

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

MARCH
2022
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REVIEW



an education and advocacy resource

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IN WOODSHOP

22 ACTIVITIES FOR
INTERNATIONAL SEL DAY

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IS BACK

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THE SCHOOLHOUSE

34 STANDING UP FOR
INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

Building the future in
woodshop



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In December, the **Lenape District Education Association (Burlington)** welcomed families at Seneca High School to an open house, greeted here by LDEA Pride Chair Grace McCloskey. The Lenape District Support Staff Association organized a charity toy drive to support Operation Santa, an initiative of the Medford Township Police Department.



The **Chatham Education Association (Morris)** hosted a "curl up and paint" PRIDE night complete with a student-painted mug, coco bomb, a special cookie (with the CEA logo) and three stories read via google meet. CEA used all local vendors and the Washington Ave third grade had a blast! Here, CEA member and third-grade teacher Nicole Jones reads *How to Catch a Yeti* to second-grader Frannie Gryta.

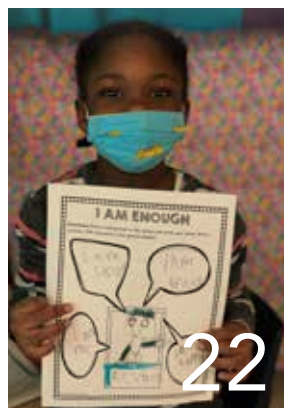
FEATURES



18 | BUILDING THE FUTURE IN WOODSHOP

Woodshop is one of many hands-on classes at Hammonton High School. The Career and Technical Arts program encompasses a variety of subject areas, including graphic design, TV/media, culinary arts, architecture, jazz band and chorus, and woodworking. With shortages in skilled trades expected to grow, CTE programs provide an economic path forward for many students.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



22 | ACTIVITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL SEL DAY

International SEL Day is right around the corner: March 11, 2022. It's a day when schools, communities, and parents will celebrate the importance of promoting children's social-emotional and character development. Even if you cannot plan your celebration in time for March 11, the ideas you'll find here are good all year long.

BY MAURICE ELIAS AND JENNIFER LY



26 | CIVICS EDUCATION IS BACK

In 2021, S-854, known as the Laura Wooten Law, was passed unanimously by the New Jersey Senate and Assembly. On July 23, 2021, Gov. Phil Murphy signed the bill. It mandated that, beginning in September 2022, New Jersey school districts teach a minimum of two quarters of civics in a middle school grade. This article discusses the reasoning behind the new law, the history that led to it, and points to resources available to carry it out.

BY ARLENE GARDNER

30



30 | THE STATEHOUSE AND THE SCHOOLHOUSE

While NJEA members much prefer to focus on their students and their school communities, we know that our schools are governed by elected leaders—from those who volunteer their time and energy to serve on school boards to those elected at the county, state and national levels. To ensure the best outcomes for our students, we must engage with politicians and the political process.

BY NJEA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS STAFF



34 | STANDING UP FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

One of the key functions of public education is to provide students with new knowledge, new perspectives, and new ways of seeing the world. All educators want their students to learn, but there are many who have come to see this mission as dangerous. Attempts to censor topics and ban books from school libraries are not only bad for school librarians. Censorship is bad for students, for schools, and for teachers. Learn how to stand up for intellectual freedom to support your students, your colleagues, and your profession.

BY DR. STEVE TETREAU

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The number 74

Only 74 school districts in New Jersey have a starting salary at or above \$60,000. By Step 6, 212 school districts have a \$60K salary.

Source: NJEA Division of Research and Economic Services





GOOD NEWS

Preschool programs in New Jersey's city schools are best in nation

New Jersey's pre-school programs in its largest urban school districts have been rated among the best in the nation.

Source: The State of Preschool 2020: State Preschool Yearbook. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.
nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks/yearbook2020



On the cover



Woodshop is one of many hands-on classes at Hammonton High School. With shortages in skilled trades expected to grow, CTE programs provide an economic path forward for many students.

PHOTO BY
Kathryn Coulibaly

VOLUME 95 NUMBER 07

Editorial Director Steven Baker
Editor Patrick Rumaker
Associate Editor Kathryn Coulibaly
Art Director Jennifer C. Marsh
Graphic Designer Jennifer Larson
Advertising Liz Murphy

EDITORIAL & PUBLISHING OFFICES

The *New Jersey Education Association Review* (ISSN-0027-6758) is an official publication of the New Jersey Education Association, published monthly 10 times a year, September through June, plus one special *New Jersey Education Association Review* Convention issue, which will be published in September. Send correspondence relating to editorial material, manuscripts, membership or subscriptions to: 180 W. State St., P.O. Box 1211, Trenton, NJ 08607-1211. Periodicals postage paid at Trenton, NJ 08650 and at additional mailing offices.

Email: NJEAreview@NJEA.org

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Send address changes to:

New Jersey Education Association Review
Attn: Membership Processing
180 W. State St., P.O. Box 1211
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PRESIDENT'S *Message*

Providing an education that sees and meets our students' needs

One of the most challenging parts of public education is meeting the needs of all students. As we know, children grow and develop at varying rates. They need different things at different times, and it is a monumental task for educators and schools to meet those needs.

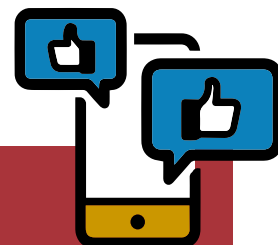
NJEA always has advocated for diverse instruction that connects with students and provides them with the motivation and confidence they need to learn and grow. Education is not always the same for everyone: uniformity is not the goal of education; rather, education seeks to challenge all students and equip each student to meet their full potential.

In this month's issue of the *Review*, we take a closer look at a subject that does not get the attention it deserves, and that serves to challenge students in very different ways.

Career and technical education always has been a vital and important part of public education. It helps to connect students with skills they need in their daily lives, assists them in identifying a career path that may be right for them, gets them up and moving and creating things with their hands, and compels them to use their brains and bodies in ways that they are not challenged to do in other classes.

We take a close look at a woodshop class at Hammonton High School, led by career educator Rick Cote, who guides his students through a number of projects, from building a tiny home to creating their own toolboxes. Along the way, he counsels them in career readiness, talking to them about how to dress for work, the importance of showing up on time, and the many kinds of careers available to them. Not every student is ready for college immediately out of high school, and not every important and fulfilling career path requires four years of college. There is a high demand for skilled trades as well as many other kinds of jobs. Cote teaches students about taking pride in themselves and their work, and that's something we can all support as educators and union members.

Thank you to educators like Rick Cote and to all of you for the work you do to inspire students to respect themselves and their contributions.



SEAN M. SPILLER

Twitter

@SpillerforNJEA: Congratulations to the 2022 NJ ESP of the Year, Nancy Cogland!! #WEareNJEA #ESPower

On Feb 3, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller shared a special congratulatory shout-out to Nancy Cogland, the 2022 NJEA Educational Support Professional of the Year with his Twitter followers. Cogland, a paraprofessional at Old Bridge High School, has spent her career educating students and advocating for her fellow union members.

STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

@Steve BeattyNJEA: Nothing more important than finding and mentoring new members into the profession and our union. Great turnout tonight at Seton Hall University with potential members from the school of education. Talking about the value and benefits of being an NJEA Preservice member with a presentation from NJEA Preservice President Brian Reilly and early career leader and consultant, Hannah Pawlak, and her sister (and SHU chapter founder) Sarah. And showcasing our "Preservice Academy" with PD offerings in essential topics for success in the profession. Thanks to our member benefits partners as well as Preservice staff coordinator, Marguerite Schroeder. Next stop—Montclair State University!

On Jan 31, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty shared photos from his visit to Seton Hall University's school of education. At the event, Beatty shared with potential and future NJEA members the critical role mentoring played in his career and the careers of many others. He offered special thanks to NJEA Preservice leaders for their role in developing the NJEA Preservice Academy.

PETAL ROBERTSON

Facebook

@petalfornjea Beautiful things are happening in Buena Regional Middle School. From unbelievable student-painted murals, student-run gardens, and a Zen Den, BRMS is hard at work. Shoutout to our members at Buena Regional Middle School. Thank you for all you do. Special thanks to Melissa Tomlinson for the tour.

On Feb 9, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson shared photos from a day spent with the members of the Buena Regional Education Association, touring the school and celebrating the creativity and hard work of BREA members on behalf of their students.

OFFICERS ONLINE

KNOW. LEAD. ACT.

NJEA ELECTIONS SLATED FOR APRIL

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

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

If there are any unanticipated changes in procedure, this information will be published in the April *NJEA Review*, publishing schedules permitting.

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

For complete elections rules and procedures, visit njea.org/njeaelections.

INTERESTED IN PRESENTING AT THE 2022 NJEA CONVENTION?

The Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division of NJEA is now accepting presenter proposals for the 2022 NJEA Convention to be held Nov. 10-11, 2022. All proposals to present at the NJEA Convention and at Digital Boulevard must be submitted electronically. The deadline for submission is March 31, 2022.

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

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Your request for audiovisual equipment must accompany your proposal submission. NJEA may not be able to provide equipment requested at a later date.
- NJEA does not provide computers.
- NJEA does not reproduce any program materials and will not reimburse you for reproductions costs.
- If you are a member, please have your PIN and password ready.

Presenting on Digital Boulevard

The Professional Development and Instructional Issues division of NJEA is also accepting proposals for Digital Boulevard at the 2022 NJEA Convention. This is your opportunity to demonstrate how you use state-of-the-art technology to enhance classroom instruction.

NJEA members can apply to present in the Teacher to Teacher Learning Area. This is an informal demonstration area for educators to network with other educators. Programs are two 50-minute sessions.

Submit your proposal

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

Please contact Janet L. Royal at jroyal@njea.org or 609-310-4322 with questions.

NJEA SEEKS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD NOMINATIONS

Do you know an individual or group that has made a significant contribution to public education in New Jersey? Nominations are now being sought for the 2022 NJEA Ruthann Sheer Award for Distinguished Service to Education. The award is named in memory of an educator from Hackensack who was its 1994 recipient. The award was first presented in 1934.

The award is designed to call public attention to those who greatly serve New Jersey public schools and children. Such service to education may take any form that in the opinion of the Distinguished Service Award Committee most merits the recognition this award involves.

Any New Jersey resident or organization, including educators, may be nominated. Excluded are NJEA officers during their terms in office. Past award recipients have included state and federal lawmakers, reporters and editors, newspapers, the New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers, PTA leaders, former NJEA presidents and staff, State Board of Education members, museum curators, school board members, and others who have promoted public school employee rights and public schools.

The NJEA Executive Committee selects award recipients based on recommendations from the Distinguished Service Award Committee.

You may nominate the individual online at njea.org/serviceaward.

You may also submit nominations by mail to:

NJEA
Ruthann Sheer Distinguished Service Award
PO Box 1211
Trenton, NJ 08607-1211

Please include the nominee's name, address, phone number and email address along with a narrative explaining why the nominee should win the award. Whether online or by postal mail, nominations must be received no later than June 17, 2022.

INTERESTED IN RUNNING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE?

Are you a woman who is interested in running for office? The Center for American Women and Politics is offering Ready to Run® again this year. This year's program is in a remote format, with a series of virtual presentations.

The series runs during the school day, but NJEA members who are interested in attending will be given access to the videos to watch them on their own time. Members who attend the sessions can also join follow-up sessions with other NJEA members who attend.

Email Carolyn Thompson at cthompson@njea.org, if you are interested.

PROGRAMS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION MEMBERS SLATED FOR APRIL

Higher Education Conference

April 8-9, 2022

The NJEA Higher Education Conference will be held on April 8-9, at the Princeton Marriott at Forrestal. The conference begins with registration at 1 p.m. on Friday followed by workshops and dinner. On Saturday, the conference continues with more workshops and concludes with lunch.

- Workshops will address the following topics:
- Bargaining 101
- Contract Enforcement and Grievance Process
- Emerging Teaching Modalities in Higher Education
- Energizing and Recruiting Members 101
- Keep Calm and Prepare for Retirement—Get the Most Out of the Alternate Benefit Program (ABP)
- Stress and Relief: Mental Health in Viral Times
- Treasurer's Training
- Using Social Media in the Workplace
- You and Your Pension: Public Employees Retirement System (PERS)
- Your County Commissioners and Board of Trustees: Why Elections Matter

The cost to attend is \$150 single occupancy, per person; \$100-resident double occupancy, per person, must indicate a roommate; or \$70-commuter.

Higher Education Collective Bargaining Summit

April 9-10, 2022

The NJEA Higher Education Collective Bargaining Summit will immediately follow the conference on April 9-10, at the Princeton Marriott at Forrestal. The summit begins with registration at 2 p.m. on Saturday followed by workshops

and dinner. The summit will continue Sunday and conclude with lunch.

The summit is an interactive program that will address current issues facing negotiations teams. Strategies and techniques for strengthening your local as a means to improve its bargaining position will be explored.

The cost to attend is \$150-single occupancy, per person; \$100-double occupancy, per person-must indicate a roommate; or \$70-commuter.

Registration for either or both events

To register for either or both events, go to njea.org/highered or contact NJEA UniServ Region 29/Higher Education office at HigherEd@NJEA.org by March 23.

The cost to attend both events is \$200 single occupancy, per person; \$150 double occupancy, per person-must indicate a roommate; or \$120 for commuters.

The fees include accommodations, meals, and materials. For additional information or if you have a disability-related need that may require assistance to facilitate your participation in the conference, contact the office at 609-689-9580 or HigherEd@NJEA.org. During the pandemic, all arrangements are subject to change in response to public health directives.

CLEARING THE RECORD

In the Rainbow Connection column of the January 2022 edition of the *NJEA Review*, a photo caption incorrectly implied the authorship of the book *Art =*. The caption, which appeared on Page 50, should have read "Kate Okeson holds *Art=*, a valuable and inclusive resource from the Metropolitan Museum of Art."

In an article titled "Irvington Pride feeds minds, bodies and souls" that appeared on pages 12-13 of the February edition of the *NJEA Review*, the author's school was misidentified. Lauren Greenfield is a teacher at Irvington High School.

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COOL STUFF



Teacher and assistant tennis coach Thiana Vasquez Salvatierra and 11th-grader and tennis team member Ashley Ruiz are among Cliffside Park staff and students who nominated Dr. Edward Meier. From left: Vasquez Salvatierra, Meier, and Ruiz.

A+ EFFORT

CLIFFSIDE PARK COUNSELOR NAMED MOST CARING COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR

Dr. Edward Meier has been named The Most Caring Counselor in the State of New Jersey by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Association and New Jersey University. Meier was nominated by his students, many of whom are members of the girls' varsity tennis team. Meier has coached the team for numerous years.

"Dr. Meier is a kind, helpful, impactful and funny counselor who has helped me and many others," said Ashley Ruiz, a student at Cliffside Park High School. "Besides being a counselor, he's also my tennis coach. Through that he has shown compassion and understanding toward our entire team."

"I am so fortunate and proud of my truly incredible students and colleagues," Meier said. "I am blessed to be an NJEA member and a counselor."

