

REVIEW



an education and advocacy resource



Restorative Justice

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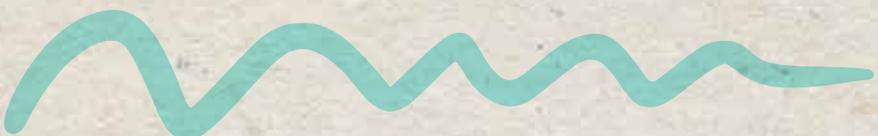
The Union County Education Association (UCEA) held a Members of Color (MOC) organizing and training event at Stagehouse Tavern in Mountainside. Many wore holiday sweaters. From left: Plainfield EA members Adriana Valencia, Ruth Wright, Kim Haynes, Karen Richards and Donna Reed.



NJREA member Nancy Phillips hosted a get-together over the holidays that she turned into a fundraiser for educators that she turned into a fundraiser for educators in Lahaina whose schools and lives were upended by wildfires. Donations were exchanged for a holiday carriage ride.



New Jersey educators participated in the 2023 TV and Film Education Conference. If you are a TV and film teacher, go to Page 42 for information about the 2024 conference on March 15.



FEATURES



18 | RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Because it is often so poorly implemented, restorative justice practices have gotten a bad rap. The fault, however, does not lie with the principles of restorative justice, the biggest stumbling block lies in how restorative justice practices are—and are not—being implemented in schools.

BY SHAN BYRD



26 | INFUSING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING INTO ACADEMICS

There are many ways to positively enhance your classroom through routines and infusing social-emotional learning into academics. Greeting students at the door as they enter our classroom, leading a morning meeting and establishing consistent routines are examples of creating a safe place for your students and building a classroom community. But you can also establish routines in your classroom that cause minimal disruption and maximize learning time.

BY LEIGH CLINE



22 | THE NJ LABOR MANAGEMENT COLLABORATIVE

Educators are less stressed and more productive at work when they are valued and respected by their administration. Administrators and board members are more comfortable partnering with staff when their wide range of experience in education is recognized and appreciated. When educators collaborate, student achievement rises. This ideal scenario is being fostered through the New Jersey Public School Labor Management Collaborative.

BY KIMBERLY CRANE



32 | CHANGING THE FACE OF ADDICTION

The annual Changing the Face of Addiction Walk held in Franklin, Sussex County was started by NJEA members Mary Burns and Elaine Tizzano after they lost their sons to addiction. Beyond the walk, they turned tragedy into triumph by working toward changing the stigma that surrounds addiction.

BY MARY BURNS

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THE NUMBER 30

The number of years that the Hipp Foundation has offered grants to public school educators.

The NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education has disbursed more than \$2.4 million in grants for innovative educational projects. Visit njea.org/hipp to learn more.

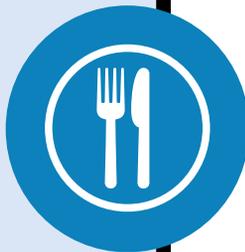
Source: NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education

GOOD NEWS

There is such a thing as a free lunch!

In January 2024, Gov. Phil Murphy signed legislation to expand access to free school meals. Under the legislation, public and nonpublic schools participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or federal School Breakfast Program will provide a free school lunch and/or breakfast to students whose families have an annual household income of up to 224% of the federal poverty level, which will make over 60,000 families newly eligible.

Source: Office of the Governor, Jan. 16, 2024 (nj.gov/education/news)



Shan Byrd is a restorative justice specialist and an NJEA Professional Development consultant.

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Brian Branch-Price/Thefotodesk

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REVIEW

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President: Sean M. Spiller | Vice President: Steve Beatty | Secretary-Treasurer: Petal Robertson
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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; 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 \$32. General professional (outside N.J. public education employment): \$250. Subscribing \$250. Only those in education positions in N.J. public schools and colleges are eligible for active membership. Payment of annual dues entitles a member to receive the *Review* for one year, from January through December. Dues include \$5 for the *NJEA Review*. *Low-earner threshold 2023-24 is \$22,500.





PRESIDENT'S *Message*

Building community improves outcomes in every way

Community is at the heart of everything we do: in our classrooms and school buildings, in the districts we serve, and in our union.

A strong sense of community can lead to so many benefits. Studies have shown that a strong community can lead to improved mental and physical health, a sense of shared values and identity, emotional support, and safety and security.

In this issue of the *Review*, we look at community through many different lenses. Community is an important part of successful restorative justice practices. By forging a sense of interconnectedness among every group and every individual in the school community, we see improved behavioral outcomes, mutually respectful school environments and a greater sense of emotional connectedness.

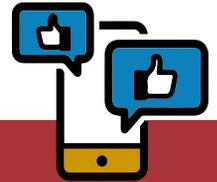
Community is a huge part of social-emotional learning, as well. Tapping into all facets of what makes us human and how we are connected helps each child flourish and grow.

Finally, community is a vital part of what it means to be a member of a labor union. We have so many shared objectives. Together, we are working to ensure that public education in New Jersey remains respected, valued and equitably funded. We are negotiating contracts that meet the needs of all our members as well as advocating for educational policies at every level that provide students with what they need to succeed and make public education an attractive profession for the best and brightest. Fundamentally, NJEA is dedicated to building relationships with all stakeholders.

As Dr. King said, "In a real sense all life is interrelated. All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

Our connection is our strength, and together, NJEA members will continue to use that strength to work in the best interests of New Jersey's public school students and all of our colleagues who have dedicated themselves to public education excellence.

In Unity,



SEAN M. SPILLER

Facebook

@SpillerforNJEA: We must work together to address skyrocketing health care costs in order to bring relief to New Jersey families. As a coalition of labor unions and advocacy groups, we can and will make a difference.

On Jan. 3, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller shared a link to an op-ed that he wrote jointly with Kevin Brown (32BJ SEIU) and Fran Ehret (NJ Communication Workers of America) titled, "It shouldn't cost an arm and a leg to fix an arm and a leg." They discuss the rising cost of health care being a threat to economic justice for the working people they serve and how they are teaming up to figure out the structural challenges to keeping health care affordable.

STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

@SteveBeattyNJEA: Feeling the joy, love, and community from the NJEA Equity Alliance weekend. From Friday's fantastic gala, complete with the voices of our students interwoven in the tapestry of the celebration of our Equity committees and our deserving award winners, including our own president, Sean Spiller. And the film festival—thought provoking, raw, and pertinent to the integral work we all do as a justice-centered organization.

On Jan. 14, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty shared images from the 50th anniversary of the NJEA MLK Human and Civil Rights Celebration, which honored members and others who are champions in defense of racial and social justice. He also shared images from the Equity Alliance Conference that followed and featured an exciting and educational film festival that engaged members in discussions.

PETAL ROBERTSON

Facebook

@PetalforNJEA: It's almost here!!! NJEA's Celebration of Women will be held on Sunday, Mar. 10. Join us as we celebrate Aida J. Wahba, MaryJo Nagy, and Spring Williams for their unwavering commitment to empower women and our communities.

On Jan. 16, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson shared an image of the three women, all NJEA members, who will be honored at the third annual NJEA Celebration of Women. In the post she referenced three ways members could register for the event and encouraged them not to wait as space is limited. Registration opened on Jan. 20, but is currently closed, due to reaching capacity.

OFFICERS ONLINE

The ADVOCATE

RESOURCES FOR YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION

Bylaw amendment proposed to add SOGI to NJEA standing committees

At its Jan. 6 meeting, the NJEA Delegate Assembly (D.A.) took the first step to amend NJEA's bylaws to incorporate the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee as a standing committee.

Amending the association's bylaws requires two votes by the D.A. at two separate meetings. First, a simple majority vote of the D.A. is required to propose the amendment. That vote took place on Jan. 6. At a subsequent D.A. meeting, a three-fourths vote is required to amend the bylaws. That vote is anticipated for the March 9 D.A. meeting.

Between the votes, the language of the amendment must be published in the *NJEA Review*. The language of the amendment is as follows:

... that the Bylaws in Sections 29 and 50 through 55 be reworded and renumbered to 50 through 56 to reflect the change as indicated below. (Additions appear in **boldface underlined**, and deletions are bracketed and struck out [—]).

29. Standing Committees

The Standing Committees shall be:

- Affiliation
- Budget
- Certification, Evaluation, & Tenure
- Constitution Review
- Editorial
- Educational Support Professionals
- Government Relations
- Human & Civil Rights
- Instruction
- Leadership
- Membership
- Minority Leadership and Recruitment
- Pension Policy
- Professional Development
- Professional Rights & Responsibilities
- Public Relations
- School Finance
- **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**
- Urban Education
- Working Conditions

50. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee – The Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee shall consist of no less than five members. This committee shall:

a. Deal with sexual orientation and gender identity/ expression issues pertaining to all persons in the school community;

b. Advocate for and promote the inclusion and equality of LGBTQIA+ Association members and students in educational environments and society at large and work to address their concerns;

c. Support the implementation and application of anti-discrimination, anti-violence, civil rights, inclusive curricula, and other statutes and regulations that protect LGBTQIA+ Association members, students, and community members at large.

{50} **51.** Urban Education Committee

{51} **52.** Working Conditions Committee

{52} **53.** Rules of Order

{53} **54.** Association Employees

{54} **55.** Employee Security

{55} **56.** Amendments to Bylaws

Interested in presenting at the 2024 NJEA Convention?

Presenting at convention

The Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division (PDII) of NJEA is now accepting presenter proposals for the 2024 NJEA Convention to be held Nov. 7-8, 2024. All proposals to present at the NJEA Convention and at Digital Boulevard must be submitted electronically. The deadline for submission is April 15, 2024.

Please review your proposal carefully before submission. Once you click on the submit button, you will not be able to make any changes.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Your request for audiovisual equipment must accompany your proposal submission. NJEA may not be able to provide equipment requested at a later date.
- NJEA does not provide computers.

- NJEA does not reproduce any program materials and will not reimburse you for reproductions costs.
- If you are a member, please have your PIN and password ready.

Submit your proposal

To submit proposals, visit njea.org/conventionproposal. Check njeaconvention.org for updates.

Questions? Email or call Vicki Serreino at Convention@njea.org or 609-310-4349.

Clearing the record

Corrections to the NJEA Organizational Directory

Every January, the *NJEA Review* publishes an organizational directory. It includes among other items, committee, staff and county education association office listings. The following items need correction:

County Associations

Mercer County Education Association
4 Princess Road, Bldg. 200
Suites 213 & 214
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
MCEA's address as listed in the January edition was incorrect.

Delegate Assembly-Alternates

The alternates to the Delegate Assembly representing NJREA were inadvertently not included.

They are:

Roger Baker
Joanne Palladino

NJEA Consultants

Rodney Lane is both an NJEA Communications Consultant and a Professional Development Consultant. In the January edition, only his status as a Communications Consultant was listed.



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COOL STUFF



GET READY FOR INTERNATIONAL SEL DAY ON MARCH 8!

March 8 is SEL Day! This year's theme is "Today's Students, Tomorrow's Leaders." SEL Day is a global, grassroots campaign for social-emotional learning to support children's academic recovery, mental health and well-being. Since its inception in 2020, #SELday has reached over 40 million views.

For information, access to SEL Day Tool Kits, and to sign up to participate in this international event, visit SEL4NJ.org. When you join SEL4NJ, you receive a weekly newsletter about SEL Day and access to other SEL Day and SEL-related information useful in your classrooms and schools. In addition, you get access to what other educators are doing around the United States and around the world.

You can also email SEL4NJ whatever you are doing on SEL Day (lesson plans, pictures of activities, examples of student products, etc.) at info@SEL4NJ.org. You can share what you are doing via social media. Send in and share as much as you can, as often as you can. You might earn badges and become a state, national or international champion of SEL and character development (SECD)! Your contributions may even be featured on the SELday.org or SEL4NJ.org!

A meeting to help teachers and schools plan their SEL Day will be held on Feb. 22, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Register at bit.ly/sel-24-zoom.

Finally, when you sign up for SEL Day, you will receive information about SECD-related workshops that will be presented by SEL4NJ for the four days leading up to SEL Day, and information about the all-day SEL Day Summit being put on by SEL4US and all of its national partners.



THE LEGAL EAGLE: SPECIAL SOCIAL MEDIA EDITION

The New Jersey State Bar Foundation's 2024 winter issue of *The Legal Eagle* contains articles on how lawmakers look to curb harm on social media platforms, how TikTok bans show the difficulty of balancing national security and free speech, and how the Garden State aims to give students tools to spot fact from fiction. A PDF of the issue can be downloaded; copies can be ordered for classroom use; individual articles can be downloaded from the *Legal Eagle Lowdown*. Educators can subscribe to receive future issues. Visit publications.njsbf.org.



FREE EVENT: LAW FAIR/ LAW ADVENTURE – YOU BE THE JURY!

Experience what it is like to serve as jurors with your students (Law Fair for Grades 3-6 and Law Adventure for Grades 7-8). Hear cases performed by winners of this year's competitions. After hearing the cases, you and your students will deliberate and render verdicts. Events will be held at the New Jersey Law Center in New Brunswick. Multiple days and sessions (a.m. and p.m.) are available. See Law Fair or Law Adventure pages for more information (space is limited!)

Visit mocktrial.njsbf.org to learn more about this free event.



AID-NJEA CAN HELP

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

AID-NJEA is a partnership between NJEA and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care.

