students, who are high school students on the autism spectrum, participated in golf and gardening projects. The first, ACCESS to the Links, brought together typical students from Northern Valley Demarest High School and students on the spectrum for golf lessons and to play together once a week.

Their other grant, Here We Grow, funded a hydroponic raft garden system and supplies so students could participate in planting, harvesting and—hopefully—tasting fresh produce. Excess produce is offered to staff for purchase or donated to the local food pantry.

“We saw the enjoyment our students took in these activities, whether golf or gardening,” Troia-Slutzky says. “Seeing them participate in activities that are not regularly available to them made it all worthwhile.”

While HIPP grants are typically funded for one year, it is possible to apply for a continuation grant. However, the goal is to eventually build up community support of the program so that it can continue after the seed money from the HIPP Foundation is no longer available.

## From top to bottom:

Lisa McGhee’s Read Lead Succeed book club is getting Princeton Middle School students reading.

Catherine Troia-Slutzky poses with students participating in the Here We Grow project.

Hillsborough High School students share their stories and perspectives on the Prejudice and Pride podcast.

Hope Ranalli and Warren Hills Middle School students showcase the power of the Zen Zone



## Support the Hipp Foundation

### Educators in the lead

The impact on educators has been profound. It has given many of them a sense of ownership and satisfaction because they are implementing projects they believe will benefit their students.

#### The Zen Zone

"Hipp grants are important because they enable educators to provide materials, do projects and fund programs that can't be funded by individual school districts due to limited funds," McGhee says.

School counselor Hope Ranalli created the Zen Zone at Warren Hills Middle School to provide students and staff with a mindfulness space where they could engage in a variety of activities, including yoga, meditation, using singing bowls and more. In addition to purchasing materials for the space, Ranalli used part of the grant money to become SEL (Social Emotional Learning) certified.

"We have seen an improvement in our staff and student mental health while utilizing the space," Ranalli says. "The Zen Zone is a popular location for the students, and they crave being in there. The ability for staff and students to 'escape' the school building and focus on improving their mental health has been such a positive experience for our school community."

#### HealthRhythms

First-time grant winner Canaan Bump is in the process of implementing his project, HealthRhythms: Integrated Drum Therapy Program, in the Wanaque Borough School District, but he has already felt the impact of winning a Hipp grant.

"I would certainly recommend that other educators apply for a Hipp grant," Bump says. "The funded projects have the potential to spark passion, increase student engagement, create opportunity for exploration and help foster school community in a direct and meaningful way."

### The power of funding

Money is always an issue in education, and front-line educators are rarely the people who get to decide how funds are distributed. Thanks to the independence that Hipp grants provide, educators are the ones making the decisions about how to implement their project.

For Vernon Township Middle School art teacher Lisa Hirkaler, who established a Sensory Garden in the school's natural space and a Social Justice Art and Book Club, "Hipp grants provide the means to the dreams!" In times of budget austerity, when even teacher positions, clubs, and after school buses have to be pared back, running a Hipp grant will help you feel like you are accomplishing something extraordinary for your students.

"Hipp grants provided us the resources to make student and teacher dreams come to fruition."

Hipp grants are open to all New Jersey public school employees and everyone from pre-k through community college are encouraged to apply. To read more about this year's grants, go to [njea.org/hipp](https://njea.org/hipp). 🏠

There are many ways to financially support the Hipp Foundation and help us continue to fund even more programs.

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1. Gather four or more ink cartridges.
2. Go to [planetgreenrecycle.com](https://planetgreenrecycle.com) to print out free USPS labels.
3. Use the Hipp Foundation's Program ID Code 31808 to ensure the foundation receives the credit for your donations.
4. Use any box to mail the ink cartridges to Planet Green Recycle for free.
5. Ask friends, family and businesses to participate, as well.



**The end goal is NOT that everyone learns the same thing. Rather, that everyone will become expert learners.**

"I'm looking for hidden gems," Bangs says. "Kids who have untapped potential. And then I try to put them in a position to recognize that in themselves. I'm also looking for the quiet kid who's bored and needs someone to take an interest. With a bored student, I try to point out how the topic we're covering relates to an interest they have outside the classroom, such as sports or music, and encourage them to explore those connections further. It's so rewarding to see a student 'blossom' once their curiosity is sparked!"

He also recognizes the challenges in education, particularly parents who advocate only for their child at the expense of the 26 other students in the class.

"A lot of people want learning to follow the form they are used to," Bangs says. "But there are many different teaching and learning styles. After so many years, adhering to one style can become repetitive and routine. I keep it interesting and fresh for myself and my students by leaning into my students' creativity and ingenuity. If you build up their confidence, you get better results."

"I believe that student-centered and student-directed learning makes the learning process far more interesting and equitable for the students and far more energizing for the teacher." Bangs explained, "The end goal is NOT that everyone learns the same thing. Rather, that everyone will become expert learners."

"If more teachers adapted these approaches" Bangs feels, "they would enjoy teaching their students more and be less inclined to leave the profession." He has mentored new teachers and shared his innovative teaching methods with them and other colleagues over the years.

Bangs sees himself as a steady, stable person in his students' lives.

"I put down roots and I've stayed," he says. "I've got parents of kindergarteners asking me to keep teaching so their kids can have me! I can remember where some of my current students' moms, dads, uncles and aunts sat in my classroom. Approximately 25% of the teachers and administrators in this district are former students of mine."

Another reason Bangs credits for his success in teaching is that he gets to know each of his students as individuals – their background, interests, and career goals. That way he can better guide them in choosing a college that would be a good fit. Without his guidance a number of his students would never have considered attending college. Many go on to careers in science research, engineering, medicine, and other STEM related fields.



Roselle Park chemistry and physics teacher Raymond Bangs builds strong relationships with his students, getting to know them and their interests.

**I could never see myself walking away from something I really loved.**

Bangs has kept abreast of rapid advances in science and technology by taking graduate level courses throughout his career. He has three master's degrees and is currently a doctoral candidate in the Teacher Education and Teacher Development program at Montclair State University. His adviser and dissertation chair is Douglas Larkin. Bangs also networks with recent graduates while they attend college.

"My colleagues often ask me how I maintain my enthusiasm after so many years in the classroom. I reply that I am inspired by my students. And it is so gratifying when former students come back to visit and say, 'Thank you, Mr. Bangs, for changing my life.'"



### **Marie DeMaio: Adapting and growing**

On Sept. 1, 1962, Marie DeMaio walked into a second-grade classroom in West Orange and launched a legendary career. For 23 years, she taught second grade, earning her administrator's degree without a specific timeline for using it. When the school principal was out of the building, she would fill in for him.

**West Orange school principal Marie DeMaio always wanted to be in education. As a teacher and a principal, she has spent 61 years in public education.**

but not willing to leave her students. The superintendent overruled her, and she found herself behind the desk in the principal's office.

By April, the principal had recovered, but he elected to retire in June. That September, DeMaio was back in the principal's office, no longer as "acting." For the past 38 years, she has continued in that role.

"You have to really like what you're doing," DeMaio says. "If there's any doubt, then walk away. You have to walk into it knowing there are going to be ups and downs, good days and bad days. But if I walked into my classroom and I was down for some reason, the students would uplift me. The students would get me fully involved in what was going on in that classroom. That would immediately put me back to being the teacher and being with them. Everything else was secondary."

"A lot of people look at my long career in education—61 years—and say they couldn't do it. But I always wanted

The arrangement worked well for everyone, until one weekend when the principal got sick. The superintendent informed her that she would be filling in as acting principal. DeMaio was willing to help out,

to be a teacher. I love students. During high school and college, I tutored younger children. I could never see myself walking away from something I really loved."

DeMaio is honored by a scholarship fund in West Orange that has been named after her.

"It is given out every year to a high school senior who came from my elementary school and who is going on to higher education," DeMaio says. This scholarship will go on, whether I'm there or I retire. It's a legacy."

For educators today, school in the early 1960s is difficult to imagine.

"There were no computers and no SmartBoards when I started in 1962," DeMaio recalls. "Everything was handwritten or on a typewriter. But I've grown with the new things that came about. I had to learn. We can all learn from each other in education. We need to embrace each other's strengths and learn from each other."

DeMaio has no plans to retire. Her love of public education sustains her every day, and she urges other educators to keep a sense of perspective about their career.

"I think you have to love the profession you're going into," DeMaio says. "If you love that profession and you want to be with students and see them succeed, that's the most important thing. If you have that kind of an attitude, I think you'll be able to weather any changes in education, and there will be many changes. But you're here to teach these students and enable them to succeed. And always keep perspective. Otherwise, things seem overwhelming."

### **Paul Tillman: Decades of caring for students' mental well-being**

When Paul Tillman accepted a position as a school psychologist in Paterson 47 years ago, he was the first Black school psychologist in the district.

At the time, Tillman was a recent—and very proud—graduate of Seton Hall University. He became hooked on psychology when his best friend Aaron Campbell brought him to a graduate class taught by Dr. Henri Yaker, the chief psychologist at Marlboro State Hospital. He combined his interest in psychology with education after working with Upward Bound students and as a counselor in the educational opportunity program.

Tillman had been raised in Belmar, Monmouth County, a community with many Black professionals thanks to its proximity to Fort Monmouth. The Army was one of the few institutions that hired Black scientists. Many of those scientists made their home in Tillman's communities, and their spouses often worked in education.



Paterson school psychologist Paul Tillman is active in his school, community and with NJEA. He is pictured at the 2023 NJEA Summer Leadership Conference.

An excellent student, Tillman recalls how his favorite teacher, Mr. Bitsko, would move him to the front of the class during exams so the other students couldn't copy off of him. He earned A's from Mr. Bitsko, but also 5's, which Tillman says meant he was capable of doing better, a comment that frustrated him. When he asked the teacher to explain, Mr. Bitsko told him, "You won't understand this now, but someday you'll see that you are capable of doing even more."

After student teaching at Essex County College, he began his graduate studies at Seton Hall University. After earning two master's degrees, he went on to work as a school psychologist in Orange and Newark. In 1976, Tillman was recruited to work in Paterson.

"I was hired in Paterson as a result of a corrective action plan," Tillman says. "Paterson had a school that didn't accept people of color. The state got involved and the NAACP sued Paterson. After the investigation, they saw that psychology was one of the areas where there were no people of color."

"I faced serious racism and prejudice early in my career," Tillman says. "It wasn't anything I was unfamiliar with. Now, though, in recent years, I've been facing what I call senior and elder discrimination. That's when districts start putting pressure on older staff to retire."

In 1982, Tillman earned a law degree from Seton Hall School of Law but after considering a career in law, he decided to continue working with young people in public education.

Tillman is a founding member of the New Jersey Association of Black Psychologists. He is active in NJEA and attends professional development and advocacy workshops. He is active with the NJEA Members of Color Network in his local association and statewide.

**Tillman has worked hard to open the door to others over the years, mentoring other staff and helping to get other Black psychologists hired.**

Tillman is a familiar face for Paterson's students. He worked at Eastside High School for many years and is now at the elementary level.

"One of the things that I've always done is visit the entire school," Tillman says. "Sometimes, that's hard, but for me, it's an everyday type of thing. Everyone in the school knows me."

Tillman believes that educational support professionals are underutilized by other school staff.

"They're the people who are boots on the ground. They know who is coming and going, what situations are occurring. When it comes to mental health, they need to be brought into the picture. I'm friendly with everyone so if support staff see anything, they tell me what's going on with a student."

