

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

REVIEW

DECEMBER
2021

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an education and advocacy resource

24 MEET NJ TEACHER OF THE
YEAR THERESA MAUGHAN

28 PAY ATTENTION
TO YOUR PENSION

32 PASSAIC COUNTY
EQUITY SEEKERS

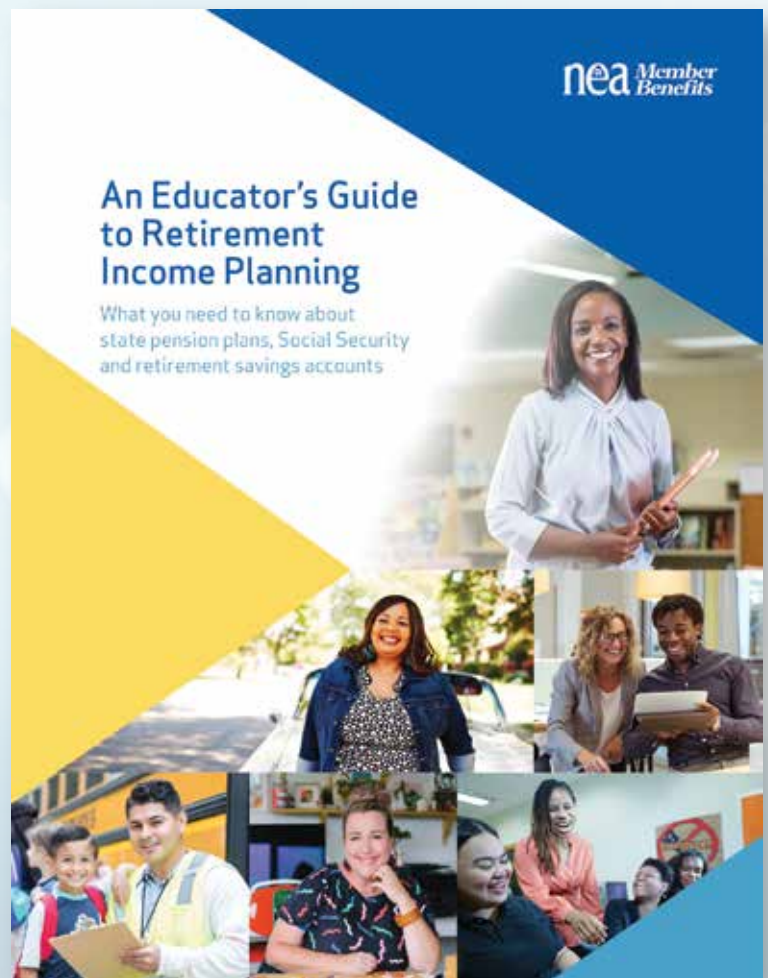
36 MESSAGES OF PEACE

*Theresa
Maughan*

2021-22 NJ State Teacher of the Year

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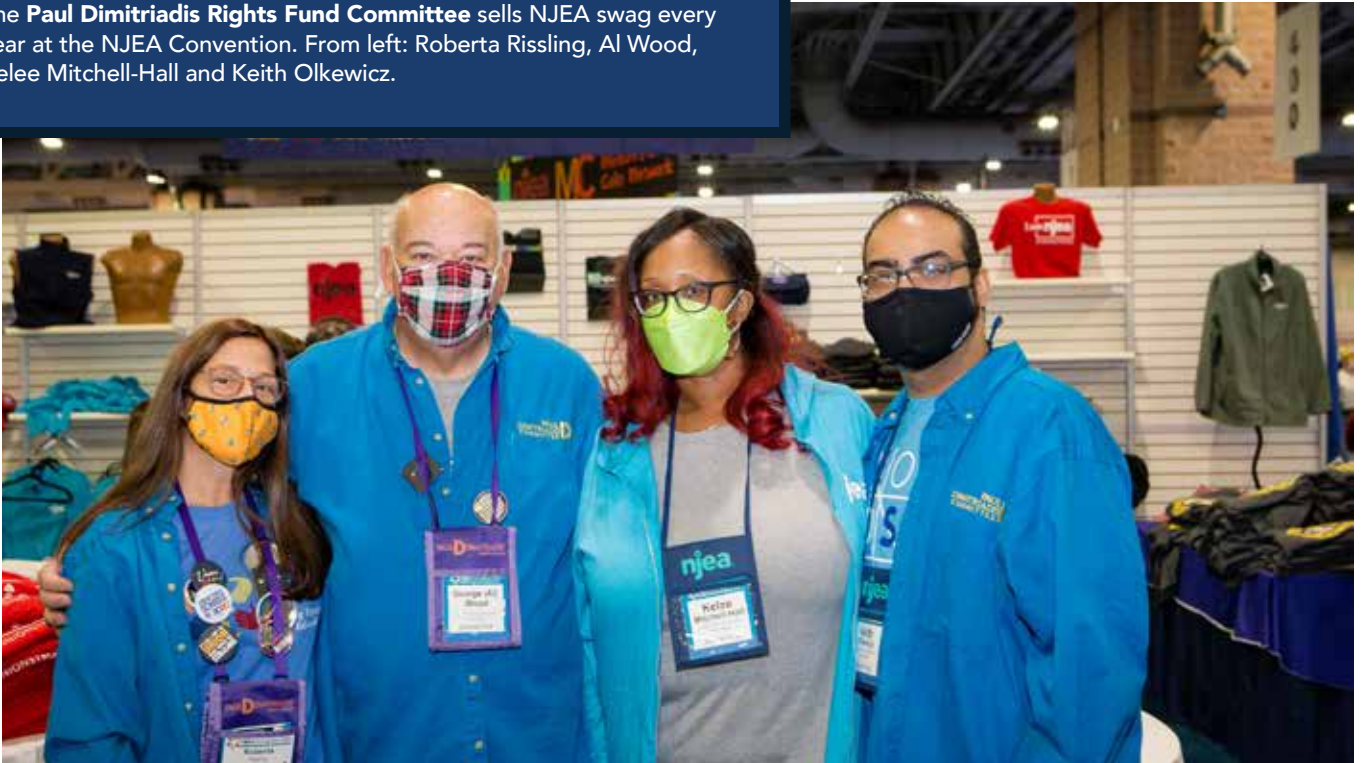
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*For more NJEA Convention photos,
see pages 16-21 and visit [flickr.com/njea/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/njea/albums).*

I AM NJEA

The **Paul Dimitriadis Rights Fund Committee** sells NJEA swag every year at the NJEA Convention. From left: Roberta Rissling, Al Wood, Kelee Mitchell-Hall and Keith Olkewicz.



The **South Jersey Anti-Privatization Coalition** held an information session and reception to highlight and expand their work to protect the jobs of educational support professionals. Standing from left: Michael Accchione, Christine Sampson-Clark, Robert Rodriguez and Trina Jenkins. Seated: Adam Sheridan, Kimberly Scott-Hayden and Melissa Tomlinson.

FEATURES

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24 | MEET THERESA MAUGHAN

Theresa Maughan, who has been teaching history in East Orange since 1987, is the 2021-22 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year. Maughan, a self-proclaimed history geek, has a passion for the subject that inspires her students to develop a similar love for the study of history and pride in their achievements.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



32 | PASSAIC COUNTY EQUITY SEEKERS

When five active union sisters needed to respond to the turmoil of spring 2020, they decided to start in their association community. They invited fellow union members to "Join the Journey" by signing up to become an Equity Seeker. Together, they founded the Passaic County Education Associations' Equity Seekers as a group dedicated to providing members a space to examine our feelings, prejudices, and knowledge about equity and the impacts of systemic racism in a monthly thematic virtual environment.

BY LIZANDAA ALBURG, NIKKI BAKER, SUE BUTTERFIELD, LAKRESHA FRESSE AND CARRIE ODGERS LAX

28



28 | PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR PENSION

Why should you care about preserving your defined-benefit pension? Why is it better than retirement savings accounts, such as a 401(k) or 403(b)? This article will address these questions to illustrate why NJEA and other public-sector unions have fought so hard for the state to uphold its end of the bargain when it comes to pension funding.

BY THE NJEA PENSION POLICY COMMITTEE

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36 | MESSAGES OF PEACE

While students and educators in Long Valley (Washington Township, Morris County) are back to in-person instruction this year, last year they learned that remote learning can bring worlds oceans away, and times long ago, within reach. Those lessons have not been lost.

BY BETTY PAOLELLA

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It was great to see you!

The number 16

Number of school districts awarded a share of \$37 million in Stabilization Aid, additional state aid earmarked for districts "facing reductions in state aid and/or structural budgetary deficits." Around 200 districts faced state aid reductions this year.

Source: NJ Department of Education



NJEA CONVENTION PHOTOS
Pages 16-21

On the cover

Theresa Maughan, a history teacher at the STEM Academy in the East Orange School District, is the 2021-22 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year. Her path to teaching and her love of history was inspired by those who taught her. Now she is inspiring a love of history in her own students.

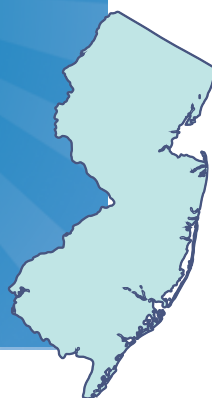


PHOTO BY
Kathryn Coulibaly

NJ Leads the Nation in the Number of Children Attending Preschool

New Jersey is one of the top two states in the nation in the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds who are enrolled in preschool.

Source: Source: Education Week. Quality Counts 2021: Chances for Success. January 2021.



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PRESIDENT'S *Message*

Educational excellence, every single day

One of my favorite moments of the year is the announcement of the New Jersey State Teacher of the Year and our Educational Support Professional of the Year. Without fail, every single educator who has earned either of those honors has a fascinating story, an inspirational message, and a deep commitment to excellence in education.

This year's New Jersey State Teacher of the Year, Theresa Maughan, is a history teacher and self-described "history geek" from the East Orange School District's STEM Academy. At the October State Board of Education meeting when she was named the 2021-22 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year, Maughan captivated the board with her journey, beginning in Belize, and marked by the encouragement and support of teachers throughout her life. You can read more about Maughan later in the magazine, but her story reminds me of the quiet excellence that NJEA members exemplify every day in New Jersey's schools.

Nancy Cogland, this year's New Jersey Educational Support Professional of the Year, is a paraprofessional in at Old Bridge High School in Middlesex County. You'll read more about Cogland when she is featured in the February edition of the *Review*.

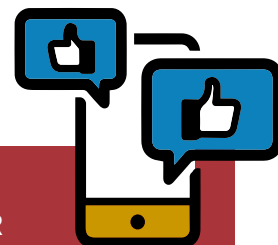
NJEA members do not perform their essential services because they seek the limelight. In fact, most educators are extremely uncomfortable when the spotlight shines on them. Like Maughan and Cogland, they want to highlight their colleagues and students rather than their own achievements.

But without the tireless contributions of our members, our schools would not have achieved the distinction of the best public schools in the nation three years in a row.

And, most importantly, our students would not enjoy a vast network of caring educators who strive to meet their needs academically, socially, and from a health and safety perspective.

Our communities have been through so much, and we continue to face many challenges, but one thing that should inspire us all is the example of our colleagues who quietly show up every day, dedicated to performing their duties and caring for New Jersey's public school children in the best way they can.

Thank you for all that you do every day; your contributions are invaluable and important.



SEAN M. SPILLER

Instagram

@SpillerforNJEA: What a terrific New Jersey Education Association #NJEAConvention2021!!! Excellent work Sue Davis and the whole Convention Committee & staff. Members & guests loved it.

On Nov. 7, Spiller shared 10 photos from the 2021 NJEA Convention, which was held both in person and virtually for the first time in its history. The images demonstrated the broad array of learning opportunities available at the convention. Spiller congratulated NJEA Convention Committee Chair Sue Davis and the committee for their hard work planning a world-class education convention despite facing the many challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

@SteveBeattyNJEA: Great day out canvassing with fellow NJEA members, and our brothers and sisters in labor from AFL-CIO Operating Engineers, Local 68. Working it to the finish line in support of our endorsed candidates—including Governor Phil Murphy, with a guest appearance by Assemblyman Tom GIBLIN and Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill. And a special door-knock at my parents' house in Maplewood! Thanks Chris, Patti, Cameron, and Tamara for going on the tour of my hometown as we canvassed!

On Oct. 30, Beatty shared photos of his end-of-October canvassing with NJEA members to elect NJEA-endorsed candidates. With the help of thousands of NJEA members, Gov. Murphy was reelected to a second term after an unexpectedly close race with his Republican challenger Jack Ciattarelli. Here, Beatty thanks NJEA members for their hard work throughout the election season, working to ensure all endorsed candidates had the full support of NJEA.

PETAL ROBERTSON

Facebook

@Petal4NJEA: Shout-out to the Chester EA Expo markers. Who else was in the Halloween spirit?

On Oct. 29, Robertson shared a photo of the NJEA members from the Chester EA dressed up as Expo Markers for Halloween to inspire and encourage other members to join in the fun. True to her commitment to elevating the work and voices of all NJEA members, Robertson used the Halloween-inspired creativity of the CEA members to build connections across county lines using social media. Several local associations responded to Robertson's request by posting their fun Halloween-themed photos on the post.

OFFICERS ONLINE



Save the Date

Jan. 14th
& 15th, 2022
Hard Rock Hotel & Casino
in Atlantic City, NJ

EQUITY ALLIANCE CONFERENCE + HCR CELEBRATION



EQUITY ALLIANCE CONFERENCE Registration Information

TRAINING TRACKS: Upon registering, members will choose from one of 4 learning tracks.
(NOT choosing individual workshops)

Practitioners Growing Our Community Cultural Wealth (Green Track)

This learning track focuses on educators aiming to sharpen their skills as practitioners and deepen their knowledge around issues of equity. The space will invite members to reflect, share and grow in conversation to impact your practice in the classroom and school community.

Organizers Growing Our Collective Power for Change (Black Track)

This learning track focuses on members committed to organizing within the school, community and/or union spaces to build a movement for racial and social justice. The space will invite members to share strategies, resources and tools to grow our collective power.

Advocates Building Self-Healing Communities (Red Track)

This learning track focuses on union advocates who seek to create self-healing communities and restorative practices within your school district. There will be an opportunity learn from stories and equip yourselves with practical tools.

Activists Navigating Leadership and Politics (Gold Track)

This learning track focuses on members seeking to impact change through political advocacy, power-building and policy-making. If you currently (or aspire to) serve in a decision-making role within our union or the political arena, then this track is tailored for you.

HCR CELEBRATION (Saturday)

HCR Celebration Saturday Cocktail Reception
12:30-1:30pm • Ceremony begins at 1:30pm

Hotel Info:

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino • Atlantic City, NJ

Registrants will choose:

- Double (with Roommate)
- Single Room
- Commuter

Doubles will need to list their roommate.

Fees:

Double Occupancy–Conference Only: \$165

Double Occupancy–Conference & HCR Celebration: \$190

Single Room Occupancy–Conference Only: \$225

Single Room Occupancy–Conference & HCR Celebration: \$250

Commuter–Conference Only: \$115

Commuter–Conference & HCR Celebration: \$140

HCR Celebration Only: \$75 (no conference)

Registration begins November 15th,
and closes on December 15th.

To register, click the link below:
www.njea.org/eac

KNOW. LEAD. ACT.

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE: NOMINATE AN OUTSTANDING N.J. PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE

Since 1984, NJEA has presented Awards for Excellence at the NJEA Convention to New Jersey public school graduates who have demonstrated exceptional leadership in their fields of expertise. Awardees have come from all fields including—but not limited to—education, entertainment, government, media, and the fine arts.

