

REVIEW

APRIL
2022
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an education and advocacy resource



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endorsement
in action*

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Bayonne EA member conducts Ukrainian chorus to lift spirits

Featured on Saturday Night Live

Bayonne Education Association member Vasyl Hrechynsky, a music teacher from the Henry E. Harris Community School, led the Ukrainian Chorus Dumka of New York on Feb. 26 in the most unlikely of venues—Saturday Night Live (SNL).

SNL typically has a comedic sketch as part of its opening. This time was different. The opening instead featured the chorus singing "Prayer for Ukraine." Candles were arranged to spell out Kyiv. The Ukrainian Chorus Dumka's members are not professional singers and typically perform classical, spiritual and folk music.

"I am glad that we were able to lift our voices in support of those suffering from the war of aggression towards Ukraine," said Hrechynsky.

Hrechynsky has been the choir's musical director and conductor for the last 30 years.

"I feel that the attention our performance received has encouraged others to step up and do what they can to support Ukraine and her people," Hrechynsky said. "This extends beyond the people in the audiences or those watching from home. In fact, my students have seen both news footage and the video of our concert and have asked me to explain what is going on, and they want to be involved in helping Ukraine. It is important to share the Ukrainian language and culture and to show that the people of Ukraine are strong."

FEATURES



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18 | THE TEACHER LEADER ENDORSEMENT IN ACTION

In 2015, the teacher leader endorsement was established through legislation strongly supported by NJEA. In early 2020, NJEA opened its own Teacher Leader Academy to lead candidates to the endorsement. But what exactly does one do with the teacher leader endorsement? Recently, we went back to visit with some of the graduates to ask them how they have used the endorsement after they received it.

BY RICHARD WILSON



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24 | ESP MENTORING IN LIVINGSTON

The Livingston Education Association (LEA) has become only the second association in the state to launch an educational support professional (ESP) mentor program, thanks to the hard work and advocacy of its members. With support from the National Education Association and district administration, the mentoring program has the power to help school support staff succeed and stay in the profession.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



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26 | STUDENT JOURNALISTS' FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

The New Voices of New Jersey Act, signed into law last December, is a victory for student journalists' First Amendment rights. The law empowers them to write about what they believe matters and protects school employees from retaliation when protecting students' rights.

BY THOMAS MCHALE



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30 | NJEA SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The 2022 NJEA Jack Bertolino Summer Leadership Conference offers a broad menu of seminars that equip members to become stronger association advocates. This year, 30 in-depth workshops are offered as well as numerous electives.

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A budget for all

The number **\$650** million

The increase in state aid to K-12 schools in Gov. Phil Murphy's proposed budget for FY2023.

Source: NJ Department of the Treasury
state.nj.us/treasury/omb.



NJEA REPORT OF AUDIT 50
Sept. 1, 2020 - Aug. 31, 2021



GOOD NEWS

Many More Students Participating in AP Courses

The number of New Jersey public high school students taking and testing in an Advanced Placement (AP) course has more than doubled in the past 15 years.

Source:
College Board. AP Cohort Data:
Graduating Class of 2020.



On the cover



Syreeta Primas, a teacher and local leader in Pleasantville, is a member of the first cohort of teacher leader candidates to graduate from the NJEA Teacher Leader Academy.

PHOTO BY
Kathryn Coulibaly

REVIEW



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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.

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PRESIDENT'S *Message*

NJEA Teacher Leader Academy: building resilience, driving excellence

In 2015, the teacher leader endorsement was signed into law with NJEA's enthusiastic support. Since 2019, NJEA members have been enrolling in the NJEA Teacher Leader Academy to earn the endorsement and expand their leadership role in their districts while remaining in the classroom. Teacher leadership provides an opportunity for educator growth without sacrificing what so many of us love about our careers in education: working directly with students and educators.

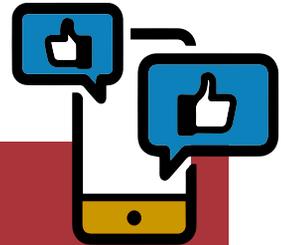
In this issue, we take a closer look at what educators' careers look like with the teacher leader endorsement. We examine the different career opportunities and what a day in the life of a teacher leader looks like, as well as how interested educators can pursue the program.

Many of these teacher leaders found that the program impacted not just their professional lives, but also their advocacy. They became more engaged with their union and drew their colleagues with them. They sought out opportunities to connect with other union members along areas of identity or interests and built stronger bonds that helped strengthen their association.

In addition, their experience with the NJEA Teacher Leader Academy helped them navigate the pandemic. The program emphasizes collaboration and helps build connections among educators in order to develop best practices. Each member is encouraged to utilize their talents to benefit the group and, ultimately, the students. By sharing their skills with the group, they helped build each other up to withstand the many challenges they experienced during the pandemic. They supported and encouraged each other during the hard times, and they celebrated the victories. As a true community, they were never alone, even when they were physically isolated.

NJEA is very proud of the teacher leader endorsement and the NJEA Teacher Leader Academy, as well as all of the graduates of the program. They are a testament to the potential of the program and the power that educators have to make fundamental, positive changes in their districts that boost morale and student achievement. We know that our schools are brimming with talent at every level. We are eager to support measures that keep excellent educators in the classroom while expanding their reach and influence.