Tillman has worked hard to open the door to others over the years, mentoring other staff and helping to get other Black psychologists hired.

In his 50th year in education, Tillman says that he's made it a lifelong practice to be involved as a Cub Scout leader, mentor and community servant.

Over the years, Tillman has worked with other long-term educators, including an art teacher who taught for 53 years and a physical education teacher who was still working well into her 80s.

"I love what I do," Tillman says. "You have to seek inspiration out—there are inspirational people everywhere."

### **Nancy Siegel: Stay and fight**

Nancy Siegel was a recent college graduate with a job offer from McGraw Hill to work on any one of five magazines that interested her.

Dr. Charles King, the superintendent of Millburn Public Schools, knew her mother, who was an elementary teacher in the district.

## **ESP members with long careers in education**



If you are an educational support professional who has had a long career in education, we want to hear from you! Please email [kcoulibaly@njea.org](mailto:kcoulibaly@njea.org) and share your story.



Nancy Siegel has seen many changes in her 57 years in Millburn public schools, but she still believes in the power of public education.

“Dr. King called me into his office and told me that he had a problem,” Siegel remembers. “He said that if he could get a guarantee from McGraw Hill that my job would be waiting for me in a year, would I consider working as an English teacher at the middle school. I told him that I would consider it if McGraw Hill agreed.”

Dr. King produced an official letter from McGraw Hill assuring Siegel of their commitment to her, and Siegel began to prepare herself for a year teaching English. Although she did not have certification at the time, that wasn’t a requirement. In the second week of August, Dr. King called her back to his office. He told her that she would be a guidance counselor at Millburn High School instead.

“He told me, ‘You’ll learn how to be a guidance counselor,’” Siegel says.

That conversation took place 57 years ago, and Siegel has worked as a guidance counselor ever since.

“My family’s emphasis has always been on education,” Siegel says. “My mother was devoted to being a teacher. I knew the people in this district, and I figured it out.”

From the beginning, Siegel wanted to change up how things were done, which led to some conflicts with others in the department.

“I was the odd man out in my department,” Siegel says. “At that time, counselors were not doing what I was doing. I had an open-door policy. I invited students in to talk to me in groups.”

Despite being a high-achieving district with a 98% acceptance rate into four-year colleges or universities, Siegel saw how many of her students were struggling.

“The students I remember the most are the ones who I spent time with trying to make them feel good about

**If you can make someone feel there is something worthwhile in who they are, then that is the only thing that matters to me as an educator.**

themselves,” Siegel recalls. “If you can make someone feel there is something worthwhile in who they are, then that is the only thing that matters to me as an educator.”

“I may sound idealistic, but I think you have to go through the world feeling that there are ideals you have to live up to,” Siegel says.

Like many other educators, Siegel remembers a time when educators were treated differently in their communities.

“For me, the hardest part has been adapting to a very different world,” Siegel says. “Education used to be highly respected. Teachers are being slammed in every single way. Parents swearing at me that they’re paying my salary so I should be doing what they want, and they are demanding unrealistic things. You have to make up your own mind and decide, am I going to fight this or am I going to walk away? If you walk away, I think you’ve given up.”

Siegel maintains a passion for public education and a belief that the work that she and her colleagues do matters very much.

“I mentor young teachers, and I spend a lot of time with them trying to get them to stay and fight,” Siegel says. “They’re crying and overwhelmed. What upsets me is they believed in something and now they’re questioning if it was worthwhile after all. We can’t have them feeling that way about education.”

### Finding a way through

What each of these veteran educators expressed is a focus on their students, a profound belief in the power and promise of public education and a realistic view of the ups and downs that everyone will face in their lives, in every career. But each of them holds the belief that the work they do with New Jersey’s schoolchildren matters very much and is worth fighting for. 🌟



## NJEA’s administrative members

You might be surprised to learn that NJEA represents some administrators. While many principals are represented by the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, some choose to be represented by NJEA.



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# ESPs

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# ESP unions' dogged determination *literally* pays off

By Christy Kanaby

It's widely known throughout the state that NJEA's educational support professionals (ESPs) are also known as *essential* school personnel. This was never truer than during the COVID pandemic. As educators scrambled to move to remote learning in response to the state of emergency declared through Gov. Phil Murphy's executive order, districts were left to decide which personnel would remain in the buildings and what their roles would be.

Like many of their colleagues around the state, members of the East Orange Educational Support Professional Association (EOESPA) and East Orange Maintenance Association (EOMA), collectively composed of custodians, maintenance and security personnel, remained in the school buildings to disinfect and maintain them as the pandemic raged on. And—like many of their colleagues—they deserved to be paid for their selfless work.

Each of the EOMA and EOESPA's bargaining units have a clause in their respective contracts that addresses compensation for work completed in a declared state of emergency, which supersedes any other contract language on overtime. So, in March 2020, when New Jersey's public schools shut down, these three groups continued to work and continued to be paid, as per the contract.

"When we were directed to return to work during the pandemic, the death tolls and hospitalizations were very high," recalled Lynnette Joyner, EOESPA president. "All the custodians were terrified, afraid and stressed, not just for our lives, but for the lives of loved ones we lived with. We didn't want to bring in any germs, so many of us had to quarantine in our homes."

But in June 2020, the East Orange School District informed EOESPA and EOMA members that, beginning that July, they would no longer receive state-of-emergency pay and instead would receive their normal compensation. The district claimed that "...no one thought an extended state of emergency would occur" in the wake of the executive order.

"As ESPs, we are used to working under different conditions. We signed up to be security and maintenance professionals, knowing that we were working in difficult or even dangerous situations," said Mark Richards, EOMA president. "No one could have predicted working during a pandemic. We had struggles, and we showed up."

## Protecting contractual provisions

Working with NJEA Field Representative Jim McGuire and NJEA network attorneys Sanford Oxfeld, Esq. and Randi April, Esq., EOESPA and EOMA filed grievances on behalf of their bargaining units, as each has different language on overtime pay, but all three grievances were bundled with the same complaint: the district must honor the contract.

The East Orange Board of Education balked at the grievances, claiming that since schools weren't closed in the summer and fall of 2020, it was no longer necessary to pay individuals more for the same work. However, NJEA's, EOESPA's and EOMA's position was clear: regardless of the board's feelings, the state of emergency was still in effect, and no students were present.

"To have the district unilaterally decide they will no longer pay these employees what they were owed is unacceptable," said McGuire. "With the state of emergency still in full effect, so is the contract language that outlines how they will be paid during such time."

The grievance worked its way through the contractual process and eventually went to arbitration at the end of 2020, with Jack Tillum assigned as the arbitrator. Tillum ruled in the unions' favor and, in January 2021, awarded the following decision:

- Custodians' group, as per its contract, will receive two-and-a-half times their salary rate.
- Security group, as per its contract, will receive time and a half.
- Maintenance group, as per its contract—which specifically states that if the state of emergency is declared by the governor, no overtime is awarded—will receive only their regular hourly rate.

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Christy Kanaby is an associate director in the NJEA Communications Division. She can be reached at [ckanaby@njea.org](mailto:ckanaby@njea.org).

**The judge who heard the case agreed with the entire arbitrator’s decision and ordered the district to pay—but the board of education still refused to comply.**

In all, roughly \$4 to 5 million was awarded to these members, as all worked during COVID.

### **Stall tactics ensue**

Unfortunately, the board of education began to stall and refused to pay EOESPA and EOMA members what they were owed, despite many legal letters and meetings between the parties. In June 2021, NJEA filed a “Continuing the Arbitration Award,” which seeks a judge’s certification to enforce the award. The judge who heard the case agreed with the entire arbitrator’s decision and ordered the district to pay—but the board of education still refused to comply.

The stalemate continued, and, in the summer of 2022, NJEA filed a civil contempt charge, which is filed when one party fails to adhere to an order from the court, further injuring the other party’s rights. In this filing, NJEA demanded all fines to be enforced and paid by the BOE, and the prevailing party’s attorney fees to also be paid. This matter was heard by a different judge, who ruled the BOE in contempt of court. The ruling held, however, that no fees would be imposed, provided the BOE paid the EOESPA and EOMA members by September 2022.

### **Additional shortcomings exposed**

Finally, after nearly two years of fighting this matter, the district finally began to comply and, on Sept. 8, 2022, representatives from EOESPA, EOMA, NJEA, the district and the board of education met. At that meeting, the district provided a list of members who were retroactively paid, as per the award. Upon review of the list, Joyner noted that—despite the district’s business administrator and board attorney stating they “...will certify that the list is consistent with the award, the contract and the district’s accounting procedures”—several anomalies were apparent, including:

- The list did not include anyone who worked during the pandemic but had since left the district or retired, despite the award stating all would be paid.
- Even though the district’s summer school did not run during the pandemic, the district tried to claim that this period should not count toward time worked and the award stipulations.
- The district used the incorrect base salary formula to calculate the monies owed.



**EOESPA President Lynnette Joyner on the job in East Orange.**



EOMA President Mark Richards, in foreground, with his team at the NJEA Health and Safety Conference last year. Clockwise from Richards, Michelle Cruz Stem, Rajahn Robinson, Janice Young and India Watson. All are district security staff.

- The board of education acknowledged there are no official records of who worked where and when throughout the pandemic, claiming problems with its card swipe system.

“My reaction was that it was all very bittersweet. I couldn’t enjoy the fact that we had achieved justice when I knew the numbers were inaccurate,” said Joyner. “According to my own calculations, the amount I received was incorrect, and a fellow custodian who had perfect attendance most school years was not given any money, nor were two of his co-workers. I could only assume after those discoveries that others were incorrect as well.”

On Oct. 6, 2022, a mediator was brought in to address these anomalies, and all parties began to compare attendance records. At that meeting, the board of education offered to use whichever attendance records would be most beneficial to members. Less than a week later, additional checks were issued to members, but they were sporadic, still inaccurate and not fully compliant with the award.

### **When enough is enough**

Following the distribution of the additional checks, the board’s attorney informed NJEA that the district would not comply with the order, and the previous payments would be the only monies paid. The district then filed a motion to quash the award, while NJEA filed a motion to enforce the penalties.

In March 2023, the matter went to court, and the judge again found the board in contempt. This time, however, the judge ruled to enforce the penalties and ordered the district to pay NJEA’s attorney fees. Additionally, the judge considered sanctions against individual board members for their role in disregarding the order.

The judge wasn’t the only one upset. EOESPA and EOMA members were outraged, as they had spent the last three years dealing with the board’s unwillingness to honor the collective bargaining agreement—only to have the district and board of education blatantly disregard the law and multiple rulings in the union’s favor. Some individuals even began to seek private action, with one EOMA member filing a complaint with the Essex County courts to compel the district to pay his outstanding back

**I hope other ESPs can learn from this experience to never give up.**

compensation, which was estimated at \$11,000.

“At this point, we fully learned that we are hardworking people who are not appreciated by our school district leaders,” declared Joyner.

### **Patience paves a path to justice**

Despite the ongoing delays, the end is in sight for EOESPA and EOMA members. The local unions, NJEA and district representatives met in June with Bob Glasson, an arbitrator from the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC), and it was agreed that his ruling would be final. Both sides were given until Aug. 1 to provide the appropriate documentation to support the amount of monies still owed, with Glasson set to render a decision by late August. As of press time, no decision has been issued, but Richards offered the following advice to ESPs statewide.