To be eligible, the nominees must have graduated from a New Jersey public high school, be well-known, considered highly successful in their fields, and have a pro-union point of view.

If you would like to make an Awards for Excellence nomination, send the information described below to Janet L. Royal at jroyal@njea.org by Jan. 28. You can also mail the nomination to Janet Royal, NJEA Awards for Excellence, PO Box 1211, Trenton, NJ 08607-1211.

Include the nominee's name, mailing address, phone number, public high school from which he or she graduated, and a brief description of his or her achievement

Also include your name, mailing address, phone number, and email address.

Nominations received after the Jan. 28 deadline will be considered for subsequent conventions.



SHOP, SAVE, AND BE MERRY WITH FESTIVAL OF DEALS!

Five days of deep holiday discounts and fabulous giveaways to make the season even sweeter!

Visit memberbenefits.njea.org between Nov. 29 and Dec. 3 and click on ACCESS DISCOUNTS to learn more.

NJEA ELECTIONS: VOTING REGISTRATION FOR NON-CLASSROOM TEACHERS

All NJEA members who are not classroom teachers or active supportive (ESP) members must identify themselves in order to vote in the appropriate unit in NJEA's spring elections. A "non-classroom teacher" is any person who is certified, where required, and a major part of whose time is spent in direct contact with students or who performs allied work that places that person on a local salary schedule for teachers.

NJEA members who were considered classroom teachers in last year's elections, and who now consider themselves non-classroom teachers must complete and return a registration form in order to be included in the non-classroom teacher unit of representation for the spring 2022 and future elections.

Go to njea.org/NJEAelections to download the form; it must be received at the address provided on the form by Jan. 14. New members who joined in the non-classroom teacher unit do not need to complete this form.



CLEARING THE RECORD

In the new NJEA staff announcement for Cindy Matute-Brown published in the October Review, it was noted that she had graduated from an NJEA apprentice program. The middle initial of the individual for whom the program is named was incorrect. The program should have been listed as the **NJEA Bolivar L. Graham Practicing Apprentice Program**.

Established in 1989, the program was renamed in honor of Graham in 2001. Graham was instrumental in establishing the NJEA Minority Involvement Committee (now the Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee). He traveled the state recruiting members of color for active involvement in the association at the local, county and state levels.

A U.S. Air Force veteran, Graham was a science teacher at John F. Kennedy High School in Willingboro, president of the Burlington County Education Association, and a member of the NJEA Delegate Assembly and the NJEA Executive Committee. He represented NJEA nationally on the NEA Board of Directors. Graham passed away on Aug. 4, 1982, at the age of 49.

NJEA created the program to provide members of color and women with the opportunities, knowledge, and skills needed for association governance roles and potential NJEA staff employment. Graduates of the program include current full-time NJEA staff members, part-time NJEA consultants, and many statewide, county, and local leaders.

COOL STUFF

A+ EFFORT

Camden EA member named a 2021 American Academy of Nursing fellow



Robin Cogan, a school nurse at Camden's Yorkship Family School, was named a 2021 American Academy of Nursing fellow, placing her among 225 distinguished nurse leaders worldwide inducted at the academy's annual Health Policy Conference, which took place Oct. 7-9.

"I am thrilled to welcome another exceptional class of fellows to the American Academy of Nursing during a momentous time of change and progress in our collective efforts to fulfill the organization's vision of healthy lives for all people," said Academy President Eileen Sullivan-Marx, PhD, RN, FAAN. "The academy aims to improve health and achieve health equity through nursing leadership, innovation, and science. The Academy's Fellows embody our values of equity, diversity and inclusivity, inquiry, integrity, and courage, which enable us to achieve new heights of impact that advance health policy across the globe."

The newest fellows represent 38 states, the District of Columbia, and 17 countries. In welcoming these fellows, the academy will be composed of more than 2,900 nursing leaders who are experts in policy, research, administration, practice, and academia who champion health and wellness, locally and globally.

Induction into the academy is a significant milestone in a nurse leader's career and follows a competitive, rigorous application process. Comprising current fellows, the academy's Fellow Selection Committee reviewed hundreds of applications to select the 2021 Fellows based on their contributions to advance the public's health.

Cogan maintains a popular blog, *The Relentless School Nurse*, at relentlesschoolnurse.com.



SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY IN BROADCAST JOURNALISM OR RELATED FIELD

The Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS), which recognizes excellence in television with the coveted Emmy® Award,

is offering the Next Gen Diversity in Broadcast Journalism Scholarship to a high school student currently in their senior year of high school. Eligible students must reside in the NATAS Mid-Atlantic Chapter region, which includes all of New Jersey; Pennsylvania, with the exception of Erie County; and northern Delaware.

The \$1,500 scholarship will assist the scholarship recipient in pursuit of a post-high school course of study in broadcast journalism or a closely related field at a college, university, or other post-secondary educational institution.

"The goal of this scholarship is to encourage underrepresented young people in our region to pursue broadcast journalism careers and add their diverse voices to the media landscape for more inclusive and comprehensive reporting," said NATAS Mid-Atlantic Chapter President Laura McHugh.

This scholarship is open to all underrepresented students, including but not limited to:

- Black or African American; American Indian or Alaska Native; Hispanic or Latino; all people of Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander ancestry; LGBTQ+; and multiracial students.
- Students with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- All female students, regardless of race or ethnicity.
- Any other students who come from backgrounds that would add to the cause of diversity, regardless of race or gender.

Current high school seniors who wish to apply for the Next Gen Diversity in Broadcast Journalism Scholarship will be required to complete an application form, write a short essay on an assigned topic, and submit two to three examples of original work, demonstrating skills in writing, broadcast storytelling, and technical execution.

Complete instructions and the application form are available online at natasmid-atlantic.org/next-gen-diversity. A hard copy of the application may be requested by contacting the organization's Scholarship Committee representative, Wanda Swanson, at wandajoyceswanson@gmail.com.

The deadline for scholarship applications is Monday, Jan. 31, 2022 at 5 p.m. The scholarship recipient will be announced in early April 2022.

PLEDGE TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

ACEs are adverse childhood experiences that affect children under 18, and include violence, abuse or neglect; bullying; witnessing violence in the home or community; and having a family member attempt or die by suicide, among others. ACEs affect two in three children nationwide and are linked to long-term mental health, physical health and substance abuse problems.

With students back in school and readjusting to in-person learning, all adults—from teachers to custodians to school nurses, counselors, bus drivers, coaches and principals—can play a role in addressing this important issue. Simple actions, such as sharing words of encouragement, supporting children and their emotions, and playing and having fun can have a huge impact.

That's where you can help! Actions 4 ACEs is a statewide initiative guided by the NJ ACEs Collaborative, a public-private partnership consisting of the Burke Foundation, The Nicholson Foundation, the Turrell Fund, the New Jersey Department of Children and Families and the New Jersey Office of Resilience to raise awareness about ACEs.

To take the pledge, visit Actions4ACEs.com and click on "Take the Pledge" in the upper-right-and corner. You'll also find resources and information for upcoming trainings.

You can join the conversation on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn using #Actions4ACEs and #TraumaTools. Let's heal New Jersey together!

Visit Actions4ACEs.com for additional resources and info on upcoming trainings. Let's heal NJ together!

Actions4ACEs | **NJ ACEs COLLABORATIVE**



WORKSHOP SERIES TO FOCUS ON PREGNANCY LOSS, IVF, ADOPTION AND FOSTERING

Join NJEA members and staff for a series of virtual workshops and conversations titled Building a Family, where NJEA members will share with you their experiences around pregnancy loss, overcoming infertility, and the adoption/fostering process. Experts will provide information and answer your questions.

NJEA staff will discuss ways that members can advocate for themselves and their colleagues as they navigate their rights and benefits when facing pregnancy loss, addressing infertility, and seeking to adopt or foster children.

The virtual programs each begin at 7 p.m.

- Dec. 9: Supporting Members Through Pregnancy Loss
- Jan. 20: Helping Members Navigate the IVF Process
- March 31: Hearing Members' Stories About Adoption and Fostering

To register, email Jessica Denney at jdenney@njea.org.

HELP PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES

▶ WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOUR PAYCHECK SUDDENLY STOPPED?

From your paycheck to your savings, NJEA wants you to help protect what's important to you.

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NJEA Report

Celebration of Excellence honors Hipp Grant recipients, NJ State and County Teachers of the Year

In a packed program that highlighted excellence across the state, NJEA honored the 2020-21 and 2021-22 Frederick L. Hipp grant recipients, the 2020-21 State Teacher of the Year, Angel Santiago, the 2020-21 County Teachers of the Year, and the 2021-22 State Teacher of the Year, Theresa Maughan, and the 2021-22 County Teachers of the Year. The Celebration of Excellence is an annual event held during the NJEA Convention that highlights exceptional NJEA members and honors a noteworthy graduate of New Jersey's public schools.

To kick off the celebration, New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy, in one of his first appearances since winning reelection as governor, addressed the audience and thanked NJEA members for their support. Murphy, who has repeatedly mentioned his family's connection and commitment to public education, enjoyed some banter with the crowd. He reaffirmed his commitment to the public education issues that matter most to educators and vowed to continue to support policies and practices that put the interests of students and educators first.

Following Gov. Murphy's speech, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson announced the names of the 2020-21 and 2021-22 Frederick L. Hipp grant recipients. Because of the pandemic, this was the first time the Hipp grant teams could be present in person to receive their commemorative plaques and be honored by NJEA. Twenty-four grant teams were honored and those present took photos with NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, Vice President Steve Beatty, Executive Director Steve Swetsky, and Deputy Executive Director Kevin Kelleher.

The first grant announced was for the LEAP Academy Charter School in Camden whose project, A Virtual Community Garden, was designated as the first recipient of the Visions Grant for Social Justice. Timothy Strong, manager of public relations and community engagement for Visions, spoke about Visions Federal Credit Union's \$1 million donation to NJEA to support social justice programs in the community. The Virtual Community Garden will encourage an interest in gardening among families in the school district. Interested families will receive a "Garden in a Box" to help them kickstart at-home gardening. The



NJEA officers and staff congratulate Hipp Grant winners. From left: NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, Lisa Hirkaler, Amanda Miranda, NJEA Associate Director for Communications and Hipp Grant Coordinator Dawn Hiltner, Susan Ort, Robert Fenster, Michele Ransone, Bridgit Lapierre Valgenti, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson and NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty.

project also will work to build stronger connections among the participating families and with the school district.

2021-22 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year Theresa Maughan next addressed the audience and spoke about her journey as an educator. A history teacher at East Orange's STEM Academy, she has been teaching for four decades. She shared the stories of the teachers who inspired her and advocated for her family during a challenging time in their lives. Maughan also extolled the importance of continued professional development.

"My teaching career is similar to a long-distance race," Maughan said. "And my growth mindset is the key to my longevity in this profession. I am still a work in progress and each year that I have taught, I've approached it as if it was my first. I am constantly looking for ways to improve myself, improve things for my students, and improve

our community. I'm on a continuous journey of professional development and I believe we can stay in the profession for the long haul through our professional growth."

Maughan encouraged people from diverse backgrounds to pursue teaching as a career and called on schools to reflect diversity through their curriculum.

"Our students deserve a teacher corps that is as diverse as they are, and we need to promote culturally inclusive classrooms that exhibit relevancy by providing an effective and safe learning culture that connects with our students' prior knowledge and backgrounds," Maughan said.

Maughan plans to work with high school and college students during her time as Teacher of the Year. Maughan's powers of persuasion must be considerable; her daughter is a special education teacher in Livingston.



2021-22 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year Theresa Maughan.



2020-21 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year Angel Santiago.



Actor, director producer and Union Township High School graduate Daryl Stewart received the 2021 NJEA Award for Excellence.

Angel Santiago, the 2020-21 NJ State Teacher of the Year spoke next. Fresh off a visit to the White House with nearly 100 other state teachers of the year from the 2020 and 2021 cohorts, Santiago shared his amazement that a child from Vineland would end up meeting the president of the United States at the White House. Santiago, an elementary school teacher at Loring Flemming Elementary School in Blackwood, Camden County, reflected on his year as the teacher of the year which also saw him and his wife welcoming their second child.

“A few weeks ago, I sat on the South Lawn of the White House and I was in awe of the spectacle that I had just experience: meeting the First Lady and the President of the United States,” Santiago said. “You have to understand, in my mind, a Puerto Rican kid from South Jersey rarely gets these types of opportunities. Less than five minutes after thinking this, I took a picture with the U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, a fourth-generation Puerto Rican teacher from Connecticut. It was a dream; un sueño, as my abuela reminds me.”

National Education Support Professional of the Year and NJEA ESP of the Year Kimberly Scott-Hayden, an inventory control clerk who also assists the supervisor of Security Services at East Orange Public Schools, was recognized at the celebration. The ESP of the Year typically speaks and is honored at the NJEA ESP Conference held in February.

2020-21 ESP of the Year Stacy Yanko, a high school guidance secretary at Hopatcong High School, also was recognized.

The final speaker of the celebration was Daryl L. Stewart, an award-winning actor, director, producer, and educator, and a 2005 graduate of Union High School in Union County. Stewart shared how he thrived in an educational environment that valued art and music as much as math and the social sciences.

Stewart reflected on the impact of his teachers and educational support professionals.

“I can say, without reservation, that I would not be who I am without my public school education,” Stewart said. “I grew up in a place, at a time where extracurricular activities like theater and dance and chorus and student council were just as revered as athletics and standardized testing. This carved out a space for artsy kids like me to excel. And my life in the arts has taken me all around the world.”

To learn about NJEA’s Frederick L. Hipp Grant program, read more details about the winning grants, and to apply for a grant of your own, go to njea.org/hipp-foundation.



In one of his first appearances since winning reelection, Gov. Phil Murphy addressed the audience at the Celebration of Excellence and thanked NJEA members for their support.

Gov. Phil Murphy reelected to second term

81% of NJEA PAC-endorsed legislative candidates win elections



One of Gov. Murphy's first stops after his reelection was the NJEA Convention where members congratulated him on four more years.

On the heels of four years of progressive leadership, Gov. Phil Murphy won reelection, along with his running mate Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver. Gov. Murphy's record of raising the minimum wage, making responsible payments into the state pension system, expanding access to tuition-free community college, and protecting New Jersey's most vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic propelled him to victory on Tuesday, securing 51% of the vote against former Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli.

This historic reelection, the first for a Democratic governor in more than 40 years, was bolstered by an unprecedented organizing effort by NJEA members across the state. Gov. Murphy's work to reduce health care costs for educators, secure new job protections for educational support professionals, preserve retirement security for our retired

educators, and restore respect to our profession led thousands of members to come out and stand strong in support of his reelection.

In the state Legislature, all 120 seats were up for reelection, with several stunning upsets. In legislative districts (LD) 2 and 8, Democratic candidates lost their seats and missed opportunities for pickups. In LD 11, Sen. Vin Gopal narrowly secured reelection, while his Democratic running mates were defeated. In LD 16, the three Democrats beat back the Republicans in a tight race. In perhaps the most shocking result from Tuesday's elections, Senate President Steve Sweeney and his running mates were defeated by a slate of virtually unknown Republican challengers. Democrats retained control of both houses in the Legislature, winning 24 Senate seats to the Republicans' 16, and 46 to 34 in the Assembly.

