

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

# REVIEW

SEPTEMBER  
2021

njea.org

*an education and advocacy resource***28** FROM MENTORS  
TO MEMBERS**36** YOGI BERRA MUSEUM  
& LEARNING CENTER**40** STANDING TOGETHER  
IN CAMDEN**44** BUILDING A STORY**48** SCHOOL NURSE NAMED  
AN NEA SISP FELLOW

## *From Mentors to Members*

Meet NJEA President  
Sean M. Spiller

**MOLLY HELLER**  
*Class of 2021*

B.A. in Elementary Education  
and Social Studies

M.A. in Curriculum  
and Instruction

K-6 Teaching Certification

“Caldwell has  
given me so much...  
the opportunity  
to grow into a  
confident and  
outgoing woman  
and teacher.”

# INSPIRED TO TEACH

## GRADUATE PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATORS

- Ed.D./Ph.D. in Educational Leadership
  - K-12, Special Education, and Higher Education Leadership Specializations
- M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction
  - ESL Certificate, Principal, Supervisor and TOSD Endorsement Options
- M.A. in Educational Administration
  - (on campus and online)
  - Principal and Supervisor Certification
- M.A. in Higher Education (online)
- M.A. in Literacy Instruction (Reading Specialist Certificate)
- M.A. in Special Education (TOSD Endorsement, LDT-C Certification and ABA Course Option)
- Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certification
- Post-Master LDT-C Certification
- Post-Master Principal Certification (on campus and online)
- Post-Master Reading Specialist Certification
- Post-Master School Administrator (on campus and online)
- Post-Master Supervisor Certification (on campus and online)
- English as a Second Language (ESL) Certification (online)
- Special Education Certification

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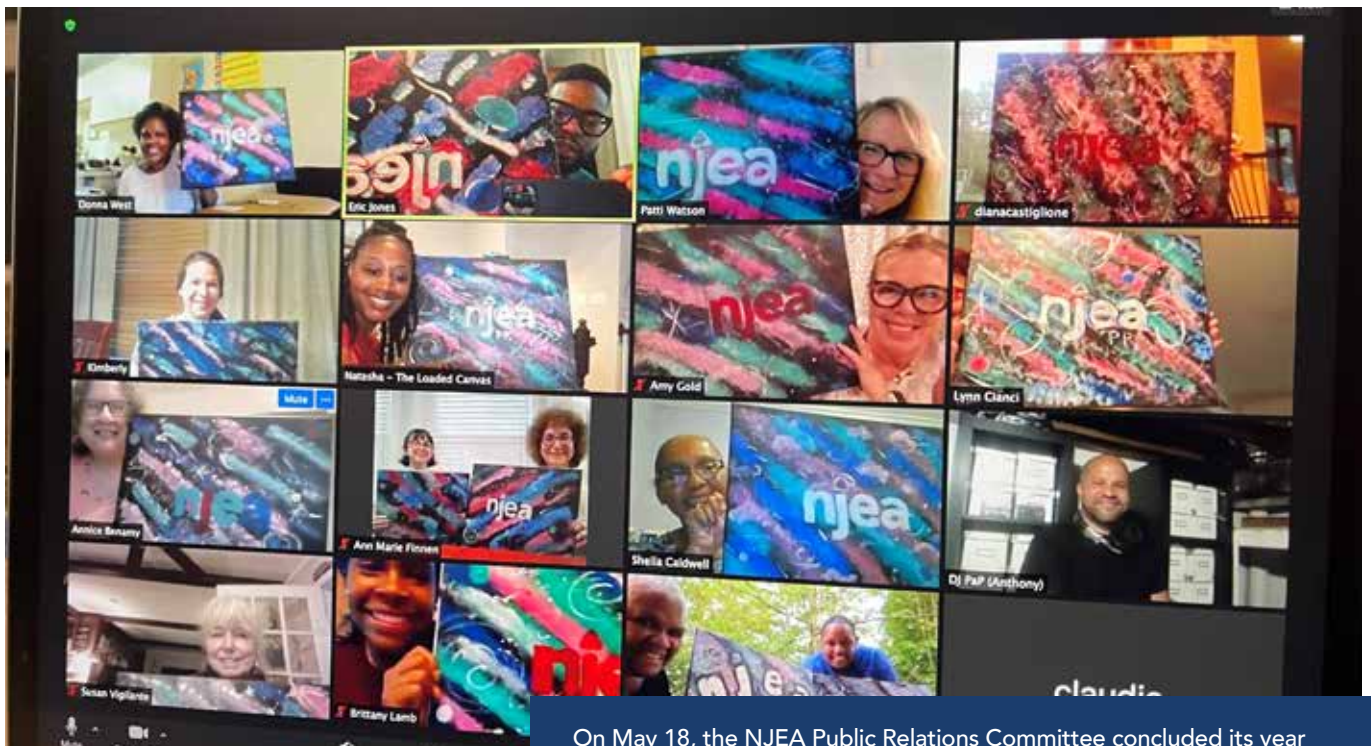
**CALDWELL**  
UNIVERSITY

Caldwell, NJ





Montclair social studies teacher Dan Gill was named Grand Marshall of the 2020 Montclair Fourth of July parade, which, along with the 2021 parade was cancelled. Gill was singled out for his dedication to Montclair's youth. This year he enters his 52nd year of teaching. On July 3, Montclair held a townwide motorcade celebration of frontline workers called Montclair's Caravan of Heroes and honored Gill, who delivered keynote remarks at the caravan's endpoint: his own Glenfield Middle School.



On May 18, the NJEA Public Relations Committee concluded its year together with a virtual social gathering, a Paint & Sip. NJEA member Anthony Colon, aka DJ PAP, provided energy for the event playing music selections requested by committee members.

# FEATURES

28



## 28 | MEET SEAN M. SPILLER

Sean M. Spiller's path to the classroom and to union leadership is not the typical story of a youngster who dreamed throughout his childhood of becoming a teacher. His future could have taken any one of several paths: sports writer, professional hockey player, editor, biologist or psychologist. Spiller's journey to the classroom and association leadership traverses a hockey rink and a high-pressure newsroom and features a host of mentors who knew his potential.

BY PATRICK M. RUMAKER

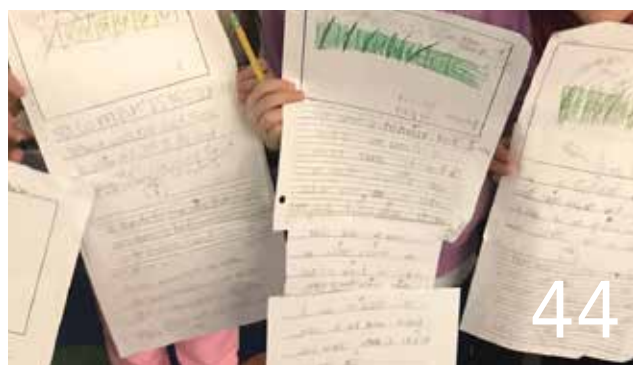


40

## 40 | STANDING TOGETHER IN CAMDEN

After more than 1,000 days working under the terms of an expired contract, Camden Education Association members stood strong to win a settlement that honors their commitment to their students and their community.

BY MATTHEW STAGLIANO



44

## 44 | BUILDING A STORY

In math class, elementary students work as a class on a similar problem, examining discrete parts of the problem, before working out a such problems independently. But in writing, students often try to tell stories without a concrete understanding of the various parts of the story. Inspired by my father's approach to fixing washing machines, I found a concrete way to fix my writing instruction.

BY KIM CLANCEY

36



## 36 | YOGI BERRA MUSEUM & LEARNING CENTER

The Yogi Berra Museum and Learning Center's education programs, both virtual and in person, promote the values that made Yogi a national treasure—respect, excellence, perseverance and teamwork—through interdisciplinary and series programs. Hands-on, interactive field trips for middle and high school students weave together baseball, STEM, language and civil rights.

BY EVE SCHAELEN



48

## 48 | SCHOOL NURSE NAMED AN NEA SISP FELLOW

NEA describes SISPs, or specialized instructional support personnel, as individuals who work other staff, parents and education stakeholders to help students remove learning barriers. Sheila Caldwell, a Matawan-Aberdeen school nurse, will be on leave from her district for the 2021-22 to work with NEA as an SISP Fellow.

BY SHEILA CALDWELL



# COLUMNS

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE 7

*A New Beginning*

## THE ADVOCATE 8

*Know. Lead. Act.*

## THE BULLETIN BOARD 10

*Cool stuff to check out*

## THE LAW AND YOU 13

*District lactation policies*

## THE NJEA REPORT 14

*Education in the news*

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 27

*Educators in the lead*

## HEALTH AND SAFETY 50

*Tackle harmful heat*

## TOOLBOX 53

*Teaching with video games*

## PRESERVICE MEMBERS 55

*Confidence and creativity*

## SPEAK OUT 56

*Community colleges open doors*

## RAINBOW CONNECTION 58

*LGBTQ+ issues in our schools*

## EARLY CAREER 61

*Starting the school year*

## SUSSEX TO CAPE MAY 62

*Workshops and conferences*

## MEMBER BENEFITS 65

*Get your money's worth*

## RETIRED MEMBERS 66

*News and events*

## CLASSROOM CLOSE-UP 68

*Global classrooms*

## COMING UP 69

*What's next at NJEA*

## FINAL EXAM 70

*A generational opportunity*

# 13%

Percentage New Jersey households with children, where parents report that the family sometimes or often did not have enough to eat over the course of the pandemic. As of Aug. 3, 2021, NJEA's Pandemic Relief Food Assistance Program had distributed \$1.6 million in food aid, with an approximate \$100,000 in additional distributions pending as of that date.

Source: 2021 Kids Count Data Book: State Trends in Child Well-Being, Annie E. Casey Foundation and NJEA Business Division.



## On the cover

NJEA's new leadership team, from left: NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson at Jefferson Elementary School in Union Township (Union County).



PHOTO BY  
John O'Boyle

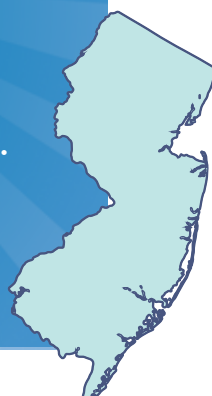


## GOOD NEWS

### NJ Public School Students Outperform Private School Students on AP Exams

In New Jersey, public school students score higher than private school students on their AP exams.

Source: College Board, AP New Jersey Summary Report, 2020.



# VOLUME 95 NUMBER 01

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NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

# REVIEW

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

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## MEMBERSHIP

Active professional: \$999 (full time); \$199.80 (full time \*low-earner); \$499.50 (part time); \$499.50 (on leave); \$199.80 (part time \*low-earner). Active supportive: \$488 (full time); \$97.60 (full time \*low-earner); \$244.00 (part time); \$97.60 (part time \*low-earner); \$241.50 (on leave). Retired professional: \$88; \$1,095 (retired life). Retired ESP: \$60; \$675 (retired ESP life); Preservice \$32. General professional (outside N.J. public education employment): \$250. Subscribing \$250. Only those in education positions in N.J. public schools and colleges are eligible for active membership. Payment of annual dues entitles a member to receive the *Review* for one year, from January through December. Dues include \$5 for the NJEA *Review*. \*Low earner threshold 2020-21 is \$21,700.





# PRESIDENT'S *Message*

## *A new beginning*

After nearly two years of global upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, New Jersey's public schools, and the students and educators who have made them the best in the nation, are beginning a new school year.

This is also the start of a new era in NJEA leadership: for the first time, we have two officers of color. We are proud to follow in the footsteps of Judy Owens, NJEA's first, and until now only, African American president. I am honored to helm this new team, which includes Vice President Steve Beatty and Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson, as they bring their unique talents to serve NJEA members and our students.

The start of a new school year is always special, but I think that we are all sighing with relief at the thought of being back together in person. We accomplished amazing things during the trials of the pandemic, and our students learned vital new skills that will serve them well in their lives, but educators will tell you that we work in public schools because of our students. We need to see them and connect with them in person, so long as it is healthy and safe for them and us.

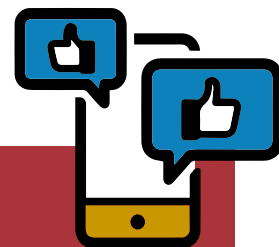
I want to thank you for all you have done to see your students through this time. We have suffered losses; we have struggled. We have had moments of challenge and moments of victory during this time, but we have made it through and we have derived strength from our unity and collaboration. Despite everything, we remain hopeful and committed to our students as people and as learners.

For those of you just beginning your career in education, welcome! You are joining a winning team in New Jersey and we look forward to learning from you and bringing you into our union as fully engaged members, actively advocating for our students and members.

Let's continue to do great things together.

In solidarity,

Sean



### SEAN M. SPILLER

Facebook

@SpillerforNJEA: To Mr. Gill... As a 51-year educator, you inspire us every day, your lessons are powerful (including today), and we are eternally grateful. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!

On July 3, Sean M. Spiller posted photos of Montclair social studies teacher Dan Gill as he rolled through town in Montclair's Caravan of Heroes, a Montclair-wide motorcade celebration of frontline workers. Dan Gill was originally named the Grand Marshall of Montclair's 2020 Fourth of July parade. Uncertainties around coronavirus restrictions caused the cancellation the township's 2020 and 2021 Fourth of July festivities. Gill delivered keynote remarks at the caravan's endpoint: his own Glenfield Middle School.

### STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

@Steve BeattyNJEA: Just got the word that as of this morning, our #200Kconversations have called all 200,000 members, having 25,000+ meaningful discussions with members! Starting to run back through the list to continue the work! Unbelievable, empowering, necessary ... When we reach out with intention, authenticity, and sustainability, we move to fulfill our mission in meaningful and deep ways. Thank you to all our consultants and our 125 member-callers in strengthening our grassroots, one conversation at a time!

On July 30, Steve Beatty shared with his Facebook followers that he had just been informed that NJEA's "200K Project," an effort launched during the 2020 school year to reach all NJEA members by phone, had officially called every one of NJEA's 200,000 members. Beatty praised the volunteers for their hard work, and he looked toward a future of making more frequent and meaningful connections with every NJEA member.

### PETAL ROBERTSON

Facebook

@petal.robertson.7: As I get ready for Day 3 of the NEA RA, I'm missing the discussions, delicious food, games, giveaways, and team atmosphere. Thank you so much for welcoming me Camden County. Congratulations to President-elect April Brown.

On July 2, incoming NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson shared with her Facebook followers her thoughts before beginning Day 3 of the NEA Representative Assembly, which took place virtually for the second year in a row. Robertson spent the day with members of the Camden County Council of Education Associations, and she also congratulated incoming CCCEA President April Brown for winning her recent election.

OFFICERS ONLINE



# KNOW. LEAD. ACT.

## RHEAULT, LA MORTE AND GIBSON-PARKER ELECTED AS NEA DIRECTORS

Barbara Rheault of Atlantic County, Robert La Morte of Bergen County, and Laurie Gibson-Parker of Camden County have been elected by NJEA's policy making Delegate Assembly (DA) to serve on the NEA Board of Directors.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NEA director elections were conducted through mail balloting with D.A. members from April 21 to May 5. Under the D.A. rules, a candidate for NEA director must receive more than 50% of the valid ballots cast to be elected.

Five candidates were nominated as candidates for the three available seats. In addition to Rheault, La Morte and Gibson-Parker, the nominees were Theresa Fuller of Somerset County and Stacy Yanko of Sussex County.

Rheault received 52.86% of the 70 ballots cast to win in the first round of balloting. In the second round of balloting La Morte and Gibson-Parker were declared elected after receiving 55% and 52.5% respectively.

The NEA Board of Directors is responsible for setting general policies between annual NEA Representative Assembly (NEA RA) meetings. It consists of at least one director from each state affiliate, at-large directors to meet representational guarantees, and representatives for students and retired members. Each state is entitled to an additional director per 20,000 active and life members. New Jersey holds nine state seats on the NEA Board of Directors.

Rheault, La Morte and Gibson-Parker will serve three-year terms from Sept. 1, 2021 to Aug. 31, 2024.



Laurie Gibson-Parker



Robert La Morte



Barbara Rheault



## NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR AWARDS AT NJEA EQUITY ALLIANCE WEEKEND

Nominations are now open for four awards that will recognize advocacy and achievement in equity and justice. The awards will be presented at NJEA's Equity Alliance Weekend to be held on Jan. 15-16, 2022.

The weekend will feature training on social justice issues and social justice activism, recognizing the intersection of diverse identities and circumstances among NJEA members and the communities they serve. The event is a collaboration of these NJEA committees: Exceptional Children, Human and Civil Rights, Minority Leadership and Recruitment, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Urban Education, and Women in Education.

Four of NJEA's highest awards will be presented during the NJEA Dr. Martin Luther King Human and Civil Rights Celebration, held at the conclusion of the Equity Alliance Weekend.

- **NJEA Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human and Civil Rights Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Human and Civil Rights Committee. Nominees may be an individual, group or organization working in the area of civil rights, and if eligible, NJEA members.
- **Judith Owens Spirit Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee. Named for Judith Owens, the first African American president of NJEA, this award honors a member who has been a champion of ethnic minority rights and issues and who has had a significant impact on education and the achievement of equal opportunity for those facing discrimination because of their ethnicity.
- **Equality Champion Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee. This award honors a member who has been a champion of human and civil rights, and who has had a significant impact on education and the achievement of equal opportunity for those facing discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **NJEA Elizabeth A. Allen Women in Education Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Women in Education Committee. Named for NJEA's first female president, the award honors a member or an individual living or working in New Jersey who promotes women's rights and equality for all persons, particularly in education.

Nomination forms and documentation for any of these four awards are due Oct. 29, 2021.

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

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

## NOMINATIONS ACCEPTED FOR ESP AWARDS

NJEA will present the 2022 ESP of the Year Award to an NJEA member whose activities reflect the contributions of educational support professionals to public education. The purpose of the award is to recognize an individual who shows outstanding accomplishments in one or more of the following areas:

- Professional Practice
- Member Advocacy and Association Involvement
- Community Engagement
- Personal Achievement
- Enhancement of ESP Image

Links to nomination forms can be found at [njea.org/nominations-accepted-esp-awards](https://njea.org/nominations-accepted-esp-awards).

Your local association's nomination form must arrive at your county association office no later than Sept. 10, 2021.

County associations will select among local nominees. The county's nomination form for ESP of the Year must arrive at NJEA Headquarters no later than Oct. 2, 2021.

Nominations for ESP Career Achievement and Friend of ESP awards are also being accepted through Oct. 23, 2021.

Awards will be presented at the 2022 NJEA Educational Support Professionals (ESP) Conference.



### Employment Opportunities at NJEA

Questions? Call the NJEA Human Resources office at 609-599-4561. NJEA is an equal opportunity employer.

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

## ARTSEDNJ OFFERS SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR ARTS INSTRUCTION

As early as May 2020 and continuing through the summer of 2021, Arts Ed NJ convened the September Ready Taskforce for Arts Education. The taskforce included many statewide education stakeholders, including NJEA.

More than 100 arts administrators, educators, practitioners, and association leaders have joined together to develop the strategies, plans and solutions needed for arts instruction to be delivered to our students in a way that addresses, first and foremost, the health, safety and well-being considerations for our students, faculty and staff.

They developed a practical guidance document for K-12 schools administrators and arts educators to help them provide meaningful arts instruction for students of all ages and grade levels as New Jersey emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic. By maintaining access to meaningful arts learning, arts educators will continue to support the artistic, academic, social and emotional development of students, schools, and communities across New Jersey.

To access the materials, visit [artsednj.org/september-forward](https://artsednj.org/september-forward).

# COOL STUFF



## NEW JERSEY STUDENT MOCK ELECTION

The New Jersey Student Mock Election will be hosting an opportunity for students in grades 4 - 12 to practice the habit of informed voting this October. Help your students understand the impact of state government on their daily lives and the importance of exercising their right to vote in every election.

Registration is fast and easy. Go to [njmockelection.org](http://njmockelection.org) with student privacy is protected. The voting portal will be open for approximately two weeks. Results are tabulated automatically and mapped by legislative district and grade band.

Teacher resources are available online. Access the mock election regardless of whether students are in school or working remotely from home.

The election is sponsored by the New Jersey Social Studies Supervisors Association, the New Jersey Council for the Social Studies, and the New Jersey Center for Civic Education. Questions? Click the "Contact Us" button at [njmockelection.org](http://njmockelection.org).



## NJSBF HAS CIVICS EDUCATORS COVERED FROM THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE LAST

*The Bill of Rights* Up Close, a 28-page newsletter, takes a deep dive into the Bill of Rights with 13 articles, including four on the First Amendment alone. Covering all the bases, *Beyond the Bill of Rights*, a 24-page newsletter, focuses on the 17 Amendments added to the U.S. Constitution after the Bill of Rights was ratified in 1791. Articles contained in both newsletters include discussion questions, as well as relevant glossary words, providing ready-made lesson plans.

In addition to these publications, NJSBF publishes *The Informed Citizen*, a civics blog that has tackled such topics as democratic norms, the meaning of equal justice under the law and the rule of law, to name but a few. The articles published on the blog also contain discussion questions and glossary words.

Free print copies of *The Bill of Rights* Up Close and *Beyond the Bill of Rights* may be ordered via our website ([njsbf.org](http://njsbf.org)). Downloadable PDFs of the newsletters can be found on the site's Publication Page, or individual articles from both newsletters are also available on *The Informed Citizen* blog.



## GRANTS FOR SCHOOL SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS AVAILABLE

Have a project that needs funding? The 2021-22 Sustainable Jersey for Schools Grants Program cycle, funded by NJEA will award ten \$10,000 grants to school districts or schools and forty \$2,000 grants to support school green teams. By emphasizing the value of sustainability, we also help ensure that we leave a better world for our students.

Applicants must be registered in the Sustainable Jersey for Schools program, which is free and voluntary. For more information about the Grants Program and details on how to apply, visit [sustainablejerseyschools.com](http://sustainablejerseyschools.com), click on "Grants" and look for "NJEA Grant Cycle" in the left menu.

Applications are due on Oct. 29, 2021, for this cycle of the Sustainable Jersey for Schools Grants Program.

## SAVE THE DATE FOR GOLDEN PROFS REUNION

Graduates of Rowan University of fifty years or more (especially the classes of 1970, 1971 and 1972) are encouraged to save the dates of May 6-7, 2022, for an in-person reunion on at the university.

Join fellow graduates and former classmates for a reception, dinner and tours of the campus. For more information contact the Rowan University Office of Alumni Engagement at [alumni@rowan.edu](mailto:alumni@rowan.edu) or call 856-256-5400.



## FIND YOUR CALM....

...with the Calm meditation and sleep app. NJEA Members can get a one-year subscription for \$29.99! That's a \$40 savings from the regular price! Log into [memberbenefits.njea.org](http://memberbenefits.njea.org) and go to Plum Benefits under the "Entertainment" section.



# LEARN TO BE SMART ABOUT GUN SAFETY

By Nicole Glukstad-Alzamora, Be SMART for Kids

Our New Jersey Be SMART team is reaching out to school districts to introduce our five-step program. We ask that New Jersey school districts share our Be SMART materials with all parents and caregivers, and gun owners and non-gun owners alike. The Be SMART framework is designed to help parents and adults normalize conversations about gun safety and take responsible actions that can prevent child gun deaths and injuries.