“The fact that we still haven’t been fully paid for our sacrifices is a disgrace,” Richards said. “But I hope other ESPs can learn from this experience to never give up. It can be exhausting to fight for things that you shouldn’t have to fight for, but you need to just keep going and stay focused.” 🏠



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# INFORMING, EDUCATING AND TRAINING

## The New Jersey State Bar Foundation's free resources for schools

By Taya Ros

The New Jersey State Bar Foundation is marking more than six decades as a law-related education resource for the people of New Jersey. Established in May 1958 as the charitable and philanthropic arm of the New Jersey State Bar Association, the foundation strives to help people of all ages better understand the laws that affect them every day.

### Informing kids about the law

#### Compelling publications to spark student interest

With a focus on making law relevant and helping kids think critically, the foundation provides free resources for educators for classroom use. In addition to civics and law-related newsletters and blogs, the foundation publishes *The Legal Eagle*, a legal newspaper for kids, and *Respect*, a diversity and inclusion newsletter.

Each issue is a valuable, easy-to-use resource for students and educators. With colorful graphics, glossaries and discussion questions, every article provides the perfect, ready-made lesson plan. Each publication and the individual articles are available to download from the foundation's website at [njsbf.org](http://njsbf.org). Published, three times per year, free print subscriptions are available to New Jersey schools and can be ordered through our website using the publication order form.

*The Legal Eagle* was first published in 1996 to create a law-related program for middle school students. Today, *The Legal Eagle* is distributed to more than 1,600 elementary, middle and high schools across New Jersey. *Respect* was first published in 2001 and examines social justice issues. Copies of *Respect* are sent to more than 1,200 middle and high schools.

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*Taya Ros is the marketing director for the New Jersey State Bar Foundation. You can learn more about the NJSBF and its resources at [njsbf.org](http://njsbf.org).*

Educators have shared that *The Legal Eagle* and *Respect* make civics and the law real for students by showing them the importance of government and how it affects them. Almost every article touches on civics curricula and ties into current events, focusing on issues that students are aware of and want to talk about. The information is presented in a way that helps students understand an issue and how it is relevant to them.

"NJSBF's publications are very valuable resources in my classes," says Michael Hayes, an eighth-grade social studies teacher at Von E. Mauger Middle School in Middlesex. "I have used *Respect* articles, like "Stand Your Ground," as the basis of a class project, and I have used "Does Banning Books Violate the First Amendment" article when teaching my Bill of Rights unit. My students benefit greatly."

"The foundation offers high quality, relevant and free materials for school use," says Louis Russo, a social studies teacher at Vineland High School, and the president of the Vineland Education Association. "The *Respect* newsletter helps support my A.P. U.S. Politics and Government course. *The Legal Eagle* helps inform my U.S. History students with current issues and perspectives on the past."

In addition, the foundation has civics publications for students and educators, including *The Bill of Rights Up Close*, which takes a deep dive into the Bill of Rights, and *Beyond the Bill of Rights*, which covers amendments 11 through 27.

The NJSBF also produces *The Informed Citizen*, a civics blog, which explores how the Founding Fathers created the nation and what every citizen's rights are under the U.S. Constitution. Recent blog posts include an explanation of the responsibilities of the Speaker of the House, the origins of the U.S. Supreme Court and the Electoral Count Act of 1887. All blog posts include discussion questions, and relevant glossary words, providing a ready to use lesson plan.



High school students check out the latest issue of Respect.

“The free publications and blogs are top notch and extremely well done,” says Thomas Prendergast, a middle school social studies teacher at Our Lady of Sorrows School in Hamilton. “They really help students see law and government at work. My students actually learn about what their state is doing or has done. For example, my students can read about the Bill of Rights and learn about how it can and will affect them.”

## Educating and inspiring

### Mock Trial competitions for high schoolers

The New Jersey State Bar Foundation’s annual mock trial competitions are a shining example of how legal and education communities come together to provide interactive, hands-on ways to learn about the justice system. Close to 5,000 students, from grades three through 12, participate in the free competitions each year.

“When participating in mock trial competitions, my students have such fun, and grow by leaps and bounds in their critical thinking skills, public speaking, research, and ability to look at things from others’ points of view,” says Tracie Smith-Yeoman, senior naval science instructor and mock trial adviser from the Marine Academy of Science and Technology in Monmouth County.

High school teams compete in the Vincent J. Apruzzese High School Mock Trial Competition using an original case prepared by the foundation’s Mock Trial Committee. Student teams take on the roles of attorneys, witnesses and jurors and present the case in county courtrooms for the first round of competitions. Regional



competitions, semi-finals, and the finals, are held at the New Jersey Law Center.

The winning team represents the state at the National Mock Trial Championship held each spring. In 2023, over 200 teams—3,000 students and 300 teachers—participated with more than 250 attorneys volunteering their time as county coordinators, mock trial team advisors and competition judges.

### Law Fair and Law Adventure for younger students

The mock trial program was expanded in 1991 to include a Law Fair for third- to sixth-grade students and expanded again in 1995 when Law Adventure was launched for students in grades seven and eight. For Law Fair and Law Adventure, students and their teachers are invited to create and write an original mock trial case on legal issues of interest. Rules and guidelines are provided by the foundation.

In 2023, the Law Adventure winning cases, selected from 83 entries, dealt with student rights and defamation. Law Fair winning cases, selected from 69 submissions, dealt with negligence, theft, perjury, child custody and Fentanyl poisoning.

Law Fair and Law Adventure winners present their original cases before juries of their peers at the New Jersey Law Center in the annual “You Be the Jury” events, which give students an opportunity to experience what it is like to be a juror in a mock trial. More than 1,000 elementary and middle school students attended.

“My students have been enriched by programs like Law Fair, Law Adventure, and the High School Mock Trial Competition,” says Lori Bathurst, a social studies and humanities teacher at Chestnut Ridge Middle School in Washington Township, Gloucester County. “I have seen students’ interests in a career in law blossom, along with their critical thinking skills. Programs sponsored by the foundation help students expand multiple areas of their development from reading and research to public speaking, along with various styles of writing and teamwork. The students share awesome feedback each year explaining why they think Mock Trial is such a rewarding learning experience.”

### Courtroom Artist Contest

In 2015, the program was expanded once again to add a high school Courtroom Artist Contest where student artists sketch a mock trial team in action during county mock trial contests. Thirty-eight students from 19 schools entered sketches in 2023. The winning student artist is invited to represent the state at the annual National High School Mock Trial Championship.



Top: Teams “Rock the Mock” at High School Mock Trial regional competitions

Middle: A 4th Grade Law Fair team objects at NJSBF annual “You Be The Jury” event

Bottom: A middle school Law Adventure defense team rests.



2022-2023 1st Place Winner  
Cypress Drueding  
Cumberland County Technical Education Center

### Hearing from an attorney

The NJSBF Speakers Bureau has over 200 attorneys who volunteer to share their legal expertise in classrooms on a variety of topics including careers in law, the court system, criminal law, constitutional law, turning 18 in New Jersey, hate crimes and more. In the last year, over 35 speaking events took place, reaching over 120 elementary school students and 740 high school students.

### Training educators

#### Creating a positive school climate: violence prevention, peer mediation, restorative justice and more

In 1991, the foundation held its first Law-Related Education Conference for educators. In 1994, the foundation's Violence Prevention Training Initiative was launched, followed by a focus on preventing teasing and bullying. Today the foundation offers free training for educators year-round. Over 3,500 educators attend trainings—and earn professional development hours—each year.

More than 15 different training topics are offered virtually and in person at the New Jersey Law Center. In-school and in-district training options are also available. Current topics and trainings include conflict resolution and peer mediation programs; active school climate teams; trauma informed schools; social and emotional learning and character development; addressing bias, race, and racism in schools; HIB characteristics; and restorative justice practices.

NJSBF is committed to providing educators with a toolbox of intersecting approaches, mindsets, and practices to promote a positive school climate, as well as reduce violence and bias. For example, the restorative justice training complements many of the other training topics



For more about the free programs and services offered by the New Jersey State Bar Foundation visit [njsbf.org](https://njsbf.org).



Restorative Justice circle at in-person training at the New Jersey Law Center.

offered by NJSBF. Restorative justice is trauma informed and helps students and adults practice social emotional skills. It can be used as a way to resolve conflict through circles and peer mediation sessions, and it prevents bias, bullying and violence.

"Every training I have attended has been meaningful and applicable to the work I do with my students," says Constance Koutsouradis, student assistance coordinator at Burlington Township School District. "I take information I have been given and turnkey it to my colleagues. The free resources provided are invaluable."

The belief that "informed citizens are better citizens" is reflected in everything the foundation offers. Our school and public programs, from mock trial competitions and publications to law-related conferences and scholarships, foster increased awareness, appreciation and knowledge of the law for people of all ages. 🏠

## VISIT US

on the Exhibit Hall floor at the NJEA Convention in **Booth 1519** to learn more or pick up sample copies of our publications.

# Chemical storage hazards and NJ's Right-to-Know Act

By Justin Panzarella, BS, MPH (c) Derek G. Shendell, D.Env., MPH and Koshy Koshy, Ph.D.

## Understanding chemical exposure and storage hazards

The federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) affirms that inhalation of chemical vapors, ingestion and/or absorption of liquids, and injection are pathways of chemical exposure. Adverse effects from acute and chronic chemical exposures depend on factors such as frequency, concentration, duration and route of transmission.

Acute exposure can have adverse effects such as skin, eye, and respiratory irritation, headaches, drowsiness and dizziness. Chronic exposure can have adverse effects such as organ damage, cancer and skin sensitization. Chemicals must be stored properly to avoid incidents and exposure. Facilities where chemicals are commonly stored include nail salons, science laboratories and auto body repair shops.

It is important to follow proper safety measures when handling, storing and disposing of chemicals. Improper chemical storage can lead to explosions, fires, spills, releases of dangerous vapors and other adverse consequences.

The most effective method for reducing staff and student exposure to hazardous chemicals is to eliminate them from the school environment and/or identify a less toxic substitute. If the original product must be used—or even if you do find a safer substitute—the next most effective safety controls would be engineering, administration, and personal protective equipment. One engineering control is installing an exhaust ventilation hood to remove volatile chemicals from the air.

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*Dr. Derek Shendell is a professor and Dr. Koshy Koshy is an associate professor at the Rutgers School of Public Health where Justin Panzarella is a registered environmental health specialist and working toward his master's degree in public health, majoring in occupational safety. They worked in coordination with the New Jersey Work Environment Council to produce this article.*

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) collected and analyzed data from the Hazardous Substances Emergency Events Surveillance in elementary and secondary schools about 15 years ago. The CDC's findings documented mercury was the most common chemical associated with an incident. The three leading causes of chemical incidents reported at elementary and secondary schools were human error (62%), equipment failure (17%) and intentional acts (17%). Thirty percent of incidents resulted in at least one acute injury.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) recently reported about 2-in-3 or 64% of schools inspected were not labeling chemical containers with the date they were received. Additionally, 48% of schools inspected were storing incompatible chemicals in the same location and 40% of inspected schools maintained more than two school years of chemical supply in storage.

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) outlines requirements for the safe handling of chemicals. An authorized person must be designated by the employer as the person-in-charge of chemical inventories. This person must monitor chemical storage areas, checking chemicals for their compatibility, toxicity, purity, labeling and quantity. Chemicals that are not compatible must be stored separately to avoid interaction. This is, in part, why federal and state law require labels on chemical containers.