NJEA members flooded the state in support of Gov. Murphy and all of our endorsed candidates, delivering hundreds of thousands of phone calls, thousands of door knocks, as well as digital communication through peer-to-peer texting, social media communication, and video conference meetings. This tremendous effort resulted in 81% of our endorsed candidates for state legislature winning election.

COUNTY, MUNICIPAL AND BOARD OF EDUCATION ENDORSEMENTS

County and Local Associations made endorsements at the local level in 15 counties around the state. Fifty-four percent of endorsed candidates were successful. Notable races include a hard-fought victory for three candidates for Jersey City Board of Education, a second year of success in Hillsborough Township, and wins for endorsed members in Bergen, Camden, Essex, Ocean, Passaic and Union counties. NJEA encourages its affiliates to continue to be involved in local elections.

MEMBERS ON THE BALLOT

NJEA members came out in record number to step up and run for public office this year. Two hundred and eighty-six NJEA members were on the ballot on Tuesday, running for state Legislature, county commissioner, mayor and other municipal offices, and to be members of their boards of education. As of press time, the results of those elections are not yet official, but it appears that 68% were victorious. NJEA encourages our members to continue to run for offices in their communities.



Gov. Murphy greets members of the NJEA Educational Support Professionals Committee as he toured the convention exhibit hall before speaking at the Celebration of Excellence.

Blistan receives Ruthann Sheer Award



From left: NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty, Immediate Past President Marie Blistan, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller and Distinguished Service Committee Chair Danielle Clark.

At the NJEA Convention's Wednesday night Celebration Dinner, Immediate Past NJEA President Marie Blistan received the NJEA Ruthann Sheer Distinguished Service to Education Award. The award honors to those who greatly serve New Jersey public schools and children. Distinguished Service Award Committee Chair Danielle Clark presented the award along with NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson.

Blistan was recognized for her long career as a special education teacher and as a staunch advocate for public education, serving 12 years as an NJEA statewide officer and as president of the Gloucester County Education Association, as a leader in the Washington Township Education Association, and as president of the Somerdale Education Association.

Blistan not only inhabited those offices, she transformed them, improving the working conditions for teachers and educational support professionals and the learning conditions of the state's 1.4 million students.

"Marie is a racial, social and economic justice warrior," Clark said. "She was a driving force to ensure equity throughout NJEA. She has boldly led fights for Chapter 78 relief and Job Justice for

educational support professionals. She has ensured inclusive curricula through forming an Amistad Stakeholder Group and ensuring passage of the New Jersey LGBTQ curriculum."

Upon receiving the award, Blistan listed the many individuals and organizations that had previously received it and the significance of their contributions to public education.

"The award itself is also of special significance," Blistan said. "It's a tangible reminder of the power, the strength, and the influence of collective action. No matter any day's circumstances in our classrooms, on our buses, in our cafeterias, in our schools; no matter the results of any election, good or bad; we know that as members of this union we are empowered to face the obstacles, to face the challenges, to see what was in front of us and see what could be, and make change."

She encouraged NJEA members to continue their work to make the world a better, more just place, especially together through their union.

"You are the truth tellers of the value of this union," Blistan said. "You will continue to sow the seeds so that justice will prevail—not only in the educational community, but in the world."

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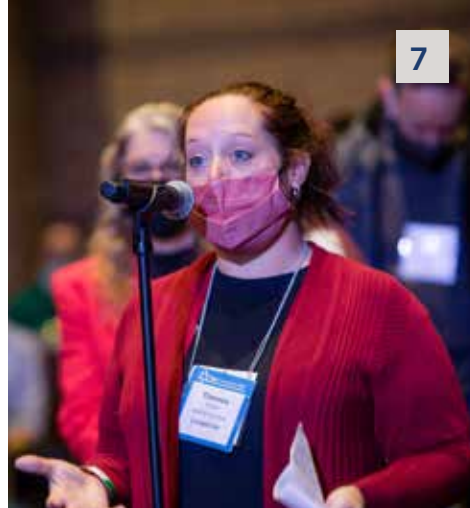
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- 1: NJEA President Sean M. Spiller (center), NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty, and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson cut the ribbon to open the 2021 NJEA Convention, joined by leaders in the association and public education.
- 2: Lateefah Scott on Digital Boulevard.
- 3: Callers from the 200K Conversations initiative gather on Main Street NJEA.
- 4: Learning about "phishing" from Keystone Cyber Protection.
- 5: Workshop – Literacy and Science Inquiry: Using Information Texts to Support Investigation.
- 6: LeDerick Horne speaks in the Equity Alliance Lounge.
- 7: Theresa Fuller asks about the special education teacher shortage and IEP compliance at the State Board of Education and commissioner of education meeting.
- 8: Member and published writer Ronnette Smith-Powell displays her books in Authors' Alley.
- 9: NEA and NJEA ESP of the Year Kimberly Scott-Hayden with East Orange EA President Dr. Dawn Nichol-Manning.
- 10: The NJEA Convention Committee.



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- 11: NJEA staffer Marybeth Beichert takes notes as (clockwise from Beichert) Edward Carmien, Thomas Harrington, Brent Costleigh, John Bukovec and Jonathan Weisbrod discuss issues for higher education members.
- 12: Members of the Burlington County EA gather for hospitality.
- 13: Google Boot Camp on Digital Boulevard.
- 14: Marie Montoya (l) and Maria Riascos at the Bus Transportation Safety and Security workshop.
- 15: NJ Teacher of the Year Theresa Maughan with Gov. Phil Murphy.
- 16: Members of the NJEA Educational Support Professionals Committee.
- 17: Marpessa R. Bell in the Equity Alliance Lounge.
- 18: Matt Deibert, a retired Atlantic City firefighter and master sand sculptor, renders the NJEA Convention logo in sand on Main Street NJEA.
- 19: Author and historian Henry Louis Gates Jr. discusses his documentary "Reconstruction: America After the Civil War."
- 20: Actor and author Sonia Manzano, who portrayed Maria on "Sesame Street," traces her life's journey and the educators who inspired her.
- 21: Scientist and television producer Bill Nye discusses the importance of science in a healthy democracy.
- 22: NJEA Preservice President Brian Reilly at Bill Nye's keynote presentation.
- 23: Keynote speaker Eric Liu discusses the power of engaged citizens in a democracy.



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24: Main Street NJEA

25: Donna Coates, Tiffany Harris-Greene and Tonya Green at the Members of Color booth. On the video in the background are Jacqui Greadington and Cheryl Willis.

26: Kristin Santilli and Tracy Dirkes tour photos of the places visited in Lisa Funari Willever's Nicky Fifth series.

27: Early career educator Jessica Quijano makes a point during the final session of the NJEA Preservice Academy.

28: South Orange-Maplewood EA President Rocío Lopez proudly displays her local's pride-themed shirt at the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Brunch.

29: As seen in a flashy professional development workshop.

30: NJREA in the house: Top (l-r) Kitty Sausa and Ron Burd; Bottom (l-r) Joan Wright, Barbara Toczko, and Fran Davis.

31: John-Fred Crane (l) assists Alex DiGiovanni during Integrating Arts and Technology Using Paper Circuits.

32: Commissioner of Education Angelica Allen-McMillan speaks. She shared the stage with State Board members President Kathy Goldenberg and Joseph Ricca Jr. and NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty.

33: NJEA's officers present the official 2021 NJEA Convention charity, Push to Walk, with a \$10,000 donation.

Clarifying teacher certification rules and processes

By Camy Kobylinski

As we face a global pandemic and increasing teacher shortages, it is critical to be aware of teacher certification regulations and processes. Failure to follow the complex rules could have a serious impact on your license and employment status. If questions arise about any aspect of the licensing process, do not hesitate to your local association leaders for help. They can connect you with NJEA staff who can assist you.

For the complete details about the rules pertaining to licensing, see New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:9B for certification and 6A:9C for professional development, which includes mentoring.

Applications, updated demographics, and fees are submitted electronically by the educator through the New Jersey Teacher Certification Information System (TCIS). You can also view your certification records in TCIS. The entire certification process has undergone major revisions within the last several years. The process veteran educators may have followed is no longer in place.

Below are some general examples of certification rules that may be overlooked or misunderstood.

CERTIFICATIONS RULES FOR NOVICE TEACHERS

Novice teachers who do not yet hold a standard certificate must be enrolled in the Provisional Teacher Process (PTP) if their assignment in the district will last beyond 60 days. Districts

are responsible for enrolling them for the first provisional certificate. During the provisional period, teachers holding a Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS) must receive mentoring and must achieve two effective or highly effective final summative ratings. Districts arrange for the mentoring and submit final summative ratings to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE).

In addition to the two final summative ratings, Certificate of Eligibility (CE) holders must receive more frequent mentoring, must complete an Educator Preparation Program (EPP) and must pass a performance assessment, currently the edTPA.

A provisional certificate may be renewed once for a total of four years. There are a few rare exceptions in which the provisional license may be renewed one more time. Because of recent procedural changes at the NJDOE, renewals of provisional certificates are the responsibility of the teacher candidate, not the district. Once all standard certificate requirements are met, teachers must apply for their own standard certificate. The standard certificate is not initiated by the district or by the NJDOE.

CERTIFICATION AND TEACHING ASSIGNMENT

Despite the challenges districts are experiencing with staff shortages, all teachers must hold the appropriate certificate for their teaching

assignment or job title. The NJDOE maintains a list of approved job titles with corresponding authorized certificates. If teachers work outside of the authorization of their certificate, their tenure and seniority rights may be affected.

In some cases, districts wish to create a new job title. Before assigning a teacher to an unrecognized job title, the district must make a written application through the executive county superintendent. The executive county superintendent has discretion to approve and to determine the appropriate certification and title for the position.

SPECIAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATION AND ENDORSEMENTS

Teachers qualified to teach special education in New Jersey hold one of two licenses. The Teacher of the Handicapped (TOH) endorsement is no longer issued but is still valid. TOH holders may teach classified students at all levels except that they must demonstrate two prior years of teaching experience with 3- and 4-year-olds to teach at the preschool level.

The second endorsement, Teacher of Students with Disabilities (TOSD) is not a standalone certificate. Holders of this endorsement may only teach within the scope of their other certificate. For example, a TOSD with a K-6 Elementary endorsement, may teach special education students in the elementary grades. However, all TOSD endorsement holders may provide consultative services and supportive resource programs to students with disabilities in general education programs in preschool through grade 12. In the example of the teacher holding a K-6

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elementary endorsement, that teacher may be assigned to provide support within a preschool or a secondary general education class.

PRESCHOOL ENDORSEMENT

New Jersey public schools have seen an expansion of preschool programs. For a general education preschool class, the teacher must possess a Preschool through Grade 3 endorsement (P-3). Or the teacher must hold the Nursery through Grade 8 endorsement (N-8), which is no longer issued but still valid and must demonstrate evidence of two years of experience working with 3- and 4-year-olds.

A TOH or a TOSD may provide consultative and supportive services in these general education programs. In a special education preschool class, the teacher must possess a TOH with 2 years of prior experience or a TOSD and the P-3 endorsement. Special area teachers must possess the subject matter endorsement for their assignment. New Jersey subject matter endorsements such as art, music, physical education, etc. are valid in all public schools, meaning preschool through grade 12. Teachers may check the authorization for their endorsement in the New Jersey Administrative Code.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES CERTIFICATES

In addition to instructional certificates, the NJDOE issues educational services certificates for 20 different titles including school nurse, school library media specialist, school counselor, student assistance coordinator, speech-language specialist and athletic trainer.

Many of these endorsements do not allow the holder to deliver instruction. For instance, school social workers and school counselors may not deliver instruction unless they hold an instructional certificate in the content or level being taught. On the other hand, school nurses and school library media specialists may provide instruction in health and information literacy skills respectively. Educators should check the authorization and details of their certificate in the New Jersey Administrative Code to be certain.

Emergency certificates are available for some of the educational services certificates. The emergency certificates are valid for one year and expire on July 31 regardless of date of issuance. An emergency certificate may be renewed at the superintendent's request up to two times. Renewals require evidence of progress toward successful completion of coursework and the tests required for a CE, CEAS, or standard certificate.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you are unsure of how these rules apply to you, do not hesitate to reach out to your local association leadership for clarification. They will be able to put you in touch with NJEA staff who can answer your questions.

There are exceptions and nuances that can affect individual situations. Certificated staff should rely upon the responses and determinations of the NJDOE licensing office for their case. When contacting the NJDOE, use your unique tracking number in the subject line of the email. Never send Social Security numbers through email.

You can email the NJDOE licensing office at licensing.requests@doe.nj.gov. 



JOIN US AT THE NJEA TEACHER LEADER ACADEMY

Teacher leadership is more important than ever

The NJEA Teacher Leader Academy is a one-year, 12-credit program* for candidates seeking to earn the teacher leader endorsement. A new cohort is scheduled to begin in March 2022.

Teacher leaders create new models of professional learning, develop new systems to monitor student progress, connect with families and communities and advocate for the profession.

Join our program and collaborate with fellow educators who are finding ways to lead from the classroom as they share ideas, support their colleagues, and work with school and district leaders to create systemic change that will support high-quality teaching and learning.

*12 credits are offered through Thomas Edison State College



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— MEET —

Theresa Maughan

BUILDING CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY WITH THE 2021-22 NJ STATE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

By Kathryn Coulibaly

East Orange School District social studies teacher, Theresa Maughan, cannot—and will not—stop learning. An educator now in her 34th year teaching in East Orange, Maughan has a bachelor's degree in history and secondary education from Rutgers University, a master's degree in administration and supervision of urban schools from New Jersey City University, and she is nearly finished with a second master's degree in American history from Pace University, sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute.

In addition, she constantly attends workshops on a variety of subjects, including New Jersey's Amistad Commission's Summer Teacher Institute, where she is an Amistad Scholar. She attended a seminar on Abraham Lincoln at Oxford University, and she is a member of a Twitter book club, #sschatreads, looking at pedagogy and content knowledge.

"I love history, and I love research and being a student," Maughan said. "I'm happiest when I'm

in a class learning from professors and listening to my classmates."

Maughan's path to the classroom was influenced by two very special teachers at pivotal times in her life.

Maughan had originally thought she would pursue a career as an immigration attorney, inspired by another teacher who helped her family when they faced an immigration issue when she was in sixth grade.

"My family emigrated from Belize when I was 5 years old," Maughan said. "My father had an issue with his visa that threatened our immediate family's status in the U.S. My teacher, Mrs. Roman, launched a letter-writing campaign and arranged for coverage in the Jersey Journal about our situation. The school community rallied around us and we were able to go through the naturalization process, eventually becoming American citizens. She showed me that teachers and students can have a huge impact by applying our civic lessons to real life."

Her plan to study law was altered thanks to another teacher who singled her out for a special role.

"When I was in high school, Sister Bettyanne Schultz at St. Dominic Academy in Jersey City

encouraged us to think like historians and uncover historical evidence through research. I was hooked," Maughan said. "I was honored to receive the history award at my high school graduation, and it influenced my decision to become a history and education major in college."

A PASSION FOR HISTORY

After graduating from Rutgers and student teaching in Franklin Township, Somerset County, Maughan began working in East Orange in 1987. Inspired by her students, she has been there ever since.

"Growing up, my sisters and I were always the only Black children in our classes," Maughan said. "Wanting to assimilate, I did not share a lot about my culture with my classmates, although I did have two very close friends who I met in fifth grade. Working in East Orange helped me become more comfortable and accepting of my ethnic background and my racial identity. I work with students from all over the world. I see how proud they are of their cultures and it reinforces my pride in my culture. In order for me to create an environment that provides students a safe place where they can share who they are, I have to be comfortable with myself."