## Here are our five simple Be SMART steps:

- S** – SECURE all guns in your home and vehicles.
- M** – MODEL responsible behavior around guns.
- A** – ASK about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes.
- R** – RECOGNIZE the role of guns in suicide.
- T** – TELL your peers to be SMART

These sobering statistics illustrate the need for the Be SMART steps.

- A survey found that 57 percent of teens are concerned that there will be a shooting in their school.
- In the case of gunfire on school grounds, up to 80% of shooters under 18 obtained the firearm(s) used from their own home or the homes of relatives or friends.
- Every year, more than 1,600 children under the age of 18 are killed with guns —by homicide, suicide, or unintentional shootings.

- 41% of adolescents in gun-owning households report having easy access to a gun.
- In NJ, firearms are the 3rd leading cause of death among children and teens.
- Research shows that households that locked both firearms and ammunition were associated with a 78% lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries and an 85% lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens, compared to those who locked neither.

Parsippany-Troy Hills Library will be hosting a Be SMART presentation for adults on Tuesday, Oct. 19 from 7-8 p.m. The link for registration can be found on the Be SMART website under the calendar of events or you can get there directly from the link below.

We hope you can come see the presentation and learn some safety tips and view this as a valuable resource to help keep students and our community safe. The presentation is available in both English and Spanish.

**Registration:** <https://tinyurl.com/2frmjn39>

For more information visit [besmartforkids.org](https://besmartforkids.org) or email Nicole Glukstad-Alzamora at [nglukstad81@gmail.com](mailto:nglukstad81@gmail.com).

**This program is also offered in Spanish. Refer any Spanish-speaking parents or members to [njea.org/besmart-es](https://njea.org/besmart-es) for a Spanish language version of this article.**

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# DOES YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT HAVE LACTATION POLICY ACCOMMODATIONS?

BY KAITLYN DUNPHY, ESQ.

Breastfeeding, while rewarding, is a challenging undertaking for many, and even more so when a new parent must navigate lactation schedules and policies while she is planning her return to work. According to the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) 2020 Lactation Room Policy Report, no schools serving grades 8 through 12 had a designated lactation room policy in place at the time of that report, which was issued in August of 2020. Of the reporting schools, 14.64% accommodated breastfeeding staff, and 17.31% accommodated lactating students.

Beginning with 2020, NJDOE is required by state regulation to annually collect statistics surrounding lactation policies and accommodations provided by K-12 districts. The 2021 report is due to be released on Aug. 15, which followed press time for this edition of the NJEA Review. The report will likely be made available on the NJDOE's website at [bit.ly/lactationdoe](http://bit.ly/lactationdoe).

The statistics on the lack of existing lactation room policies are disheartening, but that does not mean that there is no support for breastfeeding members who are returning to work. In 2018, New Jersey passed legislation that requires an employer to engage in an interactive process with an employee who requests an accommodation to breastfeed or express breastmilk during the workday to discuss the request and the parameters of the accommodation. Unless it causes an undue hardship for employers, they must provide the employee with reasonable break time to breastfeed or express breastmilk, and they must provide a private location to do so.

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

“  
***New Jersey law requires that the lactation space is a private area that is not a restroom, and that it is in close proximity to the employee's work area.***”

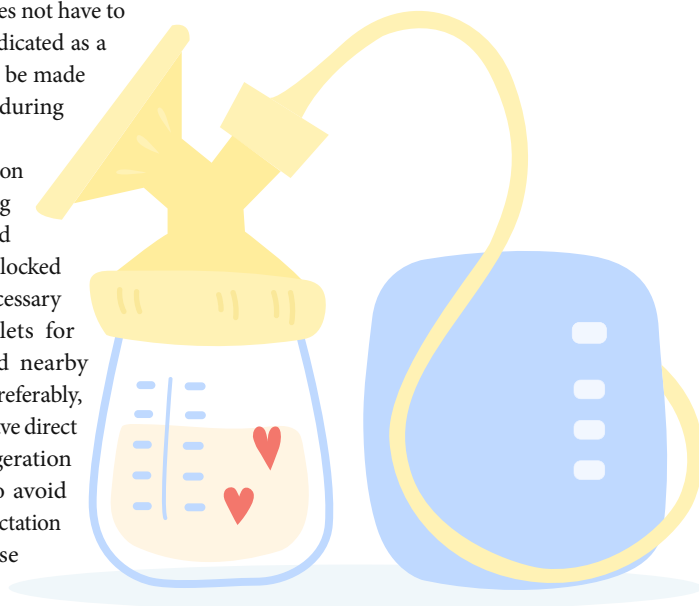
Local associations and members should advocate for their boards to accommodate breastfeeding members as well as students, and to institute lactation policies. New Jersey law requires that the lactation space is a private area that is not a restroom, and that it is in close proximity to the employee's work area. It does not have to be a space that is solely dedicated as a lactation room, but it must be made available to the employee during her breaks.

Best practices for a lactation policy would include making sure that the space provided is clean, available, able to be locked from the inside, has the necessary space and electrical outlets for pumping equipment, and nearby access to running water. Preferably, the lactation room would have direct access to a sink and refrigeration space. It would be best to avoid using the nurse's office as a lactation space, as that would cause unnecessary exposure to

germs that could be passed to the newborn.

Because the breaks must be reasonable in length, the employer should engage the member in a discussion regarding scheduling those break times. The law does not require a precise allotment of time for those breaks, but it does require that they be treated in the same manner of other types of breaks, particularly when it comes to compensation. Further, best practices would include providing separate break times; prep periods are an important part of work duties, and not a break.

For more information about advocating for lactation accommodations and policies, a group of NJEA members and staff have formed the Lactation Rights Task Force under the auspices of the NJEA Women in Education Committee. If you are interested in learning more about or joining in their work, e-mail me at [kdunphy@njea.org](mailto:kdunphy@njea.org) or Meredith Barnes at [mbarnes@njea.org](mailto:mbarnes@njea.org). 🏠



# NJEA Report

## NJEA PAC endorses Gov. Phil Murphy for reelection 84 Democrats and 13 Republicans endorsed for Legislature

NJEA's 125-member political action committee has voted to endorse Gov. Phil Murphy as well as 97 legislative candidates for election this November. Those endorsements include 31 Senate candidates and 66 Assembly candidates. Eighty-four endorsements were for Democratic candidates and 13 were for Republican candidates.

"In 2017, NJEA members endorsed Gov. Phil Murphy on the basis of his promises and his progressive vision for public education," said NJEA President Sean M. Spiller. "This year, he earned our endorsement on the basis of his outstanding record as governor."

NJEA PAC voted on the recommendations of local interview teams from each legislative district (LD). The complete list of endorsements are:

- **LD 1:** John Capizola Jr. (D) and Erik Simonsen (R) for Assembly
- **LD 2:** Vince Mazzeo (D) for Senate and John Armato (D) and Caren Fitzpatrick (D) for Assembly
- **LD 3:** Stephen Sweeney (D) for Senate and John Burzichelli (D) and Adam Taliaferro (D) for Assembly
- **LD 4:** Fred H. Madden (D) for Senate and Paul Moriarty (D) and Gabriela Mosquera (D) for Assembly
- **LD 5:** Nilsa Cruz-Perez (D) for Senate and William Spearman (D) and William Moen (D) for Assembly
- **LD 6:** James Beach (D) for Senate and Louis Greenwald (D) and Pamela Lampitt (D) for Assembly
- **LD 7:** Troy Singleton (D) for Senate and Herb Conaway (D) and Carol A. Murphy (D) for Assembly
- **LD 10:** Emma Mammano (D) for Senate and Gregory P. McGuckin (R) for Assembly
- **LD 11:** Vin Gopal (D) for Senate and Joann Downey (D) and Eric Houghtaling (D) for Assembly
- **LD 12:** Ronald Dancer (R) and Robert Clifton (R) for Assembly
- **LD 13:** Vincent Solomeno III (D) for Senate and Allison Friedman (D) and Erin Howard (D) for Assembly
- **LD 14:** Linda Greenstein (D) for Senate and Dan Benson (D) and Wayne DeAngelo (D) for Assembly
- **LD 15:** Shirley K. Turner (D) for Senate and Verlina Reynolds-Jackson (D) and Anthony S. Verrelli (D) for Assembly
- **LD 16:** Andrew Zwicker (D) for Senate and Roy Freiman (D) and Sadaf Jaffer (D) for Assembly
- **LD 17:** Bob Smith (D) for Senate and Joseph V. Egan (D) and Joe Danielsen (D) for Assembly
- **LD 18:** Patrick J. Diegnan Jr. (D) for Senate and Robert J. Karabinchak (D) and Sterley S. Stanley (D) for Assembly
- **LD 19:** Joseph F. Vitale (D) for Senate and Craig J. Coughlin (D) and Yvonne Lopez (D) for Assembly
- **LD 20:** Joe Cryan (D) for Senate and Reginald Atkins (D) and Annette Quijano (D) for Assembly
- **LD 21:** Jon Bramnick (R) for Senate and Anjali Mehrotra (D) and Nancy Munoz (R) for Assembly
- **LD 22:** Nicholas Scutari (D) for Senate and Linda Carter (D) and James Kennedy (D) for Assembly
- **LD 25:** Anthony Bucco (R) for Senate and Aura Dunn (R) for Assembly
- **LD 26:** Christine Clarke (D) for Senate and Pamela Fadden (D) for Assembly
- **LD 27:** Richard J. Codey (D) for Senate and Mila M. Jasey (D) and John F. McKeon (D) for Assembly
- **LD 28:** Ronald Rice (D) for Senate and Cleopatra Tucker (D) and Ralph Caputo (D) for Assembly
- **LD 30:** Edward "Ned" Thomson (R) and Sean Kean (R) for Assembly
- **LD 31:** Sandra B. Cunningham (D) for Senate and William Sampson (D) for Assembly
- **LD 32:** Nicholas J. Sacco (D) for Senate and Angelica M. Jimenez (D) and Pedro Mejia (D) for Assembly
- **LD 33:** Annette Chaparro (D) and Raj Mukherji (D) for Assembly
- **LD 34:** Nia H. Gill (D) for Senate and Thomas P. Giblin (D) and Britnee N. Timberlake (D) for Assembly
- **LD 35:** Nellie Pou (D) for Senate and Shavonda E. Sumter (D) and Benjie E. Wimberly (D) for Assembly
- **LD 36:** Paul A. Sarlo (D) for Senate and Clinton Calabrese (D) and Gary S. Schaer (D) for Assembly
- **LD 37:** Gordon M. Johnson (D) for Senate and Shama A. Hadier (D) and Ellen J. Park (D) for Assembly
- **LD 38:** Joseph A. Lagana (D) for Senate and Lisa Swain (D) and P. Christopher Tully (D) for Assembly
- **LD 39:** Ruth Dugan (D) for Senate and Karlito Almeda (D) and Melinda Iannuzzi (D) for Assembly
- **LD 40:** Kristin Corrado (R) for Senate and Kevin Rooney (R) and Christopher DePhillips (R) for Assembly

No endorsements were made in legislative districts 8, 9, 23, 24, and 29. Senate endorsements were not made in districts 1, 12, 30, and 33. In districts 10, 25, 26, and 31 only one Assembly endorsement was made.

The October edition of the *NJEA Review* will feature an interview with Gov. Murphy and statements from each endorsed candidate.



# Join the 2021 NJEA Members for Murphy campaign



Gov. Phil Murphy greets NJEA members in Monmouth County.

Gov. Phil Murphy has earned NJEA's endorsement for reelection as governor because he's the pro-public education candidate. After his endorsement, NJEA leaders came together to form the 2021 Members for Murphy campaign, a statewide, member-driven effort to reelect Gov. Murphy this November.

Members who sign up to be volunteers with the Members for Murphy campaign will have the opportunity to work with their colleagues from around the state to make a tangible difference in this year's election cycle. Phone banks, door-to-door canvassing, sending emails and texting messages are just a few of the activities that Members for Murphy will engage in this fall. If you're interested in becoming a 2021 Member for Murphy, visit [murphy.njea.org](http://murphy.njea.org) today!

## Gov. Murphy's Top 10 – Education Edition:

- Chapter 78 relief signed into law
- Job Justice signed into law
- Paid more into the pension fund than any governor in history, this includes the first full pension payment since 1996, which he made one year ahead of schedule
- Expanded access to preschool
- Expanded access to tuition-free community college
- Expanded Amistad Curriculum, signed LGBTQ curriculum into law
- Appointed the state's first and second Black commissioners of education in state history: Dr. Lamont Repollet and Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan
- Prioritized educator access to the COVID-19 vaccine
- Supported waiver in 2021 to #CancelTheTests
- Restored respect for public education

## Gov. Murphy on the issues: his record speaks for itself

### • Pension funding

**Gov. Murphy has funded educators' pensions at record levels.** Believing the state should keep its promises to educators, Gov. Murphy kept his 2017 campaign promise to make the state's first full pension payment in more than 25 years—and he did so a full year ahead of schedule. Gov. Murphy stopped kicking the can down the road and made educators a top priority. He also worked with legislative leaders to add an additional \$505 million to the full pension payment.

### • School funding

**Gov. Murphy increased school funding to record levels.** Gov. Murphy has funded New Jersey's public schools at record levels. He's increased access to preschool for working families. He's expanded access to tuition reimbursement for community colleges for qualified students and added an additional \$5 million in state funding to community colleges. He closed the digital divide that existed in New Jersey's public schools, and continues to find fair, equitable approaches to ensuring all students across the state get what they deserve. Gov. Murphy has made education funding a top priority four years in a row.

### • Respect for Public School Employees/Workers' Rights

**Gov. Murphy supports educators and unions.** Working with NJEA members, Gov. Murphy signed the Chapter 78 relief bill and two ESP Job Justice bills into law. Gov. Murphy has consistently worked with educators and NJEA leaders on a wide variety of issues. He's attended educator conferences, included educators on policy-related decisions, and has worked to restore respect and ensure all public school employees are treated with respect and dignity.

### • LGBTQ Curriculum

**Gov. Murphy signed and supports the recently passed LGBTQ Curriculum.** A champion of inclusion, diversity and teaching the truth, Gov. Murphy signed LGBTQ curriculum into law in 2019. With Murphy's signature, New Jersey became the second state to implement an LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum. The passage of the law and subsequent implementation of the curriculum was lauded by Garden State Equality as an important marker of progress in New Jersey's public schools.

### • COVID-19 Response:

**Gov. Murphy has followed the science and health care professionals.** Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gov. Murphy has followed the science and health care professionals as he has worked to keep New Jersey's citizens safe. He has consistently prioritized science over politics and has focused on keeping students and staff safer during this global pandemic.

# Bill Nye joins lineup for the NJEA Convention

## Nye joins Henry Louis Gates Jr., Sonia Manzano and Eric Liu

Bill Nye the American science educator, engineer, comedian, television presenter, author, and inventor has joined the lineup of exciting keynote speakers at the 2021 NJEA Convention, to be held in Atlantic City, Nov. 4 -5.

Nye will appear virtually. He joins three in-person, world-class speakers who were announced in June. Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, literary scholar, journalist, cultural critic, and institution builder Henry Louis Gates Jr., actor and author Sonia Manzano, and Citizen University CEO Eric Liu, will headline the 2021 NJEA Convention to be held Nov. 4-5.



Famous for his persona and the show by the same name, “**Bill Nye the Science Guy**,” Nye’s mission is to foster a scientifically literate society and to help people everywhere understand and appreciate the science that makes our world work. The show won 18 Emmys in five years.

Nye returned to television with the release of his new series “Bill Nye Saves the World,” which debuted on Netflix in April 2017.

Nye has written eight books for elementary and middle school students and three books for a general audience: *Undeniable – Evolution and the Science of Creation*, *Unstoppable: Harnessing Science to Change the World*, and *Everything All At Once: How to Unleash Your Inner Nerd, Tap into Radical Curiosity and Solve Any Problem*.

Nye has also produced the DVD series “Solving for X,” where he shows us how to do algebra along with the P, B, & J—the Passion, Beauty, and Joy—of math.

Nye discusses science on news and television programs such as ABC World News, NBC Nightly News, CNN, Good Morning America, MSNBC, TODAY, CBS This Morning, The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, and more.

After joining as a charter member in 1980, Nye is now the CEO of the Planetary Society, the world’s largest space-interest group. Under his leadership, the non-for-profit society is growing and becoming more influential, having members in 130 countries. In 2017, he was a co-chair in the inaugural March for Science, a series of rallies and marches held in Washington, D.C., and more than 600 other cities across the world on Earth Day.



For over 40 years, **Sonia Manzano** inspired, educated, and delighted children and families as “Maria” on “Sesame Street.” Named among the “25 Greatest Latino Role Models Ever” by Latina Magazine, Manzano broke ground as one of the first Hispanic characters on national television. Throughout her career, she has continued to contribute to enriching diversity on television, on the stage, and in the educational realm. A first generation American of Latin descent, Manzano’s tale is one of

perseverance and courage as she overcame countless obstacles to become one of the most influential Latinas in television.

Recently, Scholastic and Manzano partnered to launch two middle-grade novels and two picture books. Some of Manzano’s other books include her memoir, *Becoming Maria: Love and Chaos in the South Bronx* (Scholastic), and a Christmas picture book, *Miracle of 133rd Street* (Simon & Schuster). *Becoming Maria* was praised by Kirkus Reviews for its “lyrical and unflinching account of her tough Nuyorican upbringing in the South Bronx,” and calls it a “touching memoir.” Kirkus Reviews says “Manzano lovingly details life-changing moments,” with a “stark and heartbreaking contrast to her Sesame Street character.” Manzano’s latest book, *A World Together* aims to promote unity by celebrating cultural and generational diversity.



Harvard University professor **Henry Louis Gates Jr.** has authored or co-authored 25 books and created 23 documentary films, including *Wonders of the African World*, *African American Lives*, *Faces of America*, *Black in Latin America*, *Black America Since MLK: And Still I Rise*, and *Africa’s Great Civilizations*.

“Finding Your Roots,” Gates’ groundbreaking genealogy series on PBS, has been called “one of the deepest and wisest series ever on television,” leveraging “the inherent entertainment capacity of the medium to educate millions of Americans about the histories and cultures of our nation and the world.”

His series “Reconstruction: America after the Civil War” (PBS, 2019) was a winner of the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award, and his related book, *Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow* (Penguin Random House, 2019), was a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2019. Gates’s newest film series is “The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song” (PBS, 2021), with a Penguin Random House published a companion book under the same title.



“Democracy works only when enough of us believe democracy works,” says **Eric Liu**. How do we rekindle that belief? How do we, as individuals, organizations, communities, corporations, and professions reinvigorate the meaning and spirit of citizenship in America? These are the questions civic evangelist Eric Liu explores in his compelling, acclaimed talks—talks that celebrate our shared values and challenge Americans to live up to them. Liu is one of the country’s most sought-after speakers on citizen power, civic health, the future

of democracy, and American identity.

Liu, son of Chinese immigrants and former White House speechwriter, is the CEO of Citizen University, a nonprofit working to foster a culture of powerful, responsible citizenship. He also directs the Aspen Institute’s Citizenship and American Identity Program and is a correspondent at *TheAtlantic.com*. His eight books include *You’re More Powerful Than You Think: A Citizen’s Guide to Making Change Happen*, and the national best-sellers *The Gardens of Democracy* and *True Patriot*.

# Two ways to attend the NJEA Convention

## 2021 NJEA Convention will be presented in-person with remote components

The NJEA Convention returns in person to Atlantic City on Nov. 4-5. The convention will also include virtual professional development sessions to enable members who wish to participate remotely yet still benefit from much of what the NJEA Convention has to offer.

Both in-person and remotely, members will have access to what has become the convention's signature feature—professional and career development workshops and programs for every member. Keynote speaker Bill Nye will appear remotely both for in-person attendees and those attending remotely. The convention's three in-person keynotes—Henry Louis Gates Jr., Sonia Manzano and Eric Liu—can also be attended remotely.

The massive exhibit hall, featuring Main Street NJEA, education vendors, publishers, field trip opportunities, colleges and universities, NJEA Member Benefits sponsored vendors, the Member Showcase, the Nicky Fifth series author Lisa Funari-Willever, and so much more will return for the in-person convention only.

Workshops that are presented remotely will be optimized for the virtual environment and will generally not be broadcasts of the in-person workshops. All sessions—both virtual and in person—will require pre-registration. No walk-ins will be permitted for in-person sessions in the convention center.

## Boardwalk Run returns

The very popular George M. Adams Boardwalk Run and Fun Walk, a 5K event, is scheduled to return to this year's convention. This year, registration for the run will be electronic. More details concerning registration and safety protocols will appear in the October *NJEA Review*, and on [njeaconvention.org](http://njeaconvention.org) as soon as available.

## Safety protocols established for in-person convention

In order to protect the health and safety of all persons attending the 2021 NJEA Convention, the practices below will be in place for all attendees, regardless of vaccination status.

- Every attendee must wear a mask.
- Temperature checks will be administered upon entry. If a fever is measured, rapid COVID testing will be available.
- No one under 18 years of age will be admitted. Childcare is suspended for the 2021 NJEA Convention.
- Food and beverages will be available but must be consumed in designated areas. No food or beverages will be permitted in any other area of the convention center. There will be an expanded area for dining adjacent to the Exhibit Hall.
- Capacity in workshops and meeting rooms will be reduced from previous year to enable social distancing. As currently envisioned, workshop presenters will be permitted to unmask when they begin their sessions, but must remain at the front of the room and maintain an appropriate distance from the audience.

NJEA will adhere to the safety protocols established by the New Jersey Department of Health, which may add to or modify the above practices. Visit [njeaconvention.org](http://njeaconvention.org) regularly for more information.



# Stay overnight at the NJEA Convention

Want to reserve a room in Atlantic City for the NJEA Convention at a great rate? Take a look at these discount rates available at Bally's, Borgata, Caesars, Golden Nugget, Hard Rock, Harrah's, Resorts and Tropicana.

To make reservation, go to [njeaconvention.org](http://njeaconvention.org). To access the room reservation tool, you'll need to log in as a member. For your PIN, use either the email address you've previously given NJEA or the PIN that is found on your membership card. Your password is the last four digits of your Social Security number unless you have changed it.

Shuttle service to the Atlantic City Convention Center is available from the hotels listed here.

Hotel	Wed.-Thurs. rate	Friday rate	Deadline	Group code
Bally's	\$132.42	\$203.10	10/1/2021	SNJ112
Borgata	\$146.17	\$146.17	10/4/2021	GBNJE21
Caesars	\$140.40	N/A	10/1/2021	SC10NJM
Golden Nugget	\$92.45	\$168.57	10/19/2021	AED21
Hard Rock	\$114.35	\$114.35	10/8/2021	GEA1121
Harrah's	\$105.06	\$207.66	10/1/2021	SH11NJ1
Resorts	\$107.54	\$152.99	10/28/2021	VNJE21
Tropicana	\$105.22	\$190.44	10/16/2021	ST11NS1



# NBTEA relieves food insecurity with Pride grant

By Beth Passner, North Brunswick Township Education Association president



**With a mixture of funds from an NJEA Pride in Public Education grant and direct donations from NBTEA members, the local association distributed over 500 bags of food to families in the community.**

Every year, the North Brunswick Township Education Association sponsors events funded by NJEA Pride in Public Education grants that help our schools and communities. In a typical school year, we usually plan about 20 events that range from literacy and math nights to providing our students with various school supplies.