In addition, chemicals must be stored in a well-ventilated area with a ventilation system not connected to any other rooms. This set-up is to avoid vapors and gases from being released into the ventilation system. A well-ventilated room will also help create an ideal temperature for chemicals. Following manufacturers guidelines, it's important to store chemicals at the ideal temperature and away from direct sunlight.





## References and resources

### NJ's Right-to-Know Act

The NJ Right-to-Know Act (RTK) was created to improve health and safety for the benefit of the public, employees and emergency response teams. Information for hazardous substances is collected, monitored and tracked to obtain workplace and environmental data to benefit employees and public safety. This includes the names and quantities of hazardous chemicals being used and stored at the workplace.

Public and private employers must notify their workers of the hazardous substances they may encounter at the worksite as well as report their inventory to the government. This information benefits public safety in several ways. RTK requirements along with proper training will minimize workplace exposure to hazardous chemical substances and reduce the likelihood of releases. RTK benefits emergency responders reporting to the location in the case of a fire, explosion or spill. A list of hazardous substances for any facility will provide a better response from the emergency responders while appropriately protecting themselves by knowing the hazardous substances in advance.

The NJDEP collects Community RTK surveys completed by private employers. The NJDOH collects RTK surveys completed by public agencies. RTK requires public and private employers to create and maintain a RTK central file, post the RTK poster, label all containers containing hazardous substances and complete the RTK survey.

Employees should check their employer's RTK survey to learn which products contain hazardous chemicals. An employee can request the ingredient information of the products they are working with in writing from their employer. The employer must provide the employee this information within five business days.

#### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

"Hazardous chemical incidents in schools: United States, 2002-2007"  
[bit.ly/47kKRQJ](https://bit.ly/47kKRQJ)

#### New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH)

"Right to Know"  
[nj.gov/health/rtk](https://nj.gov/health/rtk)

"Safe Chemical Management in School Science Laboratories"  
[bit.ly/3ZYCyVY](https://bit.ly/3ZYCyVY)

#### New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP)

"School Chemical Management"  
<https://bit.ly/3OsTMXA>

#### U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

"Understanding Chemical Hazards"  
[bit.ly/43YSn0l](https://bit.ly/43YSn0l)

If the employer does not respond to the employee's request, they may refuse to work. A worker may also refuse to work with an unlabeled container, but they are advised to contact the NJDOH, their local association president and their UniServ field rep prior to refusing to work with the product. Anonymous complaints against your employer are accepted by the NJDOH regarding RTK infractions.

There are ways to locally dispose of hazardous waste that would prevent the risks of contaminating soil, storm drains and wastewater treatment systems. Each of New Jersey's 21 counties offers a collection program to properly dispose of hazardous waste. There are scheduled dates when residents can go to designated facility to drop-off hazardous waste. Certain restrictions may apply.

Most counties will collect cleaning products, fuels, insecticides, oil-based paint, pool chemicals, chemistry sets, spray paint and turpentine. However, many only accept up to 20 gallons of waste. Local businesses may accept certain products for proper disposal.

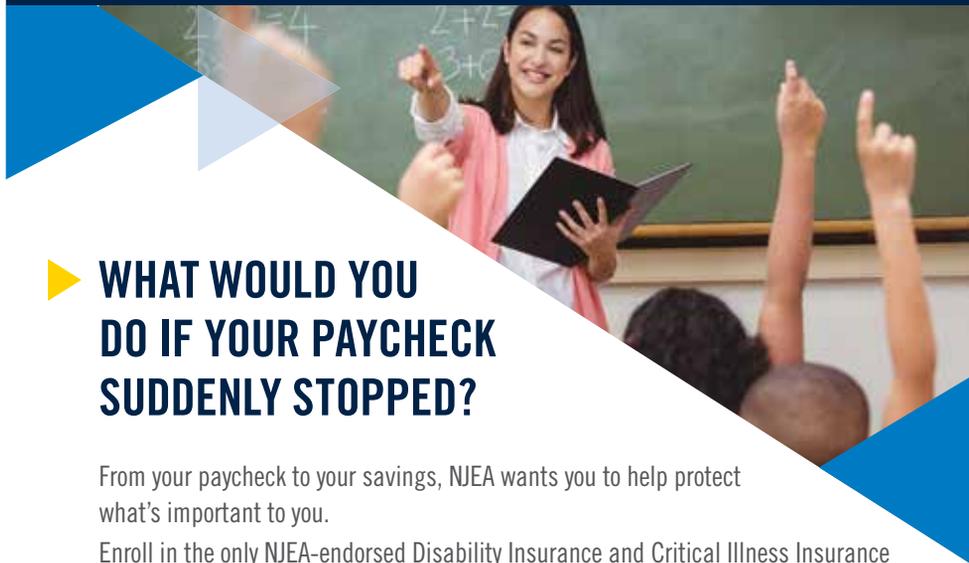
Websites such as [search.earth911.com](https://search.earth911.com) will navigate local facilities in your area for recycling specific materials and chemicals by inputting your area code. You can also call 1-800-CLEANUP. Finally, the Recycle Coach app links local municipalities, businesses and people to help assist in the proper disposal of hazardous waste with relevant information to your area. 📍



## What can health and safety committees do?

Use the resources listed on this page to support your demands for procurement policies, to find alternatives and to stay up to date. Use these resources and the law to demand your school district administration remediate and eliminate hazardous conditions.

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EMAIL: [teacherleader@njea.org](mailto:teacherleader@njea.org)

\*12 credits offered through Thomas Edison State College



The NJEA Teacher Leader Academy (TLA) admits candidates of any race, color, creed, national origin, ethnic origin, disability, marital status, domestic partnership status, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the NJEA TLA. It doesn't discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, ethnic origin, disability, marital status, domestic partnership status, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, or scholarship programs.

# Year interrupted

## Ensuring equitable evaluation practices

By Elisabeth Yucis

It was my second day back in the classroom after a 12-week maternity leave, and I was extra bleary-eyed from catching a mere three hours of sleep the previous night, when my supervisor stopped by my classroom to welcome me back. He asked about my baby boy, told me everyone was glad to have me back, and checked on whether there was anything I needed.

Then he gave me some news: my announced observation was scheduled for two days later, and my student growth objectives (SGOs) were due in a week. In my sleep-deprived new-mom haze this news came as a shock, but as a nontenured teacher, I was reluctant to ask questions.

While I was thrilled to be back to work at a job I loved, I would have appreciated a little more time to get reacclimated before having to take on the important tasks of participating in an observation and setting my SGOs.

### Planning ahead

Educators care deeply about student learning and professional growth, and they want to do their best even in years when they take a leave of absence. A strong work ethic is essentially why the evaluation process causes most teachers to feel some amount of pressure or stress.

New Jersey's current educator evaluation system is based on the assumption of yearlong employment, but an interrupted year is commonplace. Midyear hires have increased dramatically during this educator shortage, and many staff members take leaves of absence during the school year. All educators have the right to a fair evaluation in compliance with regulation and local policies, and NJEA can provide support to individual members and local associations.

A little bit of planning can go a long way, and in many situations, such as parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child, leaves of absence come with advance notice. Members planning leaves of absence should engage in a conversation with their designated supervisor to ensure fairness and transparency around evaluation. During this conversation, they can discuss observation

**We must support equity measures within the system that ensure fair and meaningful evaluation for all.**

timelines, SGO expectations, and confirm adjustments to professional development plan (PDP) hours. All of these details are case-specific and depend on the member's tenure status, the length and timing of their leave, and any local evaluation policies and procedures already in place. NJEA's PDII division is currently developing a resource to support members and leaders in guiding these conversations.

### Advocating for equitable evaluation practices

If we believe that evaluation can be used to drive student learning and professional growth, then we must support equity measures within the system that ensure fair and meaningful evaluation for all.

The work of supporting members as they plan for leaves of absence may uncover opportunities for the local association to become more involved in advocacy efforts aimed at shaping local policy and procedure around evaluation. These efforts may result in opportunities to organize and mobilize members around issues of professional practice, which could bring fresh perspectives into the union. The downside is that change might take years of work; the upside is that everyone can benefit.

NJEA is an equity-focused union, and championing equity asks us to make sure our members get what they need to grow and thrive. Ensuring that all educators receive fair evaluations is one piece of the puzzle, and members who go on leaves of absence during the school year deserve a system that works for them, too. If you would like more information on how NJEA can support you and the members of your local association, please reach out to the NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division. [✉](mailto:eyucis@njea.org)

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*Elisabeth Yucis is an associate director in the NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division. She can be reached at [eyucis@njea.org](mailto:eyucis@njea.org).*

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## NJEA Preservice represents NJ well at NEA Aspiring Educators Conference

BY MATTHEW YURO

NJEA Preservice leaders throughout New Jersey attended the National Education Association Aspiring Educators (NEA-AE) Conference in Orlando, Florida in late June. Held yearly just prior to the NEA Representative Assembly, the NEA-AE Conference brings together future educators from across the nation. They attend professional development workshops, an exciting GramAEs awards night recognizing outstanding state and local chapter achievements and vote to elect the 2023-24 national leadership team. I was elected to the NEA Resolutions Committee for a one-year term as one of three aspiring educator representatives.

We participated in “union communities,” where we researched a given topic and identified ways to advocate around that issue at the local, state and national levels of our union. Some of these topics included disability justice, honesty in education, and arts integration in education.

The NJEA Preservice delegation consisted of six members from various colleges and universities in the state. To supplement our teacher preparation programs, we participated in educational workshops such as Getting to Know Your Union, Disability Justice: Looking to Future Leaders to Dismantle Disabling Environments, and Decolonizing Curriculum and Abolitionist Teaching.

These workshops not only built our base of authentic instructional and societal knowledge, but also gave us more confidence in pursuing an activist platform in our union. We attended a rally in the NEA’s Honesty in Education protest held after the conference. NEA Aspiring Educators stood alongside full-time members in solidarity protesting the unjust laws and regulations enacted under the DeSantis administration in Florida.

NJEA Preservice is also proud to announce that we won many awards at the GramAEs this year, taking home the award for Outstanding State Project with our Eliminate EdTPA campaign. The Student New Jersey Education Association at The College of New Jersey also took home the award for Outstanding Local Project for Pack-A-Backpack, a school supply drive donated to Ewing High School for students in need.

Overall, NJEA Preservice members were able to grow our leadership skills and strengthen our union activism by attending this national experience. We look forward to attending the 2024 Aspiring Educators Conference in Philadelphia next year! 🏠

*Matthew Yuro is the president of NJEA Preservice. He is a junior at The College of New Jersey where he is studying special education, elementary education and history. Learn more about NJEA Preservice at [njea.org/preservice](http://njea.org/preservice).*



## The state of education in NJ is...

# SUPPORTED

By Kate Okeson and Amy Moran, Ph. D.