Meier began his career as a teacher in Cliffside Park in 1982. He was named teacher of the year in 1988 and Time Warner Teacher of the Year in 1996. He began his counseling career at Cliffside Park in 1992. The Bergen County School Counselors Association named him Bergen County Counselor of the Year in 2000 and again in 2011.

Thirty years ago, Meier organized a support group for students who had lost a parent. He continues to facilitate the group. In 2003, the Bergen County School Counselors Association honored him for that work with its Human Rights Award.



MAP CONTEST FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Encourage your students to enter the 2022 New Jersey Map Contest. The contest is part of the ESRI National Student ArcGIS Online Competition and it is open to all New Jersey students in middle or

high school, public, private, or home schooled.

The challenge is to create and share a project using ESRI's online platform that tells a story focused on New Jersey. No coding is required—students may use publicly available data or data they collect (or both) and map using ArcGIS Online.

Students work singly or in teams of two. New Jersey may award up to ten \$100 prizes. The best middle school and high school projects will be forwarded to ESRI for national consideration.

Register and more information can be found at bit.ly/3fupqmK.



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The Associated Press (AP) is giving the 2019 Stylebook to qualified organizations. AP has a limited inventory of the 2019 *AP Stylebook* in stock and would love to see these books put to good use.

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NJEA Report

We are BRTA!

A commitment to safety and professionalism

By Maria Reed

We are Bridgewater-Raritan Transportation Association (BRTA), and we go above and beyond. Before the pandemic shut everything down, we rolled along on our regular routine, driving our students to school every day and then back home. It was scary and unsettling to learn that we would have to shut down because of COVID—scary because of so much uncertainty. This was March of 2020, and we still had three months of school left before summer break.

I clearly remember my students asking me what was going to happen, and my only response to my students was, “I really don’t know, but don’t worry—everything’s going to be OK.”

This was hard for all of us: students, staff and the community. Of course, it wasn’t only our community that was affected; COVID was worldwide. But as a community and as a school district we held on. We were not going to allow this pandemic to completely shut us down.

About a month after the shutdown began in March 2020, we were asked by school district management to deliver lunches to the students who were eligible for the free lunch program. Some of our drivers delivered the lunches on a voluntary basis, and later we alternated who was scheduled to deliver them. We all followed the guidelines: we made sure we had our masks on, plenty of gloves and hand sanitizer and, of course, a can of Lysol.

It was a bit of a challenge, but at the same time it was rewarding. Despite the pandemic, we were doing a good deed and making sure our students were getting their lunches. We also had a chance to

build relationships with some of the administrators of our school district.

“I have enjoyed working for Bridgewater-Raritan schools for the past three years,” says driver Deb Loris. “There is a true rapport and mutual respect between all the staff here. We strive to do our best for our students. This has been especially evident during the pandemic, when drivers delivered meals to the students and worked to find ways to connect with students once they were able to attend classes again.”

Masking made connections challenging, Loris noted, but getting students to school safely is just part of the job.

“As their driver you’re a big part of the school experience,” Loris added. “Some of my kids tell me riding the bus is their favorite part of the day. I always love hearing that. I believe we are all doing important work that supports the most important part of our community, our kids.”

BUILDING COMMUNICATION WITH AND AMONG MEMBERS

For the first time since the pandemic struck, the BRTA members gathered in-person on Nov. 24 for a reunion lunch. The BRTA’s usual back-to-school breakfast, postponed because of ongoing reopening issues, was rescheduled as a pre-Thanksgiving get-together. There was much to celebrate and be thankful for that day as the drivers had recently renegotiated a significant pay increase and retention bonus.

We needed this time to get together to discuss how important it is to be in the union and to stand together in unity. It was long overdue in many ways. Our members needed to be reminded that BRTA is here for them. It is vital to have good communication, which is key in building a positive relationship with members.

Like other school employees, bus drivers were affected by the pandemic. Between changes in



Maria Reed is the president of Bridgewater-Raritan Transportation Association. She can be reached at prwoman1026@yahoo.com.



Members of BRTA show humor and camaraderie as they sport their new shirts—embossed with a logo designed by NJEA Communications, on shirts ordered through Logo Gear by Jackie in Bridgewater.



BRTA's officers from left: Secretary Kim Deon, Vice President Alex Parameritis, President Maria Reed, and Treasurer Jesse Solis.

“

I want to make sure that BRTA members know they are appreciated for the important work they do.

routes to accommodate the shift in students attending schools on hybrid days and dealing with months of uncertainty when schools were all remote, school bus drivers learn to adapt in ways that previously seemed unimaginable.

BRTA Vice President Alexandra Parameritis knows very well what it's like to adapt to changes in her environment and that it takes a lot of patience adjusting to the changes brought about by the pandemic.

“I have been driving for Bridgewater-Raritan schools for 20 years, and I can remember not being able to speak very good English,” says BRTA Vice President Alexandra Parameritis. “I have my students to thank for helping me build my English vocabulary as I drove them every day. I enjoy working for Bridgewater-Raritan, it's a good district to work for.”

Kim Deon is one of our association representatives and is a great mediator. She has worked for Bridgewater-Raritan for 20 years. She enjoys her job and her students.

“I started out with the senior drivers who have

long retired, and they we're a very tough crew, but resilient and strong,” Deon says. “They taught me to be just as resilient and strong. I represent our members with the utmost respect, and I think communication is important with staff, students and the parents. We are so fortunate to be a part of a strong union because of the many benefits it offers. We all work together, and we learn to deal with the pros and cons just like anywhere else.”

We are all facing challenges during this time, but we are maintaining a positive attitude and will continue to move forward to make the best of it.

DRIVERS IN HIGH DEMAND

The demand for bus drivers is very high right now, and I'm happy that the district negotiated a pay increase along with the retention bonus because it paves the way for future negotiations, and it opens the door for new drivers to join our district and expand our ranks.

I want to make sure that BRTA members know they are appreciated for the important work they do. And that goes for new drivers as well. We are a diverse group from different cultures and background, and we know how to work as a team. There is so much in store for Bridgewater-Raritan School District drivers. We want to start new projects in the community to help our students and to make sure their families know who we are and what we stand for.

Above all, we want to provide great service, as well as a commitment to safety and professionalism. It's important to my members, and—most importantly—for the Bridgewater-Raritan School District and community. Because ... We Are BRTA!

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Harassment, intimidation and bullying investigations in schools

A primer

By Kaitlyn Dunphy, Esq.

Over a decade ago, New Jersey enacted the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, designed to help prevent and address harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) in schools. The act requires school districts to adopt policies that implement procedures to report and investigate incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying in schools, including at school-sponsored functions, on school buses, and if there is substantial disruption to the school, even conduct that occurs off school grounds. Those policies are required to be made available on the district's website.

In order for an incident to be considered HIB, the following must be present:

- A reasonable perception of the HIB being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic; and
- Substantial disruption or interference with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; and
- One or more of the following:
 - A reasonable person should know the incident, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to their person or damage to their property; or
 - Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
 - Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

The examples of actual or perceived characteristics included in the law are race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability. However, any distinguishing characteristic can meet this criterion.


HIB policies provide a procedure for the reporting of alleged HIB incidents. School staff are required to verbally report to the principal any potential HIBs that they witnessed or received reliable information about on the same day the incident occurs, or when they receive that information. The report should be made in writing within two days of the verbal report.

Once a report of a potential HIB is received, this triggers the review and investigation procedure contained in the district policy. The policy can give the principal or their designee the discretion to decline to open an investigation if the allegations, if true, do not rise to the level of a HIB. If the allegations would meet the threshold definition of HIB, or if the district policy does not include this initial review, an investigation will be initiated. Once an investigation is open, it must be undertaken promptly, within one school day of the report, and be completed no later than 10 school days from the date of the written report.

The investigation is led by an anti-bullying specialist (ABS). An ABS is appointed by the principal, and must be a school counselor, school psychologist, or other staff member employed by the school who is trained to be an ABS. An ABS should avoid any conflicts of interest in their investigation, including when they are asked to investigate allegations against a fellow association

member in their bargaining unit. Locals should advocate for avoidance of that conflict. A principal is permitted to appoint more than one ABS, so someone outside the bargaining unit could be appointed to investigate to avoid a conflict of interest.

The chief school administrator is required to report the results of the investigation to the board, including information on any services provided, training established, discipline imposed, or other recommended action. Within five school days after the board receives its report, the alleged offenders and alleged victims, or their parents or guardians if they are minors, are entitled to receive certain information about the investigation. The act requires that they are notified of the nature of the investigation, whether evidence of HIB was found, and if so, what action was taken—whether discipline was imposed, or services were provided.

The board may hold, and a parent may request, a hearing before the board in executive session to review the HIB report. At the next board meeting, the board must issue a written decision affirming, rejecting or modifying the chief school administrator's findings. Once the board issues its written decision, there are certain grounds on which the board's decisions may be appealed to the commissioner of education. 



Kaitlyn Dunphy is an associate director of NJEA Legal Services and Member Rights in the NJEA Executive Office. She can be reached at kdunphy@njea.org.



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New law opens door for CTE instructors

By Francine Pfeffer

The Praxis is a poor tool to predict vocational educator success, wrote Brian Ward in the June 2021 edition of the *NJEA Review*. Ward is an automotive/diesel technology instructor at Sussex County Technical School in Sparta and is president of his local association. In January of this year, legislation creating alternatives to the Praxis for vocational educators was signed into law by Gov. Phil Murphy.

Teachers must have a college degree unless they are teaching in a career and technical education program. For these programs, as Ward pointed out in his article, the best teachers are the ones with experience in the field. Individuals who wish to teach in a vocational/career and technical education (CTE) program can qualify to enter the alternate route teaching program through their work experience and a professional license or certification, as applicable. Many vocational instructors spend years in their chosen fields before they decide to teach.

Several years ago, the New Jersey Department of Education began requiring individuals pursuing a CTE certificate to pass the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators before they would qualify to receive their standard certificate. Members of the NJEA Vocational, Career, and Technical Education Committee were concerned that across the state, vocational districts were hiring promising teachers, masters of their trades,

who worked under a provisional certificate and could not receive a standard certificate. In spite of multiple tries and hours with tutors, some individuals could not pass this Praxis test.

In 2019, the Vocational, Career, and Technical Education committee met with the Certification, Evaluation and Tenure committee to discuss the problem, and the committees issued a joint report to the NJEA Delegate Assembly (D.A.) calling for multiple options to assess basic skills for vocational educators. In May 2019, the D.A. adopted the policy recommendation.

As the 2019-20 school year began, NJEA and the New Jersey Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools (NJCCVTS) began talking to the New Jersey Department of Education to seek this change through regulation. When COVID-19 hit New Jersey, the effort stalled.

As the 2021 session of the legislature neared its end this fall, the legislature took action and passed S-4074, which was sponsored in the Senate by Teresa Ruiz and James Beach and in the Assembly by Anthony Verrelli, Pamela Lampitt and Linda Carter. Instead of taking the Praxis test, the bill allows alternate route CTE teacher candidates to demonstrate basic skills proficiency through an alternate measure approved by the Department of Education. Murphy signed it into law on Jan. 18.

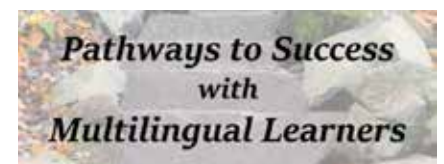
This bill is a win for vocational schools and students. Vocational instructors will now have multiple ways to demonstrate their proficiency in basic skills. Schools will be able to keep their best instructors, and students are the winners as they learn their trade from teachers with years of experience in the field.

The Department of Education still has to promulgate regulations to implement this law, which goes into effect in the next school year. In

the meantime, NJEA and the NJCCVTS are seeking relief for any CTE instructors whose provisional certificates expire at the end of this school year.

If you are a CTE instructor whose provisional certificate expires at the end of this school year and you have questions about your status, contact your local association president.

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Francine Pfeffer is an associate director in the NJEA Government Relations Division and is the staff contact for the NJEA Vocational, Career and Technical Education Committee. Wheeler can be reached at ewheeler@njea.org. Pfeffer can be reached at fpfeffer@njea.org.

BUILDING THE FUTURE IN HAMMONTON HIGH SCHOOL'S WOODSHOP

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY

As you enter Hammonton High School, Rick Cote's woodworking classroom is directly across from the main office. Kept painstakingly neat by students who sweep and sanitize after every class, Cote's classroom is full of a variety of tools, materials and supplies, including traditional stationary woodworking tools alongside the latest portable lithium-ion rechargeable tools and drivers, as well as hand tools from the early 1960s and '70s.

Today, students are working on building their own toolboxes, at their own pace, with their own modifications.

"The students who take this class have a variety of skill levels, language abilities, and comfort with building things with their hands," Cote said. "This class helps them build skills and gives them a break during the day when they can concentrate on building something, which can boost their self-esteem."

Cote showed the students the basics of constructing their toolboxes, and then, under his careful supervision, left the rest up to them. Some students chose to varnish the wood; others left it with just a protective glaze. Some used a torch to burn their toolboxes' exteriors, giving them a weathered look.

Others built intricate trays to divide up materials. Despite using the same materials and the same general plan, each toolbox is as unique as the students constructing them.

Woodshop is one of many hands-on classes at Hammonton High School. The Career and Technical Arts program encompasses a variety of subject areas, including graphic design, TV/media, culinary arts, architecture, jazz band and chorus, and woodworking.

These types of classes engage and challenge students in different ways from other subject areas, but they can all work together. Cote collaborates with his colleagues in woodworking, Matthew Arena and Gene Luby, as well as teachers across the curriculum.

LEARNING REAL-WORLD SKILLS

Due to budget cuts and an over-emphasis on standardized testing, woodshop classes are increasingly disappearing from New Jersey's public schools, despite the fact that they teach students real-world skills that can be applied in their lives regardless of the career paths they choose.

At Hammonton High School, the woodworking classes are electives and are

popular with a wide range of students. Some of the students have parents who work in the trades—electrical, plumbing, HVAC, carpentry, and more.

One student, Angelina, said she was interested in taking the class because she watched her house being built and wanted to learn how to make things.

Many of the students are children of migrant workers. Language skills can vary in the class, but the students help each other and cheer each other on.

"One student had very limited English, but he turned out to be an amazing carver," Cote said. "The other students make requests. He's carved lots of different animals, from ducks and eagles to bugs, sharks, and penguins."

Some students develop their own independent study programs. They come up with a project, draw out the specifications, and work with Cote to learn how to use the tools they will need to complete the project.

"We show the students how to use the different tools and then we're always there to assist them if they get backed into a corner," Cote said.

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.

THE TINY HOUSE PROJECT

Hammonton's woodworking teachers, Cote, Arena and Luby, also teach other classes on design, career readiness, and more. All three of them recently completed a multiyear construction project building a tiny house.

They worked with other teachers to complete the vision of now-retired Hammonton woodworking teacher James Ziegler, who started the tiny house construction project in 2017. Ziegler wanted to inspire the students with an ambitious project that would showcase many of the life skills he and his colleagues were working to instill in them.

Over the four years it took to complete the project, more than 500 students and staff members worked on the tiny house. The finished product is a beauty: wood framing, gray laminate flooring, walnut interior walls, a kitchen, bathroom with washer/dryer hook-up, loft bedroom, living room area with sliding glass entry door, fiberglass insulation, and heating and air conditioning.