Since the pandemic had made it impossible to have in-person events for our students, we got creative last year. We placed banners welcoming students back to school, purchased mask lanyards for our staff and students along with a book called *It's Ok to be Different* for each of our prekindergarten students that they read together on a Zoom Literacy Night.

As we started to brainstorm additional ways to help our schools we started thinking about how the pandemic has affected so many people in North Brunswick economically. As with all food banks across the nation, North

***We are proud of our members and hope that this is an event that we can continue every year from now on.***

Brunswick's food bank has been overwhelmed with requests during the pandemic. Our students are dealing with a lot during this pandemic and unfortunately hunger is one of them. We decided that one of the best ways to help our students right now was to help the North Brunswick Food Bank.

We said that if we were going to do this that we were going to go big. We applied for an NJEA Pride grant and were approved for \$5,000 worth of food to fill in grocery bags. We partnered with Chartwells, our district's food service provider to have bulk amounts of pasta, rice, cereal and peanut butter delivered to us. Over 1,500 additional items of soup, vegetables, mayonnaise, tuna and applesauce were purchased by our members.

We wanted to make sure that it was an event that would be safe for our member volunteers. Despite the weather, we planned for an outdoor event in the parking lot of our office in North Brunswick and told our members to bundle up. We also wanted to comply with the governor's social distancing orders for outdoor gatherings, so we implemented a sign-up sheet to make sure that we did not go over the 25-person maximum as well as having our members take a COVID test before attending.

We set up our tables across the parking lot and members walked around to stuff the bags. We had originally planned to do this event in January but when the COVID numbers spiked we postponed it to March 6. Adam Sawchak from Chartwells was amazing to work with and was very flexible especially when we had to change the date.

In the end, we had 25 members stuff over 500 bags with food in just a few short hours. Students from the North Brunswick Township High School Key Club helped us carry the bags. We are proud of our members and hope that this is an event that we can continue every year from now on.

## Bob Bonazzi, former NJEA executive director passes



Robert A. Bonazzi, who served as executive director of NJEA from 1991 to 2007 died on June 16 in Charleston, South Carolina.

Bonazzi began his professional career as a biology teacher in New York and was a founder of his local education association. Later he went on to become the director of field services for the Massachusetts Teachers Association 1985 to 1991.

Under Bonazzi's leadership as NJEA executive director, the association's membership grew, and its Great Public Schools

campaign raised public appreciation for its members. He played a key role in strengthening the fiscal stability of NJEA, enabling it to provide services to members and remain a strong advocate for members' interests.

Bonazzi served as a trustee of the Education Law Center and was instrumental in fostering a strong and dynamic relationship between NJEA and the Education Law Center and was pivotal in advancing ELC's mission of advocating for education justice and equal educational opportunity for public school children in New Jersey and across the nation. Bonazzi also served as a board member of the Center for Teaching and Learning, a nonprofit working to develop scalable solutions to the nation's massive STEM teacher shortage. To that end, Bonazzi also founded the Bonazzi Foundation for the Promotion of Science Education.

After retiring from NJEA, Bonazzi continued his advocacy for teachers as co-founder of Princeton Organizational Advisors and Care Advocacy Services, companies dedicated to improving health care for public school employees. In addition, he served as trustee of the South Carolina Education Association.

Bonazzi continued to enjoy exploring the world of microscopic life and was a voracious reader and enthusiastic learner. But, most of all, he loved interacting with and learning from people from all walks of life. He is survived by his wife, Kathy, and his children, Michael, Steven, and Annie Bonazzi.

# Meet New Jersey's 2021-22 County Teachers of the Year

NJEA is proud to join with students, school employees, parents and others in congratulating the

## 2021-22 New Jersey County Teachers of the Year.



1. **ATLANTIC:** James House, Egg Harbor Township High School, Egg Harbor Township School District
2. **BERGEN:** Kim Clancey, Ridge Ranch Elementary School, Paramus School District
3. **BURLINGTON:** Michelle Poolaw, Hillside Elementary School, Mount Laurel School District
4. **CAMDEN:** Sonia Chugh, LEAP Academy University Charter School, located in Camden
5. **CAPE MAY:** Lee Anne Tarr, Cape May City Elementary School, Cape May City School District
6. **CUMBERLAND:** Samantha Johnson Boyer, Charles Seabrook School, Upper Deerfield School District
7. **ESSEX:** Theresa Maughan, East Orange STEM Academy, East Orange School District
8. **GLOUCESTER:** Lynne Bussott, Gov. Charles C. Stratton School, Swedesboro-Woolwich School District
9. **HUDSON:** Kimberley Madalena, Washington Middle School, Harrison School District
10. **HUNTERDON:** Teresa A. DeSapio Diaz, Hunterdon County Polytech, Hunterdon County Vocational School District
11. **MERCER:** Brittany J. Thomas, Robins Elementary School, Trenton School District
12. **MIDDLESEX:** Melissa Vega, New Brunswick Middle School, New Brunswick School District
13. **MONMOUTH:** Alyssa Geary, Red Bank Middle School, Red Bank Borough School District
14. **MORRIS:** Jonathan Dowler, West Morris Mendham High School, West Morris Regional School District
15. **OCEAN:** Michael DeRiggi, North Dover Elementary School, Toms River Regional School District
16. **PASSAIC:** Tammy Nichole Cooper, Passaic High School, Passaic School District
17. **SALEM:** Julie Knight, Woodstown High School, Woodstown-Pilesgrove School District
18. **SOMERSET:** Darrin Wolsko, Watchung Hills Regional High School, Watchung Hills Regional School District
19. **SUSSEX:** Shawna Longo, Durban Avenue School, Hopatcong Borough School District
20. **UNION:** Dennis Dagounis, Roselle Park High School, Roselle Park School District
21. **WARREN:** Faith Roncoroni, Phillipsburg High School, Phillipsburg School District



# NJEA leads at 100th annual NEA Representative Assembly



NJEA's representatives to the historic 100th annual NEA Representative Assembly made their voices heard, despite the conference being held virtually for the second year because of COVID restrictions.

The convention, which was held from June 30 to July 3, saw delegates debating education issues such as critical race theory, police in schools, and adopting a nearly \$371 million budget.

## NJ'S KIMBERLY SCOTT-HAYDEN AMONG HONOREES

In another historic moment, New Jersey's delegates got to see one of their own celebrated on a national stage—one she so richly deserves. NJEA member Kimberly Scott-Hayden was honored as the 2021 NEA Education Support Professional of the Year and addressed the RA in a recorded speech. Scott-Hayden's remarks highlighted the value and impact that educational support professionals play in schools as they provide truly essential services.

Teacher of the Year Juliana Urtubey, a Nevada special education teacher, was honored alongside Julius B. Thomas, a counselor and professor at Rio Hondo College in California who has been named the 2021 Higher Educator of the Year. Lifelong disability rights advocate Judith Heumann received the Friend of Education award.

The RA also celebrated the work NEA members have done and inspired delegates to continue the fight to make sure every school community is open and welcoming.

## SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

NEA President Becky Pringle told the 8,000 delegates that it's up to every educator to imagine a system of shared responsibility where every student is supported, every educator is respected, and every school is a community school. Pringle urged the delegates to ask themselves what they are ready and willing to do to realize this vision. "I do believe the answer to that last question will be: Whatever it takes," she said.

Pringle also recognized the incredible work educators have done during the pandemic.

"I was blown away by your courage and creativity and caring," Pringle said. "But I wasn't surprised. It's who you are—who we are. We lead and love; teach and learn from a place of deep conviction and powerful purpose. You grounded yourself in that, and it became your reservoir of energy that you tapped into over and over again."

President Joe Biden and First Lady and NEA member Dr. Jill Biden addressed the delegates. President Biden called NEA "one of the nation's indispensable organizations," and thanked NEA members for their support

in the 2020 election as well as their tireless dedication to their students during the pandemic. "The entire country has witnessed the dedication and resolve of NEA members."

It was especially meaningful for NEA members to be addressed by one of their own as First Lady. Dr. Jill Biden, a community college professor in Virginia who has maintained her position even after the presidential election, thanked NEA members for their efforts to elect President Biden. She talked about how meaningful it was for her to address them on stage at the RA. "I have never been more proud to call myself an educator."

## DEMOCRACY IS THE FOUNDATION

NEA Director Kim Anderson called on NEA members to continue to fight for democracy, and to educate students about its value.

"Our democracy is the foundation of a society that is supposed to value equal voice, respect for all, and the dignity of spirited, but civil, discourse," Anderson said. "And where do we learn to put those values into action? In our schools and on our campuses. The answer to a weakened democracy is a strong, just system of public education. And it's our job, as members of this union, to fight for it."

Voting rights activist and author Stacey Abrams was another highlight of the convention. She reinforced the message that advocating for voting rights is everyone's responsibility.

"The consequences of silence have not been outweighed by the consequences of action," Abrams said. "We need every single member of the NEA, every single educator who believes the right to vote should be sacred, to stay on top of this. That means calling [legislators] every day, reaching out to our communities. If we do that every day this summer, we will see change and we will see progress."

NJEA members proved they were willing to invest in democracy, as well as take other actions, as they once again led the RA in raising the most amount of money per delegate and had the highest total donations of any other NEA affiliate.

New Jersey's delegates took first place by raising \$153,454.46 and a total of \$402,496.37 in total for NEA PAC.

NJEA members also found ways to combine fun with fundraising in a virtual environment. They submitted photos for a food bank donation contest, held an NJEA clothing photo contest, and a red, white and blue photo contest to create excitement and engagement. Take a look at some of their efforts at [ra.njea.org](http://ra.njea.org).



# Reilly, Hass, Rabinowitz to lead NJEA Preservice



## NJEA Preservice President Brian Reilly

Brian Reilly is a junior at Seton Hall University studying secondary education and mathematics. In addition to his role with NJEA Preservice, Brian is active at Seton Hall in Campus Ministry and the Seton Hall Pep Band. He is also a part of the Xi Gamma Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi.

Brian joined NJEA Preservice as an ambassador at the 2019 NJEA Convention. He later went on to serve as NJEA Relations Chair for

the 2020-21 school year. In this position, he helped grow the relationships of Preservice with NJEA as well as the NEA Aspiring Educators program. He looks forward to strengthening these relationships even further in the future.

In his role as president, Brian is looking forward to continuing the growth of Preservice in membership as well as its presence on the state and national level. He is focused on the fight to end edTPA once and for all.



## NJEA Preservice Vice President Olivia Haas

Olivia Haas is a senior at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ), where she is studying mathematics secondary education. Olivia plans to attend Graduate School to obtain a doctoral degree in math education.

Prior to serving as NJEA Preservice Vice President, Olivia served as the NJEA Preservice President during the 2019-2020 year. In that role, Olivia helped

plan and lead Preservice events, such as Preservice Preview and the newly implemented Game Nights for members. To increase membership, Olivia spoke at colleges throughout the state about the importance of unionization and the opportunities NJEA Preservice provides its members.

Olivia has served on the NJEA Women in Education committee, and she has been a member of the Mercer County Education Association Legislative Action Team. Additionally, Olivia has attended the NEA Aspiring Educators

State Leaders meetings and helped lead a discussion on teacher prep exams with Cameo Kendrick.

At TCNJ, Olivia is a member of the Omicron Delta Kappa circle, the Gamma Zeta chapter of the Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society and is a new inductee of the Theta Chapter of Pi Mu Epsilon. She also serves as the secretary of the Women's Club Soccer Team and is an active member of Best Buddies, a program that matches TCNJ students with individuals with disabilities. Olivia has worked as a tutor in the Tutoring Center and TCNJ since the fall of 2019. In spring 2020, she was a learning assistant in a Calculus B course on campus and is currently a class tutor for a Number Theory course.

As the newest NJEA Preservice Vice President Olivia looks forward to being more involved in the Preservice community, working to grow membership and aid the next generation of future educators. She is looking forward to sharing the bountiful opportunities and benefits that the union offers with aspiring educators.



## NJEA Preservice Secretary Karly Rabinowitz

Karly Rabinowitz is a senior at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ). She is studying special education and elementary education with a specialization in psychology. Karly is in the five-year master's degree program and is expected to graduate in 2023.

At TCNJ, Karly is a member of the Kappa Delta Pi Honors Society which is for Education. She is also a member of Psi Chi Honors Society,

which is for psychology majors. Karly is an active member of Best Buddies. This is an inclusive club that enables neurodiverse people to connect with one another by being paired up. Karly has also been a part of a Social and Emotional Learning Lab for the Psychology Department where she studies better ways to incorporate social and emotional skills within the classroom. She is looking forward to continuing with this lab in the fall.

Over the summer, Karly works as a camp counselor. She has done this every year for the past six years and is looking forward to continuing to do so. Karly is excited to be secretary for this upcoming year. She is looking forward to collaborating with the leadership team as well as being more involved with the Preservice. Karly cannot wait to work with other members of NJEA in order to expand our membership.

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# Sweeney, Ruiz convene education leadership roundtable

## NJEA leaders champion local educator input

Senate President Sweeney and Senate Education Committee Chair M. Teresa Ruiz convened a group of state education organizations on July 22 to discuss effective ways to utilize aid allocated to public schools from the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) over the next three years. The senators said they wanted to hear firsthand from leaders in the education community about their concerns, questions, plans and thoughts regarding how they will use this direct aid.

NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, who at the time of the panel was completing his term as vice president, participated in the roundtable. NJEA Executive Director Steve Swetsky joined him.

At issue was close to \$2.5 billion being sent directly to local school districts from the ARP's Elementary and Secondary Emergency Education Relief Fund, providing a unique opportunity to address educational needs in a fiscally responsible way.

NJEA believes that this is a generational opportunity to invest in our students' academic, emotional and physical well-being. We have never seen an influx of funds like this before. It is an opportunity to be bold, try innovative things and analyze what really works.

This funding should not be used as an opportunity to shift costs to the federal government, but to expand and do things that would not have been possible otherwise.

NJEA has consistently held that educators physically present in the schools must play a substantial role in any decision-making process.

The more working educators are involved, the more effective and targeted those investments will be. Those who work directly with students know best what the needs are and know best how to meet those needs.

Two key themes emerged from the discussion: barriers to moving swiftly on capital projects, and that health-related decisions must be applied statewide.

### CAPITAL PROJECTS

HVAC was the main capital project discussed. Some participants asked for a more streamlined process for capital projects that do not have a direct educational purpose. Those panelists noted HVAC projects must go through the normal bidding process and get approvals from the Departments of Education and Community

Affairs, causing the approval process to take as long as six months to complete. Solutions, including an approved vendors list, were proposed.

However, this should not become a competition between companies and vendors looking to cash in by selling programs and products. Community investments, made with community input and targeted at each community's specific needs must be included.

### HEALTH POLICIES

Participants noted the differing guidance from local and county health departments and the volatility of the debate over masking students. Global masking mandates were favored by panelists over a patchwork of practices across districts. They noted that having local districts embroiled in these health decisions takes them away from spending time on educational decisions.

"I walked in expecting to have a conversation about the finances of the schools, how you are spending your money and what you are going to do," Sweeney said. "And it really turned into a meeting of the struggles that the school districts are having—and they're legitimate—that have to be addressed. And we have to fast-track as much as we can to get ourselves in a better position."

Sweeney and Ruiz said that they plan to continue discussions with the Murphy administration, and to consider executive actions and/or potential legislation that could alleviate some aspects of these concerns.

“

*Those who work directly with students know best what their needs are and know best how to meet those needs.*

## Roundtable participants

**Sean M. Spiller**, president, NJEA

**Steve Swetsky**, executive director, NJEA

**Donna M. Chiera**, president, AFT-NJ

**Irene LeFebvre**, president, New Jersey School Board Association

**Dr. Lawrence Feinsod**, executive director, NJSBA

**Robert Colavita Jr.**, president-elect, New Jersey Association of School Budget Officers

**Michael Vrancik**, director of government relations, NJASBO

**Melanie Schulz**, director of government relations, New Jersey Association of School Administrators

**Dr. Richard G. Bozza**, executive director, NJASA;

**Jacqueline Burke**, executive director, New Jersey Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools

**Christopher Nagy**, treasurer, NJCCVTS

**David M. Aderhold**, president, Garden State Coalition of Schools

**Elisabeth (Betsy) Ginsburg**, executive director, GSCS;

**Karen Bingert**, executive director, New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association

**Debra Bradley**, director of government relations, NJPSA.



# Member Benefit Plan report available

This is a summary of the annual report for the New Jersey Education Association Member Benefit Fund, Employer Identification Number 21-0524390, Plan No. 510 for the period from Oct. 1, 2019 to Sept.30, 2020. The Plan provides for group insurance and other welfare benefits. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

### INSURANCE INFORMATION

The plan sponsor, NJEA, has a group contract with Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay temporary and long-term disability claims incurred under the terms of the plan. The premiums under this contract are paid by those NJEA members who chose to select coverage under the contract. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending September 30, 2020 were \$35,485,669.

### BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the Plan was \$2,165,177 as of Sept. 30, 2020, compared to \$2,239,828 as of Oct. 1, 2019. During the Plan year, the Plan experienced a decrease in its net assets of (\$74,651). During the Plan year, the Plan had total income of \$438,300, including earnings from investments of \$7,135, and other income of \$431,165. Plan expenses were \$512,951. These expenses included \$48,523 in administrative expenses and \$464,428 in membership benefits paid on behalf of participants and beneficiaries.

### YOUR RIGHTS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

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

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

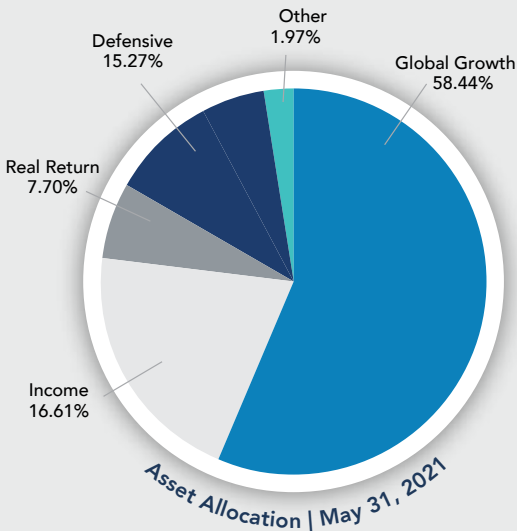
You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan at the address above or at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department of Labor should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

## PENSION UPDATE

TOTAL PENSION FUND: \$92.68 BILLION

The totals below reflect market values as of May 31, 2021, and for comparison, Feb. 28, 2021. The figures, which are rounded, may not reflect the current market values of some alternative investments through the period noted, because of lags in reporting under industry standards.

	May 31, 2021		Feb. 28, 2021	
	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation
Global Growth	\$54.16	58.44%	\$50.31	58.64%
Income	\$15.40	16.61%	\$14.26	16.62%
Real Return	\$7.13	7.70%	\$6.63	7.73%
Defensive	\$14.15	15.27%	\$12.82	14.94%
Other	\$1.84	1.97%	\$1.78	2.08%
Total	\$92.68	100%	\$85.80	100%





# How to *write* for the NJEA Review

## WHAT CAN I SUBMIT FOR PUBLICATION?

### Feature article

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

### Letter to the editor

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

### Speak out

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

### I Am NJEA

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

### Proud moments

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

### Toolbox

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

## HOW DO I SUBMIT FOR PUBLICATION?

### Submitting content

Email submissions to [njeareview@njea.org](mailto:njeareview@njea.org). Be sure to include your name and contact information, the name of your district and what you do there, the name of your local association, as well as the name and contact information of your local association president.

### The review process

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

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



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# Educators in the lead as a new school year begins

By Richard Wilson

Since the time of Aesop, there has been some version of the old proverb about necessity being the mother of invention. If that is true, this school year will certainly be fertile ground for innovation and reinvention of the ways that our schools operate. Hopefully, we can take hold of the opportunity for teachers to take the lead and create schools that better serve our students and communities.

One of the main reasons educators were able to pivot to the virtual world in March 2020 was because colleagues worked together to share their knowledge and skills with others, creating networks of teacher leaders all over the state. Throughout the pandemic, pop-up professional development, both formal and informal, grew all around the state.

For the first time, many school districts scheduled time into the work day for teachers to work together to solve the problems that were confronting them. NJEA has advocated for years for this model of sustained, job-embedded professional learning, and there is no reason why we should turn back from this model as we move back into our school buildings. There is every reason for teachers to lead with innovation to make our schools better centers of learning than they have ever been before.

Some opportunities for leveraging the influence of teachers are actually spelled out in new laws. The American Rescue Plan, which provides increased emergency funding through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER), requires school districts to solicit meaningful stakeholder engagement. Listed

stakeholders include teachers, other educators, school staff and their unions. Teachers interested in influencing the use of these funds should work with their local association to have a seat at the table as these decisions are being made.

As we physically move back into our schools, educators are in a position to create classrooms that are spaces of health and healing, especially considering the traumatic experiences we have all shared in the last 18 months. It will be teachers and other school personnel who will notice those students struggling with the challenges of transitioning back to in-person learning. Those educators will be on the front lines creating the reassuring classroom culture necessary for those students to succeed.

Teachers and front-line educators can also take the lead on ensuring equity for our students as they return to schools. The Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framework and inclusive curriculum offer opportunities for educators to reframe our schools in a way that centers on students in a more authentic way. CCW is a model that recognizes the strengths of traditionally marginalized communities to survive and thrive in spite of societal roadblocks. If this is a new concept for you, the NJEA Professional Development Division has scheduled a number of professional learning sessions throughout the state this year to help members become familiar with this useful tool. You can find out more at [learning.njea.org](https://learning.njea.org).

Students returning to traditional schooling this fall will exhibit an even greater variation in academic skills than in a typical year. The

opportunity here is for educators to rethink the process of assessment and instruction. Teachers can lead the way in developing authentic assessments with their colleagues to more accurately measure students' learning needs and plan appropriately for instruction. Once again, it is those who are closest to students who will best be able to address the needs of those students.

During the pandemic, educators found themselves virtually placed in the middle of their students' households. There were expectations for family supports that had not existed before, and in many cases, this meant building closer relationships with families. Finding ways to continue those partnerships is yet another opportunity open to us in moving forward.

This moment offers a great deal of opportunity to reimagine and reinvent schools. That reinvention should envisage schools in which teachers and other school staff can work individually and collectively to influence the school community on instruction that improves student learning. 🚀

If you find yourself supporting and leading colleagues in any of these efforts moving forward, you just might be a good candidate for the NJEA Teacher Leader Academy, a New Jersey Department of Education approved program leading candidates to the New Jersey Teacher Leader Endorsement. Now in the middle of its second year, applications are open for a third cohort that will open in March 2022. More information can be found at [njea.org/tla](https://njea.org/tla).