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

Maughan has taught history at three of East Orange's high schools, and she has high praise for all of her students, although she is now at STEM Academy.

"My students at the STEM Academy are phenomenal, but I think that's what every teacher would say," Maughan said. "My students are eager learners. They are resilient and willing to compete in anything I ask them to. They're really accepting of each other, and I think we've developed a classroom environment that encourages that."

Maughan's passion for history and learning is mirrored by her students.

"I'm a history geek," Maughan said. "I always tell my students that I'm a student of history, just like they are. So any time that I can get them engaged in research, it's just wonderful to see that light bulb go off where they become very excited about what they're learning."

Prior to the pandemic, Maughan had her then-sophomores participate in the Hamilton Education Program.

"It was a lot of work," Maughan said. "But they rose to the challenge. They had to conduct research using primary source documents. They had to create their own Hamilton-style projects. One of my students was chosen to perform their project on stage for the student workshop. And they were just amazed by the experience. Most of my students had never been to a Broadway show, so for them this was an extremely memorable event in their lives."

Maughan said her students love the line in the musical about who tells your story. She encourages them to become history detectives to uncover more stories, and tell a fuller picture, than might have previously been told.

"Growing up, there wasn't a diverse curriculum," Maughan said. "I learned most of what I know about the contributions of diverse populations in American history by attending workshops and summer institutes, mainly through the Amistad Commission. I tell my students that I try to learn something new every day, and I love to bring that back to the classroom with me."

RECRUITING TEACHERS FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

One way education can tell more diverse stories is by recruiting and supporting more teachers from diverse backgrounds.

"I am passionate about inspiring people from diverse backgrounds to pursue a career in education," Maughan said. "Oftentimes, Black teachers, especially male teachers, are not given the support they need. They're pushed into a role of a disciplinarian. They are asked to take on challenges that are really not related to the course they were hired to teach. Our students deserve a teacher corps as diverse as they are, and we need to promote culturally inclusive classrooms that exhibit relevancy by providing an effective and safe learning culture that connects with our students' prior knowledge and backgrounds. We need to ensure that our school curricula reflect this diversity and have educators who are willing to implement those lessons."



Maughan, in her classroom at East Orange's STEM Academy, encourages her students to continue to be lifelong learners.

“

I really enjoy giving my students an opportunity to become the best version of themselves.

“We definitely need to make it more possible for people to stay in the profession,” Maughan added. “We’ve lost quite a few teachers as a result of the pandemic—they have left the profession for many different reasons. I always say that I am like a long-distance runner. I am on this track and in this race for the duration, but not everyone has the support they need in order to achieve that.”

Maughan also has participated in National History Day since 2011, when she served as a mentor to a student who qualified for the 2012 state contest and went on to win the bronze medal for the 2012 National History Day Contest in the senior individual performance category. She served as a lead judge at regional and state competitions and has mentored 11 projects that qualified at the state and/or national levels.

In addition to her other work, Maughan is a curriculum writer and has developed and presented several interdisciplinary professional development workshops for her school district. She is looking forward to the opportunity to network with more teachers across the state and the nation through the State Teacher of the Year program.

Maughan has already started collaborating with her county teacher of the year colleagues, who are an impressive group.

“After we were all announced, and I was able to get to know more about the other county teachers of the year, I started to mentally take bets on who would be the State Teacher of the Year,” Maughan recalled. “I did not rank myself among the most likely to win; this cohort does so much community outreach and has such an impact. I have always focused on the students in my class and branched out from there.”

AN IMPRESSIVE RESUME

While Maughan is humble about her accomplishments, her resume could not be more impressive.

She has served as a mentor for new teachers and students studying history. She has previously been



Kimberly Scott-Hayden, National ESP of the Year and East Orange inventory control clerk, with NJSTOY Maughan by a 9/11 memorial at the STEM Academy.

named the Teacher of the Year at East Orange High School, East Orange Campus High School, and East Orange STEM Academy. She is also the 2021 Essex County Teacher of the Year and the 2021 NJ History Day/National History Day Patricia Behring Senior Division Teacher of the Year.

East Orange has long been known for the talents of its staff. This year, in a history-making first, both the New Jersey State Teacher of the Year and the National Education Support Professional of the Year, Kimberly Scott-Hayden, work in East Orange.

“East Orange is a special place,” Maughan said. “I’ve been working here since 1987, and I think what makes it special is the people I work with. They’re not afraid to try different strategies and we are always trying to put our students and their families at the center of everything that we do.”

While she works in East Orange, Maughan lives in Randolph with her husband, Niall. They are the parents of two children. Bre is a special education teacher in Livingston, and Ryan is a recent graduate of The College of New Jersey now working in marketing and sales.


Although the pandemic may alter or delay some of the perks of being the State Teacher of the Year, as the New Jersey Teacher of the Year, Maughan is entitled to an all-expense paid, six-month sabbatical from January through June 2022 to attend national and state conferences, to tour the state visiting classrooms and to work on various initiatives at the New Jersey Department of Education, courtesy of program sponsor ETS. ETS also provides \$3,000 worth of technology equipment.

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

As exciting as being named New Jersey State Teacher of the Year is, Maughan is conflicted about leaving her classroom for the six-month sabbatical.

“I love everything about my job,” Maughan said. “I have been a teacher for 40 years, and I love interacting with my students. Every day is fresh and different, and I really enjoy giving my students an opportunity to become the best version of themselves.”

She is as inspired by teaching and by her students as she was at the beginning of her career.

“I take every year as if it is my first,” Maughan said. “I’m always trying to modify and adjust. Teaching gets harder every year; this year, I have to acclimate my students back to being in person. They need to remember how to interact with each other. It’s a challenge to help them figure out how to be more involved while still maneuvering COVID protocols and keeping students safe. They need to feel connected in order to learn, and that’s what education is all about: building connections between the student and the teacher, among students, and with each individual learner and the subject matter. That’s where the richness in education lies.” 

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR PENSION

By the NJEA Pension Policy Committee



New Jersey's public pension systems have often been highlighted in the news as being severely underfunded year after year. Unlike many governors before him, Gov. Phil Murphy has kept his promise to public employees to begin making the full pension payment, setting up the system for a more stable future. This is good news for both retired and active members of a state pension system, particularly since participants have never missed a payment.

You probably have heard that New Jersey has recently made a historic payment to the pension system. In New Jersey's fiscal year 2022 budget, Murphy includes a \$6.9 billion payment to the state-sponsored pension systems—that's out of a total \$44.8 billion budget. The \$6.9 billion payment is the full amount required per the actuaries of the state pension systems plus an additional \$505 million. On July 1, the state put \$5.8 billion into the state pension systems. The remaining \$1.1 billion will come from lottery proceeds, which are paid into the pension monthly.

What's the big deal about a pension anyway? Why should you care about it? Why is it why is it better than retirement savings accounts, such as a 401(k) or 403(b)? This article will address these questions to illustrate why NJEA and other public-sector unions have fought so hard for the state to uphold its end of the bargain when it comes to pension funding. The two retirement vehicles function very differently and those differences affect how you should plan for retirement.

HOW A DEFINED-BENEFIT PENSION WORKS

A defined-benefit pension is an employer-sponsored account that provides the pensioner with an annual benefit in retirement based on a predetermined calculation consisting of your salary and years of experience. Both you and the employer (the state or the school district) pay a set amount toward the pension while you are actively working. If you are in a job that is part of a pension system, you cannot choose whether or not to participate/contribute—your employer must enroll you and withhold your contribution from your paycheck.

If you are a certificated employee in a pension-eligible position, you are a member of the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund (TPAF), one of the state funded systems. If you are an educational support professional, such as a paraprofessional, custodian, school secretary, bus driver or other support staff position, employed in a pension-eligible position, you are in the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), and your local school district contributes to your pension. Some higher education employees participate in the Alternate Benefit Program.

The New Jersey Division of Investment (DOI) invests the employee and employer contributions for both TPAF and PERS members. By pooling all pension contributions together, DOI can customize the investment portfolio to maximize investment returns while maintaining the liquidity necessary for those already drawing pensions. According to research conducted by the National Institute for Retirement Security, the vast majority of the pension benefit retirees receive is from investment earnings.



Your pension benefit calculator



PERS members
nj.gov/treasury/pensions/pers-estimate.shtml



TPAF members:
nj.gov/treasury/pensions/tpaf-estimate.shtml

HOW A 401(K)/403(B) WORKS

A 401(k) or 403(b) is a tax-deferred, individually owned account used to save for retirement. What follows in this section applies to both 401(k) and 403(b) accounts. Because, public-sector education employees typically have the option to contribute to a 403(b) while private-sector employees would contribute to a 401(k), the remainder of this section will reference 403(b) accounts.

When you have a 403(b) account, you typically will contribute into an account that you own. Although employers can contribute to 403(b) accounts, typically this account will contain only employee contributions. Since you are the account owner, you decide how to invest the money, and typically you can choose between various index funds, stocks, etc. You choose how aggressively or conservatively you want the money invested. Also, there are fees that you pay to invest your money, and those fees vary based on the 403(b) vendor.

At the time you retire, you must decide what to do with the money you have in the account. You can opt to turn the amount or part of the amount into an annuity, or just draw down from the lump sum amount.

COMPARISON OF DEFINED BENEFIT AND DEFINED CONTRIBUTION RETIREMENT PLANS

	Defined Benefit - Pension	Defined Contribution - 401k/403b
How much do you contribute?	Required % of salary	Whatever amount you choose
What determines payouts?	How long you work and your salary	How much you and your employer contribute and the investment earnings
Who makes investment decisions?	Investment professionals with the N.J. Division of Investment	You
How long will you receive payments?	Lifetime	Until the account is depleted

WHAT MAKES A PENSION PREFERABLE TO A 403(B)?

A defined-benefit pension is preferable to an individual retirement account such as a 403(b) in terms of planning, efficiency and investment strategy. If your retirement were solely based on a 403(b), there are many unknowns that can make it difficult to plan for retirement, such as stock market downturns and how long you expect to live in retirement. With a pension, you can retire regardless of the current state of the economy since your monthly payment is based on a predetermined formula. Does longevity run in your family? Rest assured you will receive your pension for as long as you live into retirement, even if it is several decades. While a 403(b) is certainly good to have in addition to a defined benefit pension, it is not a replacement for having a guaranteed lifetime payment.

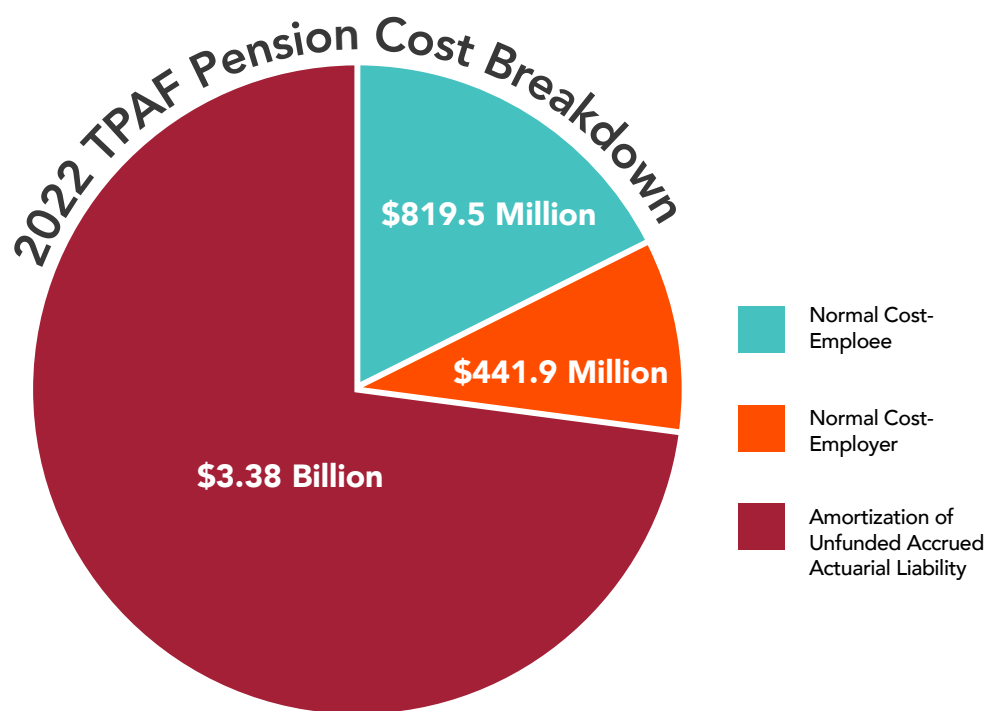
Since there are many participants in the system who are not eligible yet for retirement, this allows investment professionals to create a diverse portfolio with short and long-term investments, maximizing potential returns. For example, the pension fund system can maintain high-risk, high-reward investments because it does not have to have the money to pay out all retirement benefits at any given time. If you maintain high-risk investments close to retirement in an individual retirement account, you run the risk of not having enough money to retire.

Finally, with an individual investment account, you are responsible for your own investment decisions, so you must pick where you are invested and how conservative or aggressive those investments are. You can choose to invest in target retirement date funds, but these funds can have high expense ratios, meaning a chunk of your investment goes to fees. The New Jersey Division of Investment manages pension money at a relatively low cost—at 0.4% of the total fund (Source: N.J. State Investment Council Annual Report 2020).

WHO'S FUNDING THE PENSIONS

Every time you receive payment from your school district, a portion of your earnings is remitted to the pension system. Currently, members of the pension system contribute 7.5% of base salary (any extracurricular or other temporary pay is not included). The amount members contribute has changed over the years, with the most recent change commencing in 2011 with the passage of P.L.2010, Ch. 78. Prior to the passage of Ch. 78, K-12 members of the pension system contributed 5.5% of salary. Ch.78 immediately increased the member payment to the pension from 5.5% to 6.5% of salary and phased in the additional percent over seven years.

The increase in member contributions to the pension system is primarily due to the state not paying its share of the contribution year after year. When a pension system is not properly funded,



plan liabilities grow, ballooning the cost to keep the system afloat. Imagine if you only made the minimum payment on your credit card month after month. Eventually the payment would become so large it would be unsustainable.

The increase in member contributions was supposed to be commensurate with the state ramping up its payments. However, in the 2014 fiscal year, the Christie administration announced that the state would not make the full payment due to budget constraints.

The chart titled 2022 TPAF Pension Cost Breakdown illustrates the cost of funding the TPAF, the fund that includes all certificated K-12 members. The information comes from the 2020

Pension Fund Valuation, which is an annual report summarizing the financials of the pension fund.

The normal cost is the amount of money it costs for all active members to earn an additional year of credit in the system. The total normal cost for the current fiscal year is \$1.26 billion. Of that, members contribute \$819.5 million, which is about two-thirds of the normal cost. The state picks up the rest of the normal cost at \$441.9 million. The cost of each member accruing another year of pension credit is a reasonable expense for the state.

However, the state's only cost isn't just the normal cost, but also a second payment toward the unfunded accrued actuarial liability. In fact, the state's payment towards the unfunded liability is over 7.5 times the amount it is paying towards the normal cost.

The state's payment would be significantly lower had the full payment been made in years past. This is because for each year the state does not make the full payment required by the actuaries, the unfunded liability increases. Again, this is akin to not making the full payment on your credit card—the minimum payment gets larger and larger. 🏠

The key benefits of being part of a defined benefit pension system

These are the reasons why NJEA has fought, and will continue to fight, for the state to fully fund the pension.