Hammonton's tiny house was put up for auction in September 2021 and the district is hoping for bids of \$30,000 or more. The funds will be used to repay a contribution by the Hammonton Education Foundation and to initiate other innovative projects showcasing these hands-on skills.

A SKILLED-TRADES SHORTAGE

The opportunity to learn hands-on skills is dwindling in New Jersey's public schools, and across the country. Nationally, between 1990 and 2009, the number of credits earned in CTE high school classes dropped by 14%, according to the Brookings Institution's 2017 report, "What we know about Career and Technical Education in high school."

Even before the pandemic, the United States was forecasting a shortage of skilled trades. Since the pandemic, the demand is soaring. Here are just a few of the most in-demand trades:

- Concrete masons report a 904% job growth.
- Window glaziers are at 422%.
- House painters are at 329%.
- Electricians are at 130%.
- Plumbers are at 129%.
- Carpenters are at 121%.



From left: Woodshop teachers Rick Cote, Matthew Arena and Gene Luby stand beside the tiny house Hammonton High School woodworking students and staff built.



Cote uses some of the equipment in the shop to assist students with their projects.

Career and Technical Education gives students skills that they can use personally and professionally.



“

Woodworking gives students a sense of accomplishment that really helps build them up.

In 2015, well before the pandemic, *Time* magazine reported on a widening gap between the jobs that were needed and the skills being taught in schools.

Cote sees the opportunities for his students and wants to help them act upon it.

“There are so many industries in this area crying out for skilled workers,” Cote said. “They’re even willing to train you, so long as you have a willingness to learn. These are good, in many cases unionized, jobs. I want to help my students see the potential in these careers.”

Cote takes his role as a teacher very seriously. He takes an interest in his students inside and outside the classroom. In nearly every class, he talks to students about their career options after high school. With his connections in the community, Cote is able to help students find work in a variety of fields after graduation, from landscaping to electrical to HVAC to construction.

“Woodworking gives students a sense of accomplishment that really helps build them up,” Cote said. “They see a project through from beginning to end. They make mistakes and they learn how to ask for help to fix those mistakes—and there’s always a solution. Sometimes, you just need a little wood glue. They help each other, too, and a student who may not shine in biology is knocking it out of the park in woodshop. Every student deserves to have a chance to shine, and that’s what career and technical education can provide.” 🛠️



Woodworking gives students a chance to move and create.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE!

Activities for International SEL Day March 11, 2022

By Maurice J. Elias and Jennifer Ly, Rutgers University

International SEL Day is right around the corner: March 11, 2022. It's a day when schools, communities, and parents will celebrate the importance of promoting children's social-emotional and character development. And the evidence is clear: social and emotional skills are like vitamins. They make children—and us—stronger so that we are better at whatever it is we want to do, particularly when it involves other people.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is not for SEL Day alone. Sharing SEL-related work throughout the year will help create momentum for counting social-emotional skills as essential for success in school and life.

Like many schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, yours may have had intentions to do more with SEL than time has allowed. Well, to help you get on the bandwagon for SEL Day 2022, we have ideas to share to get you going. We have gathered ideas from New Jersey schools and from SEL4US and SEL Day headquarters (SEL4US.org and SELDAY.org). We'll start with what some schools in Montville, Lodi, and Tenafly did successfully for SEL Day 2021.

WOODMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

When you pull up to Woodmont Elementary School in Montville on SEL Day, you are likely to

Maurice J. Elias is the director of the Rutgers University Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab, which has worked over the past three decades to promote research, policy, and practice to benefit schools nationally and internationally. The lab can be reached at SECDLab@gmail.com.

Jennifer Ly, a student at Rutgers University, is a social media intern and the social media liaison for the Social-Emotional Alliance for New Jersey (SEL4NJ.org).



The students from Woodmont Elementary School showing off their "I Am Enough" posters.

see a message on the roadside board that reads, “You are enough just the way you are.” Having observed that students were doubting themselves, the message reflected media specialist Toni-Ann Raj’s and school counselor Doug Stech’s aspiration to remind students that they are valued, worthy, and loved.

“With the unusual school year, we were being told students were struggling with self-image because of their separation from their normal routine such as clubs, sports, hobbies, and friendships,” Raj said.

To help the students recognize their self-worth, Raj took inspiration from the book *I Am Enough*, by Grace Byers. This uplifting book tells a story of self-empowerment and what it means to honor and embrace people’s differences. The illustrations from the book authentically showcase characters from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, in which many students can see themselves through these characters.

Stech and Raj developed a lesson plan for the students to create posters that reflected how they view themselves. The goal was for the students to shift their focus on themselves and not worry about how others see them.

“We didn’t want students to write what they thought people would identify about them. We wanted them to focus on qualities not everyone would know about them or something about themselves they are proud of,” Raj said.

The students completed “I Am Enough” worksheets where they were instructed to write “I Am” statements about themselves. In class, they read the book and were encouraged to engage in a mindfulness activity for self-reflection.

I Am Enough Lesson Plan

1. As a class, read the book, *I Am Enough*, by Grace Byers
2. Begin a discussion and ask the students to highlight important lessons or themes they learned from the book.
3. Hand out worksheets and have the students fill in the blank: “I am _____” with an attribute/aspect of their character that describes who they are. For example, “I am brave.”
4. Have the students share what they wrote with the rest of the class.
5. Have the students engage in a mindfulness activity to self-reflect on what they learned.

Repeat with one or two other attributes as time and need allow.

Many students—elementary, middle, and



The staff from Hilltop Elementary School mixing essential oils during their mini wellness retreat.

high school—are experiencing feelings similar to those students feel at Woodmont. And even if they are not, there are many benefits to positive affirmation. Adapt this activity for your setting for SEL Day or as soon as you can thereafter. With all the talk about “learning loss,” it’s no wonder students are in a state of anxiety and doubt. You may want to add an element to this activity based on worksheets helping students articulate “What I have learned” and/or “How I am better” since the onset of COVID-19.

LODI PUBLIC SCHOOLS Lodi High School

Like many others across New Jersey and the United States, students at Lodi High School reported feeling overwhelmed and are experiencing a great deal of stress. Lodi High School’s counseling interns, along with their supervisor, created a thorough and helpful mental health

awareness PowerPoint that you can download at bit.ly/lodi-mha.

The PowerPoint provides high schoolers with mental health resources and tips and techniques on how to practice mindfulness and how to cope with stress. You can easily adapt the PowerPoint and personalize it for your high school or middle school.

Giving this to students—and sharing it with parents—will be helpful to them and will be in the spirit of SEL Day. It’s not just valuable in the COVID context. It’s a great help for the many stresses secondary school students are subjected to. You can deepen the impact by having biology teachers spend some time focusing on the physiology of stress, coping, and calming.

Hilltop Elementary School

Hilltop Elementary School in Lodi is an overflowing fountain of SEL creativity! The video they

created to highlight their work throughout the 2020-21 school year will give you many ideas for SEL Day 2022. You can view it at youtu.be/SAdlznpfV50.

Part of SEL involves caring for others, which is hard if you don't also care for yourself. Recognizing the pressures and challenges staff have been facing, school counselors in Lodi organized a mini wellness retreat for the elementary staff by setting up different stations with relaxing activities. Hilltop educators were able to recharge and connect with their colleagues. Consider enlisting colleagues in your school to do this either on or after SEL Day this year.

Mini Wellness Retreat at Hilltop Elementary School

Station 1: Aromatherapy

Staff members created a special blend to take home or keep in the classroom/office. Visuals were provided to capture the benefit of each oil and the advantages that essential oils offer once they are combined.

Station 2: Massage and Dog Therapy

Staff relaxed in a multifunction heated massage chair and also experimented with a Hypervolt massage gun. The Hypervolt has numerous attachments that help in targeting problematic areas. In hopes of reducing stress levels, a service greyhound, Royal Payne, provided emotional support to our staff.

Station 3: Self-Care Bingo and Prizes

Staff connected on a profound level by discussing notable and heartfelt topics such as setting boundaries, embracing humanity instead of perfection, trying out a new recipe, dancing to their favorite songs, spending time with those who support them, and more.

MACKAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In MacKay Elementary School in Tenafly, a group of fifth-graders known as the Peacebuilders is committed to making a positive difference in their school. They meet monthly to brainstorm and discuss ways to maintain a safe and supportive space for students and staff.

During one of these meetings, the Peacebuilders came up with the Positive Messages idea. The fifth-grade students developed a list of the positive quotes and phrases. On SEL Day, the students wrote positive messages around the perimeter of the school on sidewalks and on rocks placed in the school garden. Once the rest of the school community saw the messages, they decided to adopt the activity.

This engaging lesson gives the students an opportunity to feel like a valued part of the school community, to connect with their peers, and to make the school a warm and welcoming environment in which to be.

If you do this activity, extend it by having students speak to one another in rotating pairs or small groups about what word or message they chose and why. Having them then introduce a classmate's thoughts to the rest of the class gives students a chance to practice important SEL communication and presentation skills.

MacKay created a video to that summarizes how they celebrate SEL Day 2021. You can view it at youtu.be/z6hXedyrm3w. 📺



Students at MacKay Elementary School writing positive messages on the sidewalk.



Fourth- and fifth-graders from MacKay Elementary School decorated rocks and wrote powerful words on them to be displayed in the school's garden.

SEL Day Activities Toolkit

If you have not seen an idea yet that sparks your interest or you want more, here are some additional ideas from the Activities Toolkit created by the SEL Day team for 2022. They are based on practices used in New Jersey and other states' schools in 2021, and they are simple ways to join the SEL Day celebration now.

Have an idea to add to our list? Email us at info@sel4us.org to share your suggested additions.

Assemblies

- Organize an assembly on SEL Day to share skits, songs or original writing that celebrate and showcase SEL.
- Organize an assembly on SEL Day with a guest speaker or performance related to key SEL skills.

Morning announcements

- During morning announcements on SEL Day, read a poem, quote, or fable that connects to SEL.

Displays

- Create and display SEL Day posters that highlight SEL skills and classroom or school core values.
- Design an SEL Day bulletin board featuring a tree with SEL skills written on the leaves or that highlights aspects of positive character.

Library

- Create a library area or bookshelf in honor of SEL Day.
- Feature SEL-themed books in a read-aloud program during the week of SEL Day.
- Ask families to donate SEL-themed books in honor of SEL Day.
- Distribute lists of SEL-themed books on SEL Day.

Contests

- Hold a contest to create SEL artifacts (e.g., artwork, poetry, stories, videos) and announce winners on SEL Day while still making sure all participants receive positive recognition.

Family engagement

- Showcase SEL activities and artifacts (e.g. artwork, performance, video) with families at a special SEL Day event.
- Share information about SEL and positive character development during a March PTO/PTA meeting or other family event.

Staff and leadership

- Share best practices for integrating SEL and character development or focus on analyzing SEL assessment data at a staff meeting in March.
- Consider regular, shared staff mindful moments on SEL Day and thereafter.
- Feature SEL in a family newsletter in honor of SEL Day.

Find more activities at bit.ly/sel-activities

Let others know what you are doing

Just as you can benefit from seeing others' ideas, others can benefit from what you decide to do. Sign up at bit.ly/sel4us-signup to showcase, promote, advocate for, and support social-emotional and character development in your school and community. All you need to do is create an artifact and send it out on social media with the hashtag (#SELday) on March 11. The goal is to have #SELday trending worldwide.

If you create an artifact, which many New Jersey schools did last year for SEL Day, please send a copy of your artifact (video, photos, blogs, podcasts, etc.) with the theme of your artifact included in the subject line to info@sel4nj.org. Ideally use only one or two words in the subject line, such as kindness, connection, staff morale, student voice, or respect. SEL4NJ will be sure to tweet and share the artifact on SEL Day.

The inside track

Want to learn more about SEL Day in Montville, Tenaflly, Lodi or from the SEL lab at Rutgers? Here's the contact information for some key players.

Woodmont Elementary – Montville

Toni-Ann Raj - Media Specialist
toniann.raj@montville.net

Douglass Stech – School Counselor

douglas.stech@montville.net

MacKay Elementary – Tenaflly Public Schools

Jennifer Angerson – School Counselor
jangerson@tenafly.k12.nj.us

Dr. Evelyn Mamman – Assistant Superintendent + SEL Coordinator

emamman@tenafly.k12.nj.us

Lodi Public Schools

Christine Orosz – Supervisor and School Counseling Department
christine.orosz@lodi.k12.nj.us

Rutgers University Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab

Maurice Elias and Jennifer Ly
SECDLab@gmail.com



Civics education is back

Helping students fulfill their role as citizens in a democracy

By Arlene Gardner

Arlene Gardner started her career as an attorney and decided that social studies was more important. A graduate of Douglass College/Rutgers University and Georgetown Law School, she practiced with law firms in California and New Jersey and worked as an assistant counsel to New Jersey Gov. Brendan Byrne. In the 1980s, she worked as a consultant on a school partnership project sponsored by Gov. Tom Kean and Rutgers President Ed Bloustein. In 1990 she created the New Jersey Center for Civic Education with Dr. James Daly, a professor of education at Seton Hall University. Originally located at Seton Hall University, the center moved to Rutgers University in 2002.

Gardner has also served as president of the New Jersey Council for the Social Studies (NJCSS), as executive director of the NJCSS and as a member of the NJCSS Board of Directors. She also created the New Jersey Social Studies Supervisors Association, served on the board of the Middle States Council for the Social Studies, on the policy committee of the National Council for the Social Studies and on the committees to develop/revise the state social studies standards in 2005 and 2009. She was a member of the Westfield Board of Education for nine years, on the board of Crossroads of the American Revolution and is currently president of Mostly Music, a nonprofit that brings world-class chamber music to New Jersey.

Gardner can be reached at arlenega@sas.rutgers.edu.

Creating citizens with the knowledge, skills and disposition to participate in a democratic society is the very purpose for which public schools were established. Civic literacy was seen as essential to maintaining a representative democracy and the schools were viewed as the place for young people to learn about their government.

In a multiethnic, multi-religious country based on the shared secular ideas of liberty and justice, a common understanding and appreciation of these fundamental American values was seen as critical, so that citizens could make reasoned decisions as voters.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CIVICS IN NEW JERSEY

Until the 1960s, it was common for schools to have civics courses in upper elementary and middle school classes, as well as a separate, required course in civics and government in high school. Edwin Fisk in a 1987 *New York Times* article on civics education noted that “this pattern broke down in the 1960s and 1970s, when social unrest over civil rights, the war in Vietnam and other issues weakened the agreement about core values and put democratic institutions on the defensive.” (See [nyti.ms/33QekWJ](https://www.nytimes.com/1987/05/27/us/civics-education-in-new-jersey.html).)

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An effective civics course should also include an understanding of the principles and ideals that underlie our system of government, and, probably most importantly, the role of a citizen in a democratic society.

That led to the elimination of civics courses in many states, including New Jersey.

By the 1980s, the civic mission of schools was basically abandoned in favor of preparing a new generation of skilled workers. The focus was shifted toward “core” testable subjects such as math and reading. Jen Kalaidis reported in *The Atlantic* that time spent on social studies was consequently reduced in many schools. (See bit.ly/3fU4dTL.)