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*Richard Wilson is an associate director in the NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division. He is currently on special assignment to assist in the development of the NJEA Teacher Leader Academy. He can be reached at [rwilson@njea.org](mailto:rwilson@njea.org).*

A full-page portrait of Sean M. Spiller, the NJEA President. He is a man with a shaved head, smiling, wearing a dark blue suit, a light purple shirt, and a red and blue striped tie. He has his arms crossed and is standing in front of a blurred background of a building with columns. A small NJEA pin is visible on his lapel.

# FROM MENTORS TO MEMBERS

Meet NJEA President Sean M. Spiller

*By Patrick Rumaker, NJEA Review editor*

Sean M. Spiller's path to the classroom and to union leadership is not the typical story of a youngster who dreamed throughout his childhood of becoming a teacher. His future could have taken any one of several paths: sports writer, professional hockey player, editor, biologist or psychologist.

But having a mother who was a teacher in Jamaica and a grandfather who was a pivotal and historic figure in the New Zealand's union movement likely meant that education and union leadership were already imprinted on his DNA.

Spiller's journey to the classroom and association leadership traverses a hockey rink and a high-pressure newsroom and features a host of mentors who knew his potential.

## AN EXPANSIVE WORLDVIEW FROM THE START

Spiller and his brother Richard were born in Jamaica to a Jamaican mother, Hyacinth, and Kiwi (New Zealand) father, Tom. Spiller's parents had met during graduate school in Australia. His father drove a bus to help fund his graduate studies in engineering and his mother showed up one day as a passenger.

Spiller, who later would first meet his own wife on a bus, quips, "He literally picked her up!"

With their parents' love of travel, adventure, and learning as much as possible about the world, Spiller and his brother spent their toddlerhood in various locales—leaving them with vague memories of living in Jamaica, Venezuela, and Rockaway, Queens before the family settled in Montville, New Jersey. Their moves and travels across the globe instilled in Spiller a global experience and a macro perspective.

Spiller explains that his paternal grandfather in New Zealand, named Hubert Spiller but commonly known as Tom, was a lifelong labor and human rights activist whose life is chronicled in news accounts and documentaries there. As a young man, the elder Tom Spiller joined the International Brigades and fought against the fascist forces of Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War. After the war, the elder Spiller went on to become an official in the New Zealand's Tramways Union, ultimately serving as its president.

"My father would tell me that his father was the kind of guy who would put out an actual soapbox and stand on it to rally the people to action," Spiller says.

Spiller's own father worked for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey as a staff services engineer at Newark Airport, where he was often frustrated that he couldn't convince his engineering colleagues to form a union. But



Spiller with his parents and brother. From left: Richard, Hyacinth, Sean, and Tom Spiller.

Spiller notes that his father otherwise loved his job; he reveled in the high-level math and the grand scale of his tasks and loved reporting to work each day. Their father's role at the airport often enabled Spiller and his brother, in their pre-9/11 childhoods, to meet the pilots in the cockpit to "help" fly the plane during their annual family visits to Jamaica and their occasional family visits to New Zealand.

While his mother was a mathematics and geography teacher in Jamaica, in the U.S. she was a stay-at-home parent until she took a job as a claims examiner with Chubb. Hyacinth Spiller had a sharp analytical mind and a natural understanding of people and the world, making her a wonderful conversationalist and deeply adored by her sons. Her teaching past, however, was more often than not a reason why the young Spiller and his brother would avoid asking her questions about their homework—especially math.

"If we had a math question, Mom was the last option!" Spiller laughs. "We just wanted the answer and we knew if we went to our mom, we were getting the full lesson!"

## ON THE ICE

Spiller graduated from Rutgers College, focusing on psychology and biology, but it was his love of sports in general, and hockey in particular, that led to his first job after college and indirectly to his future as an educator and leader.

While Spiller was eager to play any sport, he loved hockey from his first skate with his father and brother. He loved the challenge of the game and the exhilarating pace, as well as the toughness it required to play despite blood and injury. Good players are smart, agile, gritty and ready.

"It demands a strength of character of every

player," Spiller explains, "and it is the epitome of a team sport. Everyone has to constantly work together, in harmony, to achieve the team's goal and protect each other."

While he was focused on the game and his personal growth, he never could have seen how this training would translate so exactly to his work in NJEA and leadership—the pace, the resilience, the focus, and the teamwork necessary for union work are just as thrilling for Spiller.

At Rutgers, Spiller made the team and was in his glory. He recalls a crossroads coming after a game at the end of his freshman year, when an assistant coach was reviewing his playing.

"In essence, he wanted me to feed the puck to my teammate more, who had been scoring. I remember his words as, 'Know your role.'" While this was meant to encourage Spiller to assist, he translated it differently. "I knew who I was. I was meant to be a goal-scorer. I was meant to be the captain. I knew my role. He didn't, and I was going to prove to him what it was."

## TEAM CAPTAIN, EDITOR, WRITER, TEACHER

By his junior year, Spiller was the leading scorer and captain of the Rutgers University ice hockey team. He would finish his career having won two championships, wearing the 'C' for two years, and leading in team points for his final two years as a Scarlet Knight. His head coach during all that time, Mike DeAngelis, was, and still is, a high school science teacher. Through Spiller's shared experiences with DeAngelis, the seeds were planted for Spiller's future career.

"Mike was absolutely the most influential person in my life at the time besides my parents," Spiller says.

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Top: Spiller with his son, Tyson, on the ice.

Bottom: Spiller with his mother, Hyacinth, at President Barack Obama's inauguration.

DeAngelis, who now teaches in West Orange, would often talk with the hockey team about his life as a science teacher.

"You're a college kid, but you're listening," Spiller says. "I'd be thinking, 'This guy is kind of like me—he's a science guy, he's doing this kind of work, he's talking about how much fun he has teaching these kids.' I really looked up to him, so the possibility of being a teacher was always there for me."

But hockey came first.

Spiller took a shot at minor league hockey. That didn't lead to a career on the ice, but it did land him an internship with hockey and New York City Subway historian Stan Fischler. With Fischler, he not only learned more about writing, editing, and sports reporting, he earned a listing as research editor for Fischler's book, *The Subway: A Trip Through Time on New York's Rapid Transit*.

Spiller's internship with Fischler led to a job as assistant sports editor for the Associated Press, covering major league baseball. The job was exciting—monitoring up to six games simultaneously and constantly talking on the phone with the reporters on-site at each of those games, and, at the end of each game, getting the story on the wire within seconds of the last out.

Again, Spiller reveled in the pace, the stakes, the people, and the content of the work. But the hours were terrible—days began at 5 p.m., often going until 2 or 3 the next morning. The excitement of hanging out regularly with professional baseball players was offset by never being on the same schedule as friends and family.

"I had that moment when I thought, 'Man, what would I really like to do?'" Spiller remembers. He thought about his role models: his mother, his coach. Both educators. "Then I thought, 'Well, I know Mike DeAngelis was a great coach for me and he was a great teacher—I'd like to do that!' That's why I went back to Rutgers and shifted my focus to education."

## UNINTENTIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

Long before Spiller even imagined he would become involved in a union, let alone a statewide president, he inadvertently engaged in his first round of negotiations. Graduating midyear from Rutgers' education program, Spiller began to look for his first job—likely not fully appreciating at the time the high demand for high school science teachers who can coach. He quickly lined up interviews in five school districts.

The first was in Kinnelon, where an interview with the principal swiftly moved into a meeting with the superintendent. Before he knew it, he was being offered a job.

"I sat there, totally silent. I didn't know what to say because the only thing going through my mind was that I had four other districts that were yet to interview me," Spiller remembers. "So I didn't say a word; I was in shock."

The silence paid off—the superintendent quickly offered to put him on the second rather than first step of the guide.

"That was my first negotiation, and I didn't even know I was doing it," Spiller quips.

Because he had already made the commitment to interview with the other four districts, he kept his appointments, but ultimately took the job in Kinnelon. He spent that first year working under an emergency certification, teaching honors physics, chemistry, and biochemistry while serving as head hockey coach and as an assistant coach for lacrosse. Again a rookie, rushing from post to post, he found it challenging and intense, but working with his students and players was incredibly rewarding.

Spiller shared his office with another science teacher, Fred Vafaie, hired in the same year, but with several more years of experience as a



teacher and NJEA member.

“Fred was super pro-union, and from Day One he was in my ear saying, ‘Go talk to the union rep—tell him this, show him that!’ He was a veteran teacher, so he knew the value of the association, and he knew how it could help as a resource, support structure, and much more.”

“Of course, like most new teachers, I remember thinking, ‘I’m just trying to survive!’” Spiller said.

A few years later, both Spiller and Vafaie moved on to Wayne Township. Now Spiller could see what Vafaie had said about the association, and he was ready to get involved. He approached Eileen Bannat Hayes, who was Wayne Education Association (WEA) president at the time and offered to help with anything the association needed. Hayes didn’t hesitate to take Spiller up on the offer.

It wasn’t long before Spiller was an officer in WEA. By 2007, with Hayes’ and the whole local association leadership’s enthusiastic support, Spiller became WEA president.

### LEARNING THE ROPES OF BEING A LEADER

Along the way to becoming WEA president, Spiller served as the local association’s representative to the Passaic County Education Association (PCEA), taking a position on its executive board in 2005. There he met one of his most important mentors, PCEA President Joe Cheff.

“I’ve always had great mentors and supporters, but I would say quite simply that I would not be sitting in this position as the incoming president of NJEA without Joe Cheff,” Spiller says.

Mr. Cheff—as Spiller has always addressed him—impressed upon Spiller the importance of strong relationships with the entire education stakeholder community including local, county, and state association members and leaders, parents, mayors, town council members, state and federal lawmakers, freeholders (now county commissioners), community organizations, and others.

“Joe really opened me up to the importance of political engagement, how to interact with decision-makers, and why politics matter,” Spiller says. “And he took me right in. He showed me everything. It’s a real testament to him that he was always looking to grow new leaders and was never threatened by it. He was always inclusive and always willing to help. He is phenomenal.”

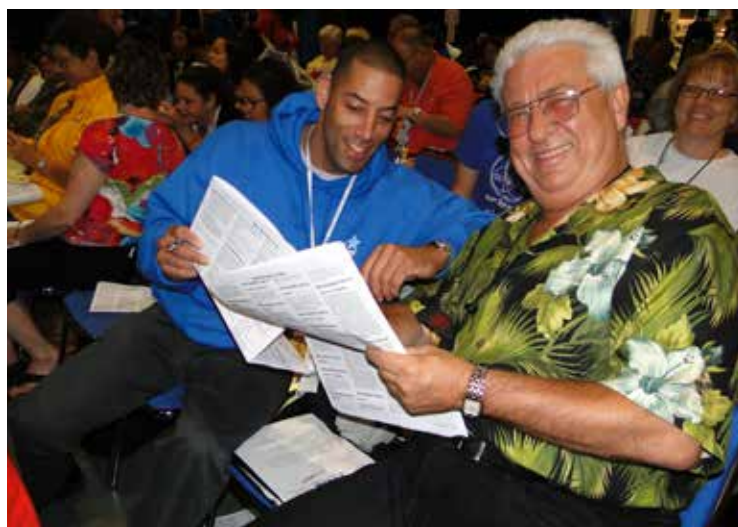
Spiller represented PCEA on the NJEA Congressional Contact Committee. NJEA President Barbara Keshishian appointed Spiller to chair the committee. As chair, Spiller worked closely with now retired NJEA lobbyist Wayne Dibofsky, who recognized Spiller’s leadership potential. Amidst several of their countless political conversations, Dibofsky encouraged Spiller to think seriously about his long-term future in NJEA, either as a staff member or in association leadership. Even then, Spiller was confident that association governance was the direction he wanted to go.

### A JUSTICE-CENTERED UNION

Spiller says it is an honor to follow in NJEA President Marie Blistan’s footsteps.

“I couldn’t be more thrilled to have had the opportunity to work with Marie Blistan,” Spiller says. “She is the epitome of leadership and work-ethic. I’ve grown so much over the past eight years, brainstorming with her and using her example to reflect about my own leadership. She’s a master class. And she’s a friend.”

Spiller credits Blistan with prioritizing racial, social and educational justice. As an African American, Spiller notes the value of Blistan’s role as a vocal white ally in the cause of anti-racism. Because of the history of systemic racism in the U.S., having a white leader center racial justice work in the union’s mission sends a strong message that



Top: Spiller with his family, from left: Tyson, Sean, Lauren, and Brody Spiller. Bottom: Spiller with his mentor, former Passaic County Education Association President Joe Cheff seated with the Passaic County delegation at an NEA Representative Assembly.





Spiller speaking at the Jack Bertolino NJEA Summer Leadership Conference in August 2013.

this is not just an issue for people of color.

Beginning with NJEA President Wendell Steinhauer, NJEA presidents have selected a theme for the NJEA Convention and to represent their term. Spiller has chosen "Learning. Equity. Justice."

"It would be a disservice to our members to say, 'We've done 'justice' under President Blistan. Let's move on.' No. This is generational work," Spiller says. "As a union, justice is what we are about. Justice for the individual worker in the face of powerful employers, justice for our schools to have the resources to help all those who walk in the door, justice for students and families so all communities have access to the tools and opportunities for success. We stand for justice—justice in education and in our society."

The theme encompasses all of NJEA's work, whether it is the full reopening of schools in the midst of an ongoing pandemic, the traditional bread-and-butter issues such as collective bargaining, contract enforcement, and working conditions, or if we are looking at our role in preserving our democracy in these uncertain times.

"Yes, we are advocating for our members' health and safety, their working conditions and student learning conditions, but I think that even more broadly—when we're seeing forces around the nation that are fighting to stop us from teaching the truth or forces that are trying to erode democracy—we have to hold the line," Spiller says. "Public education is the defender of democracy, and we as a union have an oversized role to play, especially at this moment in time, to make sure that we're here for our kids, our families, our neighbors and our nation."

#### AMPLIFYING THE VOICE AND POWER OF EACH MEMBER

Spiller believes in the power of NJEA to amplify the voices and values of its members.

"Whatever it is that you're passionate about, the union can be the place for you to exercise and leverage your power. You are part of a powerful collective group that can make a difference on so many important issues," Spiller says. "You want to do something that matters to you? The union is the way to do it. We can train you in organizing. We can help connect you to others who think like you.

The union can help you move our world forward."

And as an association, it starts with listening.

That's why, in the past year, and particularly over this past summer, an NJEA initiative called 200K Conversations has trained a cadre of members to make phone calls to every member of the association—all 200,000 members. At its core, 200K Conversations is about engaging NJEA members, listening to their stories, and empowering all members to find their spaces in the union and their voices. By doing so, we can all learn from each other's experiences, connect around our areas of passion, and build a stronger, more inclusive association.

#### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Spiller notes that for the last 10 years NJEA has been engaged in undoing the damage done to public education and to the livelihoods of NJEA members by Gov. Chris Christie. Adding that through long-term advocacy and member engagement, the association successfully addressed many of those issues, such as Ch. 78, Job Justice for educational support professionals, school funding and respect for educators. He is mindful of the difference it makes when there is a strong relationship with pro-public education lawmakers.

"I watched as a local leader, the NJEA presidency of Joyce Powell during the Corzine administration and their collaboration," Spiller recalls. "Then I watched our world change when Chris Christie was elected governor and what that meant with regard to how our members were treated and our profession characterized. I can only imagine the frustration during the presidency of Barbara Keshishian, and I know the challenges Wendell Steinhauer faced during my own time as an officer."

With a Murphy administration, we're no longer constantly in defense posture, Spiller points out,



Spiller speaking at the Garden State Equality Pride Walk on June 13, 2021, with Out Montclair, also attended by Gov. Phil Murphy. Photographer/NJ Governor's Office





NIEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson, NIEA President Sean M. Spiller and NIEA Vice President Steve Beatty.

Photo by John O'Boyle



**Now NJEA President Sean M. Spiller and then NJEA President Marie Blistan confer at the 2017 NEA Representative Assembly.**

but instead moving our pro-public education vision forward.

“My hope is that, with a Biden presidency and, hopefully, a Murphy reelection, we will be dealing with two friends of education in two of the highest positions of power,” Spiller says. “That’s a real opportunity.”

But as the grandson of a man who engaged in hand-to-hand combat to fight fascism in 1930s Spain, Spiller recognizes the fragility of democracy. He understands that while there is great opportunity, we are also at a time of great risk to our nation’s future.

“We’re not just seeing a threat to unions, but to our democracy at its core,” Spiller warns. “That is what’s at stake. If we’re not in a real democracy, think about what teaching looks like in dictatorships—talk about not teaching the truth, or what you get in trouble for saying or doing. That’s what’s on the line.”

Nonetheless, Spiller is optimistic, particularly with a Murphy administration in New Jersey and a Biden administration in Washington.

“Hopefully, after the upcoming election we will be working with leaders who fundamentally support public education and who are believers in a free democracy,” Spiller says. “We can share our vision and priorities, and work together for a better future for us all through education and action. We can continue to push toward a more perfect union and to uphold the tenets of our founding documents. That’s the opportunity. I see so much potential.”

He includes in that field of partners and leaders, the powerful National Education Association (NEA).

“We’ve got strong leadership at NEA,” Spiller says. “I’m excited about working with NEA President Becky Pringle. She’s a woman of vision and guts, and I really see NEA leaning into the power of the 3-million-member NEA and our role in the nation.”

#### **NO LONGER “THE ONLY ONE”**

In NJEA’s nearly 167-year history, Spiller is only the second NJEA president who is African American, and the first African American man to serve in the position. He follows in the footsteps of Judy Owens who was elected NJEA president in 1975.

Consequently, for the first time in NJEA history, with the election of Robertson, two of the association’s three statewide officers are persons of color. Spiller recognizes that this distinction comes later than it should have in NJEA’s history and is a function of broader issues around racial, social and economic justice.

“When you look at our system of education in New Jersey, we’re one of the most diverse states in the nation, and we are one of the most segregated states in the nation. That is why I say that there are two possible experiences that a child of color might have in New Jersey,” Spiller says.

Growing up in Montville, Spiller was accustomed to being one of only a few African Americans in his school and in his neighborhood. While his mother was a teacher, in his entire schooling he did not have a single teacher who looked like him or shared his background.

“We always talk about why it is so important for children of all races to see persons of color in positions of authority and for students of color to see someone like themselves on more than a rare occasion,” Spiller says. “My road to teaching was unconventional. But by the time I was in Kinnelon, and then in Wayne, I felt the need to seek out the students of color, or my one or two colleagues of color as I walked through the halls. We’d exchange a nod, just to say, ‘I see you. We’re here. We’re good.’ Supportive educators in general are so important, but it is still also important to see those who look like you achieving success, and success in positions that you may see yourself in one day. I was fortunate to have family and friends to look to, but seeing that diversity as a child in the teachers you look up to is also important.”

Spiller is quick to add his gratitude for the educators he was fortunate enough to encounter as a child.

“I credit the educators I had for instilling a



**In 2017, when Spiller and the NJEA officers from 2017-21 were inducted into office by Becky Pringle, who was then NEA vice president. From left: Spiller, Marie Blistan, now NEA President Becky Pringle and Steve Beatty.**





NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson.

Photo by John O'Boyle

sense of confidence in me,” Spiller says. “They always made me feel like I could do anything I set my mind to. And they, like my mentors who have helped me along this path, were there to support me.”

#### HUSBAND AND FATHER

NJEA president isn't Spiller's only role. He is also a husband and father. Spiller's wife, Lauren, is an English language arts teacher at Anthony Wayne Middle School in Wayne Township, the same district where Spiller is on leave from his position as a Biology teacher at Wayne Valley High School. They have two sons: Tyson, 3, and Brody, 1.

Like father, like son, Spiller met his wife on a bus. “I didn't make a good first impression,” Sean laughs.

As Sean tells the story—which he says will vary from Lauren's telling—they met while chaperoning a trip with the National Honor Society. Lauren's father, Keith Parian, who was also a teacher at Wayne Valley High School, was adviser to the school's chapter of the National Honor Society. Spiller was seated on the bus with a student considering her college options at Rutgers University. She was considering Douglass College.

“Absolutely not,” Spiller proudly exclaimed as an RC graduate. “You need to go to Rutgers College!”

Spiller said Lauren, a proud Douglass graduate, took issue. She wasted no time putting her future husband in his place as she expounded on the virtues of Douglass.

“I smile looking back,” says Spiller. “We were, or rather are, both proud Rutgers graduates, and there we were advocating for our respective schools. Of course, I could only end up marrying someone who could strongly make a point and who would show passion for her convictions. So, it couldn't have been a better start.”

#### A STRONG LEADERSHIP TEAM

Spiller is especially looking forward to working with his fellow officers: NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson.

“Steve is really talented and, candidly, he's a lot of fun to work with!” Spiller says. “It's because Steve is wired to connect with people. His outreach is exemplary and he's a passionate advocate. He is a focal point of our 200k member outreach work and really enjoys every conversation.”

With Robertson having recently served as president of the Montclair Education Association, Spiller has had the opportunity to work with her both as a union leader in NJEA and in his role as a councilman and mayor in Montclair.

“To hear Petal speak is to know her. She is dynamic, confident and faces things head on.” Spiller also respects her tenacity: “Petal does not allow fear to interfere; she will speak up and speak out where there is injustice.”

Spiller reflects on his debates with Blistan over their years serving together in NJEA leadership as he considers working with the team ahead.

“It's a cornerstone of the work: debating our possible moves, trying to poke holes in each other's position before any decision was made,” Spiller recalls. “And then, always halfway through, Marie and I would both flip our positions and argue the other way. It was hard pushing and healthy brainstorming. We would constantly stress-test all our ideas and decisions as a team, no matter how heavy the lift or late the debate would have to go. I know it made for better decisions, even when we may have differed at the end. I also know it helped me grow as a leader.”

He expects the same dynamic with Beatty and Robertson.

“If you can be in a room with people who you're continuing to grow with, you're in the right room,” Spiller says. 🏡



# WHEN YOU TAKE THE FORK IN THE ROAD ... AND ANOTHER FORK APPEARS

## EDUCATION AT THE YOGI BERRA MUSEUM & LEARNING CENTER

*By Eve Schaenen*

How does a museum located in Little Falls, New Jersey dedicated to a living icon—a figure who was fully involved in the visitor experience for nearly 20 years—remain engaging and relevant after that icon passes away? That was the question facing the Yogi Berra Museum & Learning Center after Yogi Berra's death in September of 2015. And how does that same museum continue to fulfill its mission when shuttered by a global pandemic? That was the question for March of 2020.

The answer to both questions turns out to be the same: Lean hard into education.

Determining a course of action after Yogi's death in 2015 wasn't difficult. When the museum was built in 1998, Yogi and his wife Carmen meant for it to be primarily a place for young people to learn. Hence the name: Yogi Berra Museum & *Learning Center*. Even as the museum became known for its one-of-a-kind collection of sports memorabilia and special events featuring Yogi's famous athlete friends, the House that Yogi Built, as far as Yogi was concerned, was always, in his words, "about the kids."

Yogi's strong interest in education came from personal experience. Growing up a child of immigrants on "The Hill", an Italian working-class neighborhood in St. Louis, the

future Hall of Famer had been forced to leave school after the eighth grade to help support his family. While his abbreviated school career didn't prevent him from leaving an indelible mark on American culture—Yogi is widely considered among the most quoted Americans in history—he wanted the institution bearing his name to offer educational opportunities to young people, opportunities he hadn't enjoyed himself.