Advocating for students as the school attendance officer

Meet Pamela Clark, 2023 Camden County ESP of the Year



Camden EA President Dr. Keith Benson with 2023 Camden County ESP of the Year Pamela Clark.

Pamela Clark has held many educational support professional positions in New Jersey's public schools. She's been an instructional assistant, secretary, community school coordinator, and paraprofessional. Now she is an attendance officer. Working in each of these positions has given her insight into the work the entire school team does—and how we all work together to make schools work for students and families.

Clark began her career in public education as an instructional assistant. A young mother at the time, she wanted to work in the public schools. Her mother was a teacher for 27 years who encouraged her to pursue education.

Since 2018, she has been a school attendance officer, and she understands the challenges students and families are facing.

"We had families who lost their homes during COVID," Clark recalls. "Some of the families struggled with the technology. They really suffered.

"Post-pandemic, we were seeing a lot of students not coming to schools," Clark adds. "I make phone calls and I show up on their doorsteps, delivering letters at 10 days. I want them to know that I'm here to advocate for their child, and for them. Not every case needs to be referred to truancy court. Every case is handled differently.

Sometimes, that means I'm advocating on the students' behalf by speaking with the principals, other school administrators and teachers or conducting parent/teacher conferences to get things resolved. Parents need to see that all the stakeholders care about their child and that we all want a better quality of life for them."

Pursuing a career in education is not without its bumps. Twice, Clark has been laid off. In 2019-20, the district laid off all but two attendance officers. While some have been recalled, it's still challenging. But she loves the work that she does.

"I'm a big softie." Clark says. "I can relate to the parents and the struggle to get everything they—and their students—need as I was a single parent myself. I care a lot, and I don't like to see people hurt. I work with the students to help them stay in school and get their diplomas," Clark says.

A graduate of Camden's public schools, Clark earned a bachelor's degree in business management and an MBA from the University of Phoenix. She uses her degrees now as the treasurer of the Camden Education Association.

In addition, Clark has been on the negotiations team, serves as the ESP chairperson for the city of Camden and Camden County, and is a member of the NJEA's PAC Operating Committee representing ESPs in South Jersey. She also serves members on the NJEA ESP Committee.

Clark was honored by being named the 2023 Camden County ESP of the Year.

"I felt valued when I heard that I have been named the Camden County ESP of the Year," Clark says. "I didn't think that people recognized me standing up for them. I try to stay humble and never forget from whence I came."

Clark's honors continue to grow. At the 2024 NJEA ESP Conference, Clark received the ESP Career Achievement Award. This award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to NJEA and its members and a high level of professional excellence.

Clark is the proud mother of a daughter, Janea, and two grandsons, Deion and Devon, who can be seen with their "Mai Mai" at union functions. 🏠

First decision issued in NJ school desegregation lawsuit

Request for immediate decision without trial rejected

By David Bander, Esq.



Mercer County Superior Court Judge Robert Lougy issued the first decision on Oct. 6 in *Latino Action Network v. State of New Jersey*, a closely watched lawsuit, filed in 2018. The Latino Action Network and its co-plaintiffs allege that the state has violated its constitution and state law by failing to remedy “unlawful, persistent, and pervasive statewide de facto segregation” in the state’s public schools.

This decision was on the plaintiffs’ motion for summary judgment, meaning that the plaintiffs asked the court for a decision solely on the legal merits of the case without a trial to develop additional facts.

The plaintiffs are a coalition of civil rights groups, parents and students who point to the state’s residency statute (N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1) as a principal cause of the alleged segregation. The statute guarantees a free public education to any child in the district where they live. In the plaintiffs’ view, this statute, combined with a history

David Bander is an associate director of NJEA Legal Services and Member Rights in the NJEA Executive Office. He can be reached at dbander@njea.org.

The court acknowledged that even though the plaintiffs asked for “unprecedented” relief, that did not diminish the state’s continuing “obligation and power to remediate racial imbalance.”

of discriminatory housing policies leading to residential segregation, has resulted in segregation in public schools.

The plaintiffs asked the court to declare the residency statute unconstitutional. The state, however, argued that the existing structure is constitutional and that the plaintiffs have asked for “unprecedented” judicial involvement.

Although the court found “marked and persistent racial imbalance in numerous school districts across the state,” it found that the plaintiffs had not met their high threshold and largely denied their claims.

Reviewing the statistical evidence presented by experts from both sides, the court found that approximately 25% of students attend school districts in which the student body is “relatively proportional to the overall demographics of the state,” while 75% do not.

The court held that even though segregation may exist in certain districts, the plaintiffs did not prove that the existing statewide educational structure, or the residency statute, was unconstitutional. Additionally, the court acknowledged that even though the plaintiffs asked for “unprecedented” relief, that did not diminish the state’s continuing “obligation and power ... to remediate racial imbalance.”

Even though the court denied the plaintiffs’ claims, that does not mean that the lawsuit has ended—it means that the claims can be developed at a trial. Since the decision, the parties have engaged in settlement discussions.

NJEA’s Legal Services will continue to monitor this case. If you are interested in additional resources on this topic, contact your NJEA UniServ field representative who can connect you with the appropriate NJEA staff. 🏠

NJEA Report

NJEA celebrates 50th anniversary of the NJEA MLK Human Rights Celebration

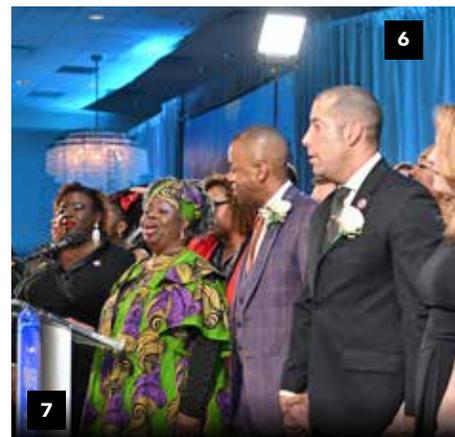
The 50th anniversary of the NJEA Martin Luther King Jr. Human and Civil Rights Celebration was marked on Jan. 12. Four NJEA members and a community organization were honored that evening for their leadership in equity and justice: Sundjata Sekou, Deborah Zitomer, Ronnette Smith-Powell, Danielle Earle, and the Phillip Pannell Foundation.

NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson honored NJEA President Sean M. Spiller for his accomplishments overcoming barriers to be the first Black man to serve as NJEA’s secretary-treasurer, vice president and president. That special moment featured video testimonials from Spiller’s family.

The following day, the NJEA Equity Alliance Conference featured six films carrying social justice themes: *The Inventor*, *Ben in Bloom*, *Harlem Fragments*, *Two Distant Strangers*, *The Fifth Wave*, and *Intelligent Lives*.

Six NJEA committees comprise the NJEA Equity Alliance: the Human and Civil Rights Committee, the Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee, the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee, the Urban Education Committee, the Women in Education Committee, and the Exceptional Children Committee.

In addition to the photos printed here, hundreds more can be found at [flickr.com/njea/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/njea/).



7



1. Author and Willingboro kindergarten teacher Ronnette Smith-Powell accepts the Dr. Judith Owens Spirit Award. From left: NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson, Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee Chair Dr. Tiffanie ThrBak, Destiny Powell (daughter and author), Smith-Powell, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty and NEA Executive Director Kim Anderson.

2. Representatives of the Nanticoke Lenni Lenape Tribe present a land acknowledgement and performance.

3. NEA Executive Director Kim Anderson delivers the keynote address. Anderson is the first woman and first person of color to be NEA's executive director.

4. The Phillip Pannell Foundation was the recipient of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human and Civil Rights (HCR) Award. Phillip was shot and killed by police in Teaneck in 1990. His mother and sister, who created the foundation, accepted the award. From left: NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson, HCR Committee Chair Fayette Weatherington, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, Thelma Pannell-Dantzler, Natacha Pannell, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty and NEA Executive Director Kim Anderson.

5. Millburn High School social studies teacher Deborah Zitomer accepts the Elizabeth A. Allen Women in Education Award. From left: NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, Women in Education Committee Chair Lisa Veit, Zitomer, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty and NEA Executive Director Kim Anderson.

6. Olive Giles, vice president of the Princeton Regional Educational Support Staff Association, leads an annual event closing tradition: singing "We Shall Overcome."

7. Orange High School audiovisual and filmmaking teacher Danielle Earle accepts the Equality Champion Award. From left: NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty, Earle, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee Chair Chris Cannella and NEA Executive Director Kim Anderson.

8. NJREA member and Delegate Assembly member Jacqui Greadington delivers the invocation. The former president of the East Orange Education Association, Greadington was the longest-serving chair of the NJEA Human and Civil Rights Committee—leading the committee from 1996 to 2018. Following the invocation, the Lawrenceville High School Gospel Choir, behind Greadington, led the attendees in singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

9. Joyce Farr, the Gloucester County representative to the Women in Education and Human and Civil Rights committees, leads a discussion on the film "The Fifth Wave."

10. Irvington elementary math and science teacher Sundjata Sekou accepts the Urban Educator Activist Award. From left: NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, Urban Education Committee Chair Todd Pipkin, Sekou, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty and NEA Executive Director Kim Anderson.

11. Filmmaker Cameron Carr discusses his feature, "Harlem Fragments."

12. Longtime NJEA Human and Civil Rights Committee Chair Jacqui Greadington, now retired, greets the current NJEA HRC Committee Chair Fayette Weatherington.

8



9



2

10



11



12



Start training now for the Boardwalk Run

The NJEA George M. Adams Boardwalk Run is nine months away. There's plenty of time between now and Nov. 8, 2024, to get ready for the 5K run. And last year's run proves you're never too old to start: runners who ranged in age from under 19 to over 80 ran the 3.1 miles up and down the boardwalk.

For inspiration, below are the times for the up to the top three runners in each age and gender grouping. For all runners' results go to njea.org/bwrun2023.

**Top member runners
male/female**

Don Ngo 20:51
Ginny Traber 22:46

19 and under

Katelyn Reuter 21:07
Jack Connery 22:20
Erin Reuter 25:37

20-29

Cecilia Wigginton 25:43
Kevin Flood 26:32

30-39

Brian Rock 19:41
William Gaydog 21:12
Devin Benker 25:25
Chelsea Mackin 29:11
Amanda Mackin 29:30
Christine Sampson-Clark 46:59

40-49

Kyle Bennett 22:03
Steve Chernoski 22:25
Erin Longo 23:58
Steve Whitehead 25:34
Valerie Wigginton 27:31
Brenda Julian 27:31

50-59

Francisco Barquin 24:58
Robert Haelke 25:41
Kathleen Carter 28:26
Kay Wollock 37:18
Getta Bakker 38:53

60-69

Bill Brooks 24:44
Pete Moran 34:03
Cris Ferguson 35:55
Bette Feldeisen 38:59
Jude Desiles 47:45

70-79

John Kuhl 36:12
Ronald Burgess 45:53
William Index 51:57
Jean Burgess 1:05:01

80 and above

Joseph Cozzi 34:03
Alex Dobrowolski 37:59
Marie Pavelchak 38:53



Top: Runners of all ages and experience participate in the Boardwalk Run.

Middle: First place NJEA members Don Ngo and Ginny Traber.

Bottom: Families and friends of NJEA members run the race.

Free online cyber security and safety practices course from NJSS

Promoting cyber security and safety practices among adolescents has become increasingly essential as technology has evolved and challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic emerged. While the internet allowed for continuation of essential activities, the number of vulnerable users encountering cyber-threats and cyber-bullying increased.

Students should have opportunities to receive the most up-to-date cyber security and safety educational training materials before engaging with any virtual platform.

The NJ Safe Schools Program (NJSS) at Rutgers School of Public Health developed the Cyber-Security and Safety course available online to New Jersey high school students through the Rutgers Canvas learning management system. The free online resources available within this NJSS Cyber-Security and Safety course can benefit high school students and their teachers, especially those newly accessing virtual platforms.

To access the course, please contact NJSS at cscbre@sph.rutgers.edu. To preview the many free resources included within this course, see the sidebar.

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neamb.com/connect



Resources for your classroom and additional reading

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2021
bit.ly/cdc-facts-bullying

Cyberbullying Research Center
cyberbullying.org

PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center
pacer.org/bullying/info/cyberbullying/

UC Berkeley Information Security Office
Phishing Examples Archive
bit.ly/phishing-archive

More to learn

In addition, scan this QR code for List of agency and nonprofit and foundation resources available to NJ K-12 Schools included in the NJ Safe Schools Program Introduction to Cyber-Safety and Security Course during the COVID-19 pandemic.



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

When implementation falls short of the promise

By Shan Byrd

Fed up with a hodgepodge of recycled ideologies, many people are frustrated and confused about what “restorative justice practices” are. As a restorative justice specialist in New Jersey public schools and a professional development consultant with years of experience providing training on adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and other topics, I hear from educators and top administrators from all over the state who say that restorative justice practices don’t work.

The fault, however, does not lie with the principles of restorative justice, the biggest stumbling block lies in how restorative justice practices are—and are not—being implemented in our schools. Unless we conduct the practices with fidelity, we must stop terming what we are doing as “restorative justice practices.”

Restorative justice is a philosophy borrowed from indigenous cultures with a strong emphasis on building relationships rooted in the strength of community. In the U.S., the form of restorative justice that we borrow is tied closely to the traditions of the Ojibwe, a federation of First Nation people residing on the U.S.-Canadian border.

Oral history tells us that people working within Minnesota’s criminal system were searching for solutions

to growing problems related to zero tolerance legal policies. After researchers witnessed how the Ojibwe—a self-governing nation with a low incidence of crime in their communities—dealt with conflict, they adopted many of their practices.