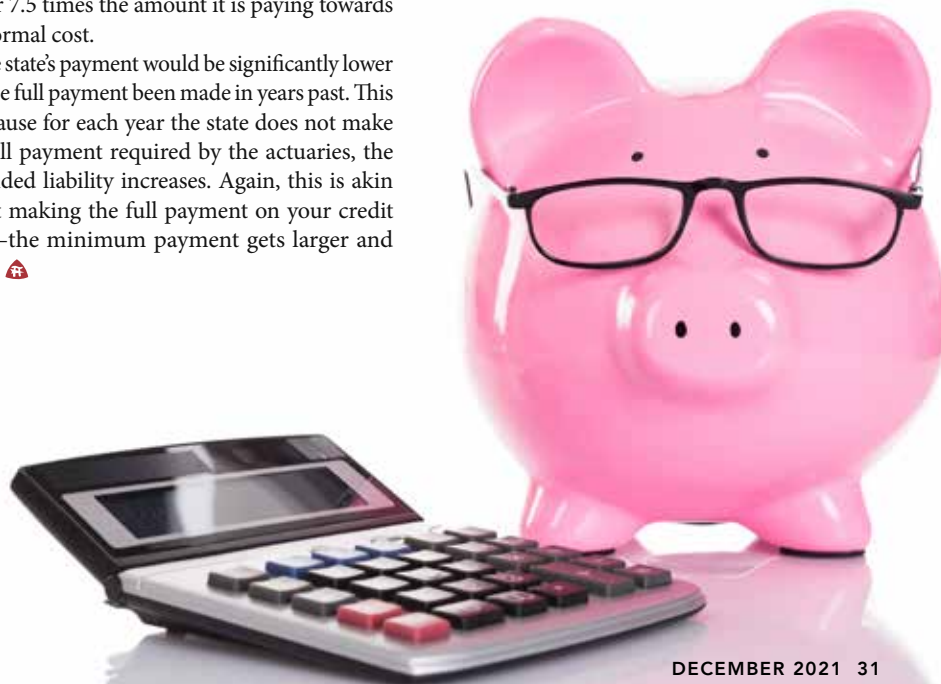
- Provides a monthly retirement benefit for as long as you live.
- Amount you receive per month does not fluctuate with the stock market.
- Leaves all investment decisions to professionals.
- Is not overly costly to the taxpayer when funded properly.

The NJEA Pension Policy Committee

The NJEA Pension Policy Committee, which authored this article, studies and makes recommendations on problems and solutions relating to teacher retirement and other pension or benefit programs designed to help members and their dependents attain financial security upon retirement, disability, and/or death. It reviews legislative proposals related to changes in the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund and the Public Employees' Retirement System, and reviews actions of the respective pension systems' boards of trustees.

The committee includes representatives from various county associations and NJREA.

1. Bergen: Howard D. Lipoff, chair
2. Atlantic: Karol E. Ball
3. Camden: David M. Regn
4. Gloucester: Michael Acchione
5. Hudson: Mark C. Azzarello
6. Hunterdon: Fiona Descala
7. Mercer: Daniel A. Siegel
8. Middlesex: Kenneth J. Veres
9. Monmouth: Casey A. Barilka
10. Morris: Kathleen L. Paterek
11. NJREA: Irene Savicky
12. Passaic: Pamela B. Fadden
13. Somerset: Theresa Fuller
14. Union: Linda A. Cortinas
15. NJEA staff contact: Sarah Favinger
16. NJEA associate staff contact: Roxie R. Mushin



FROM THE VIRTUAL BARBERSHOP TO THE MOUNTAIN

The culmination of a year-long social justice
and racial equity journey

By Lizandaa Alburg, Nikki Baker, Sue Butterfield,
Lakresha Fresse and Carrie Odgers Lax

"In the spring of 2020, we watched George Floyd being murdered as a result of police brutality. We also participated in rallies and marches to demand the arrest of the officers responsible for the death of Breonna Taylor. We were forced to consider all the 'unintended consequences' and ills inflicted by institutional racism, oppression, prejudice and discrimination. The Equity Seekers was created as a means to support education professionals in the difficult and necessary work of building an environment of social justice and equity for all and breaking down the systems of racism and oppression. Our journey began in September 2020 and continues on ... Passaic County Education Associations is committed to work for equity in our schools and communities. We invite you as individuals, schools and districts to join us on this courageous journey."

When five active union sisters needed to respond to the turmoil of Spring 2020, they decided to start in their association community. They invited fellow union members to "Join the Journey" by signing up to become an Equity Seeker. The excerpt to the left was our written invitation.

We founded the Passaic County Education Associations' Equity Seekers as a group dedicated to providing members a space to examine our feelings, prejudices, and knowledge about equity and the impacts of systemic racism in a monthly thematic virtual environment. There is no roadmap for equity work; nor were we starting from the same vantage point. It was an intentional decision to acknowledge that "wherever it takes you is where you should be."

The Equity Seekers ultimately drew in members from at least 10 local associations throughout Passaic County. Conscious that through education one can increase awareness, host challenging conversations and join the movement towards equity, participants acknowledged the responsibility to promote racial equity and social justice within their classrooms, schools, districts and communities.

To advance this work, we chose nine monthly themes, including Voting, Black Health, Black Wealth and Businesses, Ensuring Diversity in the Curriculum, and Eliminating the Educational Divide. For each theme, a collection of resources was developed, pulling together books, videos, movies, podcasts and more from reputable and reliable sources such as the National Education Association, Black Lives Matter at School, Rethinking Schools, and the Zinn Education Project. These resources were designed to meet the diverse needs of learners, to support state-mandated curricula related to diversity and inclusion, such as the Amistad Mandate, and to provide professional development tools to support our members in this critical work.

RESOURCES, MEETINGS AND ACTIONS

In addition to resources, a collection of individual, classroom/school, and community actions was shared each month, providing participants with concrete ways to reflect and engage in the work independently, collaboratively, or in community. In April/May, for example, actions for the

Lizandaa Alburg, Nikki Baker, Sue Butterfield and Lakresha Fresse are members of Passaic County Education Associations. Alburg, Baker and Fresse work in Paterson, Butterfield, who is president of the PCEA, works in Passaic City. Carrie Odgers Lax works in Summit in Union County. She previously worked in Ringwood, Passaic County. They can be reached at pcea@optonline.net.



PCEA Equity Seekers sponsored this virtual event. The Equity Seekers developed questions for the panelists to address mental health, anxiety, the importance of self-care, and systematic hiring practices.

“ I came out to support the ESE because the group has been an informative union outlet throughout the year. In addition, it provided an opportunity to reunite with friends and colleagues post-COVID quarantine.” – Todd Pipkin, Paterson EA ”

theme Eliminating the Digital Divide included attending a board of education meeting and learning more about district technology policies in their hometowns, inviting students to the next Equity Seekers session to discuss their technology experiences, and posting a graphic on social media that illustrates the digital divide to spark personal discussions.

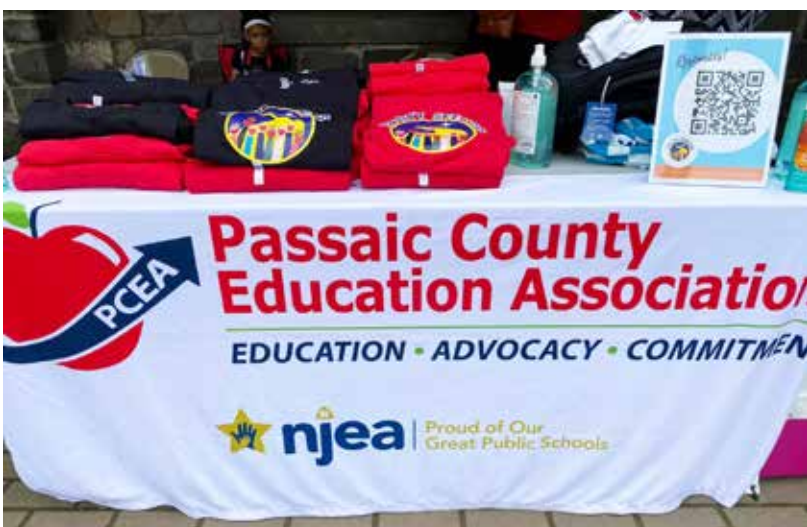
As the saying goes, “music is the soundtrack of our lives.” In addition to resources and actions, the Equity Seekers curated and shared YouTube playlists connected to the monthly themes. The playlists provided auditory and visual components to complement the journey of all educational support professionals (ESPs), teachers and other education professionals. Songs such as “Glory” by Common and John Legend or spoken word

recordings such as “The Average Black Girl” by Ernestine Morrison added sensory experiences to bring life to everyone’s journeys. The playlists allowed participants to feel the beats, energy and mood of the journey in their hearts and souls.

Monthly virtual check-ins served as a brave space for participants to share the successes and struggles of their journeys. A “brave space” is a place where participants can engage in honest but sometimes difficult conversations with mutual support and understanding. During each check-in, we lifted up individual stories, tackled tough questions and shared highlights from that month’s playlist. Several of our check-ins featured guest speakers who shared their expertise, including nurse Sheila Caldwell and Deborah Cornavaca, deputy chief of staff for Gov. Phil Murphy.

Just as part of the history of the United States includes enslaved people following signs placed by allies to reach freedom, so did the Equity Seekers create each meeting as a stop along the collective journey for truth. The plan was commemorated with digital “badges” sent to participants after each meeting, adapted from the family quilt story of Ozella, an example of an enslaved person’s freedom journey.

Individual participants varied with each meeting, but the bond among like-minded people committed to social justice work grew. In the winter, Equity Seekers partnered with NJEA’s REAL Movement in a two-part series discussion on “Racialized Capitalism” that engaged participants from all over the state.



Top: East Orange EA Vice President Angel Boose interviews the equity seekers. From left: Linzandaa Alburg, Nikki Baker, Sue Butterfield, Lakresha Fresse, Boose. Middle: Baker and Hodge speaking at the NJEA Convention. Bottom: Members left the outdoor celebration with resources for members and community partners.

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The entire project depended on and succeeded because of support from all levels of association governance and staff.

In June, after the culminating session titled PCEA Equity Seekers: Barbershop Edition, the Equity Seekers decided to have an in-person, outdoor celebration to recognize their fellowship while providing an opportunity to meet community partners and support minority-owned and member-owned businesses. The decision to seek out these businesses was an intentional effort to “practice what we preach”—a theme that surfaced repeatedly throughout this journey. Finally, all participants were invited to share their abundance and bring perishable foods for the Silk City Community Refrigerator in Paterson.

PLANNING THROUGH AN ORGANIC PROCESS

This may sound like an elaborately planned and structured sequence of events; in fact, it was the result of an organic process in which the founding members spent many hours brainstorming, discussing, organizing and preparing for each meeting. One of the early discussions was about how to most effectively communicate with our Equity Seekers community, share information and keep everyone engaged between monthly check-ins.

Materials needed to incorporate different forms of media and be visually appealing, easy to navigate and well organized. A trio of tools was used to create visual media and curate resources: Canva, Sutori, and Padlet.

Canva, a graphic design platform, helped create social media graphics, the calendar of monthly themes, and the posters for the celebration in August.

Sutori is a collaboration and presentation tool that organizes content along a vertical timeline. Sutori showcased our monthly actions because of the ease with which we could embed a variety of media files along with content from other websites and online platforms. Its simple navigation menu allows users to quickly and easily find specific information, and the streamlined format is equally beautiful on computers and mobile devices.

The monthly resources needed to be well organized, but also visually appealing. Padlet’s shelf layout is perfectly suited to this type of curation, sorting resources into specific categories and easily adding descriptions to posts. A Padlet shelf was also used



At an outdoor PCEA Equity Seekers celebration, Paterson NAACP Executive Committee members, Membership Chair Roz Thompson and Paterson EA member Todd Pipkin, staffed an information table.



At the outdoor celebration, from left: Nikki Baker, Sue Butterfield, Carrie Odgers Lax, Lakresha Fresse, and Lizandaa Alburt. Standing in foreground is Baker's daughter, Johari Frost.

to provide a single resource where members could access all Equity Seeker materials in one place.

Rounding out the collection of digital tools were some familiar favorites: YouTube to curate monthly playlists, Remind to text members about upcoming check-ins and events, and Facebook and Instagram to connect with members and share the journey.

To attract members to the work, the Equity Seekers name and logo was developed with help from the NJEA Communications Division. In fact, the entire project depended on and succeeded because of support from all levels of association governance and staff. The decisions, however, remained firmly with the members leading the Equity Seekers project.

DIVERSE EXPERIENCES AND SKILLS

Furthermore, we each brought our own work experiences and skill sets to this project. Among ourselves we are an ESP member, teachers, and a technology coach; local and county governance leaders; professional development and UniServ consultants; and members and leaders of committees from all levels. Our range of experiences and the wealth of connections resulted in a well-rounded Equity Seekers project in which eventually guest speakers and guest participants brought our message across the state.

The June Barbershop Edition may best illustrate this collaboration. The format evolved as plans were made to address the theme for June: Black Men. Equity Seekers developed questions for the panelists to address mental health, anxiety, the importance of self-care and systematic hiring practices. The panelists were all in the education field and shared their experiences—it was an emotional 90 minutes.

Perhaps panelist Donovan Coney best summed up the session, “Black men don’t have a single narrative.” As it did every month, the June virtual meeting started and ended with music from a playlist created especially for the theme.

What’s next for the Equity Seekers? We shared our journey, including the structure that developed and resources, at the 2021 NJEA Convention. We plan to continue the virtual meetings with a new theme for the 2021-22 school year: “Breaking Bread.” We are all committed to the journey for equity, and open to experiencing all the stops and challenges along the road. 🍞

Messages of peace transcend distance and time



By Betty Paolella

For many, the past two years have changed how educators teach. Amidst this challenge a virtual platform has emerged, providing experiences unlike any other. What once was the traditional classroom is no more. Oceans no longer divide our countries, they connect us by providing messages of peace through the voices of others.

For students and staff in Washington Township (Long Valley), Morris County, the pandemic provided opportunities to connect with history on a very personal level. All fifth grade students in Long Valley studied World War II through not only a historic lens but a literary one as well. With our students, we read novels and various grade-level texts to help connect with and understand both primary and secondary experiences of the events between 1941 and 1945.

Long Valley exceeded state curricular requirements as students learned messages of

peace through a human lens. This endeavor came to fruition after connecting with Jennifer Sagon-Taeza from REAL Innovative Connections, based in Mililani, Hawaii. It was through Sagon-Taeza's nonprofit organization that students explored the war in the Pacific through the lenses of a Pearl Harbor survivor and guided virtual tours of the USS Missouri and the many memorable peace memorials in Hiroshima.

THROUGH THE EYES OF A PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR

Meeting an actual survivor of the bombing of Pearl Harbor was nearly indescribable. Educators watched in awe as the students listened intently to Dorinda Nicholson's very personal experience on that fateful day, Dec. 7, 1941, when the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked the naval base near Honolulu drawing the U.S. into World War II.

Her audience captivated, she continued to talk about what her life was like after the bombing and the many changes that she underwent as a mere child of six.

Through her eyes, Pearl Harbor was brought to life. More significantly, students learned that through it all, peace was ultimately achieved. It was this peace that became official on the teak-layered deck of the USS Missouri as the instrument of surrender was signed by the Japanese in 1945.

Touring the deck of the USS Missouri left an indelible memory. Seeing firsthand the sheer size of the deck, the weaponry and the plaque that commemorated the signing of surrender created a buzz in the classroom. Students wanted to know more about this majestic ship, along with the warriors who were a part of that fateful day. More importantly, students learned again that peace was established. Amidst the horrors of the war, a declaration of peace emerged.