And the results are clear: while math and reading skills have improved since 1998, less than a quarter of students demonstrated proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Civics in 1998, 2006, 2010, 2014 or 2018. (See nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/civics.) For example, in 2018, only 50% of eighth grade students understood that the U.S. Congress has the primary legislative power to pass bills.

With funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, a nationwide coalition to study and reinvigorate the civic mission of schools was formed in 2003. The results of research concluded in 2010 that students who receive effective education in social studies are more likely to vote, four times more likely to volunteer and work on community issues, and are generally more confident in their ability to communicate ideas with their elected representatives. An “effective education” included explicit instruction regarding government, law and democracy; discussions of current events and controversial issues; as well as participation in simulated democratic processes. (See bit.ly/33Z4C49.)

In 2004, 30 states required a civics course. An “Inventory of Civic Education in New Jersey” conducted by our organization in the fall of 2004 disclosed that only 39% of New Jersey school districts required all of their students to take a civics course in any grade. The vast majority of school districts indicated that up-to-date, inexpensive classroom materials and professional development would be an effective way to improve civic education. By 2012, more than 40 other states had a required civic course according to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, but there was still no requirement for a course in civics at any grade level in New Jersey. It was left to local discretion.





THE LAURA WOOTEN LAW

In 2021, S-854, known as the Laura Wooten Law, was passed unanimously by the New Jersey Senate and Assembly. On July 23, 2021, Gov. Phil Murphy signed the bill. It mandated that, beginning in September 2022, New Jersey school districts teach a minimum of two quarters of civics in a middle school grade.

The goal is for all New Jersey students to receive explicit and sustained instruction in civics. The law requires the course to broadly include “the principles and ideals underlying the American system of constitutional democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role of a citizen in a democratic society.” The law recognized that while content knowledge about how our government works is important, an effective civics course should also include an understanding of the principles and ideals that underlie our system of government, and, probably most importantly, the role of a citizen in a democratic society.

Consistent with the student performance expectations in the 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies, which will also go into effect starting in September 2022, the focus is on developing critical thinking skills and civic dispositions in addition to civic knowledge. The law directed the New Jersey Center for Civic Education to develop resources and provide professional development for middle school social studies teachers.

With the help of a team of social studies teachers and supervisors and university faculty, the center has developed an inquiry framework that outlines the big questions that should be answered in a middle school civics course. The inquiry framework includes four units that are being turned into a curriculum guide with links to lessons, activities and resources. It is available on the center’s website at civiced.rutgers.edu.

INQUIRY FRAMEWORK AND CURRICULUM GUIDE

The inquiry framework starts with foundational concepts and principles that provide the anchors for our democracy, such as civic virtue, the common good and consent of the governed. The curriculum guide includes links to lessons, activities and resources that will develop an understanding of these foundational concepts and principles, as well as the civic skills that are important in a democratic society, such as active listening skills needed for civil discourse, media literacy skills needed to be able to separate facts from opinions, and critical thinking skills necessary to be able to analyze and understand current events.

The concepts and principles provide a basis for understanding why our government was structured as it is in the U.S. Constitution. Power is limited and diffused to prevent abuse of authority. This is achieved structurally by leaving a great deal of authority with the states through federalism, and by limiting and balancing the authority of the three branches of government by separating their powers, and through checks and balances.

But the Constitution does not simply establish a structure for our government. The preamble proclaims the purposes for establishing our government: “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

How well have we implemented these ideals? How has our Fourth Amendment right to privacy been contested during times of war and change? How well have we balanced First Amendment rights to speech, press, religion, assembly and petition and the need for safety? What are the challenges that currently face us as a democratic nation? Without reflection, no person or democracy can seek to improve or survive.

The curriculum guide includes four units. The final unit is aimed at helping students understand and appreciate their role as citizens in a democratic society.

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The inquiry framework includes four units that are being turned into a curriculum guide with links to lessons, activities and resources. It is available on the center's website at civiced.rutgers.edu.

What responsibilities does a citizen have? It is not just voting—as incredibly important as that is—or even obeying the law or being a juror—also important. The broader role of the citizen in a democratic society also includes holding our elected representatives responsible; identifying community problems that need to be addressed; and bringing these issues to the governmental body that has the authority to solve them.

It is only in actively engaging in projects to consider and improve their communities that students gain the confidence and skills to address public issues and the desire to do so as adults.

The middle school civics curriculum guide has been structured following research on best practices to meet the goal of developing citizens who have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to make reasoned decisions as voters; to have the critical thinking skills to understand public policy issues that face their community, their state and their nation; and to care about and have the confidence and skills to act for the common good.

As long as there are at least two quarters of sustained civics instruction, each district will decide specifically how to structure its new middle school civics course.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The new law directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education to provide professional development as well as resources to help middle school educators teach the newly required civics course. An overview and one-hour virtual workshops for teachers are available on our website. Since in-person professional development is much more effective, we will be offering free, all-day, in-person workshops starting this April at Rutgers University in Piscataway, as well as other locations around the state.

Watch our website at civiced.rutgers.edu for registration information. Contact us with any questions: Arlene Gardner, president, and Robert O'Dell, executive director, New Jersey Center for Civic Education, Rutgers University, Piscataway at arlenega@sas.rutgers.edu or ro205@scarletmail.rutgers.edu. 📧



Photo credit: Princeton University, Jamie Saxon

Who was Laura Wooten?

S-854 was named after Laura Wooten, who was the longest continuously serving election worker in the United States. She served for 79 years, from 1939 until 2018, first in Princeton and later in Lawrence Township. Wooten passed away in 2019 at 98 years old.

Sen. Shirley Turner (D-Mercer), the prime sponsor of the Laura Wooten Law, added Wooten's name to the bill to recognize the value that each person can add to their community. Gov. Phil Murphy noted Wooten's service at the bill signing.

"An understanding of civics strengthens our democracy by ensuring an understanding of the role that everyone plays in the future of their community, our state and our nation," Murphy said. "I am proud to sign this bill into law and honor Laura Wooten's incredible civic legacy."

Born in 1920 in North Carolina, Wooten graduated from Princeton High School in 1939. She worked for 27 years in food service at Princeton University, a job she took at the age of 72 after retiring from Princeton Medical Center.

Wooten's daughter, Yvonne Hill, attended the bill's signing ceremony on behalf of her family. Hill told the *Daily Princetonian* her mother would wake up at 4 a.m. on Election Day to serve at the polls from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., doing so even in 2017 on the day after her brother died.

"My mother would be so honored to know that a bill would be passed recognizing her legacy of civic responsibility," Hill said. "She always felt that the youth should be involved in exercising the hard-fought right to vote and help make change. Her famous words were 'Don't say you can't make a difference. How can you make a difference if you don't vote?'"

Just prior to Election Day in 2018, the *Daily Princetonian* published an interview with Wooten. You can read it at bit.ly/wooten-princeton.

What happens in the **STATEHOUSE** makes a difference in the **SCHOOLHOUSE**

By NJEA Government Relations Staff

While NJEA members much prefer to focus on their students and their school communities, we know that our schools are governed by elected leaders—from those who volunteer their time and energy to serve on school boards to those elected at the county, state and national levels. To ensure the best outcomes for our students, we must engage with politicians and the political process. Moreover, it's our civic duty. That includes championing legislation that benefits our schools and supporting candidates who believe in public education.

It has been a challenging year for everyone as we navigate this second full year of the pandemic. But from a legislative and member-engagement perspective, there was much to celebrate. We achieved those accomplishments together through advocacy in the Statehouse and through organizing our fellow members across New Jersey to speak out and take action: to stand up, be counted, and fight for our values as educators and as a union.

NJEA LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

As we reviewed and analyzed legislation throughout the year, we did so through the lens of association policy set by members through their representatives on the NJEA Delegate Assembly (D.A.). We were inspired by the mission, vision and goals of our union, the voices of members serving on NJEA committees, and our association's focus on racial, social and economic justice.

NJEA advocated for legislation and policies that supported faculty, staff, students and their families as we made our way through the ongoing pandemic. In partnership with other education organizations, we promoted learning acceleration to ensure students are meeting learning standards for the 2021-22 school year. We called for and supported legislation to help students receive more mental health services, achieve food security and have reliable internet access.

NJEA advocated for a federal testing waiver. While a full waiver was not granted, most of the testing that had been scheduled for spring 2021 was postponed.

Understanding that issues beyond COVID did not go away while the pandemic raged, NJEA stayed on top of other matters that affect schools, students and communities. Protecting the professional expertise of our members, NJEA successfully advocated to ensure parents don't have the final say on grade retention. We also helped ensure students are safe from lead poisoning and other environmental dangers.

NJEA advocated for diversity and inclusion in our schools, supporting legislative and policy measures to make curricula more inclusive and amplifying the Amistad mandate. Being mindful that it is vital that our students see themselves reflected in those in positions of leadership, NJEA continued to voice association support



for programs to diversify civil service and law enforcement positions.

For a much larger sampling of NJEA supported legislation that became law, see Page 33.

BUDGET FULLY FUNDS PENSIONS AND INCREASES SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NJEA successfully advocated for a state budget that made a full pension payment and increased K-12 and higher education funding. Underlining the respect Gov. Phil Murphy holds for public education, he signed the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget at Ross Street Elementary School in Woodbridge on June 29.

That budget demonstrated the importance of having pro-public education leadership in the Statehouse. The budget included a larger payment into the pension funds than was actuarially required, and it provided more money for public schools and community colleges. It even included more money for a fund to pay down state debt.

With an approved budget, the Treasury Department wasted no time in funding the pension systems. On July 1, the Treasury Department paid the entire state contribution of \$6.9 billion slated for FY 2022. That marked the first time in more than 25 years that New Jersey made the full actuarially determined contribution to the pension fund, plus an additional \$505 million.

FY 2022 was also the first time in years that the state made a lump sum payment into the pension, rather than quarterly payments. The treasurer also announced that by making the contribution in one lump sum, the state was expected to save taxpayers roughly \$2.2 billion over 30 years, rather than the \$1.5 billion in savings initially anticipated if the state had made quarterly pension payments this year.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT YIELDS PRO-PUBLIC EDUCATION VICTORIES IN NOVEMBER

Without elected leaders who believe in public education, outcomes such as increased state aid to public schools and a fully funded pension system are less likely. That's why the NJEA Political Action Committee (NJEA PAC) makes candidate endorsements in statewide elections.

This year, New Jersey saw a historic election and wins in which NJEA members played a significant role. Our endorsed gubernatorial candidate, Phil Murphy, became the first Democratic governor to win reelection in 44 years. The governor credited NJEA members working to reelect him as a major factor in his win.

That recognition did not stop there. Just weeks before the November election, *NJ Spotlight News* took note of the work NJEA members were doing in nearly every corner of New Jersey.

"With the gubernatorial election between Murphy and Republican businessman Jack Ciattarelli appearing to tighten in its final days, the New Jersey Education Association has pulled out a weapon maybe more potent than cash: feet on the ground," the Oct. 27 article read. "Of some 203,000 dues-paying members of the NJEA—teachers, custodians, cafeteria workers, retirees and their families—it seems most have been on the street at some point this fall."

This is our goal in every election. We want to engage members in political activity and have it so noticeable that legislators, candidates, and political parties cannot ignore our members. We must have boots on the ground and engage members in our local and county associations across the state in every election.

Additionally, our campaign featured social media and direct mail as well as engagement from affinity groups of NJEA members, such as the NJEA Members of Color Network, that sent hundreds of postcards to fellow members encouraging them to come out and vote for our endorsed candidates.

Our social media ads served a total of 25.3 million impressions in just over two months, producing over 53 thousand click-throughs in that time. We ran a total of 21 different ads during the fall campaign: nine display ads and 12 videos. Almost all the video ads ran with multiple versions at various lengths from as short as six seconds to as long as 30 seconds, appearing on various social media platforms.

NJEA also conducted several virtual town halls with Gov. Murphy, Lt. Gov. Oliver and First Lady Tammy Murphy where hundreds of members gathered virtually to engage with the governor and others.

But Gov. Murphy was not the only name on the ballot. In fact, several legislators told us that their victory was because of NJEA members doing the work.

In the Northwest zone, (Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Warren counties), NJEA members completed 2,100 phone calls, sent over 3,000 postcards and knocked on over 800 doors. The Passaic County Education Association held a texting event using the Hustle app. They sent approximately 2,400 texts from that one event.

Bergen County Education Association members sent over 11,000 texts through Hustle as part of an effort to distribute Murphy lawn signs and to get out the vote.



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To ensure the best outcomes for our students, we must engage with politicians and the political process.

WE NEED YOU TO GIVE TO PAC!

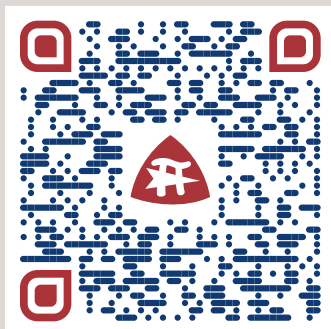
NJEA PAC is a major reason we can successfully advocate for our members and our students, but it depends on your voluntary contributions. Dues money cannot be used for NJEA PAC contributions to candidates.

It is every member's responsibility to give to NJEA PAC so we can continue to support candidates who support our public schools, our students and our members!

If we want to continue to be successful in speaking up for our members and our students, we need you!

Use the QR code to sign up to give to NJEA PAC now or to increase your contribution.

You will need your NJEA PIN and Password.



In Maplewood, South Orange and Belleville members knocked on about 600 members' doors.

Mercer County Education Association members sent about 1,750 postcards and made about 159 calls for endorsed candidates in Legislative District (LD) 16. Members of the Middlesex County Education Association contributed another 297 calls and knocked on 100 doors during a "labor walk" as part of the campaign.

Monmouth County Education Association members texted 2,700 members through Hustle as part of an LD 13 get-out-the-vote effort.

Gloucester County Education Association members teamed up with NJREA, making almost 3,000 phone calls and knocking on about 1,000 doors over multiple canvassing days.

Members of the Cape May County Education Association ran one of their first canvasses for an election in Wildwood, knocking on doors and sending postcards to hundreds of members to get out and vote.

As a result of the on-the-ground action of NJEA members, over 74% of our endorsed Senate candidates and over 79% of our endorsed Assembly candidates won. Among them are two NJEA members in the Assembly—Benjie Wimberly (D-Passaic) and Linda Carter (D-Union County).

LEADERS LISTENING TO EDUCATORS

The impact of NJEA in New Jersey and NEA members nationwide, ensures that educators have a seat at the table and influence in decision making.

In March, President Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) into law. The act is a \$1.9 trillion package meant to address the challenges the nation is facing because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This can be connected back to how important elections are. It made a difference that 93% of NJEA members who are registered voters cast a ballot in the 2020 presidential election. Your vote is your voice, and look at the results!

The ARP includes significant funding for education, providing nearly \$170 billion to public schools. From that, New Jersey received \$3.7 billion in education funding, with \$2.76 billion allotted for K-12 schools and \$901.5 million for higher education. In addition, our state and local governments received \$10.2 billion in aid from the federal government.