A common thread woven through Rainbow Connection articles is highlighting what educators have done and can do in classrooms across New Jersey to make and sustain safe, equitable and affirming school spaces for LGBTQIA+ youth, and the positive impacts that approach has on all students in our spaces. Because of the challenges we've seen across the nation and at home in New Jersey, this month's key abbreviations to know are:

- AG – Attorney General ([njoag.gov](http://njoag.gov))
- DCR – New Jersey's Division on Civil Rights
- LAD – New Jersey Law Against Discrimination

We've noticed that actions and efforts to increase visibility are invaluable support to students in schools, but they upset some residents in and beyond New Jersey. Many educators are being met with loud, angry, and, at

Photo Above: NJEA Leadership, including state, county and local association leaders as well as members of the NJEA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee met on June 9 with NJ Attorney General Matthew Platkin and his staff to discuss inclusive and affirming education. Editor's note: Rainbow Connection authors, Amy Moran and Kate Okeson, are standing at right.)

times, dangerous rhetoric and actions: banning books, restricting access to art and culture, curtailing speech and access to truthful accounts in history, fabricating common and important topics as "controversial," and not least, rescinding policies that create safer school environments for transgender, nonbinary, and intersex students.

Because of these unfortunate developments, NJEA members and leadership met on June 9 with New Jersey Attorney General Matthew Platkin and his associates to discuss our concerns and the troublesome impacts that those challenges to policy, guidance, curricula and library resources have on our students. Our voices were united in solidarity, and the result is powerful.

One of the many actions now being taken by the AG's office with respect to maintaining safe and affirming schools for all students was a **Joint Statement from Division on Civil Rights and Department of Education on School-Based Anti-Bias Initiatives and the Law Against Discrimination** from Attorney General Platkin and Acting Commissioner of Education Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan. It includes a clear outline of what actions are not acceptable and a direct line for reporting discriminatory practices with specific attention to race, ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

This excerpt demonstrates their clarity of purpose:

To address the rising tide of bias and hate, many schools across our State have adopted anti-bias initiatives, policies, and curricula that recognize and value the identities and experiences of students from historically excluded communities. In general, these measures are consistent with the goals of the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD)—to prevent and eliminate discrimination. To that end, DCR and DOE encourage all New Jersey schools, school boards, and administrators to continue to develop and implement initiatives to counter bias; to continue to display inclusive markers, flags, and symbols in and around their buildings; to continue to ensure students have access to books representing a diversity of experiences and identities; and to continue to implement and comply with the state's anti-bias curricula requirements regarding race, gender, LGBTQIA+, disability, and diversity. It is consistent with the LAD, for example, for classroom curricula to intentionally highlight Black history, for a teacher to display a LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual) safe zone sticker, or for a school library to include books and other materials that reflect the experiences and identities of children and families of all races, sexual orientations, and gender identities.

As the new school year begins and we work to create safer spaces for students, colleagues, and ourselves, the AG's office invites us to alert DCR to a district that has or is considering a discriminatory policy here: [schooldiscrimination@njcivilrights.gov](mailto:schooldiscrimination@njcivilrights.gov). 🇺🇸



Read the full letter, which is linked in this QR code, and share the information with your colleagues. Let's remember: We are the front lines of keeping schools and students safe.



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**For more information, contact Cross County Connection's SRTS Coordinator, Latifah Sunkett: [Sunkett@driveless.com](mailto:Sunkett@driveless.com) • 856-596-8228**

*In Central and North NJ, contact your local TMA for information. Scan QR tag at right for details. →*



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# STAFF NEWS

## HIRES AND PROMOTIONS



NJEA welcomed **DANIEL HOLUB** to NJEA staff on July 17 as the director of the Research and Economic Services Division. Prior to joining NJEA staff, Holub was the executive director of the Indiana State Teachers Association, a position he had held since 2017. From 2013 to 2017, he was the executive director of the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE), which represents state employees working in professional capacities. Prior to his employment with MAPE, Holub worked for the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), an affiliate of the National Education Association. He served WEAC members in many roles, including interim executive director, director of Quality Education Advocacy and director of Collective Bargaining and Research.

Holub holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Iowa – College of Law. He earned his bachelor's degree from Iowa State University. Holub has relocated to the Garden State with his wife, Agnieszka.



NJEA welcomed **ANGEL BOOSE** to NJEA staff on June 1 as an associate director in the Communications Division. Prior to joining NJEA staff, she had been an elementary school teacher in the East Orange Public Schools since 2007. She had also worked as an NJEA Communications Consultant since February 2020. Boose served as vice president and Grievance Committee chair of the East Orange Education Association. She chaired the Essex County Education Association Women in Education Committee. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Boose worked with NJEA's Racial Equity, Affirmation, and Literacy (REAL) Movement hosting the NJEA REAL Storytellers podcast. She also served as associate director of the REAL documentary. At the national level, Boose was the Northeast Regional Director of the NEA Black Caucus and a facilitator for the NEA Leaders for Just Schools program in which she trained educators across the county to lead education justice work.

Boose holds a bachelor's degree in business and economics from Rutgers University and a master's degree in teaching and learning from Nova Southeastern University. She lives in North Plainfield with her fiancé, Chris, and her son, Jaiden.



NJEA congratulates **MONICA WINCH** on her promotion in May to chief-business services in the association's Accounting Office. Winch initially joined NJEA staff in July 2018 as a principal clerk-bookkeeper. When she joined NJEA, she had most recently worked with Bank of America-Merrill Lynch in New York, bringing over a decade of experience in accounting, primarily in the finance sector. Winch holds a bachelor's degree in statistics from Shanghai University in China. She earned a master's degree in business administration from Baruch College in New York. Winch lives in Skillman.



NJEA welcomed **BRENDA JULIAN** to NJEA staff on July 17 as a temporary secretary in the Government Relations Division-Office of Member and Political Organizing. Julian has over 15 years of administrative experience supporting various organizations in Canada and the U.S. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Brock University in St. Catherine's, Ontario. Julian lives in Hamilton Square with her husband, Tom, and their children, Astur and Liam. She is an avid marathon runner and, along with her husband, an avid cyclist. Their family raises substantial financial support for Anchor House, a Trenton shelter for runaway youth, through 500-mile, multiday cycling events.



NJEA welcomed **ANTOINETTE BLAUSTEIN** to NJEA staff on July 3 as a UniServ field rep in the Region 17 office in Parsippany. Prior to joining NJEA staff, Blaustein had been a math and computer science teacher in the North Hunterdon Regional High School District since 1998. She had also been a UniServ consultant since 2013, working first in the Region 13 office in Flemington and, since 2017, the Region 21 office in Livingston. Blaustein holds a bachelor's degree in computer science and a master's degree in school administration. She lives in Bedminster with her husband, Gary.



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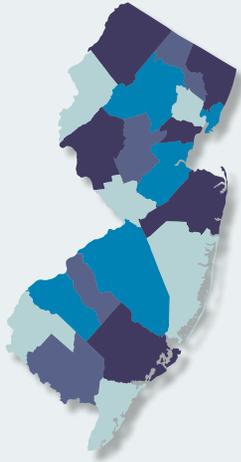


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# SUSSEX TO CAPE MAY

Workshops and  
conferences

## HIGHLIGHTS

Culture, Muslim students,  
science and more

### 2023 RUTGERS GSAPP CULTURE CONFERENCE

On Oct. 27 from 9:30 a.m. until 3 p.m., Rutgers University will hold its annual 2023 Culture Conference. The conference this year is virtual. The theme of this year's conference is "Mental Health Implications of Discrimination: How Can We Support Diverse Populations." The keynote speaker, Dr. Riana Anderson, will address the attendees in the morning and the rest of the day will be spent in breakout sessions before coming together for an interactive panel at 1 p.m. Panelists include representatives from diverse populations.

For more information and to register, visit [gsapp.rutgers.edu/event/culture-conference](https://gsapp.rutgers.edu/event/culture-conference).

### USE STARLAB TO MAKE SCIENCE COME ALIVE FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Starlab is an inflatable dome on which you can project vivid images of the night sky, ancient mythological characters, our solar system and galaxy, Earth's weather patterns and geological features, or the biological cell. Starlab is easily transportable and fits into a small car. It can be set up in 15 minutes and accommodates up to 30 students. The Starlab dome requires a clean floor space of 20 x 22 feet and a 12-foot-high ceiling.

A Starlab Training will be held in-person at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg and will begin promptly at 9 a.m. and end by 4 pm. At the training, participants will learn how to set up, maintain, and repack the Starlab system. Light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

The training fee is \$175. Teachers who complete the training are eligible to rent Starlab for a fee of \$450/week (\$350/week between June 1 and Dec. 1).

To register online use [tinyurl.com/RVCC-REGSLT](https://tinyurl.com/RVCC-REGSLT). For more information contact Tina Gandarillas at [tina.gandarillas@rارانval.edu](mailto:tina.gandarillas@rارانval.edu) or 908-526-1200, ext. 8942.

This Starlab Training is supported by a grant from the New Jersey Space Grant Consortium.

### NGSS WORKSHOP SERIES 2023-24

The Science Education Institute at Raritan Valley Community College offers a series of workshops for K-12 teachers and supervisors on how to support students as they investigate and make sense of phenomena in the classroom. Through these workshops, participants will explore all aspects of effective Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) aligned instruction.

Led by Dr. Wil van der Veen, author and a nationally recognized expert on the NGSS and science education, the workshops will be held at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg. Each workshop begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. Light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

The fee is \$150 per workshop per teacher. Participants will receive five professional development units for completing each workshop.

To register, visit [tinyurl.com/RVCC-REG23-24](https://tinyurl.com/RVCC-REG23-24). For more information contact Tina Gandarillas at [tina.gandarillas@rارانval.edu](mailto:tina.gandarillas@rارانval.edu) or 908-526-1200, Ext. 8942.

**Nov. 1: Using Core Ideas to Construct Explanations for Science Phenomena**

**Dec. 6: Engaging Students in Practices Using Performance Tasks**

**Feb. 7: Making Crosscutting Concepts Explicit**

**Feb. 28: Using Explanation and Argument to Assess Student Learning**

**March 12: Defining Problems and Designing Solutions for Engineering Phenomena**

### THE MUSLIM STUDENT PATHWAY

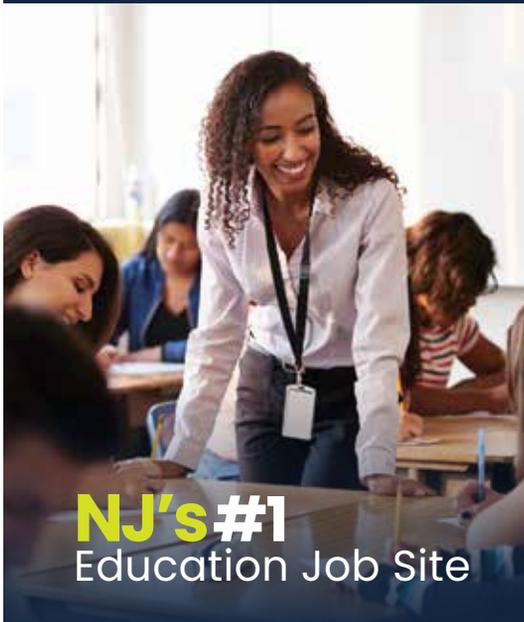
*An online course by Farhana N. Shah*

The Muslim Student Pathway is appropriate for staff seeking to become knowledgeable about their Muslim students. This pathway provides its participants with materials, resources, and accurate information firsthand. It stimulates meaningful reflections, and delivers unbiased information, with participants leaving the session with a new or enhanced understanding toward Muslim students. Each course in this Pathway is 15 hours and can be taken for one graduate credit with University of Massachusetts Global for a total of three graduate credits. The courses are "Getting to Know Your Muslim Students," "Muslims: Past and Present," and "Role of Muslims in U.S. and Globally."