“

"A wise man once told me that we're not separated by land, but we are all connected by water..."

Jason Momoa

REMEMBERING HIROSHIMA

Imagine waking up on a Sunday morning, relaxed and ready to start a day full of family and fun. For the students of Long Valley, one Sunday morning transported them and their families to Hiroshima, Japan, where volunteers awaited the opportunity to share their stories.

Although it was 8 a.m. in Long Valley, it was 9 p.m. in Japan. Each volunteer shared their knowledge of the many memorials in Hiroshima. The memorials were dedicated to those who lost their lives when the U.S. detonated an atomic bomb over Hiroshima, and three days later Nagasaki, ultimately ending the war with Japan.

Students were amazed to see the Sadako Sasaki Children's Peace Memorial up close and personal. Sadako Sasaki, who was two years old in 1945, was severely irradiated but initially survived the atomic bomb blast. In 1954, however she developed leukemia as a result of the radiation. After her diagnosis, she set a goal for herself to fold 1,000 paper cranes—an accomplishment she achieved prior to her death in 1955. Her story is told in Eleanor Coerr's novel, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*.

At the virtual tour of the Sadako Sasaki memorial, students learn about the now 10 million paper cranes that are housed there. Seeing these memorials through the lens of a Hiroshima resident brought a perspective about the war that could not be learned within the pages of a history text. Each student was afforded a vision of history, not one from an American textbook, but from the voices of those who live or have lived with those who experienced this unforgettable tragedy.

Our final virtual experience entailed the folding of paper cranes. Prior to this

endeavor, Sagon-Taeza sent folded paper cranes with a message of peace written in Japanese from the Sadako museum and other paper cranes with a message written in Hawaiian and from Hawaii. District staff sent these to their students, who cherished these symbols of peace and eagerly worked to create their own cranes with their own handwritten messages. Once folded, each crane was sent across the ocean to the Sadako Sasaki Children's Peace Memorial. Each of our students had now become a part of a living history.

As a culminating activity, students designed their own peace project as a reflection all that they had learned. Some wrote traditional Japanese haikus, while others folded giant paper cranes marked with quotes from the many virtual experiences and heartfelt messages learned. These messages were shared with families and the community alike. Dinner tables were abuzz with conversations about history and the forging of peace. Characters came alive as the students connected with the historical events in each of the novels read. Classrooms were electrified with knowledge of our past and their future.


Each and every fifth grade student in Long Valley learned that a classroom extends beyond the walls and that the vast oceans are not what separate us. Instead, they unite each and every individual. Teaching of history through the human lens has provided unforgettable experiences for these students while demonstrating that learning can occur on unique platforms.

Through these virtual platforms students, parents and educators alike have had windows opened to the world. Often, it is through these platforms that relationships are created that will ensure peace lasts a lifetime. 🌸



Catherine Hartley (top) and Maya Condrón display paper crane art echoing the message of peace inspired by the story Sadako Sasaki and the Thousand Paper Cranes.

Betty Paolella is a fifth grade English language arts and social studies teacher at Benedict A. Cucinella Elementary School in Washington Township, Morris County. In that role, she created the districtwide program she describes in this article. Paolella previously served the district as a middle school literacy coach. She can be reached at bettypaol@gmail.com.



AWAY WITH ALL PESTS—WITHOUT PESTICIDES

By Dorothy Wigmore

Creepy crawlies. Rodents. Ticks. Bees and wasps.

The pandemic has made us forget many other health and safety hazards and introduced new ones. One of these hazards is unwanted or harmful insects or animals—pests—that may have had free rein in unoccupied schools or now have new targets with food in classrooms or outside spaces needing attention.

New Jersey has a specific law and regulations about how schools must deal with pests. The 2002 School Integrated Pest Management Act (See bit.ly/3GqgZ1f) and related regulations (See bit.ly/3BoIVFL) say that pests and pesticides don't have to go together. One of three such laws in the country, they're based on requirements from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Schools can be fined for violations.

WHAT'S IPM?

"The process of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system is you do everything possible before you go to the spray," says Art Pierfy, director of Facilities Management and Safety Management for the Rockaway Township Board of Education. "That's your last line of defense. You've exhausted everything else."

Pesticides are designed to kill things; most can harm people too. EPA reviews the health and environmental effects of a product's "active ingredient." The other "inert" ingredients (e.g., silica, solvents) often are toxic too but their hazards don't count in the assessment.

Only licensed applicators—trained in how to use pesticide products, the protective gear required, reentry times, etc.—can use pesticides in or around New Jersey schools. Usually, this means an outside "exterminator."

"It used to be if a teacher, or parent or anybody saw ants, they would go up to get the Raid and start spraying. Well, that's not how you do it," Pierfy explains.

Schools now need IPM co-ordinators. Pierfy provides 10 training sessions during the school year for them and others. He encourages nurses and other staff to attend; principals should, but rarely do.

Tom Rumaker knows the process. A custodian, maintenance and food-service person in the five-building Pitman School District, he's had to deal with hornets nests outside, and ants, bats, flies, unknown "bugs" in classrooms "and mice, once in a blue moon."

In one situation, a teacher reported ants in a computer classroom. When Rumaker showed the outside specialist how ants "were walking across the counter, on the keyboards ... the guy

said, "Tell the teacher to stop allowing the kids to have candy and juice in the classroom. You could see the wrappers the kids were throwing behind the computers." When flies were the problem another time, maintenance staff repaired screens and filled gaps in window frames.

In another case, unidentified bugs came out of baseboards when temperatures increased. This was reported to the plant manager and recorded in a log that the exterminator checks on monthly visits. Although the pesticide specialist used nontoxic glue strips in the cracks, the bugs returned in different spots.

"The day custodian got tired of sucking them up with the vacuum cleaner, so he put black duct tape along the bottom of the molding and we haven't seen them since," Rumaker says.

Like other health and safety hazards, this kind of prevention is key. As Pierfy says, "What's causing them to come there? They're not coming for the math class." Things like removing food scraps, fixing window screens and power washing dumpsters prevent pest intrusions.

HOW'S IPM SUPPOSED TO WORK?

The basics of IPM include:

- Schools must have an IPM policy and plan, implemented by an IPM coordinator.
- The coordinator, others involved with implementation (e.g., principals, custodians) and pesticide applicators hired by the school or district, must receive training.
- Parents, guardians and everyone in the school must be educated about possible pest problems and how IPM deals with them.
- There are rules about using pesticides—low impact ones are preferred, notices must be given, and information posted (e.g., little flags outside), students usually can't be in the school, reentry times are seven hours or whatever the label says for all but low impact pesticides, and more
- Principals must notify parents and guardians about planned pesticide use and provide the district board with annual reports about what pests were present, what was done about them, pesticides used, and recommended improvements.
- Information about the plan, policy and practices must be provided to students, staff and parents/guardians.

The IPM coordinator can't be everywhere. "We need people who are actually in those rooms to identify what's there," Pierfy adds.



BE WARY ABOUT WHAT'S CALLED IPM

The Beyond Pesticides group warns that IPM has many meanings these days. Its ecological pest management (EPM) approach has six program essentials: prevention, identification, monitoring, record-keeping, action levels, tactics criteria and evaluation—similar to New Jersey's rules.

Action levels and tactics criteria are important. Action levels set a cut-off for action related to human health, economic or aesthetic reasons. For example, school cafeterias need to be more pest-free than equipment rooms and frequently used athletic fields likely need more intense land management than other areas, while grubs in them only need attention if there are 10 or more per square foot.

WHAT SHOULD HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES DO?

The local health and safety committee plays an important role in pest management. Their tasks include:

- Meet the IPM co-ordinator regularly.
- Keep tabs on all required documents, including records and reports, and take action accordingly.
- Send someone to IPM training and share that information with local association members and others.
- Include pest-related hazards in inspections/walk-throughs.
- Insist on prevention and least-toxic approaches (e.g., check the hazards of specific products on EPA's "least toxic" list—some cause asthma).
- Work with staff, parents and students when pests seem to be a problem.

Resources

Beyond Pesticides

"Ecological Pest Management"
bit.ly/3nGvJHg

Environmental Protection Agency

"Managing Pests in Schools"
epa.gov/ipm

Department of Environment Protection

"New Jersey School IPM Program"
nj.gov/dep/enforcement/pcp/pcp-ipm.htm

Rutgers University

School Integrated Pest Management
pestmanagement.rutgers.edu/school

Sustainable Jersey for Schools

"Integrated Pest Management: Education and Organic Lawn Care"
bit.ly/sjsipm



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.



Taking Action

Angela Coxen: NJEA ACCESS model consultant

Interviewed by Amanda Adams

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events, such as parental separation, violence, abuse or neglect, that occur during childhood. Experiencing multiple or chronic ACEs may lead to toxic stress, in which the body's stress response system is activated for a prolonged period. This can profoundly affect the development of a child's brain architecture, causing lifelong harm to physical, mental, and emotional health.

As educators and school staff, we can help children heal and build resilience by taking simple actions to reduce the impact of trauma. In this monthly series, "Taking Action," I speak with educators and school staff about the things they are doing to help all children thrive.

I recently spoke with Angela Coxen, an urban educator for more than 30 years, who now consults with schools throughout New Jersey in support of the ACCESS program, originally known as the Priority Schools Initiative. ACCESS stands for "A Community Collective for Equitable and Sustainable Schools." Angela works with school leaders and offers teacher-focused mentoring, support, and professional development—including ACEs training.

Q. How is this year different from previous years?

In short, my work doubled during the pandemic. COVID-19 has had a dramatic effect on teachers and students alike. For example, during the pandemic there were teachers who needed more help managing unprecedented challenges, like not being able to interact with their students in person.

Luckily, I had previously trained school staff on ACEs, so we already had goals for social and emotional support. In training, we ask ourselves the following questions: How does student discipline change now that we are aware of ACEs? How should we approach problems? In addition, we have guidance on what to say to students who might be struggling, such as: How can we help? Is anything going on? Do you need to share something? Do you want to see a counselor?

Once the pandemic hit, we continued to follow the goals we had previously set, but we adjusted them in this new environment.

Tragically, my school suffered several student deaths. This is ACEs at its worst. We called the parents, I orchestrated healing circles, and I held wellness check-ins for the teachers, for the parents, and for the students. We went over the questions we should be asking, reviewed the pausing factor—in other words, silence is okay—and we gave young people an opportunity to express themselves.



know money. How have they not learned math and money at this point?" I said to her, "Are you going to teach them or are you going to criticize them? When they leave you, are they going to fifth grade not knowing money, or are you going to take the time to teach them?"

We have to remind ourselves, based upon their life, maybe no one has ever taught them money. I had to teach the teacher that there is nothing wrong with the kids. It's just that nobody has taught them. We then found games for the students, and they learned money in just one day. I asked the teacher, "What did you learn?" She said, "I learned that it is not their fault."

So what I teach in ACEs training is to have teachers come to a situation with a different mentality. Instead of saying, "They should know this, and they are failing," as educators we should pause and say, "Let's teach it."

Q. How can teachers and educators help children bounce back from the trauma of the pandemic, and how have you used healing circles with staff and with their students?

I was trained in circle practice many years ago through NJEA, and I have hosted and facilitated healing circles across the world. I hold circles for the teachers I work with, where we allow shared voice. The focus is not on fixing the problem, it's about creating a space for one to feel free to unload what is on their mind. These circles offer an opportunity to listen and show compassion. I also guide teachers on how to run healing circles in their classes, and how to create safe spaces. I also host circles for parents, for them to express how they are feeling.

Q. Can you tell us a bit about how ACEs have played a part in your own professional career?

I started my career as a language arts teacher in a middle school in Paterson. The school where I taught was in the middle of gang territory. Every year, I had around 25 to 30 middle-schoolers. Several already had records or were involved in illegal activities. These children seemingly had a lot working against them, so I quickly understood my role was to teach more than academics. I was determined to create a safe space for them. Yes, I taught them how to write an essay, but much more than that, I taught them coping skills and resilience. Fast forward to today, many of my students are successful adults, and I firmly believe, and they will tell you, that it is in large part due to the skills I taught them back in middle school.

Q. How did you get involved in ACEs work?

I would describe myself as part of the original think tank of the NJEA ACEs team. I was one of the first people in New Jersey trained on ACE Interface by its co-founders and creators.

The work we do is truly focused on a mindset shift. Instead of saying to a child, "What's wrong with you?" we say, "What happened to you, and how can I help?" This simple concept is at the core of our work.

Today, I am an ACEs Master Trainer. I don't know how many people I've trained. I've lost count. When asked if I'm available, I adjust my schedule to make it work. The highlight of my work is that I was able to present in Paterson, the town of my birth and of my career, and my third-grade teacher was on the call. It was personal and emotional. When we discussed resilience factors and community efforts, I knew what the missing piece was, because I knew the community members who were forgotten or left out of these conversations in the past. I was able to talk about ACEs, about healing, and put myself in that work.

Q. Can you share a brief story about a specific instance where you saw a child who was struggling?

I worked with a fourth-grade teacher who was frustrated with her students' math and money skills. She said to me, "They should know this. They should

Q. Why should educators get training on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)?

It's critical for teachers and all school staff to understand what their students may be dealing with in their life. Understanding will help teachers change their approach and their protocols. It's a caring approach. It's a virtual hug that says, we care about you and want you to be okay. By being ACEs-aware, we can change the culture.

Q. What can educators do to turn their schools—or their classrooms—into places of healing and connection?

To turn a school into a healing-centered school, everyone must be on the same page as far as knowledge goes. Going through the ACE Interface training is just the beginning. Next, school communities should get together, and based upon what stood out to them, ask, how does this fit in our community? What kind of practices do we want to set in place?

What does that look like? In Camden, one school had a parent night where the principal set up winter coats in one room and nonperishables in another room. That night she said to the community, "We know you have needs, and this school is taking care of coats and taking care of bellies." That said to the community, "We care for you, we're here for you, here is some support for you."

Everyone needs to be listened to, and everyone needs to be at the planning table. What are the first things that we can offer our community? How can we help?

Q. Do you have any tips for educators—or other school staff—about how they can help kids build resilience?

We need to teach our children coping strategies. We need to get them focused on positive practices, such as practicing yoga, quiet reflection, breathing, reading, playing music, writing poetry, painting and dancing.

We also need to make our children feel valued and let them know they are doing well. Tell them when they are good at something, tell them you are proud of them, and help them lean into that skillset.

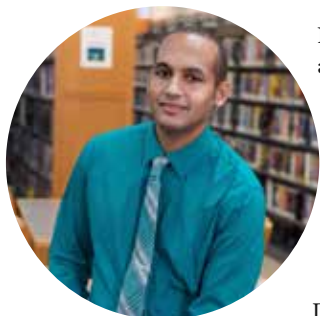
When we are trauma-informed, it takes the shame and blame away from the child, and it centers the conversation on how we can support these children. It's also understanding that what hasn't been learned yet isn't learning loss, it's an opportunity for a new way to teach.

By building supportive relationships with children, you can help reduce the impact of ACEs while building children's resiliency. To learn more, go to [Actions4ACES.com](https://actions4aces.com).

Actions 4 ACEs is a statewide initiative to build awareness about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the role adults can play in reducing the impact of trauma and helping children heal. Actions 4 ACEs offers educators invaluable resources and materials to better inform, educate and activate.

STAFF NEWS

HIRES AND PROMOTIONS



NJEA welcomed **ELOY DELGADO** as an associate director in the Government Relations Division on Oct. 18. Prior to joining NJEA staff, Delgado had been an English as a second language teacher at Linden High School since 2012. He was in his fifth term as president of the Linden Education Association and had worked as a part-time UniServ consultant in the Region 15 office in Cranford since 2019.