For most indigenous cultures what we term as restorative justice practices are a way of life, not a program. They are an actual practice of holistic community care. When authentically practiced in our schools and communities, restorative justice practices take their inspiration from these indigenous communities worldwide.

As someone who studies such peacemaking practices, I have traveled to South Africa and Rwanda to see firsthand what it looks like to restore from the atrocities of apartheid and genocide. In South Africa, there is a deep commitment to the idea of ubuntu—loosely translated as “I am because we are”—indicating that the mental, physical and emotional health of an individual is in a powerful symbiotic relationship with the well-being of the whole community. Similarly, in Rwanda, a country committed to deep healing, kindness and care for your neighbor is actually codified in their laws.

Coming to understand restorative justice practices

Restorative justice practices do not come in the form of a cookbook. It is not the kind of program that you just “plug in” and “press play.” Nor can you take a one-day workshop, return to your district and just turnkey it.

Shan Byrd is a restorative justice specialist working in New Jersey’s public schools and a consultant in the NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division. She can be reached at sbyrd@njea.org.

The first step is to humble yourself and get sound training on what restorative justice practices are. I strongly suggest aligning yourself with grassroots organizations possessing strong ties to indigenous communities. Be mindful to avoid the numerous organizations that seek to commodify the practice, seeing it as a means to garner federal and state funding and essentially co-opt a practice sacred to many indigenous communities.

Restorative justice practices are a genuine paradigm shift calling us to do deep introspective work. It's a never-ending process that starts with you first unpacking the biases that challenge all of us. We are all steeped in a grind culture that demands a punitive response to nonconforming behavior. A restorative response to conflict seeks to understand the root of the problem and seek out holistic solutions aimed to heal as a collective.

People frequently tell me that their district's approach to restorative justice practices is to "allow students to do whatever they want without consequences." Restorative justice is not that! Such misguided strategies disrupt a school's culture and climate by creating an inequitable environment.

Restorative justice is about building relationships to reduce the potential for harm in a community. Under a restorative approach, when harm does occur the needs of everyone in the community affected by the incident must be addressed with care.

Restorative justice practices begin with the adults

When I reflect on my earlier years of teaching, I remember wanting to have power. I wanted my students to sit when I said sit, stand when I said stand, and line up to walk down the hall exactly how I wanted them to. It took a lot of inner work for me to realize that I was not right—this was a form of oppression, and I didn't want to leave that mark on the world.

To truly embrace restorative justice practices we must start with the adults because children are not drivers of academic culture. Restorative justice practices are not about "fixing" children. Our educational systems are built on a hierarchy where the government is at the top, followed by top level and mid-level administrators. Educators and children are generally at the bottom of the hierarchy. Depending upon a parent or care giver's awareness of their power, they can show up at any point of this edu-political framework.



Restorative justice takes time

Proper implementation of restorative justice practices takes between five to nine years. Time is a rationed commodity in education, so it is vital for school districts to nurture the practice with patience and consistency.

In 2018, I had the opportunity to visit Skinner Middle School in Denver, Colorado. There I witnessed the power of restorative justice when implemented with great care. At the time, the middle school was in its 10th year applying the practices, and it was clear that they were committed to creating a harmonious school culture. Skinner was not perfect, but it most certainly was peaceful!

Imagine a learning environment where the care of the entire school community is prioritized. Practical structures are in place to support the needs of both students and staff members. A place where the larger community and staff members collaborate regularly to create strong home and school bonds.

I was delighted to meet a parent who actively volunteered to support the restorative justice efforts at the school. I was touched to learn that the students tenderly referred to their peers, with conviction, as family members.

My most memorable interaction was with a 12-year-old student who recently transferred to the school. The student proudly stated, "At my old school I would get into a lot of trouble, but here I don't do those things because it's peaceful here."

When I asked him what made Skinner more peaceful than his former school he smiled widely and stated, "The people here work hard to show you that they really care."

This positive school atmosphere was supported by administrators who understood that restorative justice had the ability to magnify academic excellence. For Skinner to sustain a successful school rooted in restorative justice took years of patience, an investment of time for the school community to cultivate relationships, a willingness to share power, a financial commitment from the district, and the creation of systems to reduce the possibility of harm when conflict occurs.

Unless we conduct the practices with fidelity, we must stop terming what we are doing as “restorative justice practices.”

Administrators often drive initiatives and consequently have a responsibility to ensure that they and their staff members grow in their understanding of authentic restorative justice practices. When restorative justice practices implemented before school leaders and staff are ready, there is a danger that the process will devolve into top-down directives. This minimizes the voices that make up the whole school community and is one of the main reasons why so many educators complain that restorative justice does not work!

Relationships and shared power

A restorative approach seeks to create relationships where power is shared. It is philosophy that takes into account that all humans inherently possess power despite their social ranking. This is not to negate the importance of leadership because we all are called to lead in the various domains of our lives. But a leader working through a restorative lens understands that their role is not to manage or control the behavior of others.

Highly effective educational leaders who embrace restorative justice practices center uplifting the humanity of their stakeholders through shared values and expectations. They are hyper-focused on collaboration rather than control.

On several occasions, I have spoken with heartbroken administrators and educators who try to understand what went wrong in their restorative justice implementation process. Unfortunately, by the time they contact me a



Student led peace keeping practices. Courtesy of Paterson's BUDS and Umoja community based organization.



Recommended reading

This article is the introduction to future articles exploring the implementation of restorative justice practices. In the meantime, I recommend reading *The Little Book of Restorative Justice in Education: Fostering Responsibility, Healing, and Hope In Schools (Revised Version)*, by Katherine Evans and Dorothy Vaandering.

lot of harm has been caused so they ask “What do we do now?” My answer is generally to stop until they can commit fully to doing the work with fidelity, are properly trained and have adequate funding.

In the meantime, we can focus on some of the foundational work that can aid in the proper implementation of restorative justice practices. We can examine our interactions with our colleagues and the students we come into contact with every day. We can focus on creating mutually respectful, healing spaces where we really see each other and listen to each other.

Restorative justice practices should look like community valuing itself. It should look like the tenets of restorative justice, which are dignity, respect, and a sense of compassion and grace for others. It should look like seeing people as equally human and breaking down hierarchical structures.

It is time to have honest conversations on how to properly implement restorative justice practices within our schools. What we are currently seeing in many schools are not restorative justice practices. When we blame restorative justice rather than the way we are implementing it, we dishonor the indigenous people from whom we are borrowing the tradition.

Adopting a restorative justice approach toward education takes time and consistency. When implemented with care it is immensely gratifying to engage in a sustainable philosophy that elevates each of us: students, school employees, administrators and parents. It enables us to treat each other with dignity, respect, compassion and grace. 🙏

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The NJ Labor Management Collaborative “holds space” in Atlantic City

By Kimberly Crane



From left: Catherine MacManiman (Westampton EA), Heather Polk (Clifton EA), Keith Presty (Highland Park EA), Martha Orrok (Clifton EA), and Heather Moran (NJ Principals and Supervisors Assn.)

Educators are less stressed and more productive at work when they are valued and respected by their administration. Administrators and board members are more comfortable partnering with staff when their wide range of experience in education is recognized and appreciated. When educators collaborate, student achievement rises.

This ideal scenario is being fostered through the New Jersey Public School Labor Management Collaborative (LMC) guided by the New Jersey Collaborative State Partnership. The partnership includes the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA), the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), the New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA), and NJEA.

On Nov. 7-9, just prior to the NJEA Convention,

Kimberly Crane is an NJEA Communications Consultant and the vice president of the Highland Park Education Association. She previously served as HPEA president. She can be reached at kcrane@njea.org.

educators and association leaders from across New Jersey came together with administrators and school board members at the Atlantic City Convention Center to work toward a common goal: increasing student success in public schools.

NJEA Deputy Executive Director Denise Graff Policastro opened the event.

“The innovative work you are doing here today—and throughout the year—demonstrates a real commitment to the collaboration needed among educational partners to make our public schools work for every child,” Graff Policastro said.

The three-day event was financed through partner funding with the National Education Association (NEA). In 2021, NEA approved a \$1.5 million in funding to help expand the New Jersey Public School Labor Management Collaborative in the state. NEA committed an additional \$1.5 million over three years to fund and grow the initiative nationwide.

“Our recent pre-convention workshops are the first effort to sustainably grow labor management collaborative

Labor management collaboration is more than just getting together and talking.

partnerships across the state of New Jersey,” said Mike Ritzius, the NJEA liaison to the LMC.

In addition to Ritzius, those facilitating the event included NEA Fellow for the LMC LeShaun Arrington, NJPSA Executive Director Karen Bingert, NJPSA Professional Learning Coordinator Heather Moran, Education Consultant Stefani Hite and California Labor Management Initiative Director Gustavo Morales.

Who’s in the collaborative?

NJEA, NJPSA, the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), and the New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA) comprise the New Jersey Collaborative State Partnership.

Representatives from eight New Jersey school districts were present: Clifton, Cherry Hill, Hillside, Highland Park, New Brunswick, South Brunswick, Trenton and Westampton. Representatives from NEA and the Delaware State Education Association also participated.

“Our group found the workshop experience very valuable,” said Highland Park Education Association President Keith Presty. “We took away strategies and insights that we can easily turnkey to our district’s leadership teams and committees.”

Presty said that he and his team are looking forward to future events.

Participants brought varying levels of experience with labor management collaboration. Several of the participating districts already have district leadership committees in place that meet once a month and individual school building teams that meet bimonthly. Other districts in the group are taking their first steps to institute leadership teams in their schools.

“No matter where a district is in the process, they are welcome to join the collaborative,” Ritzius said.

“Including educators as decision makers on district leadership teams offers the best opportunity to maximize student outcomes,” Arrington said. “The Labor Management Collaborative is a venue where education stakeholders come together to build understanding and solve problems in a safe space with equal voices.”



Top: NJEA Liaison to the LMC Mike Ritzius
Middle: New Brunswick’s Zuleima Perez
Bottom: New Brunswick’s Aubrey Johnson



LMC participants from New Brunswick. Top from left: Karen Asson, Ivan Adorno, Randall Miller and Carolyn Newsom
Bottom from left: Aubrey Johnson, Zuleima Perez and Melissa Howard

District leadership teams

A school's district leadership team or committee should include members from every represented unit within the school's structure—that includes educational support professionals. Union members and leaders, school administrators, board members, parents, and sometimes students, work as partners on issues affecting the district as a whole.

For example, a district leadership team might generate solutions to concerns such as a lack of substitutes, the flow of students and staff around construction, school start and end times, how to best support student and staff's mental health, or how to develop positive messaging to support a bond referendum.

Items a labor management team would not handle include contract disputes, personnel, budgets, curricula, or many of the other issues that are already addressed by standing committees—though concerns with those topics may be touched upon for reference.

Those who work in education know that there is no shortage of challenges. Addressing concerns by gathering the collaborative input of all local education stakeholders, each with different perspectives on the issues, provides quicker, more effective solutions.

Collaborative partnerships in education lead to greater employee retention, educator empowerment, more effective communication among stakeholders, and an increase in student success.



What does it mean to hold space?

LMC macro curriculum and competencies

Labor management collaboration is more than just getting together and talking. Building a sustainable collaborative requires intentional practices. The New Jersey Collaborative State Partnership has developed the LMC Macro Curriculum as a guide for achieving increased student success.

As stated in that curriculum, "Research indicates that effective collaborative partnerships in education lead to greater employee retention, educator empowerment, more effective communication among stakeholders, and an increase in student success."

The LMC Macro Curriculum competencies are:

- Commit to an organizational structure that follows sustainable collaboration.
- Empower participants.
- Establish a shared purpose.
- Broker knowledge.
- Ground decisions in evidence and reflection.
- Establish a shared purpose and knowledge brokering with community stakeholders.

NJCSP holds itself accountable for its work through the curriculum guidelines and its efforts to introduce more districts to collaborative work. 🏠

Holding space for someone is a practice of centering the other person's experiences while being fully present without distractions. It is important to create a physically and emotionally safe space, listen without judgment, and offer empathy without sharing assessment or advice.

Using this practice for a group involves the same principles but will look somewhat different than an informal conversation or group sharing session. When planning a meeting where you are holding space for a group, you may use developed meeting structures such as Open Space or World Café, similar to those found in *The Art of Hosting* (see link below), or you may establish guidelines of your own.

It is important to plan the meeting structure with a clear, common goal in mind. The structure you chose will influence how the group will accomplish its goal. Discussion should highlight the expression of personal experiences and ideas, promote equity among speakers, encourage honest dialogue and foster empathy.

It is important to have people who are trained and experienced with holding space guide the dialogue in the meeting. A written agenda explaining the topic or issue, an outline of the discussion structure and length, and how to harvest the discussion outcomes is helpful and can be provided in advance.

You can learn more about holding space using Open Space, World Café, and *The Art of Hosting* methods at artofhosting.org.

Join the collaborative



The next NJ Collaborative State Partnership workshop, "Growing Your Collaborative Practice" will be held on March 4 at the NJPSA/FEA Conference Center in Monroe Township, Middlesex County.

To learn more, scan this QR code, or email one of the contacts below.