Fortunately, the game of baseball, and sports in general, provide a perfect vehicle for all kinds of learning. The museum's leadership understood that nearly every young person has *some* connection to sports—often positive, almost never indifferent. Yogi's legacy as a sports icon offers easily accessible entries into important academic content across numerous disciplines. Beyond the game itself, Yogi's story reaches past the playing field and tells of a uniquely American journey that illustrates the values driving the museum's mission: perseverance, respect, strength of character and purpose. And while Yogi's life and career are anchored in the 20th century, the museum connects his history to topical events of today.

Sports permeate so many areas of our current culture, with professional athletes using their platforms to address everything

from fashion and entertainment to heated political and social issues. The museum's education programs don't shy away from exploring the ways sports often drive change; change that can have an impact on the daily experiences of the young people served. The goal is to provide students with a safe space for brave talk. And for the kids to learn, move their bodies and have fun while they're at it.

Drawing on every aspect of Yogi's biography, the museum spent the years after his death (leading up to the unprecedented events of 2020) developing and implementing an array of standards-aligned, in-person education experiences that support and extend classroom learning in unique ways. One of the first immersive trips the museum created for visiting students focuses on STEM; specifically, the physics of baseball, and how mathematics and statistics permeate our national pastime.

Playing with the museum's interactive video installation, PITCH!, and radar guns elsewhere in the museum, young people experience in their own bodies concepts of momentum and the kinetic transfer of energy as they throw real balls in real time. They calculate averages of their pitching speeds and measure their pitching strides as a percentage

Importantly the STEM program—like all of the museum’s learning experiences—encourages kids to consider values-based aspects of sports as well. For example, an examination of batting averages using baseball cards invites consideration of perseverance and grit in the face of failure, as the young people discover that even the best hitters “fail” roughly 70% of the time.

“The museum staff really connected science and math to sports in a way that was so meaningful and fun for kids,” wrote Elena Larranaga, lead science teacher from the Dr. William H. Horton School of Arts and Technology in Newark.

## POETRY, SPOKEN WORD AND YOGI-ISMS

The enthusiastic response to the museum’s STEM program led to the development of three more learning experiences, all of which have proven compelling for educators and students alike. A language arts immersion builds on Yogi’s famous playfulness with language. Yogi remains the most quoted American sports figure of all time, well known for his Yogi-isms such as “It ain’t over til it’s over,” and “When you come to a fork in the road, take it.”

Leveraging this unique aspect of his legacy, the museum created a Poetry & Spoken Word program that has young people unpacking their own identities and writing poetry that draws from their individual experiences. In addition to using Yogi-isms for inspiration, they examine word choice and imagery in the works of artists like Kendrick Lamar, Jay-Z, Maya Angelou and Amanda Gorman. After drafting pieces, students can perform their work for their teachers and peers in the museum’s stadium-style theater.

Nejuwah Singley, eighth grade spoken word teacher from Sussex Avenue School in Newark wrote, “Every kid left with two written pieces—a spoken word piece and a haiku. Furthermore, they were able to share a small portion of their lives with their peers, so we learned to be more accepting and tolerant of each other—and we had a fantastic time!”

## THE FRIENDSHIP OF YOGI BERRA AND JACKIE ROBINSON

Another program focuses less on Yogi Berra’s status as a Hall of Fame baseball player and highlights his qualities as a Hall of Fame person. Students learn about Yogi’s unwavering respect for others, focusing on his unique and lifelong

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Was Jackie Robinson out or safe?  
Students reenact an iconic baseball moment.

friendship with barrier-breaker Jackie Robinson. A slideshow documents the contrasting upbringings of these two iconic New York ballplayers, who remained respectful rivals on the field throughout their overlapping careers.

Students have the opportunity to practice observation and critical thinking skills as they study the well-known but controversial call of Jackie stealing home on Yogi during Game 1 of the 1955 World Series, Yankees vs. Dodgers. The umpire called Jackie “Safe!” but Yogi objected that Robinson was “Out!”—continuing to do so throughout his life. The Dodgers went on to win the World Series in Game 7. (When President Barack Obama asked Yogi about the iconic moment, Yogi immediately interjected: “Mr. President, he was out!”)

Through still photography and video, students examine Jackie’s run and slide, consider the angles

from which the umpire made his questionable call, then reenact the historic play themselves with costumes and props as they debate their positions.

“My fifth graders were super engaged in the program about the Yogi Berra/Jackie Robinson friendship,” wrote Dana Falcicchio, fifth grade teacher at Academy of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Tenafly. “It asked them to talk about history in a different way. The activities were fun and interactive, and the educators encouraged all the students to be involved and ask questions. We had so much fun!”

## STUDYING THE NEGRO LEAGUES

The most recent education program was developed in recognition of a milestone in baseball and American history: the 100th anniversary of the game’s Negro Leagues. In honor of this centennial, the museum mounted Discover Greatness: An



Illustrated History of Negro Leagues Baseball, on loan from the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City. The exhibit showcases 90 framed photographs and artifacts illustrating the rich history of Black baseball from the late 1800s to the 1960s. An augmented reality app allows images to be enhanced and viewed in color, bringing these often forgotten athletes to vivid life.

The accompanying education program explores the complex history and struggles of Black players in our national pastime, illuminating historical concepts such as Jim Crow and the Great Migration, as well as larger, ongoing issues of systemic racism and its impact on communities of color.

Given the national reckoning around race and racism over the past year, the program has provided an organic path into challenging conversations for students from all different backgrounds.

Yvonne Copprue-McLeod, sixth grade social studies teacher from the Harriet Tubman School in Newark wrote, “The History of the Negro Leagues program is incredible! My sixth grade students and I ... were able to experience personal accounts of how our Black and brown unsung heroes greatly influenced America’s favorite pastime, baseball. With great pride, we listened and discussed their inspirational anecdotes of courage, determination, and fortitude ... The students were able to participate and have meaningful discussions about many issues that we still face today like social justice and inclusion. I have seen this exhibit three times and each time I have walked away with something new!”



Demonstrating the kinetic transfer of energy in pitching.

*“The museum’s education programs don’t shy away from exploring the ways sports often drive change.”*



Practicing essential math skills to calculate stride.

#### REINVENTING THE MUSEUM DURING A PANDEMIC

This story of in-person education programs at the Yogi Berra Museum & Learning Center might have continued as a straightforward narrative of growth and increased impact—attendance doubled each year in the first three years of the museum’s reinvigorated outreach to schools—but then came the unprecedented events of 2020.

Covid-19 forced the museum to shut its doors to the public, including the thousands of students who would have taken part in field trips. Once again, the institution had to reinvent itself as it had done after Yogi Berra’s passing. More precisely, it had to recommit to Yogi’s original intention of making his museum “all about the kids.” Education should and would remain the key to sustaining his legacy. But how to do that when the world was sheltering in place?

At a time when students couldn’t come to the museum, the museum decided to go to the students. Virtually.

Within weeks of shuttering the facility, the museum’s education team had translated all its



programs to remote platforms. Kids pitching softballs in the museum atrium to demonstrate the kinetic transfer of energy became kids pitching sock balls and stuffed animals across their bedrooms on Zoom. The Discover Greatness exhibition was remounted online so that conversations about race could continue, conversations that proved more important than ever in the months following the murder of George Floyd.

And the values that run through all the museum's programs—perseverance, grit, respect and teamwork—were on full display daily in the dedication of frontline workers worldwide, including the educators who took it upon themselves to make the virtual field trips happen. Moreover, the fact that the museum's programs went remote meant that access for “visiting” students was no longer limited by geography. Students from across the country, including Atlanta, Houston, Lafayette, Louisiana and Yogi's hometown of St. Louis, were able to learn, play and be inspired by Yogi's story during the virtual field trips. Student attendance tripled in 2020.

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS

The pandemic didn't get in the way of the museum's commitment to teacher professional development either. A comprehensive set of sports-based lesson plans addressing such topics as immigration, race, women in sports and

financial literacy provide the core of the museum's online curriculum called In Search of a Level Playing Field. The material is free and accessible through the museum's website and includes all the pedagogical tools for a deeper dive into these timely subjects, such as essential questions, key terms, primary source material, videos, activities, games, handouts and more.

Educators looking to extend classroom learning for themselves, or for a substitute teacher, joined the workshops remotely. According to Paul Maloney, social studies teacher from Cranford: “The material on the website with the lesson plans can be of tremendous aid to any classroom teacher. I especially like how you're going to keep applying the theme to current issues in the news such as Black Lives Matter, Colin Kaepernick and other related topics. The presentation and plans were truly in depth and had an understanding that talking about race in the classroom is hard.”

And now? What appears clear is that education at the Yogi Berra Museum & Learning Center will remain the driving force behind the

institution's work. What is also clear is that the creative flexibility demanded by the pandemic will shape the future of this work. So while it is with great joy that the museum has recently welcomed students and educators back into the building again, handing them balls to throw and iPads to view forgotten heroes in living color, it is also true that the comprehensive remote programming that has been on offer is here to stay. And that through the advancements of technology, the legacy of the great Yogi Berra, as well as the values that made him a national treasure, will reach young people near and far, and farther still. 📱

## Schedule a visit or a remote program

To learn more about the Yogi Berra Museum & Learning Center or to plan a visit, in person or virtually, visit [yogiberramuseum.org](http://yogiberramuseum.org).



Discovering Greatness: Students learn about Negro League heroes.

# STANDING TOGETHER IN CAMDEN

After more than 1,000 days, CEA settles contract

*By Matthew Stagliano*



Members of the Camden Education Association fighting to save neighborhood schools in the city.



## A DEAL WOULD BE TOUGH

Camden Education Association (CEA) members knew they had a tough road toward a fair agreement at the bargaining table before they even began to think about the negotiations process. Watching as the city's public schools were losing precious funding to Renaissance schools and charter schools, they knew the school district and the city would be hard-pressed to dedicate resources to staff. They had many challenges in front of them, but despite those challenges, they knew they possessed the union power that would help them achieve a fair settlement.

Before the bargaining process began, CEA President Dr. Keith Benson set up a 10-member negotiations team led by veteran CEA members, Mike Warren and Larry Blake. Benson, with a deep understanding of the complex and intersecting forces working against public school employees in Camden, knew veteran leadership would be needed to keep members focused and engaged.

"Generally, the sense from our members is that we're [the school district] being picked apart," said CEA President Dr. Keith Benson. "Not only does the district disrespect the work we do, but they don't care about us. Our members are seeing their district being whittled down each year as more schools close. It's a disrespect to the occupation and the profession that our members have dedicated their lives to."

The team knew that they would have to work together to engage their more than 900 members in sustained, collective action if they were going to win a fair deal at the table.

That's just what they did.

## NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN, GET STALLED

As the negotiations began, it quickly became clear that the process would be long and drawn out. Because the Camden Board of Education experienced so much turnover, their negotiations teams stalled. CEA felt the board's negotiation team was signaling that they did not have to work with CEA and intended to continue moving forward without an active collective bargaining agreement.

"There was so much turnover within the board," said Mike Warren, co-chair of the CEA negotiations teams and high school social studies teacher. "That, coupled with the fact that Camden is a state takeover district and is operated by the state—as opposed to locally elected board of education—there was no impetus for the BOE to negotiate with us. So much of what we were dealing with was influenced by outside factors: political factors from the state and county levels, financial factors from the state. It all added to an unwillingness or inability to negotiate with our team. The spirit of good faith was not there."

The city of Camden recently won the right to locally elected board of Education members, but the New Jersey Department of Education retains control over the school district.

The team was initially discouraged but found their resolve after coming together and making some changes on their own.

"For the first 500 days, our members were relatively calm," said Larry Blake, co-chair of CEA's negotiations team. "After that, and after three years without a contract, members became very upset and frustrated. It was disrespectful. We came to work every day through the pandemic."

## NEGOTIATING DURING COVID

After nearly two full years without a contract, CEA members, like educators around the state, faced new challenges when the COVID-19 pandemic upended business as usual. Like all schools, Camden City Public Schools were forced to operate in an all-remote setting beginning in March of 2020 and would continue in the all-remote setting through the entire next school year.

"COVID-19 prolonged this process because we had to wait for PERC to rearrange itself and set up the process in an all-virtual setting," said Mike



Braving January weather, and to demonstrate their commitment to Camden's children, CEA members taught their students remotely from outside of the Camden Board of Education offices.



CEA members demonstrating to protect Camden's public schools.

*Matthew Stagliano is an associate director in the NJEA Communications Division. He can be reached at [mstagliano@njea.org](mailto:mstagliano@njea.org).*





Warren. PERC is the Public Employment Relations Commission, which is called in to help move negotiations toward a settlement when the board and association reach an impasse.

CEA found creative ways to engage its members in this challenging new reality. Whether it was organizing meetings over Zoom or sending more regular and creative emails, keeping members informed throughout the process proved to be integral to the successful organizing that would eventually lead to a fair contract.

#### A TEAM EFFORT: FINDING COLLECTIVE POWER

As 1,000 days without a contract approached, CEA ramped up its member-driven action.

"With so much going on, we were slow in getting our members to mobilize," said Warren. "But as time went on, our members began to realize that we needed them to get this deal done. In the last six to eight months without a contract, our members began to act collectively, pushing the process forward. It was key to getting this deal."

In the beginning, it was hard to get members involved, but Warren and Blake's veteran leadership helped to capitalize on even small, incremental steps of momentum.

"If five people do it, it's five more than we had," said Warren. "If ten people

do it, it's ten more than we had."

Eventually, hundreds of CEA members sent emails, made phone calls, participated in weekly demonstrations outside of district and city buildings, and shared their stories on social media.

CEA members even organized a teach-in outside of the board of education building in January of 2021. Teachers from around the school district showed up to teach their fully remote classes sitting outside to remind the board that despite the lack of a contract and the challenges posed by a pandemic, CEA members continued to work in the best interests of the city's children.

"The teach-in made a big difference because parents really got to see us working for the kids, even in the freezing cold," said Blake.

As the members became more involved in the fight for a fair contract, the local association had the leverage it needed at the table. The power of the CEA members made it clear that a deal needed to be reached and fast.

The coordinated, targeted member actions of the CEA members eventually led to a deal that would benefit the members of the CEA and the community at large.

"Our members' commitment to their students and profession was powerful," said Benson. "Other NJEA members from around the state and the county made it known that we were working without a contract for over 1,000 days. It was not just a local effort. Other locals banded together and helped us uplift our struggle."





Camden EA President Dr. Keith Benson defends Camden's public schools at a rally in front of the New Jersey Department of Education. Photo by Jennifer C. Marsh

we went back to work in September of 2021. When we were able to get the deal done when we did, it really boosted the approval of our members."

Moving forward, CEA members have the power and the know-how to stand up and speak out about Camden's most pressing issues. Throughout the process, every member kept their students and their community as motivation to keep fighting for a fair agreement. This same power will move those members to better advocate for the children they teach and the community to which they've dedicated their professional lives.

"As an organization, we, the CEA, advocate for everyone in the community to make a decent wage, no matter what job you're doing, because you're working," said Benson as he reflected on the impact this deal would have on the city of Camden in the years to come. "It all impacts education at the end of the day. Every worker deserves the right to take home a livable wage.

In the end, CEA plans to help workers of all professions advocate for better working conditions because working in solidarity with other marginalized voices will have the most influence on the future of Camden. 🌐

**Photos by Camden Education Association member Genese Dean, unless otherwise noted.**



Organized to save Camden Public Schools.

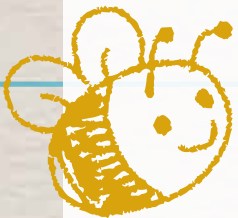
The fight for a fair deal had expanded beyond Camden. NJEA members statewide shared their support for CEA members on social media. CEA members felt that support.

"It felt like we weren't negotiating with just the board, so when NJEA members from around the state shared their support, it made a big difference for us getting this settlement," said Warren.

#### A DEAL FOR CAMDEN

The settlement was a victory for CEA, the students in the school district, and the community. The five-year agreement offered increases in salaries, hourly rates and athletic stipends, something the members had been fighting to achieve for a long time. More importantly, the new deal provided movement for every certified member on the guide for four of the five years under the agreement. The CEA's educational support professionals won movement across the guide on each of the five years of the deal. It was no small feat to win this deal for, and CEA members stood strong in their support for the negotiations team as it made significant strides in winning a fair deal for members.

"The response [of our members] has been very positive," said Warren. "We made it a point to keep our members informed throughout the process. After a while, it didn't look like we would come to a deal before



# BUILDING A STORY

USING CONCRETE MODELS TO SUPPORT  
CHILDREN'S WRITING DEVELOPMENT

BY KIM CLANCEY



*Kim Clancey is the 2021-22 Bergen County Teacher of the Year. She is a staff developer and teacher coach in Paramus where she teaches second graders at Ridge Ranch Elementary School. She can be reached at [kimc122003@gmail.com](mailto:kimc122003@gmail.com).*



When I was a child it seemed that the washing machine was always breaking down. In a family with five children, a broken washing machine created quite a problem. My mother complained and made the phone calls for repairs.

My father, fed up with the complaining and waiting for the repairs to be made, decided to disassemble the darn thing himself and figure it out. His plan was to figure out the parts, how they work, how they connect, and put it back together with a new understanding that he now “got” it and could do it himself.

Years later, I was having a similar situation with my writing workshop and the narrative pieces my students were writing. It seemed that although I had all the working parts and ran it like an efficient machine, I was constantly doing the same work over and over, teaching and reteaching, explaining and reexplaining, doing that same load of laundry over and over. Like my dad, I too became fed-up with the situation, and began an investigation into how I might better teach my young writers in a manner that fit their developmental needs. I tried my father’s approach: take it apart, learn about the parts, and put it back together with a better understanding.

## REDISCOVERING THE BASICS

In looking at my students’ writing it seemed that most of them were what I called “Fell off the Cliff Writers.” This type of writer starts off enthusiastically, a great idea takes shape on the first page, but enthusiasm dwindles as they turn to page two where I would find some sentences followed by the words: THE END, in big bold letters. A message that under no uncertain terms indicated they were done.

Perhaps they might fix a few capital letters or a spelling error, add in a period or two, but the writing was done. I wondered why that was the case. Why did enthusiasm fade? Why did this story not go on any further? Could it be they didn’t know how?

I revisited the work of Jean Piaget and his theory of cognitive development. During this time, I was teaching a second grade class ranging in age from 7 to 9. This places them at Piaget’s concrete operational stage, meaning their need to see concrete objects is of primary importance to fully understand concepts.

My writing expectations for them were not concrete. The books I read were concrete, yet the transfer of a genre style written by an author to them writing in this genre was not concrete. In my teaching of genres, we spent days listening to examples, making note of the characteristics. Charts were posted and books displayed. Students knew the qualities of the various genres and could name a few examples, but did that mean they could write in that genre? I know what lots of things are and what they are made of, that doesn’t mean I can make them!

I began to think about ways that I might bridge that gap between knowing what something is and knowing how to make it. I found the

answer right in front of me, counting cubes and BRIO blocks. I wondered if my students and I might be able to take apart a narrative mentor text, figure out the parts and their function, and build a concrete model of what a narrative story looks like that they could then use to apply to their own narrative writing.

## MAKE THE MODEL

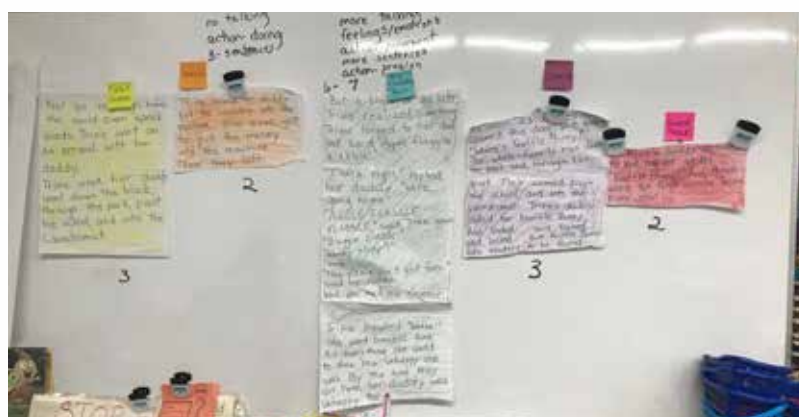
Rummaging through mentor texts, that is, text that we can turn to again and again for different instructional purposes. I selected Ezra Jack Keats’ *The Snowy Day* and began to do the work that I wanted my students to do.

I read closely to spot words that might signal to me a new part was beginning. The pattern emerged as I noticed it was transition words such as “After breakfast,” “then he went into his warm house,” and “he went to sleep.” I circled what I thought were the different parts and then decided to let my class give it a try.

There is great beauty in allowing your students to try and figure something out when you are trying to figure it out yourself. Their minds are more flexible and they often spot things you didn’t notice and make you smarter in the process. Moving out of my comfort zone, I provided the class with a copy of *The Snowy Day* text and with partners they began to take the text apart, coloring the different sections as they went along. They then made models with counting cubes using different colors for the different sections.

Rather than simply naming them the beginning, middle and end, they came up with names much better than I would have, such as Set the Stage, The Action, The Exhausting Part, and The Grand Finale. As they looked at their models and transferred them to drawings, it became evident that the story had different parts, and the middle or The Exhausting Part, was actually the most developed. Was this the case in other narrative books we read? Our investigation progressed as we pulled out one of our favorites, *Knuffle Bunny*.

Mo Willems’ story of Trixie’s trip to the laundromat with her dad and the loss of her favorite stuffed animal, *Knuffle Bunny* mimicked the same pattern of transition words to signal a new part. Again providing students with the typed text of the book, they colored the sections they felt went together and we came up with a basic model consisting of five cubes each of a different color.



Color-coded elements of *Knuffle Bunny* based on student analysis.

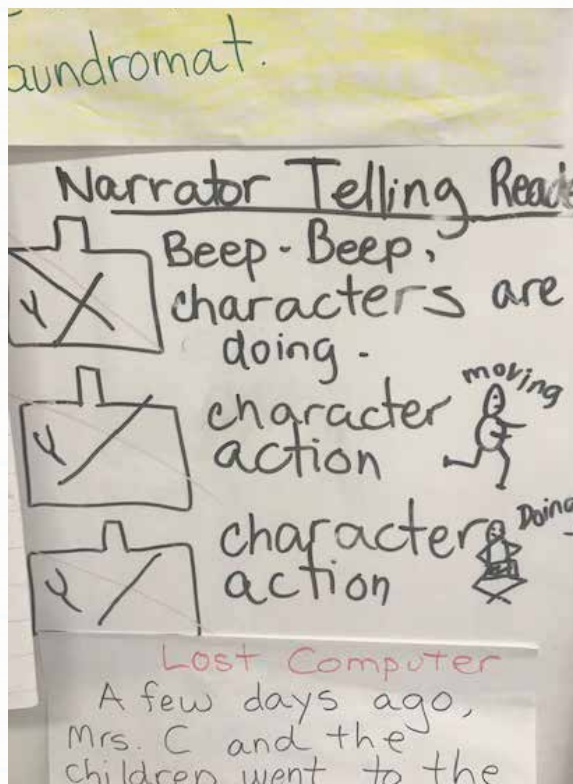
Now I wanted these young writers to see that each part of the story or model had different lengths and purposes. I wrote the words to *Knuffle Bunny* on chart paper and working in groups, students colored the parts they had identified, each with its own specific color. We had five parts so there were five colors. We then cut the story parts up by color and posted them.