For more information and to register, visit the English Learner Portal at [englishlearnerportal.com/courses](https://englishlearnerportal.com/courses) and click on "15 Hour courses."

# NJ SCHOOL JOBS

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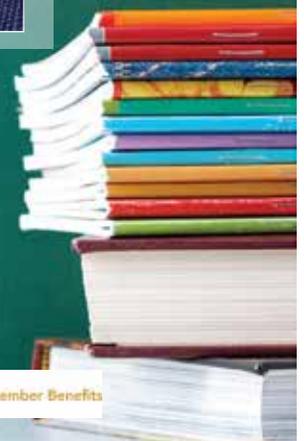
[NJSchoolJobs.com](http://NJSchoolJobs.com)

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Credit Repair	(see website)	Pet Insurance	(see website)
<b>Furniture-Mattresses</b>	<b>800-631-0286</b>	Real Estate-Buy/Sell	(see website)
Home Security Sys.	888 995-2661	Solar Electricity	800-558-1920
Jewelry-Diamonds	800-635-9136	Travel-Cruises	800-634-8538
<b>Kitchen Cabinets</b>	<b>800-327-3599</b>	...and many more!	

Need help M-F, 9-5: 800-755-5008



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**njea** Member Benefits



# NJEA Member Benefits Welcomes You Back to School!



Learn how to maximize your NJEA membership through our statewide and year-round money-saving webinars. Register at [njea.org/mbwebinars](https://njea.org/mbwebinars).



## September 18

Degrees Not Debt: Student Loan Debt Relief at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.



## October 4

What You Should Know About 403(b) Retirement Plans at 4:30 p.m.

## October 18

Accessing Your Member Benefits at 4:30 p.m.



## November 1

What is Income Protection and Why is it Important? at 4:30 p.m.

## November 13

Degrees Not Debt: Student Loan Debt Relief at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

## November 15

Holiday Hacks and End-of-Year Car Buying Tips at 4:30 p.m.

## November 18

Ways to Pay for College: FAFSA 101 at 10 a.m.

## November 29

Road to Wellness: Interactive Wellness Strategies at 4:30 p.m.



## January 10

Ways to Pay for College: FAFSA 101 at 7 p.m.

## January 22

Degrees Not Debt: Student Loan Debt Relief at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

## January 24

Dollars & Debt: Meeting Your Personal Finance Goals at 4:30 p.m.



## February 7

Unlocking Member Benefits for NJREA Members at 10 a.m.

Acceso a Sus Beneficios para Miembros de NJEA/NEA (español) at 4:30 p.m.



## March 4

Degrees Not Debt: Student Loan Debt Relief at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

## March 6

NJEA Homebuying Helpers at 4:30 p.m.

## March 12

Ways to Pay for College: FAFSA 101 at 7 p.m.



## April 3

Springtime Planning Using Your Member Benefits at 4:30 p.m.



## May 1

Summer Savings at 4:30 p.m.

## March 20

Degrees Not Debt: Student Loan Debt Relief at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.



## QUESTIONS?

Contact Beth Buonsante at [bbuonsante@njea.org](mailto:bbuonsante@njea.org).



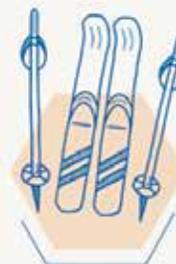
**FACEBOOK:** Follow @ [NJEAMemberBenefits](https://www.facebook.com/NJEAMemberBenefits) on Facebook for discounts and services that save you money.



For even more information, resources, and discounts: [memberbenefits.njea.org](https://memberbenefits.njea.org)

Questions? Email Beth Buonsante at [bbuonsante@njea.org](mailto:bbuonsante@njea.org).

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**EXPLORE** our new online investing tools  
or  
**PARTNER** with a financial professional  
to help reach your goals

**VISIT** [neamb.com/retirementprogram](https://neamb.com/retirementprogram)





**njea**

Frederick L. Hipp  
Foundation for Excellence  
in Education

## Got a great idea?

Get it funded, just like these NJEA members!

**Our School Museum** – Students at Ocean County’s New Egypt Primary School learn to be curators at a school museum. Students create exhibits containing artwork, writing, scientific materials and cultural artifacts. The purpose of the museum is to celebrate students’ work in a place of honor—the school entry way and hallways. During a family fun night, the children hosted the gala opening.

NJEA’s Frederick L. Hipp grants provide \$500 to \$10,000 grants for educators just like YOU and projects like this one!

The only foundation of its kind in New Jersey, the Hipp Foundation supports initiatives to promote excellence in education. Since 1993, the foundation has disbursed more than \$2.3 million in grants for innovative educational projects.

Apply by March 1, 2024, at [njea.org/hipp](https://njea.org/hipp).





## LOOKING TO WORK AFTER RETIREMENT?

### Here's what you need to know

If you choose to work after retirement, you should review Fact Sheet #86 provided by the New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits: Post-Retirement Employment Restrictions (see sidebar for link and QR code) before accepting any positions.

To be eligible to receive a New Jersey-administered pension, you must completely stop working for any public employer in the state before you can go back to work in the New Jersey public sector. This means you must completely end the employment relationship with your previous employer, with no arrangements to return in any capacity—this includes substitute teaching, volunteering, working as an independent contractor, and working through a subcontractor or service agency (such as Source4Teachers).

### Guidelines for returning to work

After you have completely stopped working in the public sector, you can receive your pension and work part-time for a New Jersey public employer as long as certain rules are followed, rendering your retirement bona fide. One primary rule is that retirees must be retired for 30 or more days before they can be hired in public sector employment or 180 days before returning to work in the retirees' former school district.

Prearranging to return to work as a retiree, for either your current or another public employer, before the necessary wait time has passed is strictly prohibited. If you make any arrangements to return to your employer in any capacity (paid or unpaid) before you retire, you will invalidate your pension—regardless of how long you wait to return.

If your pension is deemed to be invalid because you did not stop all work in the public sector or you had an agreement to go back or you actually rendered a paid or unpaid service to your former employer prior to the required period of separation, you will be required to return all your retirement earnings to the state.

If a retiree with a valid pension is hired in a pension-eligible position, that retiree may be required to "un-retire" by reenrolling in the pension system. Reenrollment includes repayment of all pension benefits received after the date of reemployment. Mandatory reenrollment in a Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) position occurs when a member works at least 32 hours per week and earns

more than \$15,000 per year. Mandatory reenrollment in Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund (TPAF) occurs when a member works at least 32 hours per week. There is no income requirement for enrollment in TPAF.

### Temporary provisions for teachers and other professionals

Gov. Phil Murphy recently signed a bill that extends the provisions of P.L.2021, c.408 into the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years. Retired teachers and other professionals who provide a special service (e.g., speech language pathologists) can return to work full time as long as the following requirements are met:

- The retiree has had a bona fide severance of employment.
- The district must prove, and the commissioner of education must find there is a critical need to employ a retiree collecting a pension. The member should ensure that the district has filed the proper paperwork establishing the credit need was filed and approved by the commissioner of education.
- The employment commences in the 2023-24 school year. If someone began reemployment in 2022-23 under P.L.2021, c.408, they could be eligible to a contract extension under that chapter.
- The contract can be for one year with a possible extension for one additional year. Reemployment beyond the two-year period would need to be approved by the commissioner of education.

### Provisions for certified nurses

If you are a certified nurse, you may return to employment in the public sector while also collecting your pension if the following apply

- You meet the requirement for a bona fide retirement.
- Your employment is limited to a one-year contract (with a possible extension of one additional year).

### Thinking about coaching?

There are exceptions for certain retirees returning to their former employer as a coach. If a retiree attains normal retirement age for their tier and is retired for at least 30 days after their retirement becomes due and payable, they may return to work for a former employer as a coach only. These retirees cannot earn more than \$15,000 per year from the employer. (Normal retirement age is 60 years

# Around the counties

For questions and concerns, or if your county is not listed, please check your county newsletter or reach out to your county REA for more information. For trip details, check your county newsletter.

old for Tiers 1 and 2, 62 years old for Tiers 3 and 4, and 65 years old for Tier 5.)

NJEA/NJREA members who are interested in coaching after retirement should contact the N.J. Division of Pensions and Benefits to obtain specific guidance on their particular situations.

## Employer responsibilities

Public employers seeking to hire a retiree are now required to complete and submit a form to the Division of Pensions and Benefits within 15 calendar days of the hire date. The division will review the forms and determine if the retiree can continue to receive retirement benefits while working, or if the retirement must be canceled and the retiree be reenrolled in the pension system. NJEA members should be aware that this form exists and are encouraged to ask for copies of any correspondence related to the potential job's effect on their retirement status.

If you or your employer has specific questions related to working after retirement, the employer is urged to call the employer hotline at the Division of Pensions and Benefits.

## A summary and more information

For a summary description and more information, see Fact Sheet #86, "Post-Retirement Employment Restrictions," at [bit.ly/3DZb6yS](https://bit.ly/3DZb6yS) or scan the QR code. Note that Bitly links are case-sensitive. The fact sheet is periodically updated to provide public employees with the most up-to-date information available.



### BERGEN COUNTY REA

**Oct. 10:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at Seasons Catering in Washington Township. Cost is \$50. To attend, call Randy Allshouse at 973-460-1262 by Sept. 29.

### BURLINGTON COUNTY REA

**Oct. 12:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at Marco's at Indian Springs Country Club in Marlton. Cost is \$25. To attend, call Donna O'Malley at 609-268-0838 by Sept. 28.

### CUMBERLAND COUNTY REA

**Oct. 4:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at NJ Motorsports Park in Millville. Cost is \$33. To attend, call Pamela Garwood at 856-392-6909 by Sept. 20.

### ESSEX COUNTY REA

**Oct. 18:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at Hanover Manor in Hanover. Cost is \$38. To attend, call Andrea Boseman at 973-676-2368 by Oct. 4.

### GLOUCESTER COUNTY REA

**Oct. 10:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at Riverwinds Restaurant in West Deptford. Cost is \$30. To attend, call Margery Walsh at 856-381-1123. Program: pensions and health benefits.

### HUNTERDON COUNTY REA

**Sept. 14:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at Mountain View Chalet in Asbury. Cost is \$35. To attend, call Joyce Kucyn at 908-479-6656 by Sept. 8.

### MERCER COUNTY REA

**Oct. 11:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at Mercer Oaks Golf Club in Princeton Junction. Cost is \$32. To attend, email Iris Tonti at [mercercountyrea@gmail.com](mailto:mercercountyrea@gmail.com) by Oct. 1.

### MIDDLESEX COUNTY REA

**Oct. 19:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at The Grand Marquis on Old Bridge. Cost is \$43. To attend, contact Susan Jaysnovitch at 732-925-1606 or [andyjace@aol.com](mailto:andyjace@aol.com) by Oct. 13. Program will be presented by several senior citizen specialized agencies and Associate Director for NJEA Research Michael Salerno to give a pension and benefits update.

### MORRIS COUNTY REA

**Sept. 13:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at Birchwood Manor in Whippany. Cost is \$35 for members and \$53 for guests. To attend, call John Beekman at 973-514-1080 by Sept. 1.

### OCEAN COUNTY REA

**Oct. 12:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at Clarion Hotel in Toms River. Cost is \$28. To attend, call Barbara Miller at 732-854-2253 by Sept. 27.

### PASSAIC COUNTY REA

**Sept. 20:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at The Brownstone in Paterson. Cost is \$35. To attend, call Kitty Sausa at 201-410-1325.