NJ Collaborative State Partnership contacts:

Michael Ritzius, NJEA Liaison to the Labor Management Collaborative, mritzius@njea.org

Judy Rattner, NJASA Director of Special Projects, jrattner@njasa.net

Heather Moran, NJPSA Coordinator of Professional Learning, hmoran@njpsa.org

Marcia Lavigne, NJSBA Director of Professional Learning, mlavigne@njsba.org

INFUSING SOCIAL—EMOTIONAL LEARNING INTO ACADEMICS

By Leigh Cline

“Take out your post-it notes. It’s time for a check in. Let’s do ‘What’s Your Number?’” I say to my second graders as I look around the room.

Our morning has started, and I’m interested to see how my students are feeling before we jump into our academics. The students pull out their post-it notes, write a number from 1 to 10 on a note, and place them on the white board easel in the back of the room.

Some of them will have names on the back of their post-it notes, and I will be sure to check in with those students and see how I can help. Some of them will write the number 10 or even higher, and others who are having a tougher day may write a lower number—between 1 and 5.

This routine, which I first learned about from a virtual workshop with educator and speaker Matt

Davidson, has made a huge impact on my students and our relationships. The 7- and 8-year-olds who enter my classroom each morning come to school with a variety of feelings, and I want to make sure they are emotionally ready to learn or that I help them to make their day the best it can be.

Building a classroom community

Building relationships with students at any age takes time and hard work, but it can make a huge difference in the classroom culture and opportunities for learning. Instilling routines that give students a voice and feel important is a big step into getting to know them—all parts of them—as well as helping to run a classroom smoothly. However, there are many other ways to positively enhance your classroom through routines and infusing social-emotional learning into academics.

Greeting students at the door as they enter our classroom, leading a morning meeting and establishing

Leigh Cline, a second grade teacher at the Parkway Elementary School in the Ewing Township School District, is the 2022-23 Mercer County Teacher of the Year.





Students enjoy creating pictures and special gifts for others in my classroom.

consistent routines are examples of creating a safe place for your students and building a classroom community. But you can also establish routines in your classroom that cause minimal disruption and maximize learning time.

Nonverbal cues

The use of nonverbal cues in my classroom helps keep students from feeling singled out and keeps our lessons moving. Students in many classrooms, including mine, use hand signals as a way to communicate their needs without using words.

In my classroom, I teach my students on the first day of school how to let me know that they need to use the bathroom, get a drink, tissue, or pencil, or if they need help, all without using their voice. I also keep the hand signal chart visible throughout the year so substitutes and special guests can also refer to it. In addition, I use certain sign language gestures to let students know they need to stop what they are doing or sit properly, which I can do without stopping a lesson or even saying a student's name.

Energy breaks

During our transition times, we use energy breaks, such as Go Noodle or dancing to a song, because we need

to move around, have some fun, and get our brains and bodies ready for the next activity.

On average, my classes complete over 1,000 minutes of energy breaks in Go Noodle in a year. While that might sound like a very high number, when the energy breaks are over, my students are more likely to sit down ready to learn than if I simply moved from one subject to the next.

“How can I help?”

One of my recent favorite TV shows, “New Amsterdam,” focused on a medical director who constantly asked “How can I help?” when his employees came to him with problems.

I use this question throughout the day with my second graders because at times they don't need an adult telling them what to do or how to do it. Sometimes, they need someone in their corner who is helping them to self-advocate or figure out what can solve a problem.

A break pass

At times, my students need a break in the calm corner, which has fuzzy pillows, small stuffed animals, Legos and other fidgets. Other times, students request to take a break. In our classroom, once they have permission,



Our daily Morning Meeting is a routine to start our day with positivity and community.



One of my most important responsibilities is giving my students a place to learn where they feel safe and loved.

they pick up a break pass from the windowsill and go for a walk.

Their walk can simply be around the upstairs hallway, or they can go to the sensory hallway and do a few exercises or jumping activities. When they are feeling ready to return, the students simply re-enter the classroom quietly, put the pass back, and get back to learning.

Feeling valued, connected and safe

While the pandemic has changed many aspects of education, including the importance of mental health and the use of technology across grades, some things have always been there, such as the need for students to feel valued, connected and safe.

As a young child, I lost my mother to cancer and grew up feeling different from my classmates because I couldn't make a Mother's Day gift for my mom. In my late elementary years, I was bullied by classmates both in and out of school, but I never told anyone because I feared that it would only get worse.

I promised myself that when I became a teacher, I would make a difference for the kids who felt different. I had many amazing teachers growing up, but even they didn't always know how I felt, and I wanted to become a trusted adult for my own students as well as a safe place for them to be themselves and make mistakes.

Many times, we hear that students aren't where they should be and the phrase "learning loss" is brought up in countless different ways as we discuss the post-pandemic education world. However, when we focus on building connections with our students and meeting them where they are, as kids, we begin to break down the walls of their trauma and emotional baggage and build up their self-esteem, self-confidence and academics.



I often refer to my class as the 2-Cline family.



Finding time to talk to students one on one makes a difference in the classroom.

Academics and positive education

In addition to establishing consistency and giving students an opportunity to regulate their emotions and self-advocate, we can also find ways to make our academic content more meaningful and relatable by infusing social-emotional learning into our lessons.

Several years ago, I attended a week-long Positive Education training and was fascinated by the idea of character strengths. After taking the character strength assessment myself, I decided this was something I needed my students to learn about. (See positivepsychology.com/what-is-positive-education/.)

Having incorporated lessons on many of the 24 character strengths into our early work, my students are able to discuss and support the character strengths demonstrated by Native Americans as they persevered through learning to live with the Pilgrims, Martin Luther King Jr. and his fight for civil rights, and the famous Black Americans who have contributed to our nation's history.

They notice bravery, fairness, leadership and love. They point out kindness, honesty and humor in historical figures. Then they even begin to notice those same character strengths in themselves and their classmates. Suddenly, the content has become relevant, and the discussions are more emotional. 🇺🇸

Changing the face of **ADDICTION**

By Mary Burns

The annual Changing the Face of Addiction Walk held in Franklin, Sussex County was started by physical education teacher Elaine Tizzano and me after we lost our sons to addiction. Both Elaine and I decided to turn tragedy into triumph by working toward changing the stigma that surrounds addiction. After our losses, we both felt that much needed to change regarding this misunderstood condition, so we partnered with the Center for Prevention and Counseling in Newton and began this walk.

The Center for Prevention and Counseling is a nonprofit agency that serves Sussex County. The center's mission, since 1973, has been to promote hope, health and recovery among all people by creating an environment that is safe and free from the effects of substance use and addiction. The center provides substance use prevention, evaluation, counseling and recovery support services to Sussex County

children, teens, adults and families regardless of cultural background, socioeconomic status, age, gender or sexual orientation.

The walk is intended to bring people whose lives have been affected by addiction and to change the stigma that surrounds this disorder. The ninth walk was held on August 5, 2023, with over 650 people in attendance raising over \$92,000. All money raised is used by the Center for Prevention and Counseling to help those without resources recover from substance use disorder.

Both Elaine and I are impressed with how the walk has grown over the past nine years. Only 225 people attended the first year. We also feel that we hit a nerve in our community.

Each year people come to walk in honor of someone in recovery, in support of someone who still struggles or in memory of a loved one lost. It is a place where people can hold their heads up high and be OK with what has happened in their lives. There is no stigma when they are at the walk, and there is no shame—something that is difficult to overcome when struggling with such an issue.

Mary Burns is a science teacher at Hopatcong High School and the author of Saving Eric, an International Firebird Award winner in the Addiction and Recovery Category. Elaine Tizzano is a physical education teacher in the Franklin Elementary School located in Franklin, Sussex County. Burns can be reached at burns@ptd.net.





The annual Changing the Face of Addiction Walk has grown in nine years from 225 participants to 650.

How addiction is perceived

Both Elaine and I feel that the “face” of addiction needs to be changed, but each of us sees the face differently.

Elaine sees the face in terms of how addiction is perceived. Addiction has always been seen as a moral failing, but that is not the case. Instead, the brain is changed by the drugs used.

According to Yale Medicine, the drugs that an individual uses changes the brain’s reward pathway. When the brain receives a stimulus that makes it feel good, it will want more of that stimulus. When a person develops an addiction to a substance, it’s because the brain has started to change. This happens because addictive substances trigger an outsized response when they reach the brain.

Instead of a simple, pleasurable surge of dopamine, many addictive drugs cause dopamine to flood the reward pathway. The brain remembers this surge and associates it with the addictive substance causing an individual to need to continue using these substances.

How addiction affects the individual

I see the face of addiction in the individual that struggles with the disease. Society doesn’t have a favorable image of individuals that struggle with addiction. These individuals

are often referred to in derogatory terms, such as, dirt bag, junkie, and other negative stereotypes.

I would like people to remember that these individuals are loved by many and include sons, daughters, mothers and fathers. This negative image needs to change.

Both Elaine and I saw that our sons had issues, but also potential and all we wanted was to see them well.

Changes to treatment needed

Getting treatment for someone who is ready to take steps toward recovery can be challenging. Insurance companies treat substance use disorder differently. Many require an individual go through outpatient treatment first before being given an opportunity to attend an inpatient program. Some companies will cover a 28-day in-patient stay while other companies may cover long-term treatment immediately paying for up to a years’ treatment.

In New Jersey, P.L. 2017, Chapter 28 requires insurance companies to cover 180 days of treatment per calendar year. While this might sound good, it requires that insurance companies cover only 28-days of inpatient treatment, which is not enough for most people to attain and maintain recovery.

I have worked with state legislators, Sen. Jon Bramnick

The Changing the Face of Addiction Walk raises funds for the Center for Prevention and Counseling. In 2023, the walk raised \$92,000.



Both Elaine and I decided to turn tragedy into triumph by working toward changing the stigma that surrounds addiction.

(R-Union) and former Senator Steve Oroho (R-Sussex) to change Chapter 28 to require insurance companies to cover 90-days of inpatient treatment. Unfortunately, the cost of such a change was deemed to be too expensive for policy holders so it won't be brought forth to committee for review or a vote.

In April 2019, Gov. Phil Murphy signed legislation (A-2031/S-1339), which requires health insurers to provide coverage for mental health conditions and substance use disorders under the same terms and conditions as provided for any other sickness. This was done to meet the requirements of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, a federal law enacted in 2008 requiring equal coverage for mental and physical health care services.

Even with the Parity Act many people still don't get proper treatment that they need to attain and maintain recovery. Many are still only given 28-days which, in my opinion, is not enough. Also, insurance companies often require outpatient treatment first.

My son, Eric, was required to go through outpatient treatment before our insurance company would pay for inpatient treatment. It was four months before inpatient treatment was afforded to him and Eric's addiction became much worse during that time.

Treatment needs to be immediate, aggressive and long-term for most people to successfully overcome their addictions.

Sharing our stories

Both Elaine and I are very open about our journeys with our sons. We both believe that people should feel comfortable about sharing their addiction journeys. Educating the public about this issue is paramount in trying to change the stigma, or face, that surrounds this issue.

I wrote a book called Saving Eric, which is about how my son's struggle became my struggle. Addiction doesn't just affect the struggling individual but all who love them as well. My book discusses my son's struggle with mental illness which ultimately leads him to become addicted to drugs.

In the beginning the drugs that Eric took alleviated his internal pain and, as he often said, allowed him to feel on top of the world. That feeling of exuberance disappears



Elaine Tizzano (l) and Mary Burns speaking at the Changing the Face of Addiction Walk.

once an addiction takes hold and then life becomes a living hell.

It is my hope that publishing my story will make those who struggle with a loved one that is addicted to not feel so alone. I also feel that it would make a good cautionary tale and can be used for drug education. In addition, I think that those who have never had a personal experience with trying to support someone with mental illness or an addiction issue would benefit from reading it to increase understanding of two very prevalent and devastating issues.

Help for families

When looking for treatment for a loved one, utilize your local state agencies and your own behavioral health care coverage phone number (on your insurance card) to vet reliable treatment resources.

In New Jersey, contact the New Jersey Department of Human Services REACHNJ hotline for more information at 844-732-2465 or 844-REACHNJ and/or review the list of recovery community centers at nj.gov/humanservices/reachnj/help/centers.

Refrain from using an internet search when looking for treatment. Many unscrupulous treatment centers spend their money on fancy advertising tactics and skimp out on their actual professional treatment services.

Concerns about parity

People who feel that they aren't getting appropriate treatment for substance use disorder or mental illness are encouraged to communicate concerns and complaints regarding parity by calling the Department of Banking and Insurance Consumer Hotline at 800-446-7467 (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday), or by going to the department website and clicking on Consumer Assistance – Inquiries/Complaints, at state.nj.us/dobi. 🗺

Need something fixed? Who you gonna call?

The invisible jobs and hazards of school custodial and building maintenance work

By Dorothy Wigmore

Schools need them. They're key health and safety prevention staff and problem-solvers. But they are often invisible, underappreciated until they're needed.

They are the custodial and building maintenance staff.

Take Paterson School District's Kleo Papadatos. He's a head custodian, monitoring the contract cleaners/custodians and doing basic preventive maintenance. At Paterson for 10 years, his responsibilities include the boiler, air quality, pest management and more.

When that heat matters, it's his first priority in the morning. After email, there's a walk-through—turning on lights, checking temperatures and rodent traps, listening for running toilets and dealing with whatever he finds. Other things get checked at other times: air filters, the hot water heater, exit and exterior lights, and the sump pump.

"It's just preventive stuff," he says, informed by a boiler's license, certification as an educational facilities manager, integrated pest management (IPM) coordinator training, qualifications as the designated person for indoor air quality issues, and experience.