In May, Murphy announced New Jersey students would return to class full time and in person in the fall. He said that the executive order allowing schools to rely on remote education would expire at the end of the 2020-21 school year.

Members on the ballot

A record number of NJEA members were on the ballot in the 2022 election cycle: 292 members ran for office—234 for a local board of education, 61 for municipal offices, two for county offices and five for state legislative offices. Of the 292 members on the ballot across the state, 68% won their elections.

In addition to a statewide endorsement process, NJEA PAC has a process through which local and county associations may work with NJEA PAC for candidate endorsements. While most local associations did not make endorsements, of those that did, here were the victors:

- Fatimah Hayes – Lawnside Board of Education
- Sandi Lazzara – Passaic County Board of Commissioners
- Erica Osmond – Jackson Board of Education
- Kerrian Palmieri – Lakeland Regional Board of Education
- Kim Scott-Hayden – Union Township Board of Education
- Tracy Williams – Belleville Board of Education

At the state level, Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly (D-Passaic) and Assemblywoman Linda Carter (D-Union) are NJEA members.

But in August, Murphy announced that because of the rise of COVID cases and hospitalizations, all students, staff and visitors in K-12 schools in New Jersey would be required to wear masks at the start of the 2021-22 school year. Later in the month, Murphy announced that all school staff and teachers at K-12 schools would have to be vaccinated by Oct. 18 or be subject to regular testing. He announced the same for all state employees, including state police.

NJEA's success in the Statehouse and in elections results from the work of NJEA members, leaders, and staff, particularly the Government Relations Division staff, working together as a team. While we have much to celebrate, we have much to do as we continue to see how we can improve our organizing as we look toward the fall of 2022 and prepare for mid-term elections. 🇺🇸

Selected NJEA-supported bills signed into law

January 2021 to January 2022

To ensure the best outcomes for our students, we must engage with politicians and the political process. That includes championing legislation that benefits our schools and supporting candidates who believe in public education.

Listed here is a sampling of legislation supported by NJEA in the last year of the previous legislative session that went on to be signed by the governor.

CIVICS

S-854 – Requires civics instruction in middle school; authorizes New Jersey Center for Civic Education to provide curricula, professional development and technical assistance for middle and high school civics.

AJR-208/SJR-109 – Condemns hate and violent extremism and commits to defense of a safe and just democracy.

COVID-19

A-4461 – Requires state to enter into contract and coordinate with certain cooperative purchasing systems for procurement of COVID-19 related goods and services by school districts.

S-2832 – Allows students enrolled in institutions of higher education who have completed 30 semester-hour credits to serve as substitute teacher; extends time period substitute teacher may serve during public health emergency.

S-3995 – Establishes School and Small Business Energy Efficiency Stimulus Program Fund in BPU.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND EQUITY

A-4454/S-2781 – Requires school districts to include instruction on diversity and inclusion as part of implementation of New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

A-1070 – Requires secretary of higher education to develop guidance for institutions of higher education to identify cultural barriers in recruitment and retention of underrepresented students for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs.

S-1020/A-1184/A-4414 – Requires School Report Card to include demographic breakdown of students who receive disciplinary actions; requires commissioner of education to establish statewide database concerning certain disciplinary actions.

S-3764/A-3369 – Establishes Commission on Asian American Heritage in Department of Education

S-4021/A-6100 – Requires school districts to provide instruction on history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders as part of implementation of New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Social Studies.

A-4856/S-3094 – Requires internet websites and web services of school districts, charter schools, renaissance schools, and the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

S-3416 – Codifies marriage equality in New Jersey law by providing that all laws concerning marriage and civil union are to be read with gender neutral intent.

HEALTH CARE

S-49/A-6260 – Codifies the constitutional right to freedom of reproductive choice in New Jersey.

HIGHER EDUCATION

A-4410/S-2743 – Establishes Community College Opportunity Grant Program in Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to provide last dollar financial aid grants to county college students and Student Success Incentive funding to county colleges.

S-4020/A-5867 – Expands bonding authority of New Jersey Educational Facilities Authority to permit financing for general funding needs at New Jersey's institutions of higher education.

MENTAL HEALTH

A-3548 – Requires health benefits coverage for adolescent depression screenings.

S-2811/A-4838 – Requires school report card to include information concerning number of mental health professionals and school safety specialists employed by each school district.

A-3007/S-3127 – Requires institutions of higher education to provide students with access to mental health care programs and services and to establish a hotline to provide information concerning the availability of those services.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

A-5814/S-3851 – Creates Office of School Bus Safety in Department of Education; appropriates \$200,000.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

S-2486 – Establishes Clayton Model Pilot Program in DOE to provide school-based social-emotional learning to students in grades kindergarten through five at certain public schools.

A-4434/S-2716 – Establishes Student Wellness Grant Program in DOE.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

S-3434/A-5366 – Extends special education services a year for some students who are aging out of the system.

S-2160/A-5701 – Creates special education unit within the Office of Administrative Law; requires annual report.

STATE BUDGET

S-2022 – Appropriates \$46,380,012,000 in state funds and \$21,026,030,082 in federal funds for the state budget for fiscal year 2021-2022.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

S-969/A-2687 – Establishes loan redemption program for certain teachers to redeem loan amounts received under New Jersey College Loans to Assist State Students Loan Program through employment in certain schools; makes annual appropriation of \$1 million.

STUDENT RIGHTS

S-108/A-169 – Concerns speech rights of student journalists at public schools and public institutions of higher education.

A-3392/S-1219 – Requires a student to be appointed to each board of education of a school district and board of trustees of charter school that includes grades nine through 12.

STUDENT SAFETY

A-5727/3726 – Requires school security drills to be age-appropriate and to prevent unnecessary traumatization of schoolchildren

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

S-4074/A-6000 – Allows alternative evaluation in place of basic skills testing requirements for certain teacher certification.

TEACHING WORKFORCE

S-2835/A-5292 – Requires compilation of data and issuance of annual reports on New Jersey teacher workforce.

STANDING UP FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

CHALLENGING TIMES

By Dr. Steve Tetreault

In June 2021, the Texas Legislature made national headlines when it passed House Bill 3979. This bill bans teaching that includes any materials that might lead a student to “feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of the individual’s race or sex.”

Then in October 2021, a Texas state representative sent a list of 850 books to the state Education Agency with questions about which of the books were in school libraries and how much money had been spent to procure them. This combination of efforts was seen by many as specifically targeting materials featuring non-white, non-heterosexual, non-male authors.

These actions have been followed by an insidious nationwide increase in very loud and dramatic book challenges by community members during local school board meetings. These challenges often use the same wording as each other and focus on the same books, even when they happen half a continent away from each other.

The attacks are generally focused around some key topics and titles. One area under attack: books by Black or other non-white authors, especially those with content that includes discussion of the experience of being a non-white person in past, present, or future America. Another: books by

LGBTQIA+ authors, or books about the experience of being LGBTQIA+ in a heteronormative society.

Many would conclude that these calls to restrict materials and resources available in schools are an attempt to prevent students from engaging with topics that might offer new perspectives or challenge systems that have been firmly entrenched for decades, if not centuries.

One of the key functions of public education is to provide students with new knowledge, new perspectives, and new ways of seeing the world. All educators want their students to learn. But there are many who have come to see this mission as dangerous.

An ever-increasing number of lawmakers are using the issue of the appropriateness of school materials to push the view that what children learn in school is dangerous. Texas is once again leading the way, with Gov. Greg Abbott pushing to institute a “Parental Bill of Rights” that includes as a measure the permanent revocation of licenses and retirement benefits for any educator who is “convicted of providing minors access to pornographic material.” In a state where nearly any book not focused on cisgender heterosexual relationships is considered “pornographic,” this is a very troubling statute. If you or someone you

know hasn’t yet had a book challenge in their district, give it time.

New Jersey is often considered firmly ensconced on the “liberal East Coast.” So it may come as a surprise to learn that there are currently half a dozen districts where educators and school libraries are being challenged by community members—and that number is rising.

This despite the fact that New Jersey law requires the inclusion of the studies of the Holocaust and genocide, LGBTQ+ topics, diversity and inclusion, social-emotional learning, African-American history, and, most recently, Asian American and Pacific Islander history.

LAWS AND NJ STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS AS SUPPORTS

New Jersey has laws and learning standards that require certain topics be covered in schools. Since 1994, New Jersey has required the inclusion of instruction about the Holocaust and genocide in K-12 curriculum. In 2002, the state established the Amistad Commission. Its purpose is to “[ensure] that the Department of Education and public schools of New Jersey implement materials and texts which integrate the history and contributions of African Americans and the descendants of the

African Diaspora.”

An LGBTQ requirement mandated in 2019 includes the provision that “a board of education shall adopt inclusive instructional materials that portray the cultural and economic diversity of society including the political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, where appropriate.” The Diversity and Inclusion in Curriculum requirement states, in part, that as of the 2021-22 school year, all districts must “highlight and promote diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and religious tolerance.”

In addition to these requirements, the New Jersey Department of Education requires districts be aligned with the “Quality Single Accountability Continuum” (QSAC). Since 2005, QSAC compliance has been in place to “ensure that school districts are providing a thorough and efficient education for all students.” And QSAC requires districts to address the provisions listed above.

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

The New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) has been helping school librarians in the state deal with these challenges. NJASL created a “Book Challenge Handbook” that covers the many relevant laws, standards, precedents and policies directly related to providing students with grade-appropriate resources and assistance.

School librarians, particularly, have a vocational mission to encourage literacy, teach research skills, encourage evaluation of sources, and stand up for every student’s right to read. But attempts to censor topics and ban books from school libraries are not only bad for school librarians. Censorship is bad for students, for schools, and for teachers.

SILENT CENSORSHIP

As problematic as public challenges to a school’s literacy resources are, they often lead to a quieter threat. The phrase “silent censorship” refers to ways educators and districts might remove books, or not even buy them if they worry their choices might result in a challenge.

This conflict avoidance is often disguised as an attempt to remain neutral. Unfortunately, when there are people who oppose knowledge, equity,

diversity, inclusion and freedom of thought, schools and their educators cannot be neutral.

Limiting students’ access to materials in the name of preventing any discomfort they might encounter by reading is not good for students. It’s not good for the education profession. It’s not good for our society. That’s why it’s imperative that every educator be aware of such challenges and offer support to colleagues within and outside of their district who may be facing these censorious attacks.

BECAUSE REPRESENTATION MATTERS

Jonathan Evison is one of several authors whose work has made “the list.” His post on how the attack on his novel, *Lawn Boy*, has affected his life is moving. The book reminds us of the confusion of adolescence, of figuring out who we are and who we might become. Many students would benefit from knowing they’re not alone in their feelings and self-explorations.

Evison’s book, intended for mature readers, reminds us that representation matters, especially in school materials. School libraries allow students to explore, to discover who they are, and to learn

they are not alone. This is one of their most important functions.

Book challengers often tout their efforts as a way to prevent students and parents from feeling uncomfortable. As award-winning author Kekla Magoon said during a presentation at ASL 2021, “We mustn’t try to run away from discomfort or keep it from our children.” And as New Jersey school librarian Martha Hickson points out in her post for the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Office of Intellectual Freedom (OIF), “ultimately, no book is the perfect fit for every reader, especially works that tackle difficult topics reflecting real-world circumstances. But one reader’s objection is not a license to restrict all other readers from the book.” 📖

Resources and related articles

Visit the New Jersey Association of School Librarians at njasl.org. You’ll find valuable information, important links and other useful.

Some of particular interest include:

Learning for Justice (formerly Teaching Tolerance)

“Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ Students”

learningforjustice.org

Use the search function to find the above title.

The Adventures of Library Girl!

“A Proactive Approach to Book Challenges,” by Jennifer LaGarde
librarygirl.net/post/a-proactive-approach-to-book-challenges

Examples to Emulate

“Fighting a Challenge to the Collection With a Coalition of Advocates” by Peter Bromberg
bit.ly/35tegN4

Knowledge Quest

“Gearing up for the Challenge: Tips for Tackling Censorship,” by Martha Hickson
bit.ly/gearing-challenge

New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL)

“Book Challenge Handbook: Resources and Suggestions for Preparing and Managing School Library Controversies”
bit.ly/NJASL-challenge-handbook

Join a regional response team

NJASL and the New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) have begun recruiting librarians, educators, and other members of the public concerned with these challenges to intellectual freedom from a variety of locations across the state to act as “regional response teams.”

The idea is to gather people who are familiar with a specific area who are willing to get involved in local book challenge situations. This might be via letter writing campaigns to local school boards. It might be by attending school board meetings to offer their professional knowledge.

Whatever level of comfort a volunteer has, NJASL hopes they will offer it in support of their local colleagues and community.

To join a regional response team, visit bit.ly/librrt.

Dr. Steve Tetreault is an educational technology trainer and school library media specialist in Holmdel. He represents the Monmouth County Education Association on the NJEA Editorial Committee and is an NJASL Member at Large. He can be reached at DrTLovesBooks@gmail.com.

YOU CALL THIS COLD?

Dealing with cold stress – inside and outside

By Dorothy Wigmore

Temperatures hover near freezing during the day and below it at night. Snowstorms are predicted. Or maybe it's freezing rain.

It's winter! With it come cold temperatures—inside and outside school buildings. Outside, it's harder to drive, to hold onto things, to walk or work in our usual way. Inside, heating systems may not work well, windows frost up and no one wants to touch uninsulated walls.

It doesn't have to be below freezing for people to get cold stress or injuries. These can occur in the 40s, depending on conditions and time in the environment. What matters are cold temperatures or water, dampness/humidity, and/or cold or strong wind.

Cold temperatures and wind speed combine to produce "wind chill." (See the chart.) Time also matters (e.g., it takes 10 to 30 minutes to get frostbite at a wind chill of minus 18 to minus 38).

Whatever the combination, our bodies try to stay warm. If it's difficult, skin temperature decreases as less blood flows to hands, feet and other extremities to protect the torso and maintain core temperature. Without enough blood and the muscles needed to produce heat, extremities cool quickly.

WHAT MAKES IT LIKELY?

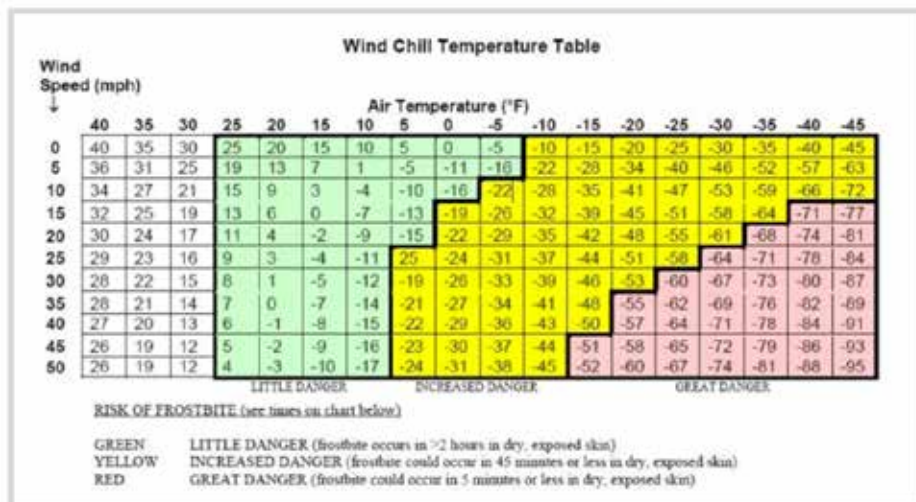
We don't adapt much to the cold, unlike acclimatizing to heat. It's harder for those from warmer climates, people with circulatory health issues or previous cold-related injuries. Using alcohol, nicotine or some medications (e.g., for anxiety, depression, nausea) and some physical conditions (e.g., low thyroid hormone, diabetes, being underweight) also can increase susceptibility to cold.