What became visually apparent was that the parts were different sizes. As a classroom community we named these five parts and using this large visual model, we revised our basic five-cube model to reflect the different sizes of each section. The cube model grew from five colored cubes to a model of three that were yellow, two orange, seven green, three purple, and two red. With a model in their hands, students could see concretely that stories have different parts of varying length.

#### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF DIFFERENT PARTS?

Now that we visually could see the parts, our next job was to investigate the purpose of these sections and how they were written.

Closely reading each colored section, students came away with a big idea of what each part was meant to tell the reader. For example: the yellow part introduced the characters and told the reader what they were doing, the orange part described the actions involved in doing that act, the long green part was the problem and the details involved, the purple part was the cleanup—as my students named it, reflecting that the problem



Using a model and group experience to write as a class.

“

THERE IS GREAT BEAUTY IN ALLOWING YOUR STUDENTS TO TRY AND FIGURE SOMETHING OUT WHEN YOU ARE TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT YOURSELF.

was being solved—and the red part was the ending. We named our parts based on what we noticed they did in the story and moved in even closer to now look at how Mo Willems wrote each part.

I teach my students two basic types of sentences: a talking sentence and a telling sentence. A telling sentence is the narrator telling the story. This type of sentence tells the reader a character's movements, feelings or thoughts. Talking sentences are dialogue, which in Mo Willems' books are in words in the text and speech bubbles.

On the wall where the five parts were posted and named, we listed the different types of sentences used in each section cube by cube. This display now contained a vast amount of visual information for students to see, touch, point to and discuss. Students could visually see the different parts, their varied lengths, their function, the types of sentences used in writing, and physically hold in their hands colorful models matching this display.

#### CREATE A SHARED STORY

Writing is a tricky subject to teach. Perhaps this is why so many teachers tell me they dislike writing time. Look back on your experience learning to write. Perhaps, like me, you remember a Fun Friday. “Write whatever you want!” my teacher would say providing no instruction. This is like playing an instrument without receiving lessons. You don't get any better.

Perhaps, like my spouse, you remember it more as handwriting lessons and diagramming sentences. No wonder he hates to write!

I wish that a teacher along my writing journey had taught me how writers do it. That is what I want to teach my students. In other subjects, such as math, you all work on a similar problem before working one independently. Writing, by contrast, is tricky because the stories children write are often individual events that occurred outside of school. We rarely have a shared experience to work on together. This is why I create a shared story that occurs right in front of them. The purpose of this arranged scenario is to provide a shared experience that the class and I can all write about to model the process of using the cubes as a planning and drafting tool.

I enlist the help of others and their acting skills to assist me with this tool. I have asked the school secretary, guidance counselor, former students, and my principal.

Ideas I have used include:

- I tell the children I have misplaced my computer and I am going to get in trouble with the main office. I lead the class on a hunt throughout the school retracing my steps. I send



a few students off to ask other teachers if perhaps I left it in their room. These teachers, not knowing that this is all a play for the sake of writing, genuinely tell the children they have not seen it, and the students run back to tell me. Eventually, I run into my principal who is in on it, and she directs me to bring my computer to her office as we need to review work. I feign fear! Upon returning to the classroom and close to tears, I go to get some tissues and when I open up the closet door I find my computer! The students are so happy for me.

- Another story involved our school guidance counselor who comes in for her lesson only to be interrupted by my continuously ringing phone. Mrs. L is nice at first, but eventually loses her temper when the phone rings for a third time. Using a “give that to me voice,” she grabs my phone and in front of the class shows me how to fix it while I apologize profusely. She returns to her lesson stating, “Okay where were we before all those interruptions,” only to have her phone start ringing. The children find this hilarious. I actually had one student comment aloud to the class, “Hey, we should write this story.” Mrs. L, who was in on the whole thing, and I share a wink—mission accomplished.
- One of my former student’s favorites is when I ask them to come in for the animal avalanche story. In this scenario they enter during a lesson and ask if they might borrow one of my stuffed animals placed high up on a shelf. I excuse myself from the lesson and go to the animals. Reaching I gently pull once or twice. Trying again, I give a big tug and all the animals fall on my head. A stuffed animal avalanche! They love writing this one as they think seeing their teacher pummeled by plummeting stuffed animals is priceless.
- A colleague of mine created a story of not being able to find her lunch and eventually she located it when she sat on it in front of the class. Oh, the sacrifices we make!

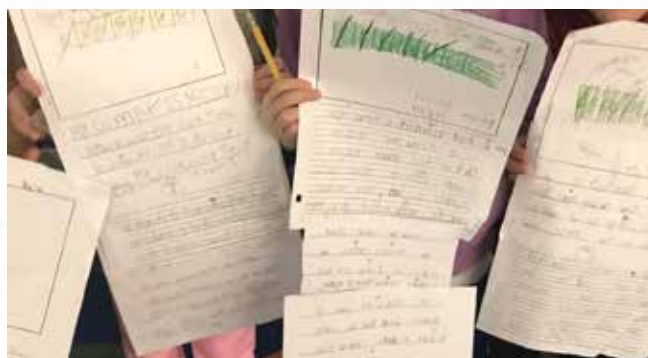
We can then use this whole class experience as a shared writing activity applying the cube model to learn more.

### LET’S WRITE

Now that we have our shared story idea and models, I hang five large sheets of paper similar to writing paper students use. This paper contains a planning box and lines to write on.

In the planning boxes I draw the cubes matching the model, each page representing a different color. Similar to when we tell a story across our fingers, now we tell it across our cubes using the model. I demonstrate how I tell the story following the outlines we have made and pull a cube off for each part I tell. I remind them of the steps I took and point out that everything is posted for them to use.

With a partner, students tell the story pulling the cubes as they go. We repeat the storytelling, but this time as they pull the cubes. I touch the cubes and identify the corresponding cubes on the paper to make the connection that the cube model is the same as the cubes on the writing paper.



**Student writing blossoms as they understand story structure at a concrete level.**

In the next few days, we will move to telling the story from more concrete to less concrete ways:

1. Telling the story across our cube models.
2. Touching the cube model but telling the story on the paper.
3. Touching-telling-and labeling in words or pictures, rather than cubes, on the writing paper.
4. Touching-telling-and-using our planning pictures or words.
5. Drafting the sentences.

As we write each sentence using talking or telling sentences, we cross off a cube. At the longer sections, students need to be reminded of the ways they can use the cubes and in doing so include details or dialogue they would not have included otherwise. It was working. Their writing was developing!

### MOVING TO INDIVIDUAL WRITING IDEAS AND PUBLISHING

As these young writers began to understand the structure of a narrative story, they eventually applied this model representation to their own writing ideas. Following the same steps, they develop their story ideas in similar patterns using the cubes as they go.

Revision and editing lessons reflect those from the unit and writing needs of students.

Eventually moving to publishing, students tape a piece of paper over the planning box and draw their final illustrations. This is an efficient way to publish as it allows teachers, students and others to see all the steps taken in the writing process. As children reflect on their writing, they can look back on the labeled cubes, the writing, and flip down the paper to have colorful illustrations that added even more context and interest to their pieces.

I have since taken this method to help young writers learn about story leads, story endings and mentor sentences. We have delved deeper into the shapes of stories and made models of informational and opinion writing. Recently, I had the opportunity to share this with many educators at the Paramus Public Schools Summer Institute on the Teaching of Literacy. It was met with excitement and enthusiasm to give it a try.

It seems my father did know best. Deciding to take something apart to figure out how it works so you can then reassemble it with a better understanding, is a worthwhile idea and one that can be applied to more than a washing machine. It is a process that I will continue to investigate in my teaching journey so that I might be the type of writing teacher I wish I had. 🌱



# NJ school

# nurse

# named an NEA SISP Fellow

*By Sheila Caldwell, BSN, RN, CSN-NJ*

“Opportunity dances with those already on the dance floor.”

This quote from H. Jackson Brown Jr., the author of *Life's Little Instruction Book*, holds great significance for me as I embark on an opportunity that I want to share with you. I was selected by the National Education Association (NEA) as their first specialized instructional support personnel (SISP) Fellow for the 2021-22 school year.

NEA describes SISPs as the staff in a school who work with teachers, educational support professionals, parents, community members, and other education stakeholders to help students remove learning barriers while examining their individual strengths and talents, interests and insecurities. SISPs include school nurses, like me, as well as school counselors, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, library media specialists, speech-language pathologists and others.

Let me step back for a moment to give you a little bit of the background that has led me to

have this amazing opportunity. It is the result of a journey for which I have been taking “dance lessons” throughout my life. I will be sharing this latest journey with you in a monthly post on [njea.org](http://njea.org) that, this month, is being introduced in print in the NJEA Review.

You likely had seen or heard me in one of the NJEA Public Service Announcements to encourage members and the public to consider taking the COVID-19 vaccination. My years of nursing have ranged from hospital-based—having various positions that include critical care and case management. Even today, I work for the same system on a per diem basis as a community health educator. I also continue to work per diem in homecare and obviously, full time as a school nurse.

## **“DANCE LESSONS” FROM MY MOTHER**

Reflecting on the many “lessons” that have put me on the “dance floor,” I must credit my mother, God rest her soul, who was a true advocate and community spirited person. From

wheeling me in a stroller during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963, to marching in Trenton for Rubin “Hurricane” Carter and John Artis in 1975, to the many other rallies and events concerning civil rights, health and welfare, my mother instilled in me a sense of giving freely—not necessarily in a monetary sense, but in time, talent and skills.

My mother’s influence inspired me to be an active citizen and school nurse who sits on many committees and boards, mostly in the nursing and school nursing arenas. I have also been active with NJEA in behind the scenes capacities to promote the inclusion of school nurses and their role in the educational world. Whether in a segment on “Classroom Close-up NJ” or in an article in the Review, I have had some influence in encouraging school nurses to step outside of their offices to share what they do or are passionate about.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FROM NJEA AND NEA**

In the spring 2019, I learned of the NJEA Members of Color Network, often known simply as “NJEA MOC.” I knew NJEA MOC was a group that I wanted to be a part of, and I knew I could contribute to it even as I learned more about NJEA through NJEA MOC.

Over the years, I had been sponsored by my local and county associations or by NJEA itself to attend programs such as the NJEA Jack

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*Sheila Caldwell is a certified school nurse in the Matawan Aberdeen Regional School District. She is on leave to participate in the SISP Fellowship described in this article. In addition to receiving numerous national and local awards, Caldwell has received the American Academy of Pediatrics-NJ Chapter School Health Advocate of Year (2016) and the 2021 National Association of School Nurses (NASN) Recognition Award for “continued support and unique contributions to NASN and school nursing.” Caldwell can be reached at [SCaldwell@nea.org](mailto:SCaldwell@nea.org).*

# “ Opportunity dances with those already on the dance floor.”

Bertolino Summer Leadership Conference and Ready to Run: Run Sister-Run!” which is presented by Rutgers’ Center for Women and Politics. In addition, although I haven’t held a position in my local association, I have held county association positions as the Monmouth County representative to NJEA Public Relations Committee since 2020 and was the Monmouth County representative for minority concerns to the NEA Representative Assembly. I have also met with NJEA leadership to offer input and expertise on a variety of issues.

In early spring 2020, I had the opportunity to participate in the NEA G-27 Task Force meeting. This meeting included members from NJEA selected to speak about initiatives and issues with NJEA and NEA Leadership. This is where the culmination of my lifetime of “dance lessons and styles” positioned me for consideration for the NEA SISP Fellowship. Fortunately, my moves during this important recital were on-point. I didn’t stagger or fall; and if I did, I was able to get right back up and continue until the end of the last song.

## NEA SISP FELLOWSHIP

NEA had been considering a SISP Fellowship for a while. Apparently, all the time I have spent learning how to dance in a variety of settings was exactly what NEA was looking for. Shortly after the meeting, NEA contacted me to inquire about my interest in the fellowship and to inform me of the next steps, which included sending my resume and scheduling interviews, etc.

To extend the dance metaphor, I have well understood the importance of not only waltz, but tap, ballet, hip-hop and other dance forms. I understood the need to listen, watch and interject suggestions when it comes to the choreography, to view how the various acts of the entire production should be laid out, and to listen to ideas of others as we develop plans, goals, and solutions. I understand the need for “productions” that entice individuals to join my dance troupe or start one of their own.

The SISP Fellowship is a 10-month program.



**Sheila Caldwell, a school nurse in the Matawan-Aberdeen Regional School District, has been named an NEA SISP Fellow for the 2021-22 school year. Last year, a commercial ran statewide and on social media that featured Caldwell as she shared facts about the COVID-19 vaccines.**

I am “on loan” from my school district to “utilize my experience and skillset...to improve the health, safety, and well-being students and educators” (quoted language is from my district’s school board minutes). The NEA Division that I will be reporting to and working with, remotely and/or in its D.C. office, or wherever they should send me, is the Education Support Professional Quality (ESPQ) Department. The ESPQ department develops, implements and promotes policies and professional supports that enhance the effectiveness of ESPs in meeting the needs of every student.

I’ve taken a number of “dance lessons,” been on a number of “dance floors” and here in front of me is my “solo recital,” where all of my life’s work has placed me. And this online column is a way for you to also share in my journey as I travel through these experiences in the next 10 months.

## ARE YOU READY TO DANCE?

I wanted to present this introduction in this metaphorical way to let you know that you can start dancing too. We all know that our union is here for us, but many of us don’t take the time to learn about the opportunities, no matter how small or large, we can learn from or participate in. It is so important for all of us to examine all the levels of opportunities that we have in front of us and to see where we fit in. Whether at the local, county, state or national level, there are so many opportunities available to you. Speak with your local and county association representatives.

When “dance lessons” come your way, put on your dancing shoes and start inching your way to the dance floor. If you are already

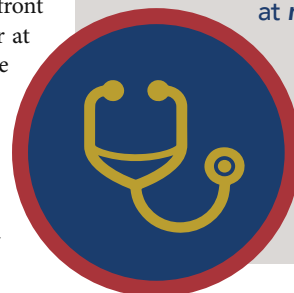
on the dance floor, look for where the spotlight is shining to seize that moment in the limelight. You never know where the next stage might be that you perform on.

The “dance floor” isn’t closed when it comes to your local, county, state and national union. Ask about what interests you or other ways that the members and/or educational impact is needed. Provide some thoughts and potential solutions. Your voice does matter. 🗣️

## Follow Caldwell’s journey

For the 2021-22 school year, NEA SISP Fellow Sheila Caldwell will be writing a monthly online column that will be posted at [njea.org/sisp](https://njea.org/sisp).

Be sure to check it out at the beginning of each month.





# TACKLE HARMFUL HEAT WITH VENTILATION AND AC

By Dorothy Wigmore

Heat harms our minds and bodies. Yolanda Hernandez knows that from personal experience. So do other parents in New Brunswick's public schools.

"My son had vomiting, fever, headaches; he didn't want to go to that school anymore," she says. That was her son's experience in the 100-year-old Lincoln Elementary school three years ago. Then, only select rooms (e.g., for the principal and administrative staff) had air conditioning; more than half had none.

Hernandez started asking about air conditioning or ventilation.

"When the weather is very, very hot, they close the schools," was the response, she says. "That's not a solution."

The message was "it costs too much." The city school district's business administrator and board secretary said in 2019 that it could be \$500,000 each to upgrade the electrical capacity to run air conditioners in three old schools and more to buy the units and run them.

## WHY DOES HEAT MATTER?

Schools were not supposed to open without adequate ventilation in the pandemic.

Effective ventilation systems—often called heating, ventilation and air conditioning or HVAC systems—move air in and out of buildings. They provide fresh air, mix it with recirculated filtered air, and control temperature and humidity. They remove airborne hazards, such as SARS-CoV2,

the virus which causes COVID-19. On its own, air conditioning is **not** ventilation. High efficiency air filtering units help clean the air but do not cool it.

Heat is a hazard, indoors or out. It is getting worse with the climate emergency.

Heat stress symptoms range from heat rash, headaches, fainting, nausea and fatigue to dehydration and death. The usual protections for outdoor workers—water, rest and shade—are necessary but not sufficient indoors.

"When it's very hot, the kids don't learn, they can't focus," Hernandez says. Studies back her up. "I'm thinking about the kids and the teachers and everybody in the building for six or seven hours or more."

New research makes it clear that extreme heat affects students' ability to learn. Those from marginalized communities, including communities of color, suffer the most. Some studies also show cooler air improves things. None have examined the effects on staff, but it makes sense that they also suffer from extreme heat.

Apparently, the state hasn't noticed. Its 2021-22 *The Road Forward* ignores temperatures, except to warn against opening windows or doors if outside temperatures are "extreme."

Others are paying attention. In June, the *Jersey Journal* called for school upgrades to allow air conditioning, it also suggested a statewide law to deal with hot schools.

Since 2007, annual efforts to pass bills about temperature controls in school districts have failed.

"This year, Assemblywoman Mila Jasey's bill (A-1044) requires school districts to create policies to maintain reasonable temperatures in all classrooms," says Heather Sorge from Healthy Schools Now. "It's a first step towards safe and healthy school temperatures."

Some states are setting indoor heat hazard standards. Oregon's July emergency temporary standard calls for increased measures when the "heat index" (accounting for temperature and humidity) reaches 80 and 90 F. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is working on one too.

## PERSISTENCE PAYS

Hernandez started talking to parents three years ago. Many weren't sure what they could do. Some lacked documentation. Like her, their first language was Spanish, and they found it difficult to read English-language board materials.

She built a community group, Unidos por Escuelas Dignas (United for Dignified Schools),



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

## What can health and safety committees do?

Connect cooling the air with cleaning it (i.e., ventilation) and the state's indoor air quality standard.

Measure, record and map the temperature in all spaces. Try to include humidity too. Present the results to the principal and/or district, requesting inspections and repairs (with a timetable).

When temperatures hit 90 F, request staff and students be relocated to cooler areas.

Advocate for quick fixes:

- Blinds and shades on windows with fans (not effective above 95F)
- Easy access to cool (not cold) potable water
- Open windows when it's cooler outside, with fans to pull in air

Also push for longer-term solutions like:

- Exterior awnings
- Reflective window shades and blinds
- Ceiling fans (ensure they pull air up)
- Low-energy windows
- Bright white or shiny materials to replace or coat roofs
- New or upgraded HVAC systems, where possible (they will cool AND clean the air)
- Shade trees.

Work with allies (e.g., Unidos por Escuelas Dignas) or set up coalitions to work on cooling and cleaning school air.

Promote cool and clean air in (social) media, emphasising what the problem costs.

Coordinate efforts with other schools through NJEA.

“

*Heat is a hazard, indoors or out.*

with about 200 members. They meet monthly and share information. Hernandez also went to board of education meetings, every month, sometimes with other parents and partners like Healthy Schools Now. She went to local and state governments too, always asking for cooler air in schools. Pandemic-related responsibilities and restrictions slowed things down, including efforts to work with teachers. But she kept e-mailing the district superintendent, asking about his plans.

“Right now, I’m very happy,” she said in mid-July. Air conditioning is being installed in three schools, including her son’s. “That’s the promise,” she added. “Of course, I have to see it to believe it. For many years it’s been just that, promises”.

### NBEA ADVOCATES FOR COOLER SCHOOLS

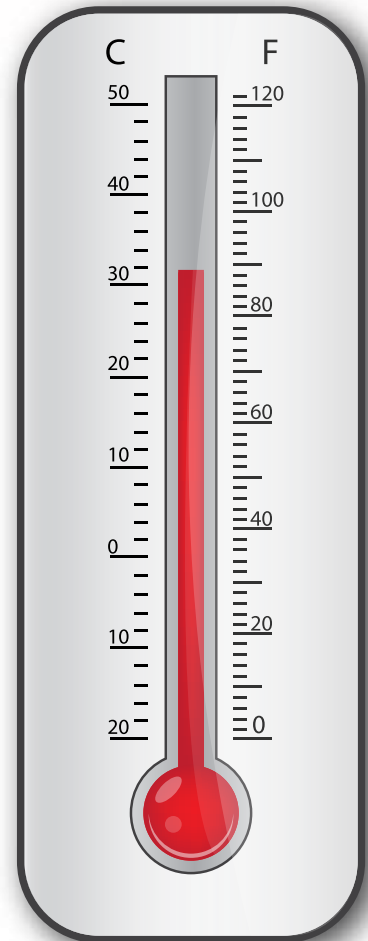
Most school buildings in New Brunswick were already climate controlled. The exception were the district’s three oldest buildings. Those buildings finally had the necessary electrical upgrades and air conditioning units installed by August.

“I was in one of those buildings for 20 years, so one of the first priorities when I became president was to get air conditioning in those buildings,” said LeShaun Arrington, president of the New Brunswick Education Association.

Arrington credits partnerships with community organizations and a positive working relationship with district administration in getting air conditioning in the buildings.

“My first meeting was with Yolanda who was a strong advocate for air conditioning the schools,” Arrington said. “But when the NBEA sat down with administration I have to say that they came with an open mind and we came with an open mind.”

Arrington noted that NBEA, district



administrators, and the school board participate in the New Jersey New Jersey Public Schools Labor-Management Collaborative, and she credits the positive working relationships fostered by that program as well as community advocacy with leading the district to make the investment in cooler air.

### NEW DIRECTIONS FOR UNIDOS POR ESCUELAS DIGNAS

For Unidos por Escuelas Dignas, success is taking Hernandez’s organization in new directions.

“We’re starting to talk about breakfast and lunch at the school, to get a menu without a lot of sugar, salt,” she says. “We need to think of the future, we need to take care of our kids.” 🍌

## Resources

*Why it's time to tackle the school ventilation problem*, Paul Bennett [bit.ly/3eDRaFe](https://bit.ly/3eDRaFe)

Oregon emergency temporary heat standard  
[osha.oregon.gov/OSHAPubs/factsheets/fs85.pdf](https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHAPubs/factsheets/fs85.pdf)

Unidos por Escuelas Dignas: [uscufe.wixsite.com/uped](https://uscufe.wixsite.com/uped)

Healthy Schools Now [njwec.org/hsn](https://njwec.org/hsn)



# Panasonic Student Eco Citizenship Project

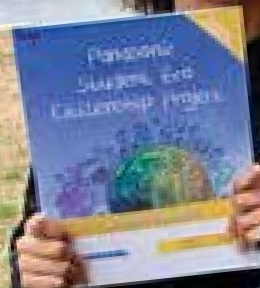


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# Getting them talking

## Teaching with video games in a pandemic

By Michael Morris

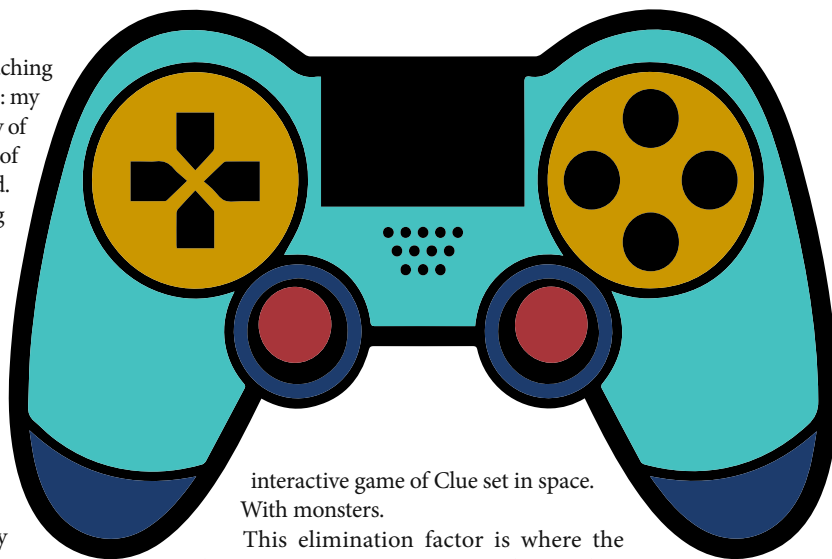
Deep into the November lull that comes with most semesters of teaching high school, I was faced with a problem exacerbated by the pandemic: my students stopped talking. Teaching in a hybrid setting, I had the luxury of still having small groups of students in the classroom, but the trickle of voices I'd been getting during class discussions dwindled and soon died. To my students, masks had become muzzles, and turning and talking to their peers seemed just as risky as the pandemic itself.