With those skills, and what he's learned as a recent president of the Paterson Custodial and Maintenance

Association and part-time NJEA UniServ consultant, he's often asked about health and safety hazards.

"I think people who don't mind rocking the boat come to me saying, 'Hey, I've got this issue, what's going on?'" Papadatos says. "We work together and try to figure it out. If there's something going on in a teacher's room, and it's not getting done, I'll tell them 'These are the steps you need to take.'"

What about the job's hazards?

There are few studies about the hazards custodians face. One found that, over four years, school custodial workers' injury rates were four times more than the overall injury rate for other district jobs. The worst hazards involved cleaning and moving furniture, handling garbage, and cleaning washrooms and floors. Another found falls and slips were almost 30% of all injuries; 45% led to strains, sprains and ruptures, many in the upper body.

Despite video training about working at heights (e.g., on the roof), Papadatos has no fall protection. He wears headphones for the noise of the boiler next his office and, until recently, had rain coming in along its outside wall. (It got solved after several complaints.) Other custodians often have no window or fresh air in their spaces.

Walk-throughs mean he's inhaling airborne hazards (including viruses). When contractors do floor cleaning or stripping, he's glad the district uses only a hydrogen peroxide-based cleaner and that floor strippers are less nasty these days and used less often. Not all schools use less toxic products.

Despite safety glasses and knee or elbow pads, there still are awkward positions, heavy tools, electrical hazards and confined spaces. Custodians handling garbage may deal with infectious materials, sharp objects and heavy weights.

Dorothy Wigmore is a long-time health and safety specialist and New Jersey Work Environment Council consultant. She has worked in Canada, the U.S. and Mozambique, focusing on prevention and worker participation to solve job-related hazards.





Resources

Labor Occupational Health Program

Custodians of Safety: A Health and Safety Tip Sheet for School Custodians
bit.ly/cust-safe-tips

NJEA Review

"Safeguarding Custodians Promotes School Safety and Health," November 2015
njea.org/safe-custodians

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

Landscape and Horticultural Services
osha.gov/landscaping/hazards

Buildings and grounds workers need to "rock the boat" about their hazards, says Chris James. A carpenter by trade, he's been a Bridgewater-Raritan Regional District building maintenance worker for 15 years. A part-time NJEA UniServ consultant, James is the negotiations chair and a vice president for the Bridgewater-Raritan Education Association.

"We need to get over that fear and stick up for ourselves through a health and safety committee," he says. "They need to know it's okay to stick up for our rights, to be the one that says 'No, I'm not doing that off a stepladder; I need an elevated work platform.' That's often a stumbling block for our group. Sometimes you don't want to ask for help. But that's why we pay dues. That's why we have NJEA, to have our back."

Security is a big issue in his job. Inspections and lockdown drills lead to work orders to replace door locks. He spends a lot of time fixing other door parts so they open or close properly in a swipe card system. Concrete often heaves right outside a door, solved sometimes by chipping it out, repouring, and replacing the door threshold.

Besides hurry-up-wait aspects of their jobs, building workers deal with hazards like airborne silica from grinding concrete (it causes cancer and respiratory diseases), chemicals, working at heights (requiring fall protection devices, procedures and training), and asbestos.

Although the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) was passed in 1986, a study analyzing state school inspections between 2008 and 2017 found half the

schools (229) had damaged friable asbestos (the fibres can be easily crumbled) and 121 had airborne asbestos fibres. Worse still, many schools had no warning labels, no protection for custodial staff and others, and incomplete asbestos management plans, all legal requirements.

"Then there's the years of cake-layered dust, whether you're changing air filters or going above the ceiling, taking out ceiling tiles, doing any plumbing work," James says. "It's not just the asbestos."

Without standard procedures, he uses his high efficiency respirator while others wear less effective dust masks.

His co-worker groundskeepers deal with lawns, trees, sports fields and help move computers, art shows, and more. Their hazards include noise, poor equipment design, awkward positions, lifting and carrying, extreme temperatures and chemicals (including pesticides). Tree and other landscape work is particularly dangerous, leading to anything from cuts and sprains to death from falls or equipment roll-overs.

Why does this work matter?

"What we do, collectively, as a department, is try to make the learning environment the healthiest, safest and most comfortable place possible," James says. "We want our staff and students to breathe the healthiest air."

"I'm like an apartment building super," Papadatos says. "I run a building. I take care of everything. If you have an issue, you come tell me, I'll take care of it or help you figure out how to do that." 🏠



What can health and safety committees or local unions do?

Custodians and maintenance staff can be powerful partners to, or members of, local association health and safety committees. So the first step is to get to know your school district's custodians and building/grounds maintenance staff. Then:

- Use their skills and knowledge of the building's systems.
- Get their help to investigate, document and complain about hazards.
- Involve them in committees and discussions.
- Ask what hazards they face and how they should be fixed. Keep an eye out for ones they may miss. Support them to get proper protections.
- Oppose outsourcing/privatising custodial, janitorial and maintenance work.



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By the time you retire, you'll have paid off your life membership and never have to worry about keeping up to date with your dues again.

The benefits of NJREA membership

When you join NJREA, you'll belong to one of the largest retired public school employee organizations in the nation while maintaining your membership with NJEA, NEA-Retired, and your CREA, which can be in the county in which you worked or the county in which you reside.

In addition, you will receive the NJREA Newsletter, an award winning quarterly publication with information that keeps you informed about your pension, medical benefits, and more. You will continue to receive the NJEA Review, which has a section on retiree issues every month, as well as the NEA Today, retired edition.

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

NJREA members also receive:

- Personal Legal Services – Free consultation and a 30% discount on services
- Buyer's Edge, Inc. – Guaranteed best prices negotiated on your behalf on major purchases
- NEA Members Insurance Trust – Term life insurance
- Association sponsored auto and home insurance
- NJEA Member Discount Program
- Access Discounts – More than 315,000 discounts and counting
- Lowest prices on eyewear
- NJEA travel discounts
- NEA financial programs

NJREA resources at your fingertips!

NJREA's webpage, njea.org/njrea, provides a multitude of valuable information for retired public school employees, from information about Medicare to tips on benefits coverage while traveling to assistance for survivors.

One of the most frequently asked questions concerns the rules governing retired public school employees who would like to work or volunteer in New Jersey's public schools. The information in the "Working After Retirement" provides many answers on post-retirement employment.

GIVE THE GIFT OF NJREA MEMBERSHIP

Some local associations or friends of a retiree purchase memberships for retiring NJEA members. Local school district associations can do this to honor their retiring staff instead of giving them a plaque or clock. Children, grandchildren and friends can "gift" a membership for a relative, a colleague, or an already retired educator who doesn't really need another sweater or flannel shirt.

For more details about this opportunity, and payment information, call the NJEA Membership Division at 609-599-4594, ext. 4123.

NJREA HAS A DEDICATED PHONE LINE

Should you need to reach NJREA with a question or concern, please call us at 609-310-4546. To save you time listening to the "phone tree" options, here they are:

- Option 1:** NJREA officers
- Option 2:** Pension
- Option 3:** Medicare/Health Benefits
- Option 4:** Prudential Life Insurance and survivor benefits
- Option 5:** Member Benefits program
- Option 6:** NJREA website
- Option 7:** NJREA Newsletter and NJEA Review
- Option 8:** NJEA PAC
- Option 9:** NJREA Membership (address changes, membership cards, membership status, etc.)
- Option 0:** Any other questions

Around the counties

For questions and/or 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.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY REA

March 6: Winter meeting/luncheon at New Jersey Motorsports Park in Millville. Cost is \$33. To attend, call Pamela Garwood at 856-392-6909 by Feb. 28.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY REA

March 26: Laura Maltman Health and Wellness workshop and luncheon at the GCREA office in Woodbury. Cost is \$10 members, \$15 guests. To attend, call Margery Walsh at 856-381-1123 by March 20.

HUNTERDON COUNTY REA

April 25: Meeting/ brunch at Mountain View Chalet in Asbury. Cost is \$35. To attend, call Joyce Kucyn at 908-479-6656 by Dec. 4.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY REA

March 7: Spring 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 by Feb. 24.

MORRIS COUNTY REA

March 13: Spring 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 March 1.

OCEAN COUNTY REA

March 14: Spring meeting/luncheon at Clarion Hotel in Toms River. Cost is \$28. To attend, call Maryann Tomborello by March 1 at 732-323-0346.

PASSAIC COUNTY REA

March 27: Spring meeting/luncheon at the Brownstone House in Paterson. To attend, call Kitty Sausa at 201-445-7577.

SUSSEX COUNTY REA

April 8: Spring luncheon/meeting at Farmstead Country Club. Cost is \$34. To attend, call Elaine Freda at 973-219-3029 by April 1.

WARREN COUNTY REA

April 3: Meeting/luncheon at Hawk Pointe Golf Club in Washington. Registration required by March 27. Luncheon is \$30. To register, go to warrencountyrea.org/meetings.



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Instructional coaching as a transformative experience

By Richard Wilson



Elena Aguilar will keynote the NJEA Transform Conference on April 20. To register, visit njea.org/transform.

Many school districts have turned to instructional coaching as an intensive individualized professional development experience for teachers, leading to better teaching and increased student learning.

Like most large-scale initiatives, coaching comes with mixed results. One teacher might be able to cite examples of coaching that have challenged them to explore new techniques and ways of addressing challenges of their students. Another might have an experience of broken trust and suspicion that a coach is acting in an evaluative manner.

Until recently, there was little professional development available for coaches themselves, and often districts would move great teachers into coaching positions without really providing the training needed for those involved in the work. Success with children does not necessarily translate into the ability to work with adults.

There might be some overlap between andragogy (adult learning) and pedagogical techniques used with children, but there are also some serious distinctions, and an ill-prepared coach can be a recipe for disaster, leading to unnecessary conflict between colleagues.

The creation of the New Jersey teacher leader endorsement and the programs approved to prepare teacher leaders offer valuable learning opportunities for current and potential instructional coaches. The NJEA Teacher Leader Academy, a New Jersey Department of Education approved program of study leading to

the teacher leader endorsement, leans heavily on the work of author and researcher Elena Aguilar in preparing candidates for working as an instructional coach.

In her work, *The Art of Coaching*, Aguilar lays out her approach to transformational coaching.

She sees the scope of coaching to address three domains:

- The individual teacher and their behavior, beliefs and being.
- The institutions and systems in which the teacher works and the people who work within those systems.
- The broader educational and social systems in which we live.

So, while a transformational coach may be working with an individual teacher in exploring their behaviors, beliefs and ways of being, the coach is also mindful of the impact of the school, the district, and the broader social systems as well as the teacher's impact on those systems.

In this way, coaching is so much more than a deficit model of "fixing" teachers, supporting the roll out of new curriculum, or serving as a provider of resources for busy educators. As a union, the approach is attractive because it looks not only at the individual teacher, but the health and well-being of the entire system and the impact these have on student learning.

In this way, the instructional coach is in the perfect position to examine the system through the eyes of many stakeholders. Coaches often are part of school leadership teams, and they have a close connection to educators in the classroom. Thus, they have a deeper understanding of the aims and goals of the larger system and the impact that these goals have in the classroom and on student learning.

No matter which side of a coaching relationship you're on, you can learn more about this approach to transformational coaching from Elena Aguilar herself as she keynotes the NJEA Professional Development Transform Conference on April 20.

You can also learn more about transformational coaching and all the other aspects of teacher leadership by joining the NJEA Teacher Leader Academy. More information can be found at njea.org/tla.

Richard Wilson is an associate director in the NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division. He is the coordinator of the NJEA Teacher Leader Academy. He can be reached at rwilson@njea.org.



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MULTIPLE MEANS OF ASSESSMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

BY IZABELLE KING

Assessment is a crucial part in many students' learning processes. Using a single method to assess every student's ability and knowledge can be harmful to both their sense of self-worth and their retention of content and ideas. A one-size-fits-all assessment can also provide inaccurate information about their progress. Multiple means of assessment can better demonstrate a student's knowledge.

Project-based assessments

Incorporating multiple means of assessment in your classroom can be difficult but will allow your students to grow in your classroom. Project-based assessments are a way to add additional ways by which to assess student achievement, allowing students to show their knowledge in a creative way. Project-based assessments have the added benefit of keeping students engaged in what they are learning.

Portfolio assessments

Offering students the opportunity to create a comprehensive portfolio of what they have learned throughout the year is yet another measure of their growth. Portfolios can include anything students have worked on. They give the students a way to consider their own growth as they learn.

Class discussions and oral presentations

Finally, class discussions or oral presentations give students an opportunity to talk about their knowledge. Students can articulate their thoughts, while showing communication skills and engaging with other classmates. This can help students of all learning styles.

As students participate in a whole class discussion, they are able to bounce ideas off each other and learn new things. Oral presentations give students an opportunity to practice their presentation skills, while talking about a subject in which they have gained knowledge.

Multiple means of assessment allow every student to show what they know, in a way that best suits them and continues the learning process. Whether its project-based assessments or oral presentations, each assessment type will allow for a broader range of learners to be nurtured.

Izabelle King is a student at Rider University and represents NJEA Preservice on the NJEA Instruction Committee.

ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

By Amy Moran, Ph.D. and Kate Okeson

Since September of 2021, “Rainbow Connection” has engaged members with resources, methods and support to create safer, more affirming schools for LGBTQIA+ youth, educators and school professionals. In schools, queer and trans teachers face similar challenges to those of our LGBTQIA+ youth counterparts, but most of the time we don’t have the benefit of our own GSAs or queer-affirming spaces to gather, share and take action.