Those with "white hand" or Raynaud's syndrome may react to a cold surface near freezing. Studies also show that women working on cold food processing lines have more painful or disrupted periods. (Reported temperatures ranged from below freezing to the mid 40s F.)

Women's core body temperatures cool more slowly than men's. But their hands and feet cool faster and they usually don't create internal (metabolic) heat as easily as men with exercise or shivering. That makes it harder for women to withstand the cold and explains why men and women often disagree about temperature settings.

Hydration is connected to heat loss. Dehydration makes cold injuries more likely.

Dorothy Wigmore is a long-time health and safety specialist and WEC consultant. She has worked in Canada, the U.S. and Mozambique, focusing on prevention and worker participation to solve job-related hazards. These days, she is writing Transmission Truth?, a book about workers' experiences in the pandemic.



Source: OSHA Academy, Occupational Safety and Health Training.
oshatrain.org/courses/mods/602e.html

HOW DOES COLD AFFECT US?

Colder temperatures affect our ability to think clearly and do things. Fingers are less able to do fine movements. When it's quite cold, our muscles don't work as well and joints stiffen. Just like heat hazards, the effects go from manageable to severe and fatal. Common effects and what to do about them include:

Condition	What's happening	What to do?
Frostnip	Skin freezes (mild frostbite). Looks yellowish, white but still soft, tingles or burns.	Do not rub/massage. Warm gradually. Get out of cold.
Chilblains	Nonfreezing cold + damp/humidity. Itchy, painful, reddish/ purplish swelling, usually on fingers, toes, nose, ears.	Remove/dry whatever's damp/wet. Warm up. Apply lotion. Often re-occurs.
Trench foot	Feet immersed in cold water for long time. Looks like frostnip.	Remove wet socks, footwear. Air dry. Then same as for frostnip.
Frostbite	Skin and tissue just under it freeze. Looks white, waxy. Feels hard, numb. Can be serious, lead to amputation.	Warm gradually using body heat, warm water in space where can keep warm. No direct heat.
Hypothermia	Body loses heat faster than it's produced. Shivering, confusion, less muscle control. Heart can stop.	Get medical help ASAP. Get person in warmer space, remove wet clothing, warm them gradually and slowly.


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It doesn't have to be below freezing to get cold stress or injuries.

It can occur in the 40s, depending on conditions and time in the environment.

WHAT PREVENTS COLD STRESS?

There are many useful resources about preventing cold-related injuries, illnesses and death. (See below.)

While there is no cold stress standard, OSHA reminds employers about their general duty to protect workers. It expects employers to train workers and provide protections from the cold. New Jersey's PEOSH enforces OSHA rules. 

Resources

National Weather Service

When the weather turns severe: A guide to developing a severe weather emergency plan for schools
[bit.ly/3s18Cti](https://www.weather.gov/3s18Cti)

New Jersey Work Environment Council

Schools with comfortable temperatures
[bit.ly/3gfkTy](https://www.nj.gov/3gfkTy)

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

Cold stress (various materials)
[bit.ly/3HolS1y](https://www.niosh.gov/3HolS1y)

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Cold environments
[bit.ly/3L1FIHx](https://www.ccohs.ca/3L1FIHx)

Environment Canada

Wind chill
[bit.ly/3LdepVB](https://www.ec.gc.ca/3LdepVB)
(Note: temperatures are Celsius)

What should employers do?

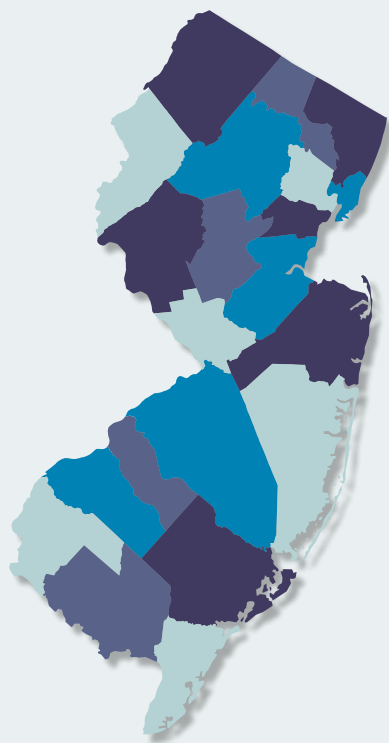
- Work with the health and safety committee on plans (buddy systems, supervision, severe weather, emergencies, driving, working alone, bus routes, schedules, warming areas/shelters, work near/on water, etc.).
- Consult guidance from the American Conference of Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH), OSHA and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), recognizing recommendations are a minimum.
- Train staff about the hazards, recognizing cold stress signs/symptoms, cold work procedures, winter driving, protective gear, first aid.
- Provide protective gear, heaters, warming areas, appropriate schedules, emergency kits, equipment adapted for use in the cold (e.g., nonmetal handle covers).
- Keep inside school spaces at 68 F or more, with fresh and filtered air.
- Evaluate plans, training.

What should health and safety committees do?

- Survey members about cold conditions, report results.
- Research, gather resources.
- Work with the district on a severe weather and other plans using the survey results, resources.
- Press for at least 68 F in school spaces, using the Indoor Air Quality standard – file a PEOSH complaint if necessary.
- Have a thermometer “stash” for members.

And for members?

- Make plans for driving, working alone, emergencies, etc.
- Work with the health and safety committee for training, protective gear to prevent cold stress.
- Dress for it. Wool, silk and most synthetics insulate even when wet; cotton doesn't. Layer up with loose-fitting clothing.
- Expect to do less or take longer to do something.
- Keep moving. Avoid drafts as best as possible.
- Keep fluids up with soup or warm drinks (no alcohol or caffeine).
- Stay dry. Have dry clothes handy.
- Take breaks in warm areas.



SUSSEX TO CAPE MAY

Workshops and conferences highlights

Holocaust, human rights and
genocide education

SHOWCASE

Showcase 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.

JOIN CHHANGE FOR ITS 40TH ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM

Join Chhange (Center for Holocaust, Human Rights and Genocide Education) for its 40th annual Colloquium. The event features plenary speaker Shabana Basij-Rasikh, the co-founder and president of the School of Leadership, Afghanistan (SOLA), which she founded while still a teenager. SOLA is Afghanistan's first and only all-girls' boarding school, enrolling nearly 100 students.

Born and raised in Kabul, Basij-Rasikh finished high school in the U.S. through the State Department's Youth Exchange Studies program. In 2008, as a student at Middlebury College, she co-founded SOLA, with the mission of providing access to quality education for girls across her homeland. In August 2021, Basij-Rasikh led the evacuation of her students and SOLA's faculty from Afghanistan to Rwanda, where all are now engaged in a study abroad program.

Following the keynote, join dozens of breakout workshop leaders including local Holocaust and genocide survivors, community activists, and dynamic educators to learn more about making a difference in your community and beyond. Topics addressed include racism, antisemitism, homophobia, human and civil rights, social justice, and more. Workshop offerings will be sent to registrants in the spring.

All attendees are invited to view Chhange's eighth annual Student Art Installation, which opens in conjunction with Colloquium. This year's theme, "Historians of Ourselves," will invite young people to document and process their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic through art. The exhibit will be open in Brookdale Community College's CVA Gallery through the summer.

The cost to attend this workshop is \$8 per person, and registration is open until May 10, 2022. Interested participants can register at bit.ly/chhange2022.

The workshop is open to students, educators and community members. The target audience for this workshop is grade levels 5 through 12.

For more information, visit chhange.org/events/chhange-2022-colloquium or contact Spencer Cronin at spencer.cronin@chhange.org or 732-224-2616.

MORE TO LEARN ACROSS THE STATE

JOIN THE NGSS SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR GRADES K-12

Monday, July 18 – Friday, July 22

The Raritan Valley Community College Science Education Institute is offering its NGSS Summer Institute in-person starting Monday, July 18. The weeklong Summer Institute provides K-12 teachers and administrators with practical ideas and tools to implement the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Every year, the organizers update the Summer Institute to incorporate what they are learning about classroom implementation through their work with thousands of teachers in New Jersey and across the nation.

During the Institute participants will learn how to:

- Identify, select, and fine-tune phenomena and connect them to NGSS core ideas.
- Turn NGSS practices into 3D performance tasks to guide student learning.
- Make NGSS crosscutting concepts explicit in questions and performance tasks.
- Use explanation and argument to assess student learning.
- Support students in defining engineering problems and designing solutions for them.
- Support students as they investigate physical, life and earth science phenomena.
- Plan their own NGSS-aligned investigations.

Access and use a database of over 600 NGSS-aligned investigations.

The Institute will be led by Dr. Wil van der Veen, author and a nationally recognized expert on the NGSS and science education. Participants will work in small groups that are facilitated by experienced classroom teachers from the NGSS Teacher Leader Program.

The weeklong Institute will be held July 18-22, 2022 at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg, N.J. Each day begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m.

Light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

The fee is \$350.

To register, go to tinyurl.com/RVCC-REGSI22. For more information contact Tina Gandarillas at tina.gandarillas@raritanval.edu or 908-526-1200, ext. 8942.

This Summer Institute is supported by a grant from the New Jersey Space Grant Consortium.

CTE EDUCATORS: APPLY FOR LOW-COST, WORK BASED SUPERVISORY TRAININGS

The New Jersey Safe Schools (NJSS) program is implementing a special grant-funded initiative in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Education. The goal is to provide teachers free work-based learning (WBL or formerly school-sponsored structured learning experiences) supervisory trainings for career and technical education (CTE) and WBL in nonhazardous occupations throughout New Jersey. Only a \$20 administrative fee will be required for certificate processing for professional development units (PDUs), a formal memo of completion and the OSHA card.

The participants ultimately accepted into the program will be selected by region, with equal representation from northern, central and southern New Jersey with additional representation for teachers in larger urban/suburban populations serving historically underrepresented minority, low-middle income students. To be eligible, participants must have a CTE, agricultural education, business, and/or family and consumer sciences endorsement on their teaching certificate.

A set of courses to be completed online within a 1 to 1.5-month cohort is available for eligible, endorsed teachers who apply for acceptance. Participants can still be assigned to cohorts #4-6 during early spring-early summer 2022.

Please note: If you previously completed the four required courses for WBL, formerly school-sponsored structured learning experiences, then you do not need to retake these courses in this capacity. If you apply and are not eligible for this opportunity, then NJSS will contact you and provide more information to register for our regular WBL training cohorts, held through July 2022 and again in early fall 2022, at a reduced total cost and an improved administrative process.

To apply, visit go.rutgers.edu/cgeekuq0. Questions? Email cscbre@sph.rutgers.edu.

CLEAN HANDS AND SPACES WEB-BASED TRAINING

Health and safety are top priorities in educational settings. If you work in an educational setting, you play a unique and important role in promoting good hygiene and clean educational spaces. To help you keep your facility healthy and safe, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

and the CDC Foundation developed Clean Hands and Spaces, an online training for educators, administrators, and supporting personnel in K-12 schools and early care and education.

The training consists of four modules that focus on:

- How and when to clean hands.
- How to create a hygiene plan for an educational environment.
- How to select, use, and store cleaning products and disinfectants.
- How to team up with parents and caregivers to build good hygiene habits with children.

Start the training today to learn best practices and strategies for proper hand hygiene and surface cleaning to help keep everyone in your educational facility healthy. You may receive free continuing education credits for completing the training.

Select the following link to take this training today train.org/cdctrain/course/1100489.

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EDTPA: SERVING NEITHER PRESERVICE EDUCATORS NOR STUDENTS

BY OLIVIA HAAS

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*EdTPA is back, and
it is just as terrible
as before.*

After the pandemic hit New Jersey in the spring of 2020, the New Jersey Department of Education temporarily modified the rules regarding certification requirements for completion of performance assessments. Prior to the modification, preservice educators were required to complete and pass edTPA to get their Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS). This modification allowed future educators who were unable to complete edTPA to still get their CEAS if they met all other requirements for the CEAS during the 2020-21 academic year.

Now, edTPA is back, and it is just as terrible as before. I am a math secondary education major in my senior year who needs to complete edTPA this semester to get my CEAS. In my student teaching placement, I will be taking over five high school math classes and will be teaching close to 100 students. To more established educators, this probably seems manageable, but to me it is terrifying, especially because I must complete edTPA at the same time.

EdTPA is based on three to five lessons, a very small portion of my student teaching experience. The assessment has three tasks with five rubrics for each task. That is 15 rubrics with a score for each ranging from 1 to 5. Thus, the highest score is a 75.

My professors have told me that scoring a 5 is unheard of. They have explicitly told me that I should aim to get a 3 on all the rubrics since the edTPA passing score for Secondary Mathematics is a 37. Never in my educational experience have I been told I could never receive the highest possible score on an assessment no matter my effort.

The first task of edTPA is about planning for instruction and assessment, which involves writing three to five lessons plans and justifying those lesson plans.

The second task is about instructing and engaging students in learning. This task requires us to record our students and submit an unedited 15-minute video segment of a lesson. The video demonstrates a small aspect of who I am as a

preservice educator and how I interact with students. To my students and their parents, the video is an invasion of their privacy.

The third task is about assessing student learning.

One of my professors recommended recording my video for edTPA right after Presidents Day. That is after only 18 days in the classroom. The idea of having Task 1 of edTPA completed and starting to record my lessons for this assessment is nerve-wracking. Teaching in a high school is brand new to me. I do not yet know how to reach all the students in my classroom academically because I am still learning how to be an educator, and I am still learning about my students. I do not know how to teach in the middle of a pandemic. I do not know all my students' names yet, but I do know what I will be teaching for edTPA in two weeks.

Instead of focusing on my students, my main priority is forced to be this assessment. Even though, as I write this, I have two more weeks until recording my lessons for edTPA, in my heart I know I am doing a disservice to my students by creating a lesson conforming to the edTPA handbook instead of their needs.

Despite being advised by many not to go into teaching, a career where the compensation makes paying off student debt economically daunting, NJEA Preservice members and fellow aspiring educators have decided to become teachers because of our passion for education. EdTPA, however, is yet another barrier that not only prevents us from becoming educators but deprives us from fully immersing ourselves into our student teaching experiences. . 🦖

Olivia Haas is the vice president of NJEA Preservice. She majors in math secondary education at The College of New Jersey.



Rainbow Connection honors Women's History Month

By Amy Moran, Ph.D. and Kate Okeson

Women's History Month is an important time to check in on issues women face nationwide. Let's explore some of the dynamics at play in 2022.

IN SCHOOLS

Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are of paramount importance in the classroom. Unfortunately, 2022 brings news of an alarming number of interruptions to this work, chipping away at progress seen nationally to canonize inclusive and representative curricula.