### SALEM COUNTY REA

**Oct. 16:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at St. John's Episcopal Church Parish Hall in Salem. Cost is \$17. To attend, call Rosemma Ward at 856-467-4795 by Oct. 9.

### SOMERSET COUNTY REA

**Oct. 4:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at the Somerville Elks Lodge in Bridgewater. Cost is \$25. To attend, call Kathy Kapp at 908-722-7715 by Sept. 28. Program is about Halloween and triskaidekaphobia (fear of the number 13).

### UNION COUNTY REA

**Oct. 17:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at Costa Del Sol in Union Township. Cost is \$35. To register, go to the fall edition of Bytes-UCREA Newsletter. Questions? Call Pat Alt at 732-382-6261.

### WARREN COUNTY REA

**Sept. 6:** Fall meeting/ luncheon at Hawk Pointe Golf Club in Washington. Registration required by Aug. 28. Luncheon is \$30. To register, go to [warrencountyrea.org/meetings](http://warrencountyrea.org/meetings).

# NJEA BUDGET SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR  
ENDING AUGUST 31

## PROPOSED INCOME AND EXPENDITURES (EXCLUSIVE OF PRIDE)

	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
<b>INCOME</b>				
NJEA Membership Dues	\$ 124,192,320	\$ 123,678,460	\$ 128,360,880	3.79%
NEA Funds	7,070,371	7,394,000	6,764,000	-8.52%
General Income	(9,252,370)	2,051,040	1,644,720	-19.81%
Publications	184,692	200,000	190,000	-5.00%
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>122,195,014</b>	<b>133,323,500</b>	<b>136,959,600</b>	<b>2.73%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
<b>PROGRAM SERVICES</b>				
Governance	5,748,851	6,391,100	6,213,400	-2.78%
Legal Services	12,575,395	14,115,000	13,512,900	-4.27%
Organizational Activities	2,482,141	4,440,000	4,172,000	-6.04%
Organizational Projects	6,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000	0.00%
Communications	6,541,876	7,060,200	7,027,200	-0.47%
Government Relations	4,429,483	5,570,300	5,304,100	-4.78%
Organizational Development	5,101,105	5,759,100	6,107,600	6.05%
UniServ Regional Offices	26,619,601	26,005,800	25,117,200	-3.42%
UniServ Field Office	7,537,241	9,762,300	8,436,600	-13.58%
Prof Development	4,756,178	5,318,700	4,847,800	-8.85%
Research & Economic Services	6,596,533	6,795,000	6,473,700	-4.73%
Conventions	2,964,402	3,655,100	3,701,100	1.26%
Organizational Mgmt	7,539,787	8,330,400	8,421,600	1.09%
Membership Organizing	0	443,000	334,700	-24.45%
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL</b>				
Executive Office	6,262,532	6,691,300	6,579,500	-1.67%
Business and Finance	15,288,119	17,640,800	18,077,700	2.48%
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM, ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>120,443,245</b>	<b>136,978,100</b>	<b>133,327,100</b>	<b>-2.67%</b>
<b>NET INCOME (EXPENSE) BEFORE USE OF FUNDS</b>	<b>1,751,769</b>	<b>(3,654,600)</b>	<b>3,632,500</b>	<b>-199.40%</b>
<b>USE OF FUNDS</b>				
Current Postretirement	356,804	500,000	500,000	0.00%
VEBA - Cash Funding Adj	8,479,245	8,825,200	10,609,800	20.22%
Pension - Cash Funding Adj	(7,709,796)	(6,400,000)	(3,500,000)	-45.31%
	1,126,253	2,925,200	7,609,800	160.15%
<b>NET INCOME (EXP) CASH BUDGET</b>	<b>625,516</b>	<b>(6,579,800)</b>	<b>(3,977,300)</b>	<b>-39.55%</b>
<b>ADJ BACK TO ACCR'L REPORTING</b>				
VEBA - Cash Funding Adj	(8,479,245)	(8,825,200)	(10,609,800)	20.22%
Pension - Cash Funding Adj	7,709,796	6,400,000	3,500,000	-45.31%
	(769,449)	(2,425,200)	(7,109,800)	193.16%
<b>NET INCOME (EXP) ACCR'L BASIS</b>	<b>1,394,965</b>	<b>(4,154,600)</b>	<b>3,132,500</b>	<b>-175.40%</b>

## NJEA OTHER FUNDS: PRIDE DUES

	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Dues	\$ 12,578,226	\$ 12,452,500	\$ 12,961,600	4.09%
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>12,578,226</b>	<b>12,452,500</b>	<b>12,961,600</b>	<b>4.09%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Communication 3650	8,309,375	8,348,500	8,348,500	0.00%
Organizing 3907	4,103,540	4,104,000	4,613,100	12.40%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>12,412,915</b>	<b>12,452,500</b>	<b>12,961,600</b>	<b>4.09%</b>
<b>INCR/(DECR) IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>165,311</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-100.00%</b>

## COMPARATIVE INCOME

	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
<b>DUES INCOME</b>				
Active Professional	\$ 108,559,235	\$ 107,451,600	\$ 111,602,600	3.86%
Active Supportive	14,922,787	15,510,900	16,066,100	3.58%
Retired Members	700,249	704,460	680,680	-3.38%
General Members	2,250	2,500	2,500	0.00%
Subscribing Members	1,000	500	500	0.00%
Preservice Members	6,800	8,500	8,500	0.00%
<b>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP DUES</b>	<b>124,192,320</b>	<b>123,678,460</b>	<b>128,360,880</b>	<b>0.74%</b>
<b>NEA FUNDS</b>				
Uniserv Grant	3,231,531	3,417,000	3,417,000	0.00%
Uniserv Option Program	395,194	407,000	407,000	0.00%
Legal Defense (DuShane)	2,709,237	3,000,000	2,800,000	-6.67%
Legal Fee Reimbursements	121,011	100,000	50,000	-50.00%
Member Benefits Grant	74,894	90,000	90,000	0.00%
Cooperative Projects	537,400	380,000	0	-100.00%
Preservice Reimbursement	1,104	0	0	0.00%
<b>TOTAL NEA FUNDS</b>	<b>7,070,371</b>	<b>7,394,000</b>	<b>6,764,000</b>	<b>-8.52%</b>
<b>GENERAL INCOME</b>				
Convention Exhibits & Fees	236,433	351,500	406,500	15.65%
Interest & Investments	(10,218,865)	500,000	0	-100.00%
Conference & Workshop Fees	407,577	873,500	912,000	4.41%
Teacher Leader Academy	81,000	156,000	156,000	0.00%
Member Benefits Income	74,141	30,000	30,000	0.00%
Grant Income	100,000	100,000	100,000	0.00%
Miscellaneous	67,344	40,040	40,220	0.45%
<b>TOTAL GENERAL INCOME</b>	<b>(9,252,370)</b>	<b>2,051,040</b>	<b>1,644,720</b>	<b>-19.81%</b>
<b>PUBLICATIONS INCOME</b>	<b>184,692</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>190,000</b>	<b>-5.00%</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME PROJECTION</b>	<b>122,195,014</b>	<b>133,323,500</b>	<b>136,959,600</b>	<b>2.73%</b>

## NJEA OTHER FUNDS: CAPITAL ASSETS

	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Investment Income	\$ (4,470,512)	\$ 500,000	\$ -	-100.00%
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>(4,470,512)</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-100.00%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Capital Assets	2,038,482	3,332,400	6,729,100	101.93%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>2,038,482</b>	<b>3,332,400</b>	<b>6,729,100</b>	<b>101.93%</b>
<b>INCR/(DECR) IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>(6,508,994)</b>	<b>(2,832,400)</b>	<b>(6,729,100)</b>	<b>137.58%</b>

PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>				
Executive Committee 0400	\$ 2,967,241	3,264,000	3,178,200	-2.63%
Delegate Assembly 0410	294,391	285,500	317,500	11.21%
Elections 0430	392,885	341,000	352,000	3.23%
Officers 0440	1,975,757	2,030,700	1,976,100	-2.69%
Committees 1400	118,578	469,900	389,600	-17.09%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,748,851</b>	<b>6,391,100</b>	<b>6,213,400</b>	<b>-2.78%</b>
<b>LEGAL SERVICES PROG 0465</b>	<b>12,575,395</b>	<b>14,115,000</b>	<b>13,512,900</b>	<b>-4.27%</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES:</b>				
Organizational Activities 0470	2,157,276	3,650,000	3,307,000	-9.40%
Human/Civil Rights and Equity 0450	192,755	530,000	605,000	14.15%
Equity Alliance Conference 0455	132,110	260,000	260,000	0.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,482,141</b>	<b>4,440,000</b>	<b>4,172,000</b>	<b>-6.04%</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL PROJ 0471</b>	<b>6,000,000</b>	<b>9,000,000</b>	<b>9,000,000</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>				
Communications Office 0600	4,794,335	5,141,800	4,871,300	-5.26%
Other Services 0605	44,733	69,000	223,500	223.91%
Consultants 0615	158,575	206,400	170,400	-17.44%
Media Relations 0620	91,284	135,000	0	-100.00%
Public Relations 0630	13,928	39,000	0	-100.00%
Review 0660	1,439,022	1,399,000	1,662,000	18.80%
Communications Conference 0680	0	70,000	100,000	42.86%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,541,876</b>	<b>7,000,200</b>	<b>7,027,200</b>	<b>-0.47%</b>
<b>GOVERNMENT RELATIONS</b>				
Gov Relations Office 0700	3,857,834	4,552,500	4,300,300	-5.54%
Legislative Field Proj 0720	477,399	879,000	892,000	1.48%
Legislative Publications 0730	23,995	31,000	33,000	6.45%
Consultants 0740	70,255	107,800	78,800	-26.90%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,429,483</b>	<b>5,570,300</b>	<b>5,304,100</b>	<b>-4.78%</b>
<b>UNISERV PROGRAM REGIONAL OFFICES</b>				
Regional Offices 0899	24,321,467	23,480,300	22,339,700	-4.86%
01 Galloway 0800	166,621	176,100	184,100	4.54%
02 Mullica Hill 0805	200,155	201,900	204,600	1.34%
03 Mt Laurel 0810	192,856	251,200	235,400	-6.29%
05 Morrestown 0815	58,538	37,600	29,100	-22.61%
07 Toms River 0820	118,718	133,600	131,600	-1.50%
08 Trenton 0823	10,003	14,300	14,300	0.00%
09 Wall Twp 0825	139,163	157,100	159,100	1.27%
11 Edison 0830	235,065	245,300	214,300	-12.64%
13 Clinton 0835	120,534	134,300	256,800	91.21%
15 Cranford 0840	170,969	154,500	156,200	1.10%
17 Rockaway 0845	49,249	71,400	276,500	287.25%
19 W. New York 0850	80,472	92,400	103,300	11.80%
20 Jersey City 0852	132,156	148,800	180,200	21.10%
21 Livingston 0855	178,243	194,100	196,600	1.29%
23 Emerson 0860	29,442	33,000	0	-100.00%
25 Hasbrouk Hgts 0865	191,102	216,600	219,400	1.29%
27 Wayne 0870	103,322	120,700	125,700	4.14%
28 Stanhope 0873	112,874	129,600	77,300	-40.35%
29 Higher Ed 0875	8,654	13,000	13,000	0.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,619,601</b>	<b>26,005,800</b>	<b>25,117,200</b>	<b>-3.42%</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:</b>				
Organizational Dev Office 0900	3,201,601	2,689,700	2,911,400	8.24%
Organizational Dev Field 0904	0	0	24,000	0.00%
Organizational Dev Program 0905	339,895	460,000	378,000	-17.83%
Active Supportive 0910	23,575	358,200	421,000	17.53%
FAST Program 0915	4,267	44,000	50,000	13.64%
Conference Expenses 0920	237,243	362,700	459,300	26.63%
ESP & Inclusive Org 0930	38,225	51,200	76,200	48.83%
NJEA Preservice 0945	31,908			0.00%
Summer Leadership Conf 0955	865,488	1,018,800	1,354,700	32.97%
Leadership Operations 0965	2,071	37,000	37,000	0.00%
New Member Orientation 0975	78,568	194,000		-100.00%
Membership Recruitment 0977	1,892	30,000	20,000	-33.33%
Membership Promotion 0980	154,881	183,500	33,500	-81.74%
Members of Color Initiative 0985	121,491	330,000	342,500	3.79%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,101,105</b>	<b>5,759,100</b>	<b>6,107,600</b>	<b>6.05%</b>