While certain demographic data is clear, sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data is harder to come by. 2020 estimates put the number of LGBTQIA+ New Jerseyans at somewhere between 300,00 and 400,000, or just over 4%, with that percentage likely being represented among teachers and school employees too. LGBTQIA+ educators everywhere—whatever the numbers—deserve affirmation and support.

Hillsborough Education Association members, seeking a more secure and supportive space to be their authentic selves at work, initiated an LGBTQ+ Affinity Group in their district. Meetings helped the small group feel more empowered. They recognized that if they weren’t feeling great about things at school, students probably felt similar. In 2022, they partnered with the local YMCA to organize a Pride event that included the district middle school and high school GSAs, and in 2023, HEA President Henry Goodhue asked them to become an official committee!

The new HEA LGBTQ+ Alliance Committee, a multigenerational affinity group, responds to the needs and goals of its members by meeting regularly, sponsoring community events and hosting signature events for students throughout the school year. Their organizational goals were formed with student input: support LGBTQIA+ inclusive curricula and be visible—including on the district website.

Their first official event, “Voices Unveiled: A Spotlight on LGBTQ+ Student Experiences,” was carefully curated to lift up the voices of queer students through personal

Amy Moran, Ph.D. and Kate Okeson (both she/her) are out queer educators, leaders and agitators working to make education affirming and inclusive for all of their students and colleagues. Moran has taught middle school for 29 years and was a high school GSA adviser for 16 years. Okeson is a 26-year art educator, GSA adviser for 14 years, local association president, and co-founder/program director of Make it Better for Youth.



HEA LGBTQ+ Alliance Committee at Voices Unveiled: A Spotlight on LGBTQ+ Student Experiences. From left (top): Rebecca Balaguer, HHS/SAC School Counselor; Lisa White, HMS School Counselor/SAC/GSA; Debra Porowski, HMS Vice Principal; Jeannette Sena, OT/Alliance Chair; Bill Singer, Esq. Bottom from left: Gabriella Graziano-LoPresti, HHS Health Services Secretary; Stephanie Moore, HES/4th grade; Ian Evans, HMS/7th Literacy.

narratives, with a kickoff presentation by the HEA LGBTQ+ Alliance Committee.

The event was for queer community and “co-conspirators”—with opting-in opportunities for all students and faculty. It provided the audience with education and background to prepare them for the personal storytelling they would engage with. These stories illuminated the more complex intersectional challenges students face daily, based on their intersectional racial, ethnic, gender and sexual identities.

Particular attention was given to the student GSA participants speaking to the invitation-only group, with special organizing attention toward SEL issues, consent, and safety for students before, during, and after the event.

Occupational therapist Jeannette Sena, the committee’s chair, said the event was:

...aimed at amplifying the voices of queer students and fostering understanding within the broader school community. It centered a series of powerful and personal narratives shared by students who bravely recounted their unique experiences as LGBTQ+ individuals in a school setting.

The diverse range of stories illuminated the challenges and triumphs faced by queer students, fostering empathy and encouraging an open dialogue. The event drew a substantial turnout, with both students and faculty members in attendance. Attendees actively engaged with the speakers, asking thoughtful questions that further enriched the conversation.

The HEA LGBTQ+ Alliance Committee’s commitment to creating a space where students can authentically share their stories not only contributes to a more inclusive school environment but also promotes empathy, understanding, and allyship among the entire school community.

Happily, the committee is seeing growing support in participation and queer-affirmation work more widely in their district, bringing their mission to life: advocate, educate, inspire and support LGBTQ+ faculty, students, and community to make safer schools and illuminate LGBTQ+ joy!

Let us know about what’s happening in your district at rainbowconnectionnJEA@gmail.com!



For additional resources, scan this QR code. And share your thoughts and ideas with us at rainbowconnectionnJEA@gmail.com.



What would you do if
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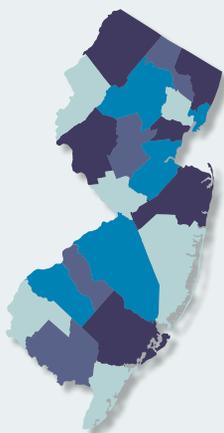


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SUSSEX TO CAPE MAY

Workshops and conferences

HIGHLIGHTS

Social workers, TV and film, Theresienstadt, civics and history

THERESIENSTADT RECONSIDERED

A free professional development minicourse, Theresienstadt Reconsidered, will be held on three consecutive Tuesdays, March 12, 19, and 26, from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m., on the Rutgers University College Avenue Campus. The minicourse is presented under the auspices of the Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center (HRC) and the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers University.

Theresienstadt served an important propaganda function for the Germans. Many prominent artists, musicians and cultural figures were deported there, and it served as a “model” camp for visits by the International Red Cross. Through a focus on material objects, family archives, art, women’s experiences and oral histories, teachers will learn how to introduce students to this major Holocaust site using a variety of different sources and methodological approaches. The minicourse will be taught by Justin Cammy, professor and chair of Jewish studies and world literatures at Smith College and the Aresty Visiting Scholar this spring at the Bildner Center.

The workshop is open to middle and high school educators, and it includes educational materials, professional development credits and dinner. Applicants should have at least one year of teaching experience and at least one year of involvement with Holocaust/genocide education or currently be pursuing a Master of Education degree.

Advance registration is required by Feb. 23.

Location: Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center at Rutgers University

Date/Time: Three-sessions: March 12, 19, and 26; 4:30 p.m.–7:00 p.m.

Cost: Free (educational materials, continuing education credits, and dinner included)

For more details: visit bit.ly/bildner-spring24.

For further information: email Sarah Portilla at sarah.portilla@rutgers.edu.

SELF CARE: STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BURNOUT FOR SOCIAL WORKERS AND OTHER PROVIDERS IN THE SCHOOL SETTING

School-based Social Workers and other providers are typically tasked with multiple roles and responsibilities, large caseloads, and often experiencing high levels of compassion and stress. Presented by the New Jersey Association of School Social Workers, this workshop will discuss the signs of excessive stress and burnout, as well as psychological barriers that may be encountered when attempting to break the cycle of burnout. Concrete strategies for successfully implementing and monitoring self-care plans will be provided.

The workshop will be led by Dr. Bianca Coleman, a state-licensed psychologist a Nationally certified School Psychologist, and a board-certified behavior analyst. Dr. Coleman has extensive experience working with individuals presenting with development disabilities, disruptive behavior, feeding, and sleeping problems, social skills deficits, as well as attention and executive functioning concerns.

Location: On-Line (Zoom)

Date/Time: March 5; 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Earn: 2 CEH/PDH

Cost: NJASSW member – \$30; Nonmembers – \$35; Student/Retiree – \$25

2024 TV AND FILM EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Are you a TV and film teacher? Mark your calendar and request professional development release time from your district to attend the 2024 TV and Film Education Conference. The conference is free to attend. High school film and TV production educators from across New Jersey will come together to discuss curricula, student-centered projects, software, live streaming and video competitions.

Location: Montclair Film, 505 Bloomfield Ave, Montclair

Date/Time: March 15; 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Cost: 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

For more information and to register: Noah Galembo, ngalembo@hillsidek12.org.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CIVICS AND HISTORY

The New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University is offering one-day workshops on a variety of civics and history topics. The workshops are supported by state funds and free to all New Jersey teachers. All of the workshops will be held at Rutgers University in Piscataway. They all start at 8:30 a.m., include lunch, and conclude by 3 p.m. Teachers can register by going to civiced.rutgers.edu/events/range.listevents.

March 5: Project Citizen (grades 3-12)

Project Citizen is a research-tested national program that helps teachers guide their students through the development of a proposed solution to a public policy issue. The workshop will focus on how the program can be used to help students understand and develop the skills and dispositions needed to assume the important role of "citizen."

March 19: Infusing Civics, Economics and New Jersey history into High School U.S. History

The inclusion of civics, economics and New Jersey history in the high school curriculum is required by statute. This

workshop will provide free, online resources and ideas to help high school teachers enhance their U.S. history courses, engage their students, and meet these statutory requirements.

April 3: Teaching Controversial issues and Media Literacy (K-12)

Join us for strategies and lessons to help navigate the current highly partisan political climate while providing students with the media literacy skills they need to address controversial issues as citizens.

April 16: Civics for grades K-5

A foundation for civic literacy needs to start in elementary grades. Research also shows that teaching social studies content can help students with literacy skills. This workshop will provide age-appropriate teaching strategies and lessons for elementary students.

May 9: Engaging Students in Middle School Civics

This workshop provides teachers with sample content, strategies, and programs that will engage students and meet the 2022 middle school civics mandate.



EARN 12 GRADUATE CREDITS*



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.

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*12 credits offered through Thomas Edison State College



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Best apps and links for travel

By the NJEA Technology Committee



Do you tend to get overwhelmed with making arrangements for travel? Finding the best flights, best time to travel and the top hotel accommodations to book can take you for a loop. We have gathered some of the top travel apps and links to make your travel seamless.

NJEA-endorsed travel providers

NEA Travel Program

neamb.com/products/nea-travel-dollars

Save up to 60% on travel including hotels, cruises, car rentals, and more. Plus, earn NEA Travel Dollars along the way to use like cash when you book through NEA Member Benefits.

Buyer's Edge Travel

buyersedgeinc.com/travel

[Group #: 3386 Password: NJEA]

As a member of NJEA/Buyer's Edge, Inc. you have exclusive access to the Buyer's Edge Inc. Discount Travel Center. They have partnered with America's leading travel companies and cruise lines so that you can travel for less with exclusive discounts not available to the general public, hundreds of last-minute deals and the ability to book online or call a travel specialist.

Non NJEA-endorsed travel apps and links

All Trails

alltrails.com

All Trails focuses on spending time in nature. If you are driven by the desire to share the outdoors with as many people in as many places as possible—and to do so responsibly and respectfully—check out All Trails more than 400,000 curated trails.

BringFido

bringfido.com

BringFido is a pet travel site. Explore over 500,000 pet friendly places to stay, play and eat with your pet.

Busbud

busbud.com/en

Busbud offers fast booking for going by bus. It manages and cancels your trips with ease, saves your payment method and billing information, and saves up to five passengers to your account.

Citymapper

Search for this app on [iOS](#) and [Android](#).

Citymapper helps travelers find the speediest route to their destinations, providing step-by-step instructions on where to find the nearest bus and train stations. You'll be able to see when the next arrivals are, and real-time routing means you'll get updates every minute. The app also has a chat feature that allows you to update friends and family on your estimated time of arrival wherever you are.

Culture Trip

theculturetrip.com

Culture Trip is an app to discover and book trips, places to stay, and experiences that are curated by a global community of travel experts and local insiders.

Glamping Hub

glampinghub.com

Find yourself a furnished yurt, an outfitted safari cabin, or a simple bell tent for your next getaway on Glamping Hub. This site lets you book "unique outdoor accommodations," and it's ideal for people who love the great outdoors but don't own any of the gear.

Google Travel

google.com/travel/flights

This site includes flights, hotel, vacation rentals, exploring, and things to do.

Hipcamp

hipcamp.com/en-US

With Hipcamp, you can find public parks as well as private land where you can set up a tent or sleep the night in one that's already set up for you. The site lets you find and book tent camping spots, RV parks, cabins, treehouses, and glamping. It works in the U.S. Australia, Canada, France and the UK.

PackPoint

Search for this app on iOS and Android.

The PackPoint App creates a customized list of what you'll need for your getaway. Enter your destination, travel dates, length of stay, and activities that might require special gear, such as hiking or swimming, and the app will create a custom packing list you can save for future use. Besides checking weather conditions for you, the app also allows users to share their packing lists with fellow travelers.

PitchUp:

pitchup.com/en-us

Search for this app on iOS and Android.

You can book 5,344 campgrounds, glamping parks and RV parks throughout the Americas, Europe and the UK. There is also local bike info, walking routes, pubs and nearby events.

Roadtrippers

roadtrippers.com

Search off the beaten path for places to visit using a database containing millions of interesting locations in the U.S., Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Roadtrippers help people discover the world around them in an entirely new way by streamlining discovery, planning, booking and navigation into an engaging and intuitive process.

Skyscanner

skyscanner.com

Want a trip but don't mind where? Or perhaps you want to discover somewhere new. Search "Everywhere" for the cheapest flight anywhere on any given day. The sight also uses Price to track the price of plane tickets for you. Skyscanner lets you know via email or the app if the price goes up or down.

Skiplagged

skiplagged.com

Skiplagged makes it easy for you to find the best rates on airfare and hotels.

TripCase

Search for this app on iOS and Android.

TripCase is a free app that helps you organize your trip by making an itinerary for you. The itinerary can include flights, accommodations, rental cars, restaurant reservations and more. To make an itinerary, you forward travel confirmation emails to TripCase, and the app does the rest.

Triplt

tripit.com/web

Triplt helps you keep track of your flights, hotels, car rentals, confirmation numbers, and other details—all in one place—so you don't have to search through multiple emails or apps to find what you need.

The Dyrt

thedyrt.com

However you camp—in a tent, trailer, RV, or cabin—The Dyrt helps you find resources and connections to the most active camping community in the world.

Viator

viator.com

Viator has more than 300,000+ experiences to explore—everything from simple tours to extreme adventures.

Wanderu:

wanderu.com/en-us

Wanderu is a travel search platform that helps travelers find the best deals on bus and train tickets across North America and Europe. Use the Wanderu website or app, you can compare bus and train schedules and prices from hundreds of travel companies. Wanderu's checkout process makes it easy to book your bus and train tickets.