Delgado holds a bachelor's degree in political science and theater arts from Fairleigh Dickinson University. He also holds a master's degree in instruction and curriculum from Kean University. In his community, Delgado is a trustee for the Elizabeth Public Library and has served as president and treasurer of the board. An avid nonfiction reader, he enjoys books on public policy and politics.

Delgado lives in Elizabeth with Robert, his partner of 13 years.

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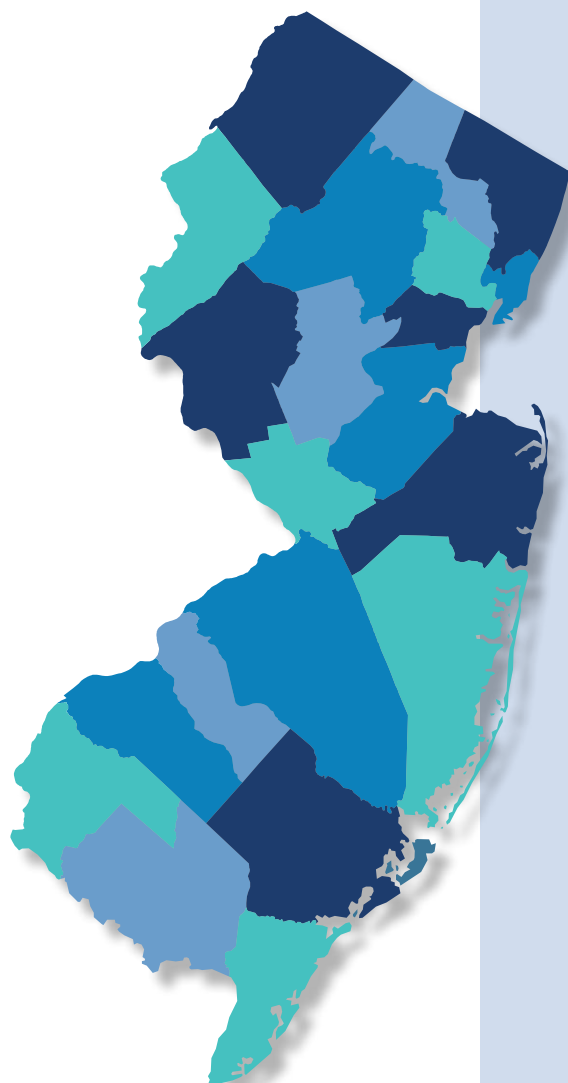
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Workshops and
conferences

highlights

Multilingual learners
and NJ Science Day



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

REGISTRATION FOR THE 2022 NJTESOL/NJBE SPRING CONFERENCE

Pathways to Success with Multilingual Learners

The NJTESOL/NJBE 2022 conference has two components to choose from:

- In-person conference – June 1, 2, and 3 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, New Brunswick
- Video Library Conference – Access from June 4 through Sept. 5. In-person attendees will have access as well.

You can register for one, two or all three days of the in-person conference. There will be over 20 presentations daily, special invited guest speakers and three fantastic keynotes: Justin Gerald, Dr. Mariana Castro, Dr. April Baker-Bell.

There's time to interact with other attendees, visit the Sponsor and Exhibitors booths and earn professional development hours throughout the day.

The Video Library Conference is a select collection of library workshops you will have access to view from June 4 through Labor Day using the conference platform. There is no set schedule. You can earn professional development hours through June 30; your hours will be tracked each time you log in. Visit the Sponsor's virtual booths.

Note that the select collection of workshops will not include the keynotes or special invited guest speakers. There is no Q&A.

Register by March 4 to take advantage of the discounted early registration rates. Free NJTESOL/NJBE membership included with paid registration.

For more information and to register, visit njtesol-njbe.org/spring-conference.

For other conference questions email Sandee McBride at conference-coordinator@njtesol-njbe.org or Michelle Land at vice-president@njtesol-njbe.org.

For information about NJTESOL/NJBE visit njtesol-njbe.org.

NEW JERSEY STATE SCIENCE DAY: CHALLENGE 2022

New Jersey State Science Day is a competition to encourage and acknowledge high school students' use of science and engineering practices to design a solution to a current and challenging problem in their community.

Your students' challenge is to design a solution to reduce the impacts of climate change in their communities through adaptation and/or mitigation efforts. All 9-12th grade students in New Jersey are eligible to participate. Students compete as individuals.

The entry submission deadline is 11:59 p.m., Feb. 7, 2022.

Since the 1950s, State Science Day has inspired students in New Jersey to pursue careers in STEM. The competition was re-envisioned in 2021 to foster growth in science and engineering practices through authentic, community-based problem solving.

This new competition is co-sponsored by New Jersey Science Teacher Association and the Research & Development Council (R&D Council) of New Jersey.

For more information and to register, visit bit.ly/NJStateScienceDay.

Questions? Email njstatescienceday@gmail.com.

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EMBRACING THE BEAUTY OF MULTILINGUALISM

BY EMMA COOPER

Language, without it, where would we be? Cafés mixing up our coffee orders, giving us hot coffee when we asked for iced, not knowing when to address someone as “dude” or “mister,” even misunderstanding someone’s greeting from a farewell. The world would be a mess without communication. Of course, without language, there would be no civilization, let alone cafés.

Being a K-12 Spanish education major, I am passionate about language and culture, and value the importance of understanding language in the classroom. As a sophomore in college, I frequently think about how language affects the classroom and, conversely, how the classroom have an impact on language development. In a country where a beautiful blend of English, Spanish and varieties of Chinese dialects can all be heard in a single grocery store line, it is imperative educators seek to recognize the unique language needs of their English language learners (ELLs) and multilingual students.

From an ELL’s outlook, English may seem to be a confusing, disorganized language. Native English speakers are used to saying, “I think she is a nice girl,” while Spanish speakers would say, “pienso que ella es una chica amable” (“I think she is a girl nice.”) By understanding the ELL’s home language, teachers will have a better gauge on where the student is coming from grammatically. They can provide activities that both promote growth in the English language and recognize their home language to build even deeper lexical connections.

This is especially easy to incorporate with the romance languages, such as Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, as these languages evolved from Latin. From this shared lingual derivation, we see common grammar structures and cognates between the languages. While the grammatical connections may be easy to make, the cross-cultural connections are particularly important.

The teacher can appreciate where an ELL’s joys, fears, anxieties, choices and everyday routines come from by researching the student’s culture. When the teacher is informed, the student can be better educated. To limit possible “culture shock” on the ELL, the teacher should focus on providing comfort. Getting to know the families of the students with whom you work and the communities in which your students live, will help you adjust your classroom environment so that it is a more comfortable and familiar place.

Moreover, a teacher’s own educational background can affect their classroom, just as mine did in my current fall observation hours. I come from a wealthy school district in Pennsylvania that consisted of a mostly white demographic. This was all I knew. I was fortunate to have great academic education, but I was oblivious to the diversity, languages, and programs other schools possessed.

For my sophomore observation hours at Monmouth University, I was assigned to a Title 1 high school Spanish classroom where 50% of the student population was Hispanic. This, indeed, was something I had a great interest in as I had never been among so many students who spoke both Spanish and English. My K-12 education did not prepare me for this placement. But as a

“

Understanding the beauty of a multilingual student's approach to thinking through two cultures will allow an educator to create a more understanding, diverse and meaningful learning environment.

lover of language and culture, I took this as a valuable learning experience. Through my observations, I noted how the students communicated with one another and the teacher, which revealed how they could interact in both languages successfully.

I intend to get my English as a second language (ESL) certification to increase my awareness of the ELL community. While not every educator will get an ESL certification, there are steps that can be taken to be an effective teacher with ESL students.

There is a plethora of programs available to support ELLs in the classroom. As a second-language learner myself, I attest to the usefulness of translation apps such as SpanishDict and even a good physical copy of a translation dictionary. If the ELL is a visual learner, they can use the voice to text function on Microsoft Word to visualize the words they are speaking. This encourages the student’s use of the English language while still embracing their home language, allowing them to make meaningful linguistic connections.

The ability to positively influence the classroom for ELLs will vary by teacher, but one small, individual step will have an impact on ELL students. Education is a remarkable career that allows us to engage students in the past, present and future. Understanding the beauty of a multilingual student’s approach to thinking through two cultures will allow an educator to create a more understanding, diverse and meaningful learning environment. Ignorance is not bliss in education; let us change this saying to “understanding is inclusivity.” 🏡

Emma Cooper is a sophomore at Monmouth University, and a member of NJEA Preservice.

Rainbow Connection's 2021 NJEA Convention GLOW UP!

by Amy Moran, Ph.D. and Kate Okeson



NJEA's officers greeted members at the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Brunch. Clockwise from top: President Sean M. Spiller, Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson, Vice President Steve Beatty, Kate Okeson, Steve Koumoulis, Chris Cannella and Amy Moran.

The 2021 NJEA Convention was a milestone for LGBTQ-focused inclusive practices, with 18 workshops led by classroom educators, school nurses, counselors, librarians, learning disabilities teacher-consultants (LDT-C), and more.

The message is no longer some vague notion about an LGBTQ curricular mandate. Rather, the NJEA Convention let us know loud and clear that LGBTQ Inclusive Education is for all of us, and here is how we are doing it!

For this month's column, we are celebrating NJEA members who created and facilitated workshops. Below you'll find their reflections on the programs they presented. We honor their work as our LGBTQIA+ colleagues, friends, peers and allies.

LGBTQIA+ INCLUSION FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PERSONNEL: SPECIAL ED, HEALTH, MEDIA SERVICES AND COUNSELING

Michelle McGreivey, Librarian/Media Services Hoboken High School

I chose to provide this professional development at the convention because libraries are leaders in providing nurturing and safe spaces for all kids in school. We support all learners with diverse and balanced collections in multiple formats. It is critical that our students see themselves in our collections, which means we need to stand ready to defend intellectual freedom and the right to read. Even now, library collections in schools across the state are being challenged for materials some would like to repress. LGBTQIA+ students need to know that they belong, but too many do not get the chance to feel that way.

From left: Jo-Ann Johnson, Renee Turonis, Cole Callahan, Michelle McGreivey.



Jo-Ann Johnson, LDT-C, Child Study Team (CST) at Point Pleasant Borough High School

Workshops on LGBTQ+ students have been around but have gained popularity since the recent law has passed. Yet not many workshops were geared towards LGBTQ+ students and special education. There are intersecting challenges that students we work with experience, and a need to help CSTs and special education school staff to be confident and prepared for inclusive conversations with our students.

Throughout my years as a high school special education teacher and as an LDT-C, I have worked with and advocated for students with a wide variety of individual needs as an ally in all the ways that help to make school and school experiences more equitable. I have advocated for inclusion of students with special needs for over 20 years and am grateful for the opportunity to advocate for the needs of the LGBTQ+ and special needs communities. I embrace the opportunity to learn as much as I can to continue to show all students respect and to be able to share this topic with other professionals throughout the state is very important and exciting.

Renee Turonis, School Nurse, Hoboken High School

I am committed to supporting all students in my health office. But I am also committed to getting outside of my health office and being part of the school community. This work and allyship to the LGBTQ community in my school and beyond is one of the reasons I wanted to share my enthusiasm with participants at the NJEA Convention. I want to encourage school nurses to make a difference by helping students get beyond the vague stomach ache or their feelings of isolation in school. School nurses often sit on attendance committees and in other roles in their school where they see the impact of—or lack of—inclusive approaches. It is a known fact that LGBTQ students are three times as likely to have missed school in the past month and have lower sense of school belonging and higher levels of depression. It is important to look at students holistically, get beyond the minor aches and pains and make the mind/body connection. Those of us in the health office can encourage students to seek out the support they need in order to feel a sense of belonging in their school.

Further, being the GSA advisor in my high school over the past four years

has given me the opportunity to help students find their people and their sense of belonging in our school community. I have witnessed their struggles and their resilience. It has opened up dialogue between students, parents and faculty. As a parent of a lesbian, I can empathize with parents trying to support their queer child through their high school years.

As a GSA adviser, hosting events has given me a way to tap into student needs to be part of something and encourage them to show up and find their voice with their peers about who they are and what is important to them. My experience as a GSA advisor and a 21st-century nurse made me want to pay it forward at the NJEA convention.

Cole Callahan, School Counselor, SAC, NCC, LAC Middletown South High School

Going to NJEA as a member was a dream come true. I have always wanted to help kids navigate school and life, but I also had the goal of using my experience and training to support LGBTQ youth. This was important to me because it was an educator who was there for me when I felt like an outcast. It was incredibly rewarding to share that passion with my co-presenters and session attendees. We can all learn so much from one another, if not at least knowing that we are not alone in this. We began the ripple effect and students will feel it up and down the state.

LGBTQAI+ INCLUSION IN ELA CLASSROOMS

Dana Maulshagen, College English, ELA and Film, Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School

I appreciate the way that providing professional development and presenting at conferences makes me more reflective of my own practice. Despite—or perhaps because of—busy schedules, increasingly complex responsibilities at school, and a climate that doesn't always make teachers feel valued, I find it helpful to have a reason to dig into pedagogy and expand my own horizons so that I can do the same for my students. My goal in working on LGBTQ+ curriculum and inclusivity is to increase exposure to marginalized voices and to make students more aware of how they think about the world and their

place in it. Presenting at conferences and workshops creates opportunities to research new texts and best practices. Exchanging ideas with other educators enriches the experience as well, and this ultimately benefits our students, who all deserve an expansive and transformative education.

LGBTQIA+ INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS: WHERE TO START, HOW TO KEEP GOING

Allison Connolly, Equity Coach, Township of Ocean School District

In 2019, I was asked to write lesson plans to support the LGBT and Disability Inclusive Curriculum mandate. Getting involved in this endeavor, and—later—coaching one of the schools participating in the pilot program, was some of the most rewarding work of my professional life. I am grateful that I get to continue coaching teachers and administrators about the importance of inclusive classrooms through my work as a classroom teacher and with organizations that amplify this, including Make It Better for Youth and Garden State Equality. As teachers, our most important job is to build relationships with our students, and to help them see positive representations of themselves in their classrooms and in their lessons. When students—especially LGBTQIA+ students—are provided with meaningful windows and mirrors in their lessons, they thrive. Inclusive spaces and practices are crucial to the success of all students, so it's imperative that we provide opportunities for teachers and administrators to not only discuss best practices, but to address potential obstacles. Inclusive strategies should be dictated by sound pedagogy and underwritten by data and help strengthen any educational professional's practice in the classroom.

LGBTQIA+ INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN STEM CLASSROOMS

Jodi Foster, STEAM Coordinator and Teacher, Henry Hudson High School

STEAM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics) have always been about expanding our understanding of the universe and making better, easier, more accommodating spaces for humans to thrive within. It only makes sense to be inclusive of all within that mission. When we look back through time it has been the bravest among us who have pushed the limits of understanding and led to enlightenment. How nice would it be to be able to say that we were in some small way part of the effort to remove the boundaries—for LGBTQIA+ folks and everyone else—to progress.