The timing couldn't have been any worse, as the next unit we were slated to dive into was rhetoric—the unit that ended in persuasive speeches, and was built up to by, you guessed it, a lot of talking. I was at an utter loss on how to proceed. This was usually such a fun unit to teach and the students would get so into arguing their points or making effective claims, but without open dialogue or a classroom they felt comfortable talking in, this was going to be a slog.

Inspiration, as it so often does, struck randomly. Class was interrupted by a fire drill, and the students in the building all filed out, leaving the students on a virtual Teams call sitting there essentially twiddling their thumbs. It was after this fire drill that I came back into a room raucous with noise—the Teams call had broken out into a full-on discussion about the legitimacy of the claim that Red was fixing the power generator and not biting off Orange's head. In our absence, they'd started to play a game to fill the time, and just that brief debate between students trying to fill time was enough for the grand plan to hatch.

After a long talk with one of my colleagues, I came to a solution I was happy with: we were going to play that video game in class and use it as a rhetorical teaching tool. My goal was no longer to make it about the content, but to make it about just having fun, loosening up and talking again, and I'd sneak the content in along the way.

At this point, the *Among Us* craze was in full swing. *Among Us* is a mobile and PC game that tasks a team of up to 10 crewmates with repairing their damaged spaceship and completing simple tasks such as downloading a file or clearing leaves off an intake vent. The catch? One to two of these crewmates can be an “imposter,” or someone bent on sabotaging the whole operation by destroying key components, and more importantly, eliminating other players. Imagine a more



interactive game of *Clue* set in space. With monsters.

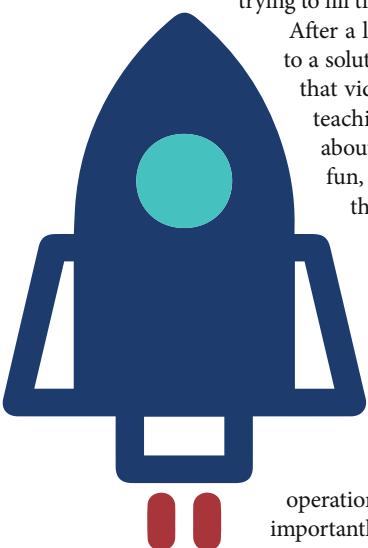
This elimination factor is where the rhetoric came in—any time a deceased crew member is found, players can hit an ‘Emergency Meeting’ button, and bring the remaining crew members in to have a chat about what happened. This forced the remaining students into a hot seat discussion about everyone's location or last task.

Simple prompting questions like, “where was the body found?” quickly became a scramble of self-defense, “I couldn't have killed them in electrical, I was doing tasks on the other side of the map in weapons!”

Boom! They were using rhetorical appeals to convince each other that they weren't murderous space aliens. Better yet? They were *talking*! They were fired up, being put on the spot, and driven to prove that they weren't the imposter or convince others that there was no reason to be suspicious of them so they could get back to their mischief. This was the key to their understanding of how to employ these rhetorical appeals, convincing others through logic, emotion and credibility.

In reaching out to students about this experience, I got some amazing feedback, especially from an exceptionally bright, but often quiet student. She sent me a thoughtful message, and included, “By telling the others where you were at the time of the ‘murder,’ utilizing logos and by gaining their trust, utilizing ethos, we tried to win the game. In addition, those who were not playing the game, were carefully listening for persuasive techniques that they could utilize themselves. Overall, by including the fun game of *Among Us*, our class was able to successfully polish our persuasive skills, which came in handy later on when we had to write persuasive speeches.”

Students I'd only known as quiet bubbles on a Teams meeting became passionate defenders of their honesty, or tricksters bent on deception. If they took anything from my English class in that semester, it was that rhetoric was just as important to surviving a hostile space invasion as a spacesuit. 🚀



Michael Morris is an English teacher at the Gloucester County Institute of Technology. He can be reached at [mmorris@gccnj.org](mailto:mmorris@gccnj.org).





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# CONFIDENCE AND CREATIVITY

## THE POTENTIAL OF POETRY WRITING IN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

MAURA TELFER, RIDER UNIVERSITY STUDENT

“The only true poets are children” states Flora J. Arnstein, author of *Poetry in the Elementary Classroom*, life-long teacher and poet. I have found a personal power in poetry that has made me curious about the potential of poetry in elementary schools, especially in upper elementary school. At that age, students are becoming independent learners and discovering many aspects of themselves as students and as individuals.

Confidence seems to play a critical role in the lives of all students, particularly upper elementary students. This observation led me to devise a research project regarding the possible connection between upper elementary students engaging in poetry writing sessions and their overall sense of self-confidence. This project became an explorative study for the capstone of my honors program at Rider University overseen by Dr. John Baer. Analyzing the results of this study may pave a road to further explorations, questioning and potential shifts in my pedagogical theory.

### STUDY SUMMARY

Students between the ages of 8 and 11 years old were asked to free-write poems on open-ended prompts. They were given freedoms with the form, structure and content of their poetry. Each student completed a pre-survey and post-survey on Google Forms that asked them about their feelings and experiences with writing in their academic career. Students also recorded their confidence levels before and after freewriting.

There were two versions of the study because of the limitations caused by COVID-19 on schools in the fall of 2020. One version of the study requested students take a pre-survey before creating four

poems in response to four different prompts. Of the four students who participated in this version of the study, two students were in fourth grade, one was in fifth grade, and one was in second grade. The second grader had already turned 8 years old and was therefore eligible for this study. This longer study was not possible for the majority of participants. As a result, 25 participants responded only to the pre-survey, first prompt, and post-survey in a shortened study. All 25 of the students who participated in the shortened study were fourth graders.

The prompts for each poetry assignment were:

- #1: Write a “Where I’m From” poem! Feel free to write it however you want! If you are unsure where to start, you may use the example poem by George Ella Lyon below. However, you do not have to use the example if you have an idea!
- #2: Write a poem about something or someone important to you.
- #3: Write a poem about one of the most important days of your life.
- #4: Write a poem about one of the hardest things you had to do OR one of the biggest challenges you have faced.

### SURVEY RESULTS REVEAL INCREASED CONFIDENCE

The exploratory study showed an overall increase in confidence levels after participants participated in freewriting poetry in both versions of the study. In the shortened study with 25 participants, there was a 12% increase in the level of confidence after the freewriting poetry session. The average confidence level was 3.96

out of 5 before writing poetry, with 5 being the highest level of confidence and 1 being the lowest level of confidence. After writing, the average confidence level was 4.52 out of 5. Similarly, in the four-prompt study, there was a 16 percent increase in confidence levels after freewriting four poems. The average confidence level was 4 out of 5 before the writing activities. After writing the four poems, the average confidence level was 4.75 out of 5. While this is still a pilot study, the positive results suggest that a larger scale study might be well warranted and shifts in the pedagogy of poetry instruction might be considered.

Often, poetry is a unit that many students and teachers dread. Continual exposure to poetry writing may benefit students more than the current one-month dedication to poetry in April (National Poetry Month). I am excited about the insights that further exploration of the ideas in this study might provide to help educators and learners.

In the future, if the results of additional studies and research support the findings of this explorative study, teachers may be able to use freewriting poetry to help young students become more self-confident. Students who are confident in themselves, their abilities, and their environment will be able to take the necessary risks for successful writing and learning. If these poetry practices can increase student confidence, then classroom use of poetry might change significantly to best support young writers. The academic discussion that this study might spark has the potential to improve writing instruction as well as students’ outlook on the writing process and their view of themselves. 🏠

*Maura Telfer, an NJEA Preservice member, graduated from Rider University in spring 2021. She accepted a position as a third-grade teacher this year.hazards..*



# Community colleges open doors to a diverse teaching force

But barriers to equitable credit transfer must be addressed

By Melissa Krieger

Community college is an affordable option toward earning a bachelor's degree, attracting students and their families who seek low-cost tuition for the first two years of their academic journey. Yet, community college students who have a calling to become public school classroom teachers find many challenges along their path to successfully transferring to four-year teacher education programs.

New Jersey's Lampitt Law, passed in 2008, also known as the Comprehensive Statewide Transfer Agreement, guarantees New Jersey four-year public colleges and universities "generally" accept all 60 credits of an earned associate degree. However, this does not ensure a ceiling of 60 more credits in the third and fourth years. Students who transfer from community college see their credits articulate as prerequisite and elective courses, leaving them with a minimum of 72 credits during their third and fourth years. Policies like these negate the value of courses completed during students' community college years.

We need to create direct pipelines for potential

educators who transfer into bachelor's programs with an associate degree, ensuring the practice that 60 community college credits are accepted, making an additional 60 college credits on the bachelor's degree side sufficient to fulfill the requirements for New Jersey teacher certification.

Dynamic innovation is necessary to design transparent articulation agreements. Such transfer agreements would create a direct path to increasing the diversity of teachers employed in our public schools. Because community colleges serve a large percentage of minority students (Ma and Baum, 2016), we have the chance to increase the diversity of our public school teacher population. Yet, as New Jersey's school district superintendents lament the decreasing teacher candidate pools, systemic barriers remain for diverse teacher candidates.

In New Jersey, the demographic disparity between educators and the students they serve is great. According to the New Jersey Department of Education, 57.6% of students identify as Black, Hispanic, Native American, Hawaiian Native, or

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***Such transfer agreements would create a direct path to increasing the diversity of teachers employed in our public schools.***

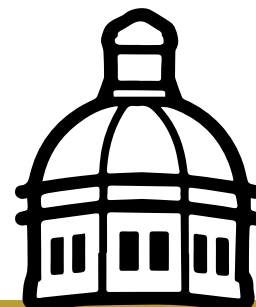
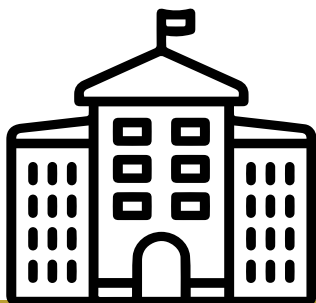
two or more races, but only 16.4% of New Jersey teachers identify similarly.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports that the U.S. will have 450,000 fewer students attending college between 2026 and 2030; a 15% drop. To address the declining enrollment, New Jersey's higher education stakeholders should pay attention to an untapped source of enrollment: teacher candidates from community colleges. The assurance of transfer support should be explicitly stated within the strategic plans of equity-minded colleges and universities.

Potential teacher candidates face another obstacle on community college campuses. Aware of the current state of the transfer process for these students, advisers often direct such students to register for general studies or liberal arts programs. This is unfortunate, as graduation rates increase

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*Melissa Krieger is an associate professor of education at Bergen Community College and a doctoral candidate at Maryville University. She can be reached at [melissakrieger1@gmail.com](mailto:melissakrieger1@gmail.com).*



when students follow an academic program course that includes sequential courses that match their interests (Bailey, Jaggars, and Jenkins, 2015). Providing students who want to be teachers with opportunities to collaborate with like-minded peers and professors, all who share a passion for teaching, is an approach that supports their persistence. Being a part of a learning community is the scaffolding for successful transfer to four-year teacher preparation programs.

For community college students who have earned the required 3.0 GPA and a minimum passing grade on a Core Praxis, ACT, or SAT, shouldn't we invest considerable effort to support their career path? To exacerbate the credit transfer inequities, some New Jersey teacher education programs are offered only on the graduate level. As the first two years of community college provide time for future teacher candidates to develop academic and social skills required of public school teachers, disruptive change is needed to bridge education and opportunity gaps. Mutually beneficial partnerships across two and four-year schools provide an illuminated path for current and future students to overcome inequities experienced in the past.

Creating pipelines for diverse teacher candidates can avert enrollment problems for four-year colleges and universities, giving them a running start on how to fill inevitable enrollment gaps. Guiding students through a transparent pathway to teacher certification can have societal impact, creating a butterfly effect; diverse teachers teaching equally diverse students in inclusive classrooms across the state. 🏡

## The following sources were referenced in this article.

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# Back-To-School with "Rainbow Connection"

By Amy Moran, Ph.D. and Kate Okeson

"Rainbow Connection" is the new NJEA Review column that focuses on LGBTIQ+ issues in our schools. As we prepare for our first interactions with students this school year, let's consider some best practices for making education spaces queer inclusive and affirming. One way to get started is by honoring the gender identity and gender expression of our students with special attention to their use of personal gender pronouns (PGPs).

**Personal gender pronouns (PGPs)** are pronouns that people want us to use when we refer to them without using the proper noun that is their given or chosen name. Female and female-identified people (whether cisgender or transgender) commonly use **she/her** pronouns. Male and male-identified people (also cis or trans) commonly use **he/him** pronouns. People who are gender nonbinary (GNB) or otherwise do not identify as female or male might use **they/them** pronouns, and there are many other pronouns used by nonbinary folks as well.

For those who find using "they" as a singular pronoun a little challenging, consider the noun "deer." That word refers to a single animal ("that deer"), a pair of animals ("those deer"), or even a whole herd of animals ("all of the deer in the herd"). The word "deer" is easily used in the singular or the plural. The same is true for "they" when referring to a single gender nonbinary person or a group of people.

**When we learn, affirm, and use our students' PGPs we demonstrate that we listen...and care.**

Some teachers are learning their students' pronouns (rather than assuming them) by distributing an information request card or form at the beginning of the school year or whenever a new student joins the group. Allison Connolly, District Equity/SEL Coach and former social studies teacher in Ocean Township Schools, uses the form you can find using the QR code on this page.. With guidance from students (visit [bit.ly/njtransguidance](http://bit.ly/njtransguidance)), we can join Allison in affirming their identities within classroom settings. This is because we know that students who face adversity—like many students who are part of the LGBTIQ+ community—develop resilience with the presence of *one strong, supportive adult* in their lives (See [bit.ly/3m1cJnH](http://bit.ly/3m1cJnH)). Demonstrating that you accept and affirm your students' identities has measurable results: they come to school more reliably and have higher GPAs than those who aren't affirmed in those same ways (See [bit.ly/3xKm5Xg](http://bit.ly/3xKm5Xg)). Try these additional methods:

- Gender-inclusive ways to address a group – Instead of binary language like "ladies and gentlemen," "boys and girls," or "guys," try gender-neutral options, like "scholars," "creators," "scientists," "Team 305," or your school mascot! Non-academic options include "folks," "everybody," "athletes,"

"colleagues," and--one of our favorites—"y'all."

- Grouping students without using sex/gender – When organizing group activities, it might seem easy to group participants according to their (perceived) sex/gender. This can backfire, and students who are uncomfortable with binary labels find themselves boxed in, or like it draws attention to them unnecessarily, or that it's just not a fit. Their attention is focused on managing discomfort rather than on full participation in learning. Invite students to break into groups by hair length, height, clothing color, birth month, or something light-hearted like sport teams or potato chip preference.

“

**"All right folks!  
Let's get ready  
to learn!"**

Chris Cannella, teacher of Social Studies and local association president in Cedar Grove, addresses his students with, "All right folks! Let's get ready to learn!"

## So, who are we?

*Amy Moran, Ph.D. and Kate Okeson (both she/her) are out educators, leaders, and agitators working to make education affirming and inclusive for all of their students and colleagues. Amy has taught middle school for 26 years and has been a high school GSA advisor for 14 years. She founded Queer Youth Advocacy Consultants, LLC and lives with her partner and their elderly pets, enjoys long motorcycle camping trips, and is getting back into yoga. Kate is a 24-year art educator, GSA Advisor for 12 years, local association president, and co-founder/program director of Make it Better for Youth. She lives in Central Jersey (yes, it's a thing) with her family, dog Bennie, and backyard chickens.*

We can be reached for contributions at [rainbowconnectionNJEA@gmail.com](mailto:rainbowconnectionNJEA@gmail.com).

**Affirming pronouns in schools goes beyond just what we say.**

Individual educators have the power to affirm students' PGPs in their classrooms, but the school culture can be enhanced with PGP affirmation as well. For instance, consider creating a professional learning community (PLC) to examine gendered language your school uses on its new student registration forms, the attendance and gradebook systems, within teacher teams, in your own plans for a substitute teacher, and with your colleagues who may be transgender or gender nonbinary.



### Making Your LGBTIQ+ Support Visible

In addition to your care and sensitivity around students' gender identity and personal gender pronoun use, consider ways of visually signaling that you and your classroom are safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ people and ideas. Maybe put a Safe Space rainbow sticker on the window of your classroom door, or perhaps a print out of the Progress Pride flag. You could post an inspirational quote by a famous member of the LGBTIQ+ community, note important LGBTIQ+ people on your classroom calendar, or ask your high school or middle school Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) club for suggestions!

### What is the LGBT curriculum inclusion mandate?

In 2019, Gov. Phil Murphy signed into law S-1569, which "requires boards of education to include instruction, and adopt instructional materials, that accurately portray political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people" across all content areas in middle and high schools starting in September of 2020, and it's up to school districts to interpret this mandate in their content areas.

Some districts and teachers are extending this work in elementary grades as well in order to affirm LGBTIQ+ elementary students and LGBTIQ+ families, to improve classroom and school climate, and to support the social/emotional learning of all students as 21st-century learners. Inclusive approaches and materials in earlier grades also prepare students for such practices and ideas—not only about LGBTIQ+ people—that they will be engaging with from middle school grades and beyond.

## CELEBRATE!

### National Hispanic Heritage or Latinx/Latine History Month

(Sept. 15-Oct. 15)

**Sylvia Rivera** (1951-2002), born to a Puerto Rican father and Venezuelan mother, was a transgender woman and activist known for her involvement in the 1969 Stonewall riots. Having fought for inclusion of transgender people in New York's Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act, Rivera's activism helped pave the way for LGBTIQ+ rights as we know them today. Rivera also co-founded the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) with fellow trans activist Marsha P. Johnson, which supported homeless queer youth and sex workers with housing and other resources in Lower Manhattan.

Check out these New Jersey-based locations where Ms. Rivera's work of supporting homeless queer youth is being continued.

- LGBT Rain Foundation (Essex County) [essexlgbthousing.org](http://essexlgbthousing.org)
- Covenant House: LGBT Youth and Homelessness [covenanthouse.org/homeless-issues/lgbtq-homeless-youth](http://covenanthouse.org/homeless-issues/lgbtq-homeless-youth)

## Books for the Month:

### *Sylvia and Marsha Start a Revolution!* By Joy Ellison

This is the story of Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, two trans women of color who sparked the modern LGBTQIA2 movement. Having met in 1969 as homeless transgender girls of color, Sylvia longs for change, saying, "Someday we'll be able to wear whatever we want. People will call us by our chosen names and we'll never go hungry." Together, they make history during the Stonewall Rebellion, kickstarting the movement for acceptance of queer and trans youth.

### *Juliet Takes a Breath* by Gabby Rivera

This book focuses on Juliet, a Puerto Rican 19-year old queer girl from the Bronx. Gabby Rivera captures what it means to live as an LGBTQ youth and person of color, including the pains of growing up, coming out to family, tackling white privilege and going through long-distance relationships.

### *Julian Is A Mermaid* by Jessica Love

Julian rides home from the pool with his abuela and notices passengers dressed up in spectacular fashion. Their hair, dresses, and joy all fill the subway car and Julian's imagination. When he gets home, he can't stop thinking about dressing up as beautifully as they did, but what will Abuela think about what Julian has done, and—more importantly—what will she think about how he sees himself? This illustrated picture book is a celebration of creativity, self-determination and family love.

*Would you like to know more?  
Use the QR code below for more  
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# STARTING THE SCHOOL YEAR THE BEST WAY WE CAN

BY ROB MANGEL



## Early Career Network

The beginning of every school year is inherently chaotic and always a new adventure. This year in particular will undoubtedly pose new challenges as we return to more fully populated school buildings and workplaces. As educators in our first few years of school employment

this new year might bring more nerves than we expect, but not do not fear! Read on for some advice from more veteran staff members about how to make the beginning of this school year as seamless as possible.

**Take the time to get to know the staff in your workplace. They will be your strongest support system and biggest cheerleaders.**

School buildings and workplaces are deeply interconnected spaces where we need to trust and rely on each other. One of the best ways to build these relationships is to introduce yourself early and often to your colleagues throughout the building. During the course of this relationship building you'll be able to learn more about where you're working and the folks you work with. These relationships will prove invaluable as you move through the year. Your colleagues will be able to offer you resources, encouragement and answers to your questions that you might not find otherwise.

**Learn about the resources available to you and the people who can help you find them.**

As newer staff members, we spend huge parts of our days just trying to keep up with the tasks assigned to us. This is especially true at the beginning of the school year. Our days are filled with dozens of things that we need to do. As a result, we sometimes are unable consult all

the professional resources that are available to us. But we must make time to learn about all of these resources. We can use them to improve our practice and more effectively do our jobs. One of the key pieces of discovering these resources is knowing whom to ask. Do not be afraid to rely on the folks you've started to build relationships with.

**Don't be afraid to admit that you have questions. Find the folks who might have some answers and ask.**

Of all the advice we have to offer, this one might be the most relevant on a day-to-day basis. The expectation that we be perfect during our first few days on a new job is unfair to us and the students we serve. No matter what our educational and professional backgrounds there will be things we don't know about our schools and students. Admitting there are things we don't know is the first step toward becoming better at our jobs. As psychologist and professor Adam Grant notes "If knowledge is power, knowing what we don't know is wisdom."

Identifying areas for professional self-improvement improve is key, but the next step is to find the people who will be able to help us learn. The more you get to know your colleagues, the more you can reach out with your questions. This piece of advice can, and should, also be taught to our students. If we can help them ask questions, they will also learn more!

While this is by no means an exhaustive list of pieces of advice to start the school year, they are some of the most important. Getting to know your colleagues will enable you to feel comfortable in your workplace more quickly, and to move seamlessly through the school year. 🏠

*Robert Mangel is a social studies teacher at Linden High School and vice president of the Linden Education Association. He is also a member of the NJEA Early Career Network leadership team. He can be reached at rob-mangel@gmail.com.*

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ideas and resources from  
those who have walked in  
your shoes.