Florida: A House committee approved a bill that would ban discussions about sexual orientation and gender identity in school. Another proposed bill seeks to install cameras in classrooms to prevent teaching content considered subversive. This builds on the "Stop WOKE Act," which would allow parents to sue schools for teaching about structural racism.

Virginia: A hotline was set up for people to report teachers who teach "divisive" ideas.

Utah: A bill was proposed to demand that all public school curricula be posted online for examination and critique, with lawsuits to follow if something was found to be unsuitable by anyone at all.

Missouri: The *Bluest Eye* (1970) was banned—again. Toni Morrison's ground-breaking novel is told from the perspective of an African American girl grappling with the physical and psychological violence she experiences at the hands of the American society in which she lives.

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*The books that the
world calls immoral are
books that show the
world its own shame
— Oscar Wilde*

Tennessee: Pulitzer-winning graphic novel *Maus* (1980) was banned—also again! It describes the author's parents' experience during the Holocaust and their imprisonment in Auschwitz. A book burning was also held in the state.

Washington: Gavin Downing, librarian, expanded his school's holdings to "provide non-stereotypical presentation of diverse racial, ethnic, gender, and ability groups" and was told to bring titles in for his superior to evaluate for removal. He brought union representation into the meeting, as well as copies of titles that had also been accused of being sexually explicit, including *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *The Hate U Give*, a human biology book, and the Bible.

The opposition to representative and inclusive curricula and resources is grounded in an understanding of our nation that lacks authentic context and shies away from difficult realities, favoring familiar (if misogynist, classist, and white supremacist) thinking that perpetuates myths rather than acknowledging and engaging with difficult historical truths.

By making books and curricular content

available that illustrate atrocities and inequities, students are better able to develop empathy, make sense of who we are, understand why our society is like it is today, and help improve it over their lifetimes. But rather than being supported by mandates like those in New Jersey—including the Amistad, Holocaust, LGBTQ+ and people with disabilities, and now Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders—teachers across the U.S. are feeling the encroachment of ideas that are antithetical to teaching for justice.

IN THE POLITICS OF WOMEN'S LIVES

Women are disproportionately impacted at the intersection of their gender and their work lives. Time, money and decision-making look different for women.

- Nationwide, 76% of public school teachers are women.
- According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the average salary for largely unionized public school teachers nationwide is \$57,950; it's \$45,320 for private school teachers. (The average salary for a full time public school full-time teacher in New Jersey is \$77,119.)
- Women take on hours more of the mental load of planning, organizing, scheduling, attending meetings and appointments in families with straight parents.
- According to the University of Michigan and the Institute for Women's Policy, women spend two more hours each day attending to children and housework than men do. Women's unpaid labor adds up

"January's Rainbow Connection asked teachers to think about LGBTQIA+ representation in all areas of curriculum. While I was doing my Black History Month bulletin board, it got me thinking about LGBTQIA+ representation in Black history. I went beyond what would be my usual sources to find prominent figures in Black history who also identify as LGBTQIA+, including activist Bayard Rustin, author Audre Lorde, journalist Angelina Weld Grimké, and Miss Major Griffin-Gracy—original executive director for the Transgender Gender Variant Intersex Justice Project."

– Erin Lafond, library media specialist at Benjamin Franklin Middle School in Teaneck

to 95 more eight-hour work days than men every year. Married straight women with three or more children did 28 hours of housework weekly, and their husbands created seven hours of housework for them. Their husbands logged 10 hours of housework weekly.

- January 2022 marked the 49th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, allowing people to have bodily autonomy over whether or not to be pregnant. In 2021 alone, states enacted 106 restrictions to that bodily autonomy.
- A U.S. Supreme Court nominee frontrunner is Ketanji Brown Jackson, among the first Black women to potentially hold the position. If confirmed, she would become one of four women serving on the nine-seat court.

Making this data visible may help us participate equitably, equalize pay—a major reason why labor unions are so important!—and to return autonomy to *all* women in all aspects of their lives.

IN MEDIA, ART, AND ENTERTAINMENT

Representation of women in the media serves multiple purposes. It reflects who we are and how we're doing, and it can (unwittingly?) omit versions of us that other audiences might find uncomfortable—even if they're authentic and affirming of real women's identities. Whether we are using contemporary media in classes with our students or it is our time to just chillax, using critical media literacy to examine who is being represented, how they're being represented, and what expectations those representations are fulfilling (and for whom!) are all part of savvy media consumption.

In the new hit TV show, "Abbott Elementary"—a

mockumentary sitcom created by Quinta Brunson, daughter of a Philadelphia public school teacher—takes a light-hearted approach to some intense social, economic and political realities about the strategic underfunding of public schools in urban areas. Similarly, "Somebody Somewhere" is another wonderful new TV show starring Bridget Everett who plays Sam, a middle-aged woman who's lost her direction in her small hometown in Kansas. She works as an essay grader for a standardized testing company and is befriended by a queer man she'd forgotten she'd gone to high school with.

Some inspiring and perhaps unexpected representation for women this month can be found in Amy Schneider, "Jeopardy!" winner, software engineer, and trans woman whose 40-day winning streak is the second highest in the game show's history. And in the wonderful world of animated films, merchandise associated with "Encanto's" Luisa—a big-bodied woman with the gift of super-human strength—is selling out in places where character merchandise is sold. Girls and women are relating more to her than the typically feminine protagonist Mirabel.

Check out Rainbow Connection's March resource doc for additional examples of amazing broadcast media and music. 🌈



For more on Women's History and the Rainbow Connection, scan this QR code.

What's "woke" anyway?

Used in the in the 1930s Lead Belly's song "Scottsboro Boys," in the 1940s in the *Negro Digest* in an article about labor unions, and again in the 1960s in a *New York Times* article called "If You're Woke You Dig It," the term **woke** comes from African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and predates its wide contemporary usage. But what does it mean?

Woke (adj): being newly informed about things you didn't know; having new understanding of social dynamics whose challenging realities have been omitted to make you think it wasn't as bad as it actually was; being politically aware about systems of oppression; a description of those who work to dismantle systems of oppression, such as those working for the Movement for Black Lives, the Green Movement, LGBTQIA+ rights, Indigenous Peoples' rights, the Labor Movement, etc.

Wokeness (n): questioning common paradigms; the fight against systems of indoctrination, such as white supremacy, corporate ecocide, book burning, etc.; refraining from espousing commonly accepted but oppressive ideas.

As we see nationwide, this term is being used in pejorative ways by certain media outlets and lawmakers to vilify folks (like us!) who challenge oppressive paradigms and are working toward greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools and beyond.

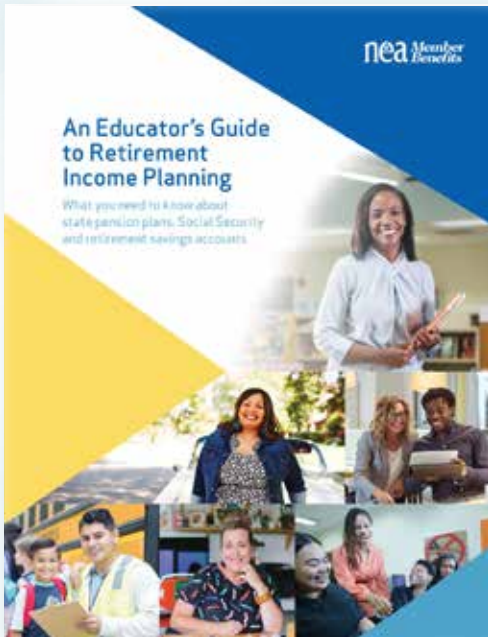


Share your own rainbow connections at
RainbowConnectionNJEA@gmail.com!



In memoriam

In December of 2021, we lost legendary queer teacher, author and social activist bell hooks. Her work explored the intersections of race, capitalism and gender and how they produce and perpetuate systems of oppression. Amy's favorite works of hers include *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* and her chapter "Is Paris Burning?" a critique of the documentary "Paris is Burning," from which the TV show "Pose" was modeled.



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BEING YOUR OWN HERO

BY JES QUIJANO



Early Career Network

starting from scratch. Throughout all of it, the students came first.

WHY DO WE NEED TO BE OUR OWN HEROES?

As educators, many of us have seen Rita Pierson's Ted Talk, "Every Kid Needs a Champion." It is her words that inspire and remind educators why we come into school day-in, day-out. Listening to her words post-pandemic, I've had a new perspective on the realities of work in a school. It is these realities that cause educator exhaustion and cynicism, while sensing a decrease in accomplishment.

Rita Pierson starts her Ted Talk by sharing that she has spent her whole life in school: attending a school, traveling to and from one, or talking about what happens at the school. Think about the amount of time you are "on the clock"—in a classroom, in the office, on a school bus, or in any of the places as a school district employee you might find yourself. Now think about how much of your time is spent commuting to and from work, how much time you spend before and after school preparing for the next day, grading assignments, and communicating with parents and colleagues. In the pandemic, the hours of

Across the state, schools experienced an unprecedented disruption because of COVID-19. Educators had to pivot to new routines and procedures while adapting to new positions and technology.

In essence, every educator became a first-year educator;

preparation increased while balance decreased.

Rita Pierson also emphasizes the importance of human connection, which has also decreased. We taught in isolation. We stared at nearly blank screens showing just the initials of our students; getting answers and responses from a chat box. For many of us, schooling is still isolating because of social distancing requirements, restrictions on student interactions, and other health and safety protocols. Even educator to educator connections are limited. Staff rooms used to bustle with staff eating lunch together, now they are passed by.

While we will always put students at the forefront of what we do, it is important that in the midst of all the exhaustion and cynicism that we remember to be our own heroes, too.

HOW TO BE YOUR OWN HERO?

As we pivot away from some pandemic restrictions, it is important that we incorporate ways to be our own hero. Adjusting back into a routine is the perfect time to create a routine that supports our well-being. Here are some ways.

Set boundaries—and keep them

Reflect on your needs, whether that is to spend time with your family, friends, or to make time for yourself. Give yourself a designated space and time to work. As much as communication has been vital to the success of virtual learning, there comes a time when your computer is laid to rest. Decide on two nights that your work does not go home with you. Communicate to your students' families a time to contact you and when they might have to wait until the next day to get a response. These boundaries will allow you to have some piece of mind.

Get moving

A growing collection of studies shows the positive effects of exercise on reducing anxiety, stress and depression. Through the physiological

“

While we will always put students at the forefront of what we do, it is important that in the midst of all the exhaustion and cynicism that we remember to be our own heroes.

and biochemical mechanisms, including the release of endorphins, moving your body has been shown to contribute to better health outcomes and better moods.

Create joy and satisfaction

This is easier said than done, but it is crucial to combating the depression and anxiety that comes along with burnout. Education can be taxing emotionally, physically and mentally. It is important that we foster the good feelings that have been proven to boost our abilities to deal with stress, solve problems, and keep open minds. Mental Health America offers these tips to create joy and relax:

- Do something you enjoyed as a kid: Whether that is running through the sprinklers, hanging on the monkey bars, or even making a mess with paint, use memories of joy to create new joy.
- Do something you've always wanted to do: Take time to get items on your bucket list done. Whether that is baking a soufflé, taking a fitness class, or learning how to knit.
- Watch or listen to comedy: Get a good laugh by watching comedy on a video, podcast, or website. Better yet, get a good laugh the old-fashioned way and read through the comics section of a newspaper.
- Take a nature break: Walking in or even just looking at nature has been shown to calm nerves and relieve mental fatigue. 🌿

Jes Quijano is a teacher in the North Brunswick School District and a member of the NJEA Early Career Educators Network.

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Member Benefits



2022 Member Benefits partner grants and givebacks

NJEa Members provide invaluable public services and our NJEA Member Benefits partners want to help support you in your community service. The following is a brief list of programs that our NJEA Member Benefits partners offer throughout the year.



California Casualty – provider of the sponsored NJEA and NEA Auto & Home Insurance Program

- **\$10K Staycation Giveaway:** Enter today for your chance to win \$10,000 from California Casualty! Use it to upgrade your kitchen, build that backyard oasis, purchase a Jacuzzi, create a media room for the family, and more. Enter before Oct. 14, 2022 for your chance to win! membergiveaway.com/NEARM
- **\$1,000 Athletics Grant:** Apply by Jan. 15th each year for a California Casualty Thomas R. Brown Athletics Grant. calcasathletics.com
- **\$250 Music and Arts Grant:** California Casualty's Music and Arts Grant program will award individual members with a \$250 grant for their classroom or program. Applications are accepted until June 30 of each year. Apply at calcasmusicartsgrant.com.

Optical Academy – partner in the NJEA Member Discount Program

Optical Academy provides 10 free pairs of eyeglasses to students in need for every 50 pairs sold. Optical Academy knows that educators often use their own money to ensure a student is able to see and Optical Academy wants to help change that. Any Educator who would like to nominate a student in need can submit an inquiry online at <https://optical-academy.com/contact/>

Security Benefit – NEA sponsored provider

The NEA Retirement Program, provided by Security Benefit, is offering a new grant program called UBenefit to thank active educators who reach into their own pockets to support schools, students and classrooms. Any NJEA member is invited to complete a quick online form at UBenefit.org to be entered into a random drawing for a chance to be one of 50 recipients of a \$100 grant. Entries must be received by March 31.

SunLife Solar – Buyer's Edge sponsored provider

Go solar and reduce your electric bill, while helping the planet! Contact SunLife, our NJEA Member Benefits/Buyer's Edge provider, at 800-558-1920 for a customized offer. A donation of \$500 will be made to the NJEA HIPP Foundation for every NJEA member installation. The NJEA HIPP Foundation for Excellence awards grants between \$500 and \$10,000 to New Jersey educators to help bring creative ideas to life. More information can be found at njea.org/Hipp.

Visions Federal Credit Union – partner in the NJEA Member Discount Program

Visions will award full funding, up to \$500 for projects submitted by educators at elementary, middle, and high schools in the following counties: Bergen, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, and Warren. Visions commits \$20,00 to the program, so multiple projects may win! To learn more or to submit your project, go to VisionsLovesEducators.com. These grants are awarded throughout the year. Projects should be submitted at least six weeks before funds are desired.



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PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

CHANGES TO RULES FOR EMPLOYMENT AFTER RETIREMENT

Recent shortages in staffing during the COVID pandemic have caused the New Jersey Legislature to make some changes in the rules governing retirees returning to public school employment.

The first change allows certified school nurses to return to public school employment for up to two years after a *bona fide* retirement. For the provisions of what constitutes a *bona fide* retirement, see the box below. The provisions are similar to administrators who return to work as interims while continuing to collect a pension. A contract issued by a local board of education to a retiree employed as a certified school nurse may not exceed one year but may be renewed for one additional year with that board of education.

The second change, which was passed by the Legislature and signed into law in January, allows for retired teachers or any professional staff member who provides special services to return to public school employment without being reenrolled in the pension system. The school district must show a critical need, as determined by the commissioner of education, when seeking to reemploy a retiree.

The provisions are similar to the restrictions for school nurses in that the retiree must have a *bona fide* retirement. A contract issued by a local board of education to a retiree employed as a teacher or any professional staff member may not exceed one year but may be renewed for one additional year with that board of education. Anything beyond that second year would have to be approved by the commissioner of education.