We hope that you are able to use these travel apps and links to help make your next adventure a great one!

The NJEA Technology Committee

Sabina Ellis, Essex County, Committee Chair

Daniel Abbadessa, Hudson County

David Ahn, Bergen County

Annice Benamy, Union County

Christopher Bowman, Burlington County

Daniel Cyckowski, Somerset County

Laurie Floyd, Monmouth County

Olive Giles, Mercer County

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Furniture-Mattresses	800-631-0286	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
Kitchen Cabinets	800-327-3599	...and many more!	

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njea Member Benefits



Get sweet deals on classic Valentine's Day gifts



For people who have little time to shop, let your NEA/NJEA member benefits help you make a memorable impression for the ones you love. Find out how to save on the big three—flowers, chocolate and jewelry—so you can express your love without spending a fortune.

Check out the suggested retailers below and more at the NEA Discount Marketplace found at neamb.com/marketplace. Navigate to "Flowers & Florists" and "Food & Restaurants" to find cash back offers on Valentine's Day goodies.

Flowers

As an NEA member, you'll receive cash back when you purchase from the 1800Flowers.com family of brands through the NEA Discount Marketplace. 1800Flowers.com, along with 1800Baskets.com, carries the freshest flowers and finest selection of plants, gift baskets, gourmet foods, confections and plush stuffed animals—perfect for Valentine's Day.



Jewelry

For gift ideas, click the Gifts tab at Swarovski to find a range of jewelry selections for men and women, many priced under \$150.

You'll also find a selection of classic and stylish jewelry for men, women and children at Macy's.

When you shop these retailers and other top jewelers through NEA Discount Marketplace, you can find discounts, plus earn cash back when you shop.



Chocolates

Search NEA Discount Marketplace for sweet deals on chocolates and other treats from retailers such as Godiva and Ghirardelli. You also can get cash back the entire 1800Flowers.com family of brands, including Harry & David, The Popcorn Factory, Simply Chocolate and more.



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

Questions? Email Beth Buonsante at bbuonsante@njea.org.

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NJEA Delegate Assembly

The NJEA Delegate Assembly met at the Doubletree-Hilton Hotel and Conference Center, 200 Atrium Drive, Somerset, NJ on Saturday, May 21, 2022, at 9:30 a.m.

Roll Call was taken. There were 114 out of 127 delegates present. Alternates were seated as follows: Kronyak (Bergen) for Avallone, Warren (Bergen) for Murphy, Policastro (Bergen) for Phillips, Hewitt (Burlington) for Bowman, Meyers for Zahn (Camden), Rankin (Cumberland) for Roche, Healey (Gloucester) for Kosar, Picca (Hudson) for Bove, Curry (Hudson) for Moncao, Kiefer (Hunterdon) for DeScala, Hopkins (Mercer) for Rarich, Lewis (Middlesex) for Salinas, Reilly (Monmouth) for Koumoulis, Montanti (Monmouth) for DeWitt, Barilka, for Vistein, Shaw (Ocean) for Junker, Sims (Passaic) for Baker, Frain (Somerset) for Fuller, Parr-Allen (Union) for Palin, and Durkin (Warren) for Jones-Brown.

Absent without alternates were the following: Rheault (Atlantic), Pildis (Camden), Robinson-Taylor (Camden), Woods (Hudson), Pastore (Hudson), Gitto (Hunterdon), Rocha (Hunterdon), Watkins (Monmouth), Shannon (Union), Farhat (Higher Ed).

Dan Epstein, Somerset County, gave the Inspirational Message and led the delegation in the Flag Salute.

President's report

President Sean M. Spiller asked for a moment of silence for the latest gun violence victims who were gunned down in Buffalo, N.Y.

Spiller requested adoption the Delegate Assembly Rules without objection and, seeing no objection, he then asked to adopt the agenda with flexibility. There was no objection.

Spiller asked NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty to introduce the 2021-2022 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year, Theresa Maughan, who teaches high school social studies in East Orange STEM Academy in East Orange, N.J. Beatty welcomed her, and she was presented with flowers and the N.J. State Teacher of the Year ring.

Spiller introduced Rich Askey, president of the Pennsylvania State Education Association, who addressed the delegation about what is happening in Pennsylvania and thanked Spiller for the invitation.

Spiller highlighted the following:

- Nominations for at-large positions were stricken from the agenda because based on election results, those nominations were not needed.
- Spiller recognized NJREA President Joan Wright and NJREA, which recently held its 100th anniversary celebration, albeit delayed two years by the pandemic.
- Spiller thanked everyone for their continued focus on PAC.
- Spiller also reported on the State Board of Education—going on year five—with a State Board whose members were mostly appointed by the previous governor.

Vice president's report

Vice President Steve Beatty highlighted the following:

- 200K Conversations.
- Visits with the NJEA Preservice chapter at TCNJ, and other campuses around the state.
- NJEA Preservice program and the successes coming from the program.

He thanked Preservice staff contact, Marguerite Schroeder, and Program Assistant Jen Roche, and Theresa Maughan, 2022 STOY, for all their work.

Report of Secretary-Treasurer

Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson presented the NJEA fiscal report.

Robertson highlighted the following:

- Correspondence from Maud Dahme, who expressed thanks and that of her three grandchildren for the flowers and gift NJEA sent on the passing of her daughter.
- Work with Henry Goodhue, Hillsborough EA president, and the organizers of the Hopewell Starbucks.
- Presentation of the budget and the good work on the budget that was created.
- Hope and Healing and R.I.S.E. Conferences coming up during the summer.
- Joan Wright, who is the NJREA's tireless advocate and that May is all about membership.

Report of the Executive Director

Executive Director Steve Swetsky spoke about the Affirmative Action for Staff Employment Statistical Information report, which is a report required by D.A. policy and goes back to 1976, and is a part of our racial, social, economic justice agenda within NJEA.

Nondelegate Speakers

Jon Coniglio, president of Dover Education Association, Morris County, thanked everyone for the updates on the D.A. portion of the NJEA website, and the Budget Committee. He stated that he would like to see an annual survey or a regular check-in with local presidents regarding local UniServ offices and their relationships with the field representatives.

Reports of Committees without Recommendations

There was one report from the Affirmative Action for Staff Employment Statistical Information, which was included in the report to the Delegate Assembly for review. Ann Kaspereen, Warren County made a motion to accept the report.

Reports of Committees with Recommendations

Constitution Review Committee Report

Scott Elliott, Warren County, interim chair of the Constitution Review Committee, spoke to the report regarding a proposal for a bylaw to suspend the formula freeze dues and recommends under Article 52 of the NJEA Bylaws.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 1: ...that NJEA temporarily suspend the application of the dues increase formula for the fiscal year 2022-2023 only by amendment of Bylaw 1 "Dues" to be amended as follows:

"...that the Bylaws be amended effective September 1, 2022, by adding the following new section to the end of Bylaw 1, Dues: "(i) Temporary Dues Formula Suspension – Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws to the contrary, the dues for

active professional, active supportive, and retired members shall be maintained at 2021-2022 dues level for the 2022-2023 fiscal year only, and the dues amount for the 2023-2024 fiscal year shall be determined by applying the normal percent increase calculated in 2022-2023 to the base dues amount in effect for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, utilizing the formulas specified in Bylaw 1 (a), (b), and (e). This paragraph shall be deleted from the Bylaws on September 1, 2023."

There were questions and discussion from the delegation. The recommendation was moved by Ann Margaret Shannon, Union County, and seconded by Chris Canella, Essex County. The motion carried.

Scott Elliott, Warren County spoke to the report for the Committee regarding rule recommendations 2 and 3.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2: ...that NJEA establish a disability membership tier.

Constitutional Amendment Question 1:

Shall the following amendments to the NJEA Constitution, Article III – Membership, be adopted as shown?

NJEA Constitution (to be added under Article III – Membership):

"Disability Retirement Members

Active members, upon applying for disability retirement or Tier 4 or 5 Long Term Disability, may continue to enjoy all rights and services, including the right to vote, but not to be elected to office, by payment of the annual dues as a disability retirement member.

In addition, any active member applying for disability retirement membership must be verified by the Director of NJEA Research and Economic Services at the time of application, as well as before the beginning of any new membership year in which the member applies for continuous membership within this category.

Eligibility for membership within this category will cease when:

(1) the member is granted disability retirement or long-term disability (as defined by Tier 4 and 5) by the State of New Jersey, or

(2) the member is denied disability retirement or long-term disability (as defined by Tier 4 and 5) by the State of New Jersey, including appropriate appeals, or

(3) the member returns to regular employment."

(1) the member is granted disability retirement or long-term disability (as defined by Tier 4 and 5) by the State of New Jersey, or

(2) the member is denied disability retirement or long-term disability (as defined by Tier 4 and 5) by the State of New Jersey, including appropriate appeals, or

(3) the member returns to regular employment."

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3: "...that the Bylaws be amended to establish a Disability Membership Tier as follows:

NJEA Bylaws (to be added under Section 1. Dues)

Disability Retirement Members

The dues for any active member qualifying for Disability Retirement Membership as outlined in the NJEA Constitution shall be:

(1) three hundred-fifty (\$350) dollars for Professional members, and

(2) two hundred (\$200) dollars for ESP members.

This shall be a flat rate for the full membership year and shall not be pro-rated or refundable.

Ann Kaspereen, Warren County, moved the report recommendations, seconded by Kathleen Paterek, Morris County. The motion carried.

Budget Committee Report

NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson presented the association budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year and answered questions.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 1: that the New Jersey Education Association operating budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year in the amount of \$139,974,300 as listed in the 2022-2023 budget proposal Appendix A be adopted.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 2: that the New Jersey Education Association Pride public relations budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year in the amount of \$12,452,500 as listed in the 2022-2023 budget proposal Appendix A be adopted.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 3: that the New Jersey Education Association Capital Fund budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year in the amount of \$2,782,400 as listed in the 2022-2023 budget proposal Appendix A be adopted.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 4: that the New Jersey Education Association Disaster Relief Fund budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year in the amount of \$325,000 as listed in the 2022-2023 budget proposal Appendix A be adopted.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 5: that no cost center be overspent without a review by the Budget Committee and action by the Delegate Assembly at its regularly scheduled meetings or by the Executive Committee during the months of June, July, and August, as provided for in the Constitution and Bylaws.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 6: that the Secretary/Treasurer notify the Budget Committee of any over-budget lines in the audit as soon as possible, but no later than prior to the presentation of the audit at the December Budget Committee meeting with explanation of those items over budget.

Michael Wildermuth of Middlesex County moved recommendations 1 through 6 as a block. Stacey Salerno, Cape May County seconded. The motion carried and the budget was adopted.

NEA Activities Committee Report

NEA Activities Committee Chair Tamara Beatty delivered the committee's report, which contained the following recommendations:

RULE RECOMMENDATION 1: that the state delegate stipend for the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly be set at \$1,799 to cover food, incidentals, and travel, as indicated in Appendix A, with \$595.20 deducted for the cost of direct billing the hotel room for six nights based on double occupancy per delegate. Members of the NJEA Executive Committee or Delegate Assembly who have been elected delegates at the state or local level will also receive this stipend. Of the adjusted state delegate stipend, \$800 will be paid at the June caucus and the remaining \$403.80 balance will be paid at the conclusion of the Representative Assembly with the reading of the proposed titles of constitutional amendments

for the following year.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 2: that the local delegate stipend for the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly be set at \$599 to cover food, incidentals, and travel, as indicated in appendix B. The hotel cost will be paid through direct billing totaling \$595.20 for six nights based on double occupancy per delegate. The local delegate stipend of \$599 will be paid at the conclusion of the Representative Assembly with the reading of the proposed titles of constitutional amendments for the following year. The checks will be dispersed at the Chicago Hilton.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 3: that all local and state New Jersey delegates to the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly who are eligible for NJEA funding, based on the amount determined by the Delegate Assembly, shall be required to stay in the delegation hotel, the Chicago Hilton 720 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago IL 60605. The waiver procedure previously approved by the Delegate Assembly shall be clearly delineated to all delegates receiving funding from NJEA. Failure to comply with these provisions shall result in a reduction of one-half the amount paid in the final NEA R.A. check.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 4: that the Virtual delegate stipend for the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly be set at \$599 to cover food and internet service, as indicated in Appendix C. 145 NEA Activities Committee Report to the Delegate Assembly May 21, 2022. The virtual delegate stipend of \$599 will be mailed at the conclusion of the Representative Assembly.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 5: that all delegates shall be required to attend all business sessions of the NEA Representative Assembly in which NEA officers are nominated, issues are debated, and policies are formed. Failure of any delegate to fully comply may result in the reduction and/or withholding of the final convention check. Delegates and/or their affiliate locals who are found to have circumvented the requirements may face prospective penalties which could result in a loss of financial support, sanctions, or other penalties that may be recommended by the NEA Activities Committee to the NJEA president.

Maryann Kronyak of Bergen County, moved recommendations 1 through 5 as a block. Laurie Schorno of Morris County requested that recommendations 1 and 2 be considered separately from 3-5. Both were seconded and the body voted to consider them separately.

Recommendations 3-5 were duly seconded and adopted.