# SUSSEX TO CAPE MAY

Workshops and  
conferences

## highlights

Science Convention, trauma-sensitive  
instruction and more

These experiences have been endorsed by NJEA's Professional Development Institute and are also posted on [njea.org](http://njea.org). Those seeking endorsement of a professional development experience that they will provide should call NJEA's Professional Development Division at 609-599-4561.

### NEW JERSEY SCIENCE CONVENTION MEETS OCT. 19-20

The New Jersey Science Teachers Association, the New Jersey Science Education Leadership Association, and the New Jersey Science Convention are co-sponsoring a two-day convention on Oct. 19 and 20 at the Princeton Marriott at Forrestal. There will be over 100 workshops and 70 vendors.

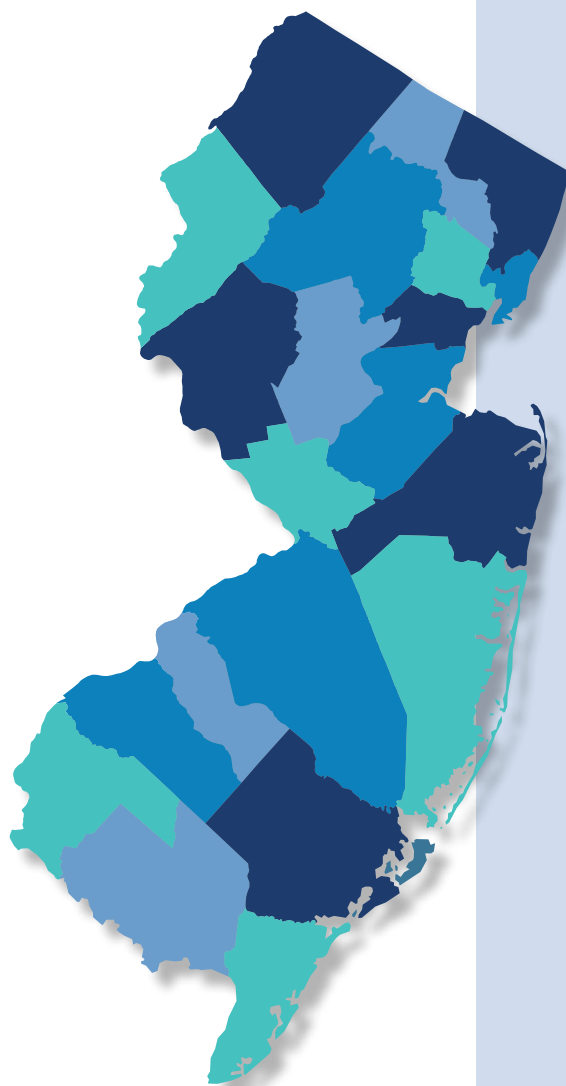
On Tuesday evening the banquet speaker is Dr. William Gutsch, distinguished professor of the college of Arts and Science at Saint Peter's University. Dr. Gutsch's topic will be Science Education: A Grand Adventure Building Bridges Between the Formal and Informal Sectors.

The convention theme is Bringing 21st Century Science Skills to the Classroom—its impact on human society and impacts in New Jersey, Next Generation Science Standards and 3-D learning, science content in all areas, biology, physics, chemistry, space and Earth science and more.

A boxed lunch and snacks are included. To receive professional development hours, an evaluation of the workshops and general convention must be completed.

The registration deadline is Oct. 15. The registration fee is \$195 per day.

For more information, and to register,  
visit [njscienceconvention.org](http://njscienceconvention.org).



# MORE TO LEARN ACROSS THE STATE

## TRAUMA SENSITIVE SCHOOLS: RETURNING TO THE CLASSROOM

Trauma Sensitive Schools, the New Jersey State Bar Foundation's (NJSBF) newest workshop for educators, was launched in August of 2021 and is focusing initially on returning to in-person learning after over a year of remote learning for most students and teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unaddressed trauma can lead to violence, and in turn, providing support for students who have experienced trauma can prevent violence and create stronger communities. While focusing on trauma in the context of returning to school after remote learning, this workshop defines trauma, gives examples of how it can manifest in the classroom and school building, and offers practical tips on how educators can incorporate a trauma-sensitive lens into their teaching style. NJSBF understands that this has been a trying year for educators, students, and families and we hope this workshop provides needed support with the transition back to full-time in-person learning.

The workshop is free and will take place on Zoom on Sept. 20 from 9am to noon and again on Sept. 22 from 9 a.m. to noon. Visit [njsbf.org/events](https://njsbf.org/events) to register.

For more information on this and other educator workshops, please contact Jessica Taube, Director of Conflict Resolution and Anti-Bias Initiatives at [jtaube@njsbf.org](mailto:jtaube@njsbf.org).

Follow NJSBF on:

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**Instagram** – [instagram.com/njstatebarfdn](https://instagram.com/njstatebarfdn)

**LinkedIn** – Search the foundation name

## NGSS WORKSHOP SERIES: 2021-22

The Science Education Institute at Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) offers a series of workshops for teachers and supervisors on how to support students as they investigate phenomena. The workshops will model what instruction aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) may look like. All workshops are for grades K-12 and include interactive presentations, investigations, breakout room discussions, practice and planning by grade level.

Each workshop can be attended in-person or online. The in-person workshops at RVCC run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and include a light breakfast and lunch. The online workshops consist of two 2-hour sessions from 4 to 6 p.m. with investigations done offline at home. The workshops will be led by Dr. Wil van der Veen, author and a nationally recognized expert on the NGSS, and supported by NGSS Teacher Leaders. Participants will receive five hours of professional development for completing each workshop.

Using Core Ideas to Construct Explanations for Natural Phenomena

- At RVCC: Wednesday, Nov. 10, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Online: Tuesday, Nov. 16, 4-6 p.m. and Thursday, Nov. 18, 4-6 p.m.
- Online: Tuesday, January 25, 4-6 p.m. and Thursday, January 27, 4-6 p.m.

Engaging Students in Practices Using Performance Tasks

- At RVCC: Wednesday, Dec. 8, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Online: Tuesday, Dec. 14, 4-6 p.m. and Thursday, Dec. 16, 4-6 p.m.

Making Crosscutting Concepts Explicit

- At RVCC: Tuesday, Feb. 1, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Online: Tuesday, Feb. 8, 4-6 p.m. and Thursday, Feb. 10, 4-6 p.m.

Using Explanation and Argument to Assess Student Learning

- At RVCC: Wednesday, March 2, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Online: Tuesday, March 8, 4-6 p.m. and Thursday, March 10, 4-6 p.m.

Defining Problems and Designing Solutions for Engineering Phenomena

- At RVCC: Wednesday, March 23, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Online: Tuesday, April 5, 4-6 p.m. and Thursday, April 7, 4-6 p.m.

The fee is \$125 per workshop per teacher.

To register online use [tinyurl.com/RVCC-REG21-22](https://tinyurl.com/RVCC-REG21-22) or visit [raritanval.edu/ngss](https://raritanval.edu/ngss). For more information contact Tina Gandarillas at [tina.gandarillas@raritanval.edu](mailto:tina.gandarillas@raritanval.edu) or 908-526-1200, Ext. 8942.

This workshop series is supported by a grant from the New Jersey Space Grant Consortium.

## Breaking Bias: Lessons from the Amistad

The New Jersey State Bar Foundation's program Breaking Bias: Lessons from the Amistad has released its newest unit: Jim Crow and the Great Migration. The unit has six brand new lessons to teach about this time period through an anti-bias and culturally relevant lens. To access the curriculum, visit [bit.ly/njsbf-amistad](https://bit.ly/njsbf-amistad).

The Breaking Bias: Lessons from the Amistad curriculum was developed for grades 3-12. We provide a FREE training that introduces best practices when teaching African American history and discusses the following questions:

1. How can I teach important content about Black history and structural racism?
2. What are effective methods for teaching this topic?
3. How can I make certain Black voices heard?
4. How can I and my students take personal and collective responsibility for standing against racism?

While the curriculum can be used without attending a training, NJSBF recommends attending in order to be familiarized with the content, learn effective pedagogy to teach the material and have a chance to experience the material firsthand. The current training covers our background unit and units 1 and 2. Please stay tuned for part two of this series, which will cover units 3-5.

We will be offering the Breaking Bias: Lessons from the Amistad trainings later in the fall. To access our workshop calendar which is updated monthly, click [njsbf.org/events](https://njsbf.org/events).

## Starlab Training: Dec. 1

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

Starlab is the perfect tool to make science come to life for students. It helps teachers prepare for the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) by allowing students to make observations, collect and analyze data, and construct explanations for natural phenomena in astronomy, earth science, and biology. Astronomical phenomena such as the daily and yearly motions of the Sun, Moon, planets, stars, and constellations are easily observed with Starlab. Data from these observations present students with the evidence to develop models and construct explanations for these phenomena. Starlab also includes projection cylinders related to earth science concepts such as ocean currents, weather and climate, and plate tectonics, and biology concepts such as the cell. At the training, participants will learn how to set up, maintain, and repack the Starlab system. The Starlab Training will be held in-person at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg (NJ) and will begin promptly at a.m. and end by 4 p.m. Light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

The fee is \$150. Teachers who complete the training are eligible to rent Starlab for a fee of \$400/week (\$300/week between June 1 and December 1).

To register online visit [tinyurl.com/RVCC-REGSLT](https://tinyurl.com/RVCC-REGSLT) or visit our website at [raritanval.edu/ngss](https://raritanval.edu/ngss). For more information contact Tina Gandarillas at [tina.gandarillas@raritanval.edu](mailto:tina.gandarillas@raritanval.edu) or 908-526-1200 Ext 8942.

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



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<b>Kitchen Cabinets</b>	<b>800-327-3599</b>	...and many more!	

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**DISCOUNTS:** The NJEA Member Discount Program is a listing of merchants offering members a discount on a wide variety of products and services. The best place to search through this large listing of discounts is at the Member Benefits page of [njea.org](http://njea.org). You can also download and print the Directory of NJEA Member Benefits.



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**THE BUYER'S EDGE:** Your membership card envelope should have The Buyer's Edge card inside. Please make sure that you keep this card in a convenient place (like on your refrigerator) so that you use it whenever you need to purchase a major item. You can save hundreds! This information is also listed at the Member Benefits page of [njea.org](http://njea.org).

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## NJREA CELEBRATES STELLAR STUDENTS



### Walter Krichling Vocational/ Technical/ Career Scholarship

**Austin Dorflinger** is currently a senior at Hunterdon Central Regional High School as well as in his second year at Hunterdon County Poly Tech in the automotive technology program. Austin has a

passion for small engine repairs and helps his friends and family with any repairs they need. As Austin pursues a career as an automotive technician, he is following in his father's footsteps. From age 10 he helped his dad—who owned and operated a repair shop—and has fond memories of rotating tires and changing the oil changes at his side. Austin is currently working for the at the Spruce Run Reservoir and will attend Universal Technical Institute (UTI) in the fall.



### Isabelle Hickman Four-Year Scholarship

**Mary Kate Merenich** is pursuing a medical degree at Duke University. Through her personal experience with vision loss and many ophthalmologist appointments, Mary Kate intends to dedicate her career to helping others with vision issues. She faces challenges undeterred and embraces her

vision difficulties while tackling all obstacles with a deep sense of problem solving and understanding. Mary Kate enjoys running track and loves to dispel the notion that visual impairment is an impediment to doing what you love.



### Fred Aug Two-Year Scholarship

**Michael Gibbs** plans to attend Middlesex County College to pursue a career as an English teacher. His experiences in school have fueled his desire to pursue a better opportunity for future learners, and Michael found a love for reading, writing and technology along the way. His advanced technology skills have even enabled him to teach his teachers through remote learning

using programs such as Zoom and FlipGrid. Through TCNJ's Future Educators program, Michael also attended the virtual NJEA Convention in November 2020 to further his knowledge of teaching as a career.



### Elizabeth Allen Four-Year Scholarship

**Shreya Shivakumar** will be attending Barnard College of Columbia University as a political science major with an economics minor. Shreya is currently the founder and president of the nonprofit Nourish America, which provides allergy-friendly food to people in need. Aware of others' struggles, Shreya is passionate to offer assistance to families facing

food insecurity, creating the nonprofit. Her goals include becoming a lawyer, as well as a congresswoman to have an impact on public policy and equity.



# ATTEND NJREA'S INFORMATIONAL AND DELEGATE COUNCIL MEETING

**Held virtually: Thursday, Sept. 23 at 10 a.m.**

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

The program will include:

- Petal Robertson, incoming NJEA Secretary-Treasurer and liaison to NJREA.
- Kimberly Scott-Hayden, NJEA and NEA ESP of the Year.
- NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty will induct newly elected NJREA officers.
- Pension and health benefits news, with updated information for Medicare and pre-Medicare retirees.
- New Jersey General Election and NJEA PAC endorsements.
- NJREA's Virtual Convention.

Visit [njea.org/njrea](http://njea.org/njrea) for registration information.

Capacity is limited, so register today!



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Questions, contact [bhuonsante@njea.org](mailto:bhuonsante@njea.org).

## *Around the counties*

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

Join **CUMBERLAND COUNTY REA** for its fall meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, Oct. 13 at the Eastlyn Golf Course in Vineland. The cost is \$35. To attend, call Irene Savicky at 856-863-8424.

**GLOUCESTER COUNTY REA'S** next meeting/luncheon will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 12 at Four Star Event Catering in Wenonah. The cost is \$25. To attend, call Candy Zachowski at 570-710-5514.

**MONMOUTH COUNTY REA** welcomes you to its fall meeting/luncheon on Tuesday, Oct. 12 at Jumping Brook Country Club in Tinton Falls. The cost is \$34. To attend, call Sue Shrott at 732-995-7754.

**MERCER COUNTY REA'S** fall meeting/luncheon will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 20 at the Mercer Oaks Country Club in West Windsor. The cost is \$20. To attend, contact Susan Karolkiewicz at 609-223-2570.

**OCEAN COUNTY REA'S** fall meeting/luncheon will be held on Thursday, Oct. 28 at the Clarion Hotel in Toms River. The cost is \$28. To attend, contact Janice Sovinee at 732-477-1711.

Join **SOMERSET COUNTY REA** at their upcoming fall meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, Oct. 6 at the Elks Club in Bridgewater. The cost is \$21. To attend, contact Dolores Schaaf at 732-469-6796.

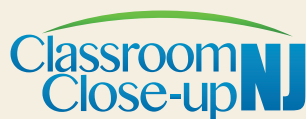


## *Classroom Close-up NJ looks back at*

# Global Classrooms

Katrina Macht of Hillside Intermediate School collaborates with fellow educators to create global classrooms. Teachers guide students through research-based investigations that incorporate issue-based themes related to environmental and social justice. Partner classes meet via video chat to select issues that resonate with each of their own communities.

Together, they identify their shared commonalities and work on solutions to shared problems. The goal is to celebrate cultural diversity and global connections. This is an NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Project.



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

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



# SEPTEMBER & *beyond*

In-person status of any meeting not listed as virtual is subject to change.

SEPT  
17

## FRIDAY

NJEA Executive  
Committee and County  
Presidents Council  
meetings

SEPT  
18

## SATURDAY

NJEA Delegate  
Assembly Meeting

SEPT  
23

## THURSDAY

NJREA  
Fall Meeting  
Virtual

OCT  
13

## FRIDAY

NJEA Executive  
Committee  
meeting

OCT  
16

## SATURDAY

NJEA LGBTQIA+ Ed.  
Justice Forum  
Virtual

OCT  
30

## SATURDAY

Jim George Collective  
Bargaining Summit  
Virtual

NOV  
03

## WEDNESDAY

NJEA Executive  
Committee  
meeting

NOV  
4/5

## THURS & FRI

NJEA Convention

NOV  
06

## SATURDAY

NJEA Delegate  
Assembly Meeting

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

## NJEA HEALTH AND SAFETY CONFERENCE

### Save the Dates

Nov. 12-13, 2021

#### East Brunswick Hilton

- Is Your District Ready to Be Rescued by the American Rescue Plan?
- Breathing Bad: Indoor Air Quality and Mold
- Mercury in Gym Floors and Lead in the Water: Where Did It Come From and What Can Be Done About It?
  - School Safety and Security
  - Project Firstline for School Nurses

Registration information and more details  
will appear in October NJEA Review.

## LGBTQIA+ EDUCATION JUSTICE FORUM

### Save the Date

Oct. 16, 2021

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

LGBTQIA+ Education Justice Forum

Sponsored by the NJEA Sexual  
Orientation and Gender Identity  
(SOGI) Committee

This event will be virtual.



# A generational opportunity to invest in our students

The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) announced on Aug. 12 that it had approved New Jersey's plan for how it would use its share of the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds (ARP ESSER). With that approval came the release of the remaining \$923 million of the funds, bringing to \$2.7 billion the total funds that New Jersey has received for education recovery amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

But it's important to remember that this is almost certainly a one-time infusion of cash. That's why this level of funding should supplement the state's investment in education, not replace it. ARP ESSER funds should not be used as an opportunity to temporarily shift costs to the federal government that in the future may not be replaced at the state or local levels. Nor does the funding remove the need for the state to continue to grow its investment in public education.

There's no question that student learning was disrupted over the course of the pandemic, but we cannot give into despair, falling into the trap of describing the disruption as "learning loss." That phrase implies that students cannot recover from the very real missed opportunities of the past year.

As educators, we know that learning never occurs in a straight line with every student learning at the same pace or on the same schedule. Even in normal times, our fundamental task is to meet our students where they are and help them get to where they need to be.

We will not make up for more than a year of disruption by pressuring students to learn faster than they are able. But ARP ESSER can make a difference by funding the supports that educators at the local level know can work—whether that be tutoring, after- or before-school programs, summer enrichment, or any of the myriad strategies that experienced educators would recommend.

There will be staffing needs for additional programs, as well as needs for additional time and space. Such learning recovery programs should not be mistaken for accelerated learning programs. Learning recovery identifies and addresses prior learning concerns so that educators can connect

***Our fundamental task is to meet our students where they are and help them get to where they need to be.***

students with challenging curricula that will move them forward in a safe and supportive environment.

School districts and community colleges, for example, could allocate funding from ARP-ESSER to create small-group learning recovery programs led by certified personnel who are employed by the local school district or college. As school or college employees, these educators are already well-versed in their school's curricula and know their community's students. They are in the best position to accurately identify and meet their students' needs.

Tools to assess students' learning needs will be more efficient and cost-effective if they are locally developed and tailored to district curricula. An over-reliance on standardized testing will reduce the time, opportunities and funding available to help students get to where they need to be.

Students from all backgrounds have been through a traumatic two years. That trauma must be recognized and addressed if we expect our students to advance. This is even more true for students who come from communities that were disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

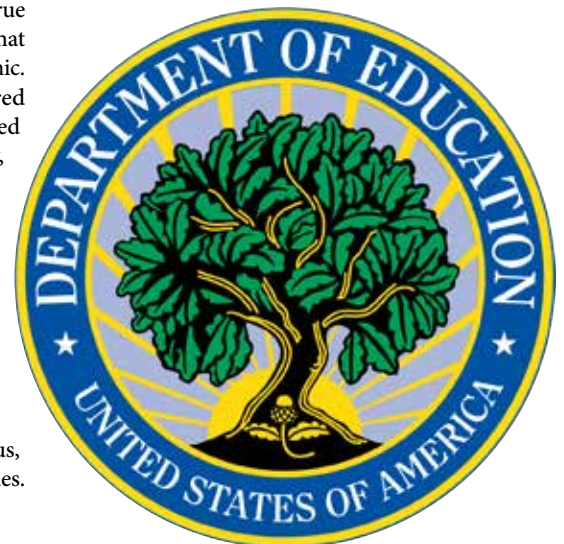
Schools must be sensitive to the altered economic conditions that many families faced over the last two years. Food insecurity, inadequate health care, and the ability to afford school clothes and basic school supplies will affect learning. Crisis management teams, wraparound service providers, mental health professionals and educators will need to be provided the time necessary to identify and support students as they continue to cope with the fallout of several uncertain school years.

As these past two years have also taught us, our schools need significant physical upgrades.

We cannot hope to see students succeed to their highest potential when they are forced to learn in unsafe, cramped, inadequate, crumbling or outdated schools. New Jersey had many unsafe, inadequate school buildings before the pandemic. The only difference now is that no one can pretend that it isn't a major problem.

As a state, we must commit to a guarantee that every student in every public school in New Jersey gets to learn in a safe, welcoming environment that is optimized for learning. That will take a combination of ARP ESSER funding and sustained state funding over many years.

ARP ESSER funds present a generational opportunity to invest in our students' academic, emotional and physical well-being. It's an opportunity to be bold, to innovate and to analyze what really works. New Jersey is already first in the nation for its public schools—just imagine where we can go from here. 🌳





**With school meals,  
the road is clear  
for academic success.**

**Daily nutrition is integral to learning.**

As students finally GO back to school, efforts to STOP childhood hunger have never been more important.

To be focused and ready to learn, students across New Jersey need the essential nutrition provided by school meals. Your support ensures consistent meal access for every student and that can make all the difference in their academic success.

American Dairy Association North East stands behind all school professionals, and we're always here to help remove roadblocks to learning.

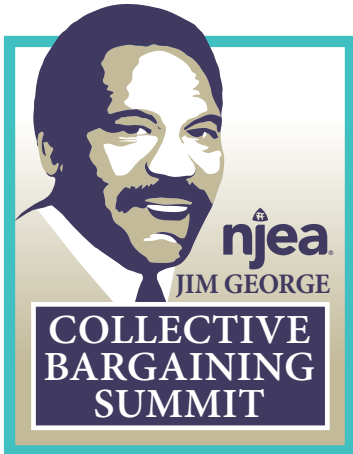
For more information, please contact us at:

**AmericanDairy.com • [schools@milk4u.org](mailto:schools@milk4u.org)**



**AMERICAN DAIRY  
ASSOCIATION** NORTH  
EAST





## NJEA 2021 JIM GEORGE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SUMMIT

Achieving Justice Through Bargaining:  
**Together We Rise!**

*"A new order is at hand.  
A new generation has  
been conceived.  
And we are not afraid."*



**MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR**

OCT 30, 2021

(VIRTUAL)

### SATURDAY, OCT. 30

#### Seminar options

1. Bargaining Strategies (Intermediate)
2. Bargaining Around PD
3. Political Organizing for Collective Bargaining
4. Bargaining Compensation & Benefits for ESP
5. Bargaining Non-Compensational Issues for ESP
6. Pay (Intermediate)
7. Basic Salary Guide Construction
8. Introduction to Bargaining
9. Current Issues in Bargaining Health Benefits (Intermediate)
10. Bargaining Around Health & Safety
11. Connecting the Dots: Membership & Bargaining

### REGISTRATION:

Visit [njea.org/cbsummit2021](https://njea.org/cbsummit2021) in mid-September to register.



**PLEASE NOTE:**  
Self-nomination  
by locals is allowed  
and encouraged.

**Reminder:** Nominations must be received  
at NJEA no later than Sept. 10, 2021.  
Please visit [njea.org/cbaward](https://njea.org/cbaward) for details.