	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>				
Prof Develop Office 1000	3,473,509	3,574,400	3,271,800	-8.47%
PD Learning 1005	57,832	175,000	368,000	110.29%
PD Capacity Bldg 1010	126,841	240,000	0	-100.00%
Training Consultants 1075	280,734	323,000	332,500	2.94%
ACCESS Program 1080	508,961	578,800	463,000	-20.01%
Teacher Leader Academy 1085	103,032	167,500	167,500	0.00%
Prof Development Conf 1097	205,269	260,000	245,000	-5.77%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,756,178</b>	<b>5,318,700</b>	<b>4,847,800</b>	<b>-8.85%</b>
<b>RESEARCH &amp; ECONOMIC SERVICES</b>				
Research Office 1100	6,081,603	5,788,000	5,612,700	-3.03%
Research Services 1105	147,357	335,500	219,500	-34.58%
Member Benefits 1110	328,115	481,000	456,000	-5.20%
Research Conference 1115	15,459	175,000	160,000	-8.57%
Research Library 1120	24,000	15,500	25,500	64.52%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,596,533</b>	<b>6,795,000</b>	<b>6,473,700</b>	<b>-4.73%</b>
<b>UNISERV FIELD</b>				
Uniserv Field Directors 1200	3,550,964	3,780,500	3,590,600	-5.02%
Uniserv - South 1201	18,196	11,000	13,700	24.55%
Uniserv - Central 1202	5,929	12,000	14,200	18.33%
Uniserv - Northwest 1203	9,566	15,300	16,900	10.46%
Uniserv - Northeast 1204	9,839	17,300	18,800	8.67%
Uniserv Field Program 1205	288,094	916,600	521,100	-43.15%
Field Consultants 1240	2,731,020	2,590,600	2,300,000	-11.22%
Strengthening Locals 1250	269,369	1,090,000	1,030,000	-5.50%
Higher Education 1260	56,634	109,000	111,300	2.11%
Leadership Operations 1265	597,631	1,220,000	820,000	-32.79%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,537,241</b>	<b>9,762,300</b>	<b>8,436,600</b>	<b>-13.58%</b>
<b>CONVENTIONS</b>				
NJEA 1095	1,777,829	2,468,100	2,469,100	0.04%
NEA 0475	1,186,573	1,187,000	1,232,000	3.79%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,964,402</b>	<b>3,655,100</b>	<b>3,701,100</b>	<b>1.26%</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL MGMT 0565</b>	<b>7,539,787</b>	<b>8,330,400</b>	<b>8,421,600</b>	<b>1.09%</b>
<b>MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZING</b>				
Membership Organizing 0532	0	345,000	240,000	-30.43%
Preservice 0535	0	98,000	94,700	-3.37%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>443,000</b>	<b>334,700</b>	<b>-24.45%</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL</b>				
Executive Office 0435	4,706,214	4,909,300	4,842,000	-1.37%
Administration 0460	1,481,190	1,607,000	1,574,000	-2.05%
Personnel 0480	75,128	175,000	163,500	-6.57%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,262,532</b>	<b>6,691,300</b>	<b>6,579,500</b>	<b>-1.67%</b>
<b>BUSINESS &amp; FINANCE</b>				
Business Office 0500	9,165,113	10,178,500	9,843,800	-3.29%
Accounting 0510	6,891	8,000	8,000	0.00%
Contract Obligations 0515	1,235,429	800,000	1,000,000	25.00%
Computer Center 0520	1,906,067	3,258,200	3,740,000	14.79%
Membership Processing 0530	311,919	345,500	355,500	2.89%
Headquarters Operation 0540	2,012,650	2,231,600	2,271,900	1.81%
Mail Room & Production 0550	124,724	230,000	185,000	-19.57%
Financial Admin Fees 0580	157,492	155,000	190,000	22.58%
Insurances 0585	367,834	434,000	483,500	11.41%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,288,119</b>	<b>17,640,800</b>	<b>18,077,700</b>	<b>2.48%</b>

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# SEPTEMBER & *beyond*

In-person or virtual status of any meeting is subject to change.

<b>SEP</b> <b>08</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b> Executive Committee	<b>OCT</b> <b>11</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b> Executive Committee	<b>NOV</b> <b>08-09</b>	<b>WED &amp; THU</b> NJREA Convention
<b>SEP</b> <b>09</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b> Delegate Assembly	<b>OCT</b> <b>20-21</b>	<b>FRI &amp; SAT</b> Jim George Collective Bargaining Summit	<b>NOV</b> <b>09-10</b>	<b>THU &amp; FRI</b> NJEA Convention
<b>SEP</b> <b>28</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b> NJREA Luncheon	<b>NOV</b> <b>08</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b> Executive Committee	<b>NOV</b> <b>11</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b> Delegate Assembly

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

## MEMBER BENEFIT PLAN REPORT AVAILABLE

This is a summary of the annual report for the New Jersey Education Association Member Benefit Fund, Employer Identification Number 21-0524390, Plan No. 510 for the period from Oct. 1, 2021 to Sept. 30, 2022. The Plan provides for group insurance and other welfare benefits. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

### Insurance information

The plan sponsor, NJEA, has a group contract with Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay temporary and long-term disability claims incurred under the terms of the plan. The premiums under this contract are paid by those NJEA members who chose to select coverage under the contract. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending September 30, 2022 were \$34,990,679.

### Basic financial statements

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the Plan was \$1,906,344 as of Sept. 30, 2022, compared to \$1,930,100 as of Oct. 1, 2021. During the Plan year, the Plan experienced a decrease in its net assets of (\$23,756). During the Plan year, the Plan had total income of \$411,263, including earnings from investments of \$4,598, and other income of \$406,665.

Plan expenses were \$435,019. These expenses included \$167,718 in administrative expenses and \$267,301 in membership benefits paid on behalf of participants and beneficiaries.

## Your rights to additional information

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed here are included in that report: an accountant's report; financial information and information on payments to service providers; insurance information, including sales commissions paid by insurance carriers; assets held for investment; and transactions in excess of 5% of plan assets.

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, write or call the office of Beth Schroeder Buonsante, NJEA, Member Benefit Fund, 180 W. State Street, Trenton, NJ 08607-1211, Phone: 609-599-4561. The charge to cover copying costs will be \$5 for the full annual report, or \$0.15 per page for any part thereof.

You also have the right to receive from the plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report. The charge to cover the copying costs given above does not include a charge for the copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan at the address above or at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department of Labor should be addressed to Public Disclosure Room N 1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.

# THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES IN NEW JERSEY

Reprinted and abridged from *NJEA Review*, December 2019

By *Cosmas P. Diamantis*, senior associate at *Zeller and Wieliczko, LLP*.

Social media platforms have had a profound impact on the way we communicate. Public-sector employees should be mindful of its unintended consequences. As a school employee, you may be affected by—and disciplined for—your use of social media.

While the First Amendment protects speech, such protections are not absolute for public employees. The U.S. Supreme Court has set forth a test that requires courts to balance the interests of the employee acting as a citizen and commenting upon matters of public concern, and the interests of the public employer in promoting the efficiency of the public services it provides.

Courts may consider the nature of your speech and whether it impairs discipline or workplace harmony, whether it has a negative impact on close working relationships requiring personal loyalty and confidence, whether it impedes the performance of your duties, or whether it interferes with your employer's regular operations.

Your employer is prohibited from requesting access to your personal social media accounts, but they are not prohibited from viewing what you post publicly. Moreover, co-workers, parents, students, and others can bring your social media posts to your employer's attention. Such posts can lead to disciplinary action.

State law prohibits retaliation against you if you refuse to provide your employer with access to your personal accounts or if you exercise your other rights and protections under the law, but the law has exceptions:

- Your employer can view, access and use information from a prospective or current employee's personal account that is available in the public domain.
- Your employer can enforce policies on the use of employer-issued electronic communication devices or any accounts or services provided by the employer or that you use for business purposes.
- Your employer can conduct investigations regarding your compliance with applicable laws, regulations or prohibitions against employee misconduct that arises from your employer's receipt of information pertaining to your activity on a personal account.
- Your employer can conduct investigations of your actions based upon the receipt of information regarding the unauthorized transfer of proprietary, confidential or financial information to your personal account.

## Recommendations

Given that few members would follow the safest advice—refrain from using social media altogether—these recommendations can help reduce your exposure to potential discipline resulting from your use of social media.

- Keep all social media settings private. This strengthens your protection under state law and prevents your employer from being able to routinely inspect your social media accounts.
- Carefully review your social media connections. For instance, supervisors who are part of your social media inner circle are given direct access to any social media communications you make, which may nullify your protections under the law.
- Review your school district's social media policy. Understanding the parameters of your employers' social media policy can provide a better understanding of what supervisors may be looking for when reviewing whether communications are in violation of the policy.
- Scrutinize all of your social media communications in the most negative light and assume all social media communications will be read by your employer. All communications should be limited to "matters of public concern" and not to your job.
- Exercise self-control. Social media provides the opportunity to engage, communicate, vent, and otherwise distract you from your duties and responsibilities. Be mindful that you are in control of what social media platforms you use, and how and when to use them.
- If social media communication is necessary for your employment, create a separate social media account where the communications are strictly limited to work-related topics.

While teachers are specifically held to a high standard of conduct, all school employees should be mindful of the possibility of discipline stemming from inappropriate social media activity. 🚫





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# NJEA Convention

## Nov. 9-10, 2023



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Want to reserve a room in Atlantic City for the NJEA Convention at a great rate? These seven hotels are offering member-only rates to help you save money while you enjoy the convenience of being close to everything the NJEA Convention and Atlantic City have to offer.

- \*Borgata (limited availability)
- Caesars
- Golden Nugget
- Hard Rock
- Harrah's
- Resorts
- Tropicana

\*Borgata is fully booked on Friday night.

Shuttle service will be available from the hotels listed here.

Go to [njeaconvention.org/hotels](https://njeaconvention.org/hotels) to check out the discount rates and to make your reservations.

You'll need to log in as a member to continue. Use your member PIN (found on your membership card) or the email address you've previously given NJEA and your password (the last four digits of your Social Security number, unless you've changed your password). Guaranteed shuttle service will be available to these hotels only.