Unlike the school nurse provision, this change is only applicable for the remainder of the 2021-22 school year or the 2022-23 school year. If you have any questions, call the New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits at 609-292-7524.

Here is what constitutes a *bona fide* retirement:

1. For reemployment in the district the member retired from:
 - a. There can be no employment, including part-time, volunteer or sub contracted work, for a period of 180 days from the date of retirement or the date the pension board approves the retirement, whichever is later.
 - b. The 180-day count begins Sept. 1 for July 1 retirees who were 10-month employees.
 - c. No prearrangement of reemployment until the 180-day count has been completed.
2. For reemployment in a New Jersey public school district other than the one the member retired from:
 - a. No employment, including part-time, volunteer or subcontracted work, for a period of 30 days after the pension is due and payable.
 - b. No prearrangement of reemployment until 30 days after the pension is due and payable.

Note: Due and payable means the retirement has been approved by the board of trustees and no changes were made in the beneficiary or option after the retirement date. If you have any questions, you can contact the NJ Division of Pensions and Benefits at 609-292-7524.

Around the counties

Because of COVID-19 concerns and restrictions, all meetings/events subject to change. For questions, call your county REA. For trip details, check the county newsletter.

CAMDEN COUNTY REA will hold its nonperishable food drive for Senior Citizens United Community Services on April 28, at the CCCEA office in Voorhees from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monetary donations will also be accepted. For more information call Susan Ronca at 856-816-1289.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY REA will hold a Member Benefits Fair on Thursday, March 10 at the Grand Marquis in Old Bridge. Cost is \$35. To attend, call Anne Chomko at achomko@gmail.com.

MONMOUTH COUNTY REA will hold its spring meeting/luncheon on Tuesday, April 12 at Our House Restaurant in Farmingdale. The cost is \$34. Call Sue Shrott at 732-995-7754 by April 1 to register.

PASSAIC COUNTY REA will hold its meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, March 23 at The Brownstone in Paterson. Meeting will include officer elections. The cost is \$35. To attend, call Kitty Sausa at 201-445-7577 by March 18.

SUSSEX COUNTY REA will hold its spring meeting/luncheon on April 4. Topic and location to be determined—pending COVID-19 circumstances. More information will follow.

WARREN COUNTY REA will hold its spring meeting/luncheon on April 6 at Hawk Pointe in Washington Township. The cost is \$35. Call Vicki Rhinehart to register at 908-319-1995 by March 30.

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(on campus and online)
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Suppressing *truth* in the classroom

By Frank Breslin

What if your race had known only tragedy throughout America's history? What if your people had been enslaved, murdered, persecuted and denied their civil rights? And what if, instead of owning up to having inflicted such outrages, showing remorse, asking forgiveness, and making amends, those responsible, their descendants and sympathizers denied that those actions had ever occurred or, if they had, they had best be forgotten?

But what if the history of those deeds could never be taught in our schools, but covered in silence because it would only be "divisive" or "racist" against those whites who had committed them? Rather, let bygones be bygones! We should forget the past and simply move on!

This is the white supremacist gospel being preached by some in our country today, especially by protestors at school board meetings. It is the New Jim Crowism that would leave no public record in the classroom of the centuries-old infamy that was inflicted on the Black race.

Moreover, these protestors add insult to injury by denying the victims of this racism the chance to finally have their story told to America's children as our schools have done for the Holocaust. Children deserve the truth, not fairy tales, even when the truth makes racists uncomfortable.

Anyone with an ounce of humanity could not help but be moved when learning about the brutal treatment of Blacks over the centuries. Students would learn that the justification of slavery was preached even from church pulpits. They would

learn about the KKK, Jim Crow laws, lynchings, fire bombings of Black churches, racial segregation of our schools today—decorously disguised as "school choice," the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., the killing of George Floyd, and the freedom march in Birmingham, Alabama when Commissioner "Bull" Conner turned his fire hoses, attack dogs, and police truncheons on peaceful Black marchers demanding their civil rights, as Americans watched aghast at their TV screens as it unfolded.

It would be a national catharsis to know that America was finally coming to terms with the dark chapters in its history and not-so-distant past. For this is what great nations do that are big enough, humble enough, contrite and courageous enough to admit their failings and vow to do better. The beginning of healing is the admission of wrong!

Great nations also reverence the sacrosanct nature of the mind. They do not insult those who have dedicated their lives to the noble profession of teaching the young. They do not force teachers to indoctrinate their students with a sanitized history that omits the entire truth about their nation's past.

However, teaching the truth is terrifying to these protestors who view truth as dangerous, especially for their children, for it would mean losing control over their minds. Schools that teach what actually happened should be shut down because truth leads to social unrest, and it is better to have peace based on lies. In a word, we are dealing with an educational philosophy that teaches: Thou shalt not think! Thou shalt not question! Thou shalt only conform!

These protestors abhor teaching about what happened to Black people since this would mean the end of their white supremacist world. Their

protests are an assault on the mind itself, the importance of truth, and the nature of education.

An education in its ultimate sense is not an initiation rite into the myths of one's tribe, but a personal struggle to free oneself from those myths. It is escaping from Groupthink. An education is not about fear of the truth or a blind acceptance of White supremacist doctrine.

Teachers resist such indoctrination of their students. They want to teach, not suppress, the truth of what happened, but these protestors know what happened and want to suppress it lest it be taught not only to their children, but to everyone's children, as well, a.k.a. censorship.

Teachers refuse to aid and abet this fantasy of a dying white Supremacy whose days are numbered as anyone knows who has checked the demographics, for what we are hearing today is but its death knell!

A classroom is a sacred place, a temple of reason, not a recruiting station for a white supremacist doctrine that would ban the teaching of Black history because it dismisses Black people themselves as unimportant in their kind of supremacist democracy that is not a democracy at all, but an ethnocentric, xenophobic, would-be fascist dictatorship, and not the American democracy most of us know, cherish, and want to preserve.

Teachers refuse to violate their consciences by lying to children and shattering their trust in them, and when they are forbidden to tell the whole truth lest it embarrass white racists, they refuse to betray both children and truth

Frank Breslin is an NJREA member and a retired English, Latin, German, and social studies teacher. An educator for over 40 years, he retired from the Delaware Valley Regional High School.

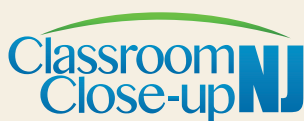


Classroom Close-up NJ looks back at **Nerd Camp**

More than 300 educators sacrificed a Saturday to attend the second annual #NerdCampNJ at Chatham High School.

Teachers Sarah Gross from High Technology High School at Monmouth County Vocational Technical School and Oona Abrams from Chatham are spreading the joy of reading and writing by spearheading Nerd Camp for teachers, librarians, administrators, authors, illustrators, publishers and community members.

#NerdCampNJ is a free literacy conference inspired by the EdCamp model of teacher-led professional development.



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 classroomcloseup.org.



STAFF NEWS

HIRES AND
PROMOTIONS

NJEA welcomed **LAKRESHA HARRIS-FRESSE** to NJEA staff on Feb. 1 as a field organizing specialist in the Northwest Zone of the UniServ Division. Harris-Fresse comes to NJEA after more than 20 years as a teacher in Paterson Public Schools. She has most recently worked as a temporary organizing specialist for NEA since April 2021 where she assisted three locals in the Virginia Education Association with the collective bargaining process. Harris-Fresse was active in the Paterson Education Association and served as 2nd vice president in addition to many other association leadership roles, in her local association and in the Passaic County Education Association. Harris-Fresse had also worked as a UniServ consultant in the Region 27 office in Wayne since November 2018.

Harris-Fresse holds a bachelor's degree in English from Montclair State University and a master's degree in administration and supervision from Grand Canyon University. She lives in Wayne with her three children, Kailyn, Justin and Dorian, and her husband, Javier Fresse.



NJEA welcomed **KATIE QUINN** to NJEA staff on Feb. 1 as a field organizing specialist in the South Zone of the UniServ Division. Quinn had been an English teacher since 2001 at Freehold Township High School District and also taught English at Brookdale Community College. She has been an NJEA Delegate Assembly member, and Monmouth County Education Association Executive Committee member, and an association rep and Pride chair in the Freehold Regional High School Education Association. Quinn had also worked as a UniServ consultant in Regions 3 and 5 since 2016.

Quinn holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education/English from Temple University. She has a master's degree in English from Southern New Hampshire University and a master's degree in education from Walden University. Quinn lives in Cinnaminson with her son, Aidan.



NJEA welcomed **KIMBERLY SCOTT-HAYDEN** to NJEA staff on Feb. 1 as a field organizing specialist in the Northeast Zone of the UniServ Division. Scott-Hayden was employed by East Orange Public Schools for over 25 years where she held many positions in administrative and building security. She has taken courses toward a degree in criminal justice at Thomas Edison State University. She plans to continue that coursework.

Scott-Hayden was the 2021 NJEA Educational Support Professional (ESP) of the Year and the 2021 National Education Association ESP of the Year.

Scott-Hayden has held multiple roles in association governance including the NJEA Delegate Assembly for three years, the NJEA Executive Committee for nine years, and the NEA Board of Directors for six years. She was president of the East Orange Maintenance Association for 10 years, vice president of the Essex County Education Association for four years, chair of the NJEA Human and Civil Rights Committee for four years, and has served on numerous NJEA task forces.

She lives in Union, with her husband Eric Hayden, to whom she donated a kidney in September 2020, and her daughter Sanaa, and three of her seven grandchildren.

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MARCH & beyond

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

MAR 04/05	FRI & SAT Northwest Organizing Institute	APR 01/02	FRI & SAT Winter Leadership Conference-Central	APR 30	SATURDAY Exceptional Children Conference
MAR 18	FRIDAY Executive Committee County Presidents Council meetings	APR 08/09	FRI TO SAT Higher Education Conference	APR 30 TO MAY 1	SAT & SUN Early Career Conference NJEA Preservice Conference
MAR 19	SATURDAY Delegate Assembly meeting	APR 09/10	SAT TO SUN Higher Education Collective Bargaining Summit	MAY 05/06	FRI & SAT Members of Color Conference

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

DEADLINES

- 3/11** Early Bird Registration for
Exceptional Children Conference
Event date: April 30
- 3/23** Higher Education Conference registration
Event Date: April 8-9
- 3/23** Higher Ed Collective Bargaining
Summit registration
Event Date: April 9-10
- 4/15** Regular registration for
Exceptional Children Conference
Event date: April 30



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In it for the outcome

But the income matters

A popular internet meme shared on social media reads “Teachers don’t teach for the income. Teachers teach for the outcome. Thanking all teachers for their hard work.” Teachers themselves often share the meme.

Similar memes, showing appreciation for all school staff appear as well, such as “School bus drivers go the extra mile for kids.”

These memes are well-intentioned. If you ask NJEA Preservice members why they are going into education, you may hear a story of a teacher who inspired them. They may tell you about their desire to make a difference in the lives of children. You’re not likely to hear about dreams of owning a summer cottage in Newport or beachfront property at Hilton Head.

Educational support professionals (ESPs)—bus drivers, secretaries, custodians and maintenance staff, security, paraprofessionals, food service staff, and other members of the school team—tell similar stories of their dedication to students and the community. Working in a public school is more than a job. It’s a mission.

But lately there is a shortage of people willing to take on that mission. Billboards around the state announcing job openings remind us that there’s a shortage of school bus drivers. The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) released a report in February indicating that since the beginning of the pandemic the number of public school bus drivers nationwide fell by 14.7%, school custodians by 6% and teaching assistants by 2.6%.

Fewer college students are preparing to become teachers. This is not a new trend. When comparing the number of students enrolled in teacher preparation programs nationwide in 2008-09 and 2015-16, the number of students in such programs fell by 37.8%.

EPI points to COVID as the likely culprit for shortages in ESP positions, pointing to the

heightened risk of exposure to the virus, second jobs that became primary jobs during school building closures, and the possibilities for higher paying jobs elsewhere.

For teachers, librarians, nurses, counselors and other certificated staff there are other factors making the profession less attractive to prospective educators. These include the ability to earn higher wages in other fields for professionals with similar credentials, rising student loan debt that is particularly challenging to absorb on an educator’s salary, and the hyper-politicization of what teachers teach, what librarians place on shelves, and what school boards do to keep students and staff safe in the pandemic.

\$60K THE FIRST DAY

From the first minimum salary law for teachers—passed in 1919, it was \$1,000—through the second minimum salary law for teachers—passed in 1985, it was \$18,500—and through every collective bargaining session held between every local association and board of education in the state, NJEA has fought for members to receive the salaries they deserve. A competitive minimum salary does more than benefit first-year teachers. It ultimately benefits the whole salary guide from bottom to top.

Of the nearly 600 school districts in New Jersey, 74 have negotiated minimum starting salaries for teachers of \$60,000 at the bachelor’s degree level. In 138 additional districts, that figure is reached by the sixth step on their salary guides.

It’s time for \$60,000 to be the starting salary across all teacher salary guides in New Jersey. While a higher salary is only one factor in making a teaching career an attractive option for college students, it ultimately benefits everyone on the guide. A higher starting salary increases the total amount of money a district budgets for salaries.

Thus, subsequent contract settlements yield more dollars to be distributed across the various steps of salary guides from top to bottom.

A LIVING WAGE

Located between New York City and Philadelphia, New Jersey has a high cost of living. According to a 2018 EPI family budget calculator, a modest yet adequate standard of living for a family of two adults and two children costs an average of \$87,509 in Camden County, the state’s lowest figure, and \$111,459 in Hunterdon County, the state’s highest figure.

According to the New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits, the average salary for secretaries in New Jersey in 2020-21 is \$52,332. For custodians, the average is \$51,618, for bus drivers it’s \$33,751, for security staff it’s \$42,230, for paraprofessionals it’s \$31,300, and for food service workers it’s \$28,717.

The shortages in nearly all ESP job categories in school districts demonstrate that it’s not only teaching staff salaries that need to be improved.

A REVISED MEME

As the “income/outcome” meme spreads across the internet, a new one has emerged. It’s the same meme, but heavily edited. It reads, “Educators are skilled professionals who deserve a competitive income. Professional level pay is how to thank all educators for their hard work.”

Future editions of the *Review* will publish stories about the current status of minimum and average salaries in New Jersey public schools. The *Review* will also feature association campaigns and local bargaining successes to ensure that those who work in public schools are professionally compensated for the value of their work. 🏠



School Meals play a pivotal role in the learning process.

Hunger can be an overwhelming distraction for students, which is why school nutrition is essential to learning readiness. Ensure that ALL students are fueled to learn by promoting access to alternate school meal models – particularly ***Breakfast After the Bell.***



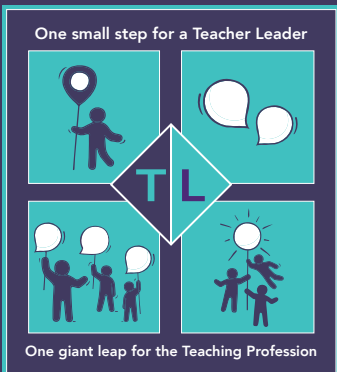
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