Schorno moved that the reimbursement in Recommendation 1 be increased by \$300. It was duly seconded.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 1 (amended): that the state delegate stipend for the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly be set at [\$1,799] ~~\$2,099~~ to cover food, incidentals, and travel, as indicated in Appendix A, with \$595.20 deducted for the cost of direct billing the hotel room for six nights based on double occupancy per delegate. Members of the NJEA Executive Committee or Delegate Assembly who have been elected delegates at the state or local level will also receive this stipend. Of the adjusted state delegate stipend, \$800 will be paid at the June caucus and the remaining \$403.80 balance will be paid at the conclusion of the Representative Assembly with the reading of the proposed titles of constitutional amendments for the following year.

The amended Recommendation 1 was adopted.

Schorno moved that the reimbursement in Recommendation 2 be increased by \$300. It was duly seconded.

Spiller explained that the local delegate reimbursement in Recommendation 2 is formula-based in connection to the reimbursement for state delegates in Recommendation 1. Thus, a \$300 increase could lead to local delegates receiving a higher reimbursement. A motion to suspend the rules would be needed to consider and adopt a \$300 increase in Recommendation 2.

Schorno moved to suspend the rules to increase the reimbursement in Recommendation 2 by \$300, a motion that requires a 2/3 majority. The motion was duly seconded. The motion failed.

Chris Cannella, Essex, asked if the formula thus modified the reimbursement in Recommendation 2 automatically with no vote needed to amend it.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 2 (modified): that the local delegate stipend for the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly be set at [\$599] ~~\$699~~ to cover food, incidentals, and travel, as indicated in appendix B. The hotel cost will be paid through direct billing totaling \$595.20 for six nights based on double occupancy per delegate. The local delegate stipend of \$599 will be paid at the conclusion of the Representative Assembly with the reading of the proposed titles of constitutional amendments for the following year. The checks will be dispersed at the Chicago Hilton.

Schorno moved Recommendation 2. It was adopted as modified.

Public Relations Committee

Donna Reaver, chair of the Public Relations Committee, presented the recommendations of the committee. She moved Recommendations 1-4 in block.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 1: that the following Pride in Public Education grant funding formulas and overall procedures be administered for approved local and county association Pride projects and activities: All Pride in Public Education grant proposals must stay within the allocated budget to ensure adequate funding is available to all associations for promotion of a positive public image for public education in New Jersey on the state, county, and local levels. Total requested Pride funding cannot exceed yearly budgeted Pride allocations.

For local associations:

- All Pride funding for local associations will be based upon the number of dues-paying members in each local association.
- The scale below will be used to compute available Pride funds for the 2021-22 school year. All calculations will be made using only verified, dues paying members as indicated by the NJEA Membership Accounts Receivable System (MARS).
- 1-25 members: \$100 per member
- 26-50 members: \$90 per member
- 51-75 members: \$80 per member
- 76-100 members: \$75 per member
- 101-125 members: \$65 per member
- 126-150 members: \$60 per member
- 151-200 members: \$55 per member
- 201-300 members: \$50 per member
- 301-500 members: \$45 per member
- 501-800 members: \$40 per member
- 801-1,000 members: \$35 per member

- 1,001-2,000 members: \$30 per member
- 2,001-3,000 members: \$25 per member
- 3,001 + members: \$20 per member

For county associations

- For the 2021-2022 school year, county associations will continue the same budgetary allotment as in previous years.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 2: that the following parameters be implemented for reimbursement of meals approved as part of Pride in Public Education local and county grant programs:

Local and county associations

- All meals purchased for any Pride event may not exceed the following reimbursement maximums, inclusive of tax and gratuity. Should any meal exceed the maximum reimbursement as listed below, the difference shall be the sole responsibility of the local or county association.
 - Light meals (pizza, sandwiches, etc.) – \$12 per person maximum
 - Breakfast – \$10 per person maximum
 - Lunch – \$15 per person maximum
 - Dinner – \$33 per person maximum*
- Alcoholic beverages and bartender fees will not be reimbursed.
- Any time Pride funds refreshments or meals, table-top signs must recognize the local or county association's funding of the event, not NJEA, the school district, or the higher education institution. The full association name (no acronyms or abbreviations) must be prominently displayed on all materials.

County association bonus provision

- For one event per funding year, the county association will be allowed one meal allowance of up to \$55 per attendee, inclusive of tax and gratuity. The meal expense must fit within the budgeted grant allowance for the fiscal year. The meal cannot be the purpose or the focus of the Pride event or project but can accompany the activity. Any meal charge exceeding the maximum will be the responsibility of the county association. Any receipts submitted that exceed the permitted maximum shall be recalculated to reflect the correct rate and adjusted within the maximum annual grant parameters that have been allocated.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 3: that local and county Pride in Public Education grant proposals meet the following criteria and that the following provisions be used in administering the program:

Types of activities

- For 2021-2022, local and county Pride budgets and spending should be split, with a maximum 65% designated for and spent on marketing/branding/sponsorship activities and a minimum of 35% allocated for and spent on community organizing activities.
 - Community organizing activities – For a Pride event to qualify as community organizing, the event must have a purposeful component (an ask, activity, or educational goal) in which parents and/or community

members partake and hopefully interact with association members. These might include coffee klatches where parents/community members and association members interact or events where parents have an active role with their children and association members, such as a family math or reading night, craft table or activity night, or fitness night.

- Marketing, branding, and sponsorship activities – These typically are passive events for parents/community members that do not build deep, meaningful relationships between parents and members but are designed to promote the Association or public education through giveaways. These might include a Pride table where parents sign in, pick up a promo item (such as a water bottle, bag, or brochure), and move on.

Program logistics

- Sign-in sheets are recommended to be used at all Pride events unless an exception has been approved by the UniServ field representative and designated Organizational Development field representative.
- Use of school district or higher education facilities for Pride events must be approved in writing by the local board of education or higher education institution board of trustees prior to local announcement of the event.
- Affiliates proposing any Pride activity or event that requires additional liability insurance must secure that insurance through NJEA before the Pride event can be approved.
- Locals are encouraged to use community vendors, whenever possible, to support grant activities. In addition, locals have access to Renaissance Promotions through the Pride Portal for ease of product approval, printing of NJEA approved logos, and direct payment from NJEA.
- The full name of the association must be prominently displayed on any apparel purchased with Pride monies. Such apparel can only be provided to participants (parents, students, community members, association members) in the Pride activity or event. Pride funds are to be used only for community events, not for subsidizing purchases for items used solely by and for association members.

Application deadlines

- All local and county Pride applications must be submitted for approval through the Pride application on the NJEA website. A link to the guidelines and to the Web Apps portal that contains the application – which is only accessible to associations presidents, Pride Chairpersons, and treasurers whose names have been submitted to NJEA – can be accessed through <https://www.njea.org/grants/pride/>.
 - Overall deadline requirements – Proposals must be submitted by the deadline date below (based on whether the applicant is a local or county) or 20 days in advance of the event, whichever is sooner, to allow reasonable time for feedback on proposals and to allow for proper community outreach prior to events.
 - No event will be approved for funding after it has occurred and without prior review. No exception

will be made to this rule, regardless of whether the event does or does not meet Pride standards.

- All Pride applications must be submitted for approval through the Pride application on the NJEA website on or before Jan. 15 of each year.
- Local application deadline exceptions – Additional projects may be requested to address emergency situations. These added projects must fit within the local association's Pride budget, unless additional financial support is requested by the NJEA UniServ field representative to fend off privatization of members, to deal with budget cutbacks that will create a reduction in force (RIF) of members, or to address another emergency determined by the UniServ field representative and the Pride program coordinator. "Emergency" activities could include, but are not limited to:
 - Informational "Meet the Board of Education candidates" events for local districts with contested April elections;
 - Teacher/School Professional for a Day, Pinch Hit for an ESP programs, or other activities designed to counter an anticipated RIF by emphasizing the importance of and extensive responsibilities public school or college staff in student success;
 - Drug/alcohol or suicide awareness programs after a tragic student incident or accident;
 - Events that organize parents around standardized testing;
 - In response to private, for-profit, corporate charter school intrusion or expansion, an event that shows the value of regular public schools and organizes parents and members around combatting school district funding potentially going to such a charter;
 - Events designed to organize community support during contract negotiations, when determined necessary by the UniServ field representative;
 - Activities for newly affiliated local associations.

Transfer of funds for additional projects

- Pride funds may be moved from one approved project to another approved project due to increased projected attendance, enhancement of an organizing activity, and/or creation of a community partnership with one or more local organizations or businesses. The transfer may occur after:
 - All reimbursements have been processed for the completed project, and it is determined that Pride funds exceeding the grant will not be required or requested;
 - Approval has been obtained from the UniServ field representative assigned to the local association and the regional Organizational Development field representative;
 - Projects are deemed to meet the 50% organizing and 50% marketing/branding/sponsorship funding requirements.

Overall administration

- NJEA Organizational Development staff who serve as Pride program administrators may make minor changes to the program during the year due to budgetary constraints,

changes in NJEA policy, and/or Executive Office directives.

- If funding for proposals surpasses the Pride budget allotment for counties within a region, the Pride administrators will coordinate with UniServ field representatives and county leadership within individual regions to distribute funds equitably.

RULE RECOMMENDATION 4: that the following items and activities be excluded from funding and reimbursement through the Pride in Public Education grant program for local and county affiliates:

- items and/or services purchased at or from Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Chartwells, Sodexo, or other companies identified as, owned, or operated by anti-union, anti-public education interests;
- gift cards, cash awards, or gift certificates, although gift baskets of up to \$100 in value per event of items such as school supplies are acceptable as long as prohibited items are excluded;
- cash to purchase donated items for a community service event;
- T-shirts exclusively for association members regardless of their participation in the Pride activity;
- newspaper or television advertisements or paid media for school budget proposals, including TV/radio ads, billboards, or bus advertisements;
- projects that endorse referenda or candidates;

New Business

There was no new business.

For the Good of the Order

Susan McBride, Bergen County, reported that some members of the Bergen delegation were terming out and gave a thank you to those members.

Anthony Rizzo, Burlington County, thanked two delegates from Burlington County who were terming out.

Aileen Haley, Gloucester County, asked if NJEA could encourage New Jersey ESPs to become members of the National Council for ESPs, in order to get Lois Yukna elected.

Spiller asked for a motion to adjourn, and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

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ADVICE IN 1941 TO OPPOSE BOOK BANS HOLDS TRUE TODAY

Although it was originally published under a different name, what is now the *NJEA Review* has been in continuous publication since 1927. Originally called the *New Jersey Educational Review*, the association has preserved every edition. It doesn't take long to see that nearly every issue covered in recent editions echoes concerns from the past 97 years.

The *Review* has always been a professional resource for educators, and it's also not surprising that salaries, pensions and benefits are regularly discussed throughout the publication's history. Nor is it astonishing that stories concerning curricula, school funding and legislation are also found throughout the *Review's* publishing history.

Nonetheless, it can still be jarring to discover *Review* articles printed over 80 years ago that read like current events.

An editorial from the April 1941 edition of the *Review*, titled "If Truth Be Treason," reads:

The textbook situation held the public eye during the past month ... It is increasingly apparent, however, that the campaign is primarily an effort to discredit the schools ... [The schools] cannot yield their right to present, honestly and fairly, controversial issues which their pupils meet hourly in the newspapers, on the radio, and around the supper table.

The editorial centered on American history textbooks written by Dr. Harold Rugg, a progressive educator and professor at Columbia University. Rugg's popular textbooks were used in over 5,000 school districts, but a vocal minority—bolstered by the American Legion and the American Federation of Advertising—sought to have them banned.

An in-depth study of the Rugg textbook controversy, titled "Treason in the Textbooks: Reinterpreting the Harold Rugg Textbook Controversy in the Context of Wartime Schooling," was published in 2008.

In the 1930s and 40s, not unlike today, various opposing political forces battled over how to teach America's past and examine its present. The 2008 study notes that Rugg once complained, "One can teach 'America – a land of opportunity,' but not 'America – a land of opportunity for many but not a land of equal opportunity for all.'"

In 1939, the Cleveland School PTA in Englewood, New Jersey, invited Rugg to meet with school board representatives and members of the local American Legion Post. The 2008 study reports that 300 people showed up



for what became known as the "schoolbook trial." *New York Times* coverage of the 1938 meeting sounds similar to today's news stories of packed board meetings:

"... parents, led by the Rev. James A. Mitchell ... aided Dr. Rugg in replying to his accusers" and that "the prosecution" was met by "prolonged boos" when it characterized as "un-American" and "false" Rugg's claim that the USA was not a land of opportunity for all people. "Were you ever in the South?" Rev. Mitchell demanded. "Have you ever seen the sharecroppers? If you have, do you still contend this is the land of opportunity for all the people?"

The *Review's* 1941 editorial takes its title from an article in the September 1940 edition of *The American Legion Magazine*. Titled "Treason in the Textbooks," the article by Missouri Congressman Orland Kay Armstrong could have as easily been drafted today by a member of Moms for Liberty. It cherry picks sentences from Rugg's textbooks and other writings, without context. In a sidebar, the article provides a list of books that concerned citizens should seek to ban in their local schools. Then, as today, book banners didn't have to actually read the books they challenged, they merely referenced their shared list of objectional texts.

On a hopeful note, the 2008 study reports that those seeking to ban progressive textbooks were largely unsuccessful due to the "...moderate approach most Americans took towards the public school curriculum..."

The 1941 *Review* editorial ends with this advice:

But most of all, it is important that the schools and the friends of schools stand solidly together. The attack which succeeds this month in one town reappears next month in its neighbor. All the forces of light should be ready to fight on every front.

That's sound advice in 1941 and in 2024. 🏠

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