LGBTQ+ ISSUES & CONTENT IN THE HISTORY CLASSROOM

Steve Koumoulis, social studies teacher, Middletown South High School

A good history teacher is a storyteller, including perspectives, topics, and people actually involved in the story, which helps students see themselves in those spaces. By seeing themselves in those spaces, and as part of the story, it gives students a sense of pride and hopefully the inspiration to create change in the present and beyond. This is what history is all about. We emulate those from the past whom we admire, we learn from triumphs and mistakes, and we make our futures through being informed by the past. This social studies presentation brought forth myriad historical events and resources for teaching about them that illuminate the experiences and contributions of LGBTQ+ people throughout history with the express purpose of enabling queer students to see themselves as having rich, productive histories and the potential for rich, productive futures. 🏳️‍🌈



Steve Koumoulis



Use the QR Code for the slide decks of these NJEA Convention presentations.

LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Classrooms: Where to Start, How to Keep Going
Presenters: Kate Okeson and Allison Connolly

GSA Advisers' Workshop: Strategies for Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students in Schools
Presenters: Chris Cannella and Amy Moran

LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in ELA Classes Using Picture Books
Presenter: Amy Moran

LGBTQ+ Issues & Content in the History Classroom
Presenter: Steve Koumoulis



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THE UNSEEN BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

How union membership affects us in
way we don't always see

BY BRIAN HARKAVY



Early Career Network

Join your union.

Those three simple words may seem odd as a start to an article in a union publication. The fact that you are reading this and not just recycling it probably means you are a pretty active member. So why

do you need to hear those words? Well, many of us, even some of

the most active members, may see those union dues each month and ask a few questions. "Why do I pay this much?" "What do they even do with that money?" or "Why should I contribute?" Throughout this article, I hope to provide some answers to these questions. How? By talking about the benefits of membership—those that we see every day, but especially those we may never get a chance to see directly.

There are some benefits to being a union member that we can see all the time. As members of NJEA, we have access to NJEA Member Benefits, including such programs as Buyer's Edge to save money on everyday appliances. We also get access to the Deals App to save money on everyday purchases. Members can get discounted auto and home insurance through California Casualty and much more. (See memberbenefits.njea.org.) Taking advantage of many of these benefits could help you save on your monthly budget, however, there are some benefits to being in a union that we sometimes don't see until we need them.

How often do you think about the smoke detectors in your home? What about your carbon monoxide detector? These are things in our home



Members of the Wayne Education Association with supporters from Passaic County Education Associations and now-NJEA President Sean M. Spiller at a Red for Ed rally at Wayne High School in April 2019. Members statewide wore red on Wednesdays in solidarity with education union members nationwide and to show support for legislation in New Jersey to provide Chapter 78 relief and Job Justice for ESPs.

that we always want, but only periodically check to make sure they are working.

Union membership protects you in similar ways. If issues come up with administration, you have union representation with you to help guide you. The union can even provide you with a lawyer in the worst-case scenarios. Most members will never need this, like most people will never use their smoke alarm for its intended purpose. However, like a smoke alarm, you want it there when the worst happens.

Having that kind of representation not only helps you when issues arise, but it also helps prevent frivolous issues from coming up as the administration knows that the union has your back.

On an even higher level, the union has your back in Trenton. Now, no one likes to talk politics, but the reality is that as public workers our pay, our benefits, the funding for our schools, and the rules and regulations guiding the work we do are all determined through a political process. The

union has your back in the political dealings that arise at the national, state, county and local level.

There's a commonly quoted sentiment that "if you're not at the table, you're on the menu." A strong state union with many active members ensures we stay off the menu. Union membership gets its strength from numbers and being a member not only helps you, but also helps your fellow members. In fact, a study published in Sage Journals by Eunice S. Han, assistant professor at the University of Utah, in 2019 found that "union membership raises base salary by 7% to 9%, decreases contract days by 1%, and reduces working hours by 2%. A 10% increase in union density within districts raises base salary by 1% to 1.5%, reduces contract days by 0.2%, and decreases working hours by 0.4% to 0.5%." (See bit.ly/3n0L06Q.)

Union membership is always worth it. It can save you money in the short term, it can save your job in the long term, and it can give you strength by standing hand-in-hand with your fellow members.

Join your union. 🙌

Brian Harkavy is a music teacher at Berkeley Township Elementary School. He can be reached at brharkavy@gmail.com.



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**Member
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Holiday Hacks and End-of-Year Car Buying Tips



Maximize your NJEA membership and attend our upcoming webinar, **Holiday Hacks and End-of-Year Car Buying Tips**, on Dec. 8, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. Register at njea.org/mbwebinars.



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PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

ENCOURAGE SENIORS TO APPLY FOR AN NJREA SCHOLARSHIP

Do you know any high school seniors with high academic accomplishments, active participation in school activities and who are community-service minded? NJREA wants to help them continue their education!

Through its annual scholarships, NJREA aims to continue its long-standing tradition to assist well-rounded, high-achieving students embark on successful college careers.

All four-year and two-year scholarships are offered to graduating high school seniors, and each is renewable based on the recipient's continued enrollment as a full-time student and cumulative GPA at the end of each academic year. Each four-year scholarship has a total value of \$6,000, or \$1,500 per year, and each two-year scholarship has a value of \$2,000, or \$1,000 per year.

Students may apply for only one scholarship, regardless of type. To be eligible, a student must fulfill the following requirements:

Elizabeth A. Allen & Isabelle M. Hickman (IMH) four-year scholarships

- Will graduate from a New Jersey public high school, including vocational-technical and charter schools.
- Has been accepted to a four-year college or university.
- Has a cumulative GPA of 3.75 or higher.

Fred Aug Memorial two-year scholarship

- Will graduate from a public high school in New Jersey, including vocational-technical and charter schools.
- Has been accepted by a community college.
- Has a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or higher.

Walter P. Krichling Jr. Trade, Vocational or Career & Technical Education Program two-year scholarship

- Will graduate from a New Jersey public high school, including vocational-technical and charter schools.
- Has been accepted to a trade school/vocational program to earn certification in a vocational field of work.
- Has a cumulative GPA of 2.3 or higher.

To be considered for any of the four scholarships, the applicant must submit four copies of the following:

- The completed 2022 scholarship application form.
- Their high school transcript.
- A brief essay, illuminating goals and interests for college and beyond.
- A list of extra-curricular activities, athletics, honors, community services and employment.
- Two letters of recommendation, one of which is from a teacher at the high school.

Encourage a student you know and respect to apply today. To be considered, all applicants must use the 2022 NJREA scholarship form. Applications from previous years will not be accepted.

Both the four-year and two-year applications are available from county REA presidents, on the NJREA webpage or by contacting Cathy Raffaele at 609-599-4594, ext. 2300.

All information must be postmarked on or before March 1, 2022. Late applications will not be accepted.

Around the counties

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

The **BERGEN COUNTY REA'S** next general membership meeting/luncheon will be held on Thursday, Dec. 14. Should it be held in person, it will be at Seasons in Washington Township, but if COVID protocols deem it necessary, it will be held virtually. In either format, NJEA staff will be on hand to discuss the latest in health benefits news. To attend, call Randi Allshouse at 973-460-1262.

MONMOUTH COUNTY REA welcomes you to its holiday meeting/luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 14 at Knob Hill in Manalapan. The cost is \$34. To attend, call Sue Shrott at 732-995-7754.

The **SALEM COUNTY REA** will hold its holiday meeting/luncheon on Monday, Dec. 13 at the Woodstown Diner in Woodstown. The Woodstown High School Chamber Choir will be the entertainment. The cost is \$17. To attend, call Rosemma Ward at 856-467-0782.

SOCIAL SECURITY COLA IS 5.9%

The Social Security Administration recently announced that there will be a 5.9% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in retirees' Social Security benefit payments beginning in January 2022. This is the largest social security increase in 40 years.

Social Security benefits are adjusted annually to protect retirees from the effects of inflation. The COLA is an increase—if any—as measured by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 5.4% for the 12-month period that ended September 2021.

Should you have any questions regarding Social Security payments, visit ssa.gov.

SOCIAL SECURITY INCREASES

Year	Increase
2008	2.3%
2009	5.8%
2010	---
2011	---
2012	3.6%
2013	1.7%
2014	1.5%
2015	1.7%
2016	---
2017	0.3%
2018	2.0%
2019	2.8%
2020	1.6%
2021	1.3%
2022	5.9%

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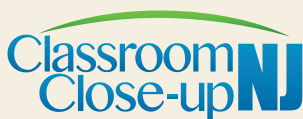


Classroom Close-up NJ looks back at

Livingston Crime Scene

Forensic Science students at Livingston High School compete in a crime scene competition judged by actual police detectives. The yearlong project involves creating a realistic fictional crime scene that the students must build and defend to the judges. Then students are assigned to solve the crimes developed by their peers.

You can view the segment at classroomcloseup.org/livingston-crime-scene.



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 and visit www.classroomcloseup.org.



DECEMBER & *beyond*

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

DEC 08	WEDNESDAY NJEA Executive Committee meeting	JAN 08	SATURDAY NJEA Delegate Assembly Meeting	FEB 02	WEDNESDAY NJEA Executive Committee meeting Virtual
DEC 13	MONDAY NEA Board of Directors meeting Virtual	JAN 14/15	FRI & SAT Equity Alliance Conference	FEB 04-06	FRI TO SUN ESP Conference
JAN 07	FRIDAY Executive Committee County Presidents Council meetings	JAN 28/29	FRI & SAT Winter Leadership Conference-South	FEB 25/26	FRI & SAT Winter Leadership Conference-North

for more information go to NJEA.org

SAVE THE DATE! 4.30.22

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HYATT REGENCY
New Brunswick

Theme: Creating Learning Environments for ALL Students

Keynote: LeDerick Horne – Speaker, Poet & Special Education Advocate

LeDerick Horne is a NJ native.
More info about him may be found here:
www.lederick.com or on YouTube.



Save the Date

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for the **1920 • 2020**
100th Anniversary Celebration of the
New Jersey Retirees' Education Association
Sunday, May 1, 2022 • 12-4 p.m.
Grand Marquis, 1550 U.S. 9 South, Old Bridge, NJ • \$55 per person

It was great to see you!

"It is so great to see you!" was exclaimed over and over again at the NJEA Convention held in early November. The convention was one of the first indoor events hosted by the association since March 2020—preceded only by the Sept. 17-18, 2021, meetings of the NJEA Executive Committee, Delegate Assembly and County Presidents Council.

Despite the face masks members wore, the NJEA Convention was a delightful breath of fresh air after nearly two years spent in online classes, meetings, conferences, and workshops. And for the members who attended the in-person convention, it was much less stressful than the last 21 months of school have been. In addition to the return of almost all the convention has always offered, it was a chance for members to experience the relief that comes from commiserating with other school staff who know exactly what you're going through.

The return of the in-person convention, complete with protocols to ensure everyone's safety, was something of a homecoming. And that feeling permeated the Atlantic City Convention Center. Members were genuinely eager and happy to see one another, and it showed in the crowds that arrived even with the stricter protocols in place. Better yet, that attendance was supplemented by the many members opting for the virtual convention that was held simultaneously, making it the most accessible NJEA Convention in history.

And what a history that is.

Over the 168 years since NJEA was founded, it has held thousands of conferences, rallies, workshops, protests, meetings, and other gatherings. But none are as well-known and as

“

Despite the face masks members wore, the NJEA Convention was a delightful breath of fresh air after nearly two years spent in online classes, meetings, conferences, and workshops.

consistently attended by a broad cross section of members as the NJEA Convention. The convention is also the oldest gathering of the association and has long been a touchstone for those who work in public education in New Jersey.

The first was held on Dec. 28, 1853. And on Nov. 4-5, 2021, the association met for its 167th NJEA Convention.

The modern convention is certainly more elaborate than those held in the 19th century, but what began in 1853 as the Annual Meeting of the New Jersey State Teachers' Association evolved into one of the largest—and certainly among the very best—professional development conferences in the country. Even in the early 20th century, the convention attracted speakers from around the country to share their views on public education and on teaching and learning. In 1923, the New Jersey Legislature recognized the importance of the convention, passing a law granting most members two days of leave without loss of pay to attend it.

In the 19th century, the convention moved from place to place—often held in high school buildings. By the end of that century, the convention had grown too big to be held in smaller communities and alternated between Trenton and Newark. It was first held in Atlantic City in 1905 and has stayed there, with few exceptions, ever since. In 1922 it was held in Trenton, and in 1923 it was held in Newark. In 1924, it returned to Atlantic City, only moving out of the city during World War II to make room for soldiers stationed there.

Only once in NJEA's history was the NJEA Convention cancelled. That was when Superstorm Sandy barreled across New Jersey on Oct. 29, 2012. Last year's convention marked the first time the

convention was held in no specific location—thanks to the online meeting technology with which we all share a love/hate relationship.

In November 2020, gathering in person would have posed too great a risk to the health and safety of members. But this year, the high vaccination rate among members and New Jersey residents overall, strict adherence to masking regardless of vaccination status, wider passageways in the Exhibit Hall, and a limitation on the size of workshop sessions made an in-person convention possible.

NJEA members are to be commended for their commitment to their profession and to each other for making both the in-person and virtual convention possible this year. Given the commitment to public health among not only members, but among residents and leaders across the state, we can have hope that we'll have many more opportunities this year and the next to exclaim, "It's so great to see you." 🌟

NJEA Convention locations through the years

1853-Late 1800s: Various locations around the state

Late 1800s-1904: Alternates between Trenton and Newark

1905-21: Atlantic City

1922: Trenton

1923: Newark

1924-41: Atlantic City

1942: Trenton (Stacey-Trent Hotel and Trenton Central High School)

1943-44: New York City (various hotels)

1945-2011: Atlantic City

2012: No convention.

2013-19: Atlantic City

2020: Convention held remotely

2021: Atlantic City (in-person) and remote





2022 Winter Leadership Conference

SOUTH

JAN. 28-29, 2022

Harrah's - Atlantic City

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: DEC. 10

NORTH

FEB. 25-26, 2022

Sheraton - Parsippany

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JAN. 14

CENTRAL

APRIL 1-2, 2022

Hilton - East Brunswick

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: FEB. 11

WORKSHOPS:

1. Presidents' Roundtable
2. X's & O's for Local Leaders
3. AR—Key to a Strong Organization
4. Legal Issues Affecting School Employees
5. Grieve, Don't Gripe—Contract Enforcement
6. Preparing for Negotiations—Collective Bargaining
7. Bargaining Health Benefits
8. The Map to Membership—Building Your Local Membership Plan
9. All Members Deserve an Inclusive Association. Where Do We Start?
10. Mapping Your Role in the Social Change Ecosystem

➔ njea.org/wlc

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

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1. Trenton & You: Perfect Together? (Pt. 1)*
2. Game of Thrones: The Political Players and How Politics Works (Pt. 2)*
(follow-up of Trenton & You: Perfect Together?)
3. What Would You Do?*
4. X's & O's for Local Leaders*
5. Preparing for Your Evaluation*
6. Understanding Your Union & Its Importance to You*
7. Preparing for Negotiations – Collective Bargaining
8. You & Your Pension
9. So You're a "Blue," and What it Says About You
10. PERC Law for ESPs
11. Health and Safety in the COVID Area for Maintenance and Custodians
12. Using your NJEA Buying Power
13. What Have You Done for Me Lately – Negotiations
14. Salary Guide Development for ESPs
15. **New for 2022:** All Members Deserve an Inclusive Association. Where Do We Start?
16. **New for 2022:** Managing Conflict Effectively
17. Special Education for ESPs
18. **New for 2022:** Social and Emotional Wellness: The Impact of Our Current Times in Education and Creating a Mindfulness Mindset
19. **New for 2022:** Building and Grounds Departments are Essential to Maintaining our Future

* (Session 1 Only)
* (Session 2 Only)

Come honor the 2022 NJEA ESP of the Year and county nominees!