There are many ways to expand leadership potential, for every NJEA member, from the NJEA Teacher Leader Academy to NJEA's numerous advocacy and professional development conferences. We look forward to seeing you in these spaces and helping you make the most of your talents to further the cause of public education and the power of labor unions to change the lives of working people.



SEAN M. SPILLER

Facebook

@SpillerforNJEA: Women make up more than 70% of our union, and this month—like every month—we don't just celebrate influential women who've made history, we honor and elevate the powerful contributions that all women who work in our schools and unions make every day! #WomensHistoryMonth

On March 1, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller celebrated the start of Women's History Month with a reflection on the impact that women have had on New Jersey's public schools and unions. Spiller further called for a celebration of all the women currently making history in public schools.

STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

@SteveBeattyNJEA: Honoring our county teachers of the year as well as 2022 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year Theresa Maughan! A great night with friends, colleagues, family and recipients of the honor. And the Devils came back from three goals down to win 5-3! After two years of strife, it's very nice to celebrate with each other. Thank you, New Jersey Devils, Meredith Barnes and Shannon Pellegrino for orchestrating the event!

On March 8, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty shared photos from a New Jersey's Devils game that he attended along with other association leaders, county teachers of the year, and the 2022 State Teacher of the Year, Theresa Maughan. At the game, the Devils honored all educators and gave a special shout out to Maughan for earning the honor of State Teacher of the Year.

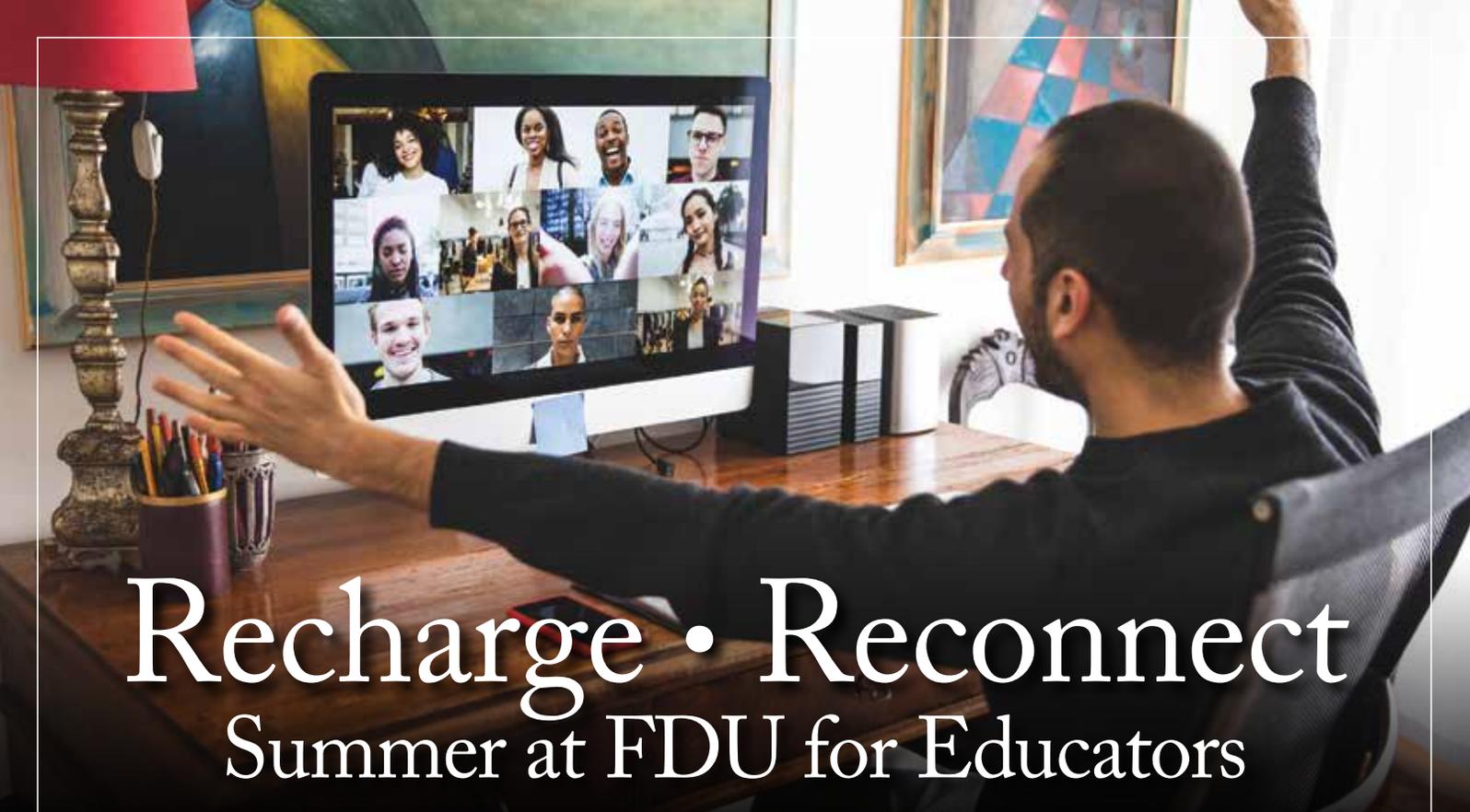
PETAL ROBERTSON

Facebook

@PetalForNJEA: Oh, what a night! Winslow Township EA hosted an awesome and informative MOC night. Thank you to Tyeisha Jefferies for demonstrating that you don't need a title to be a leader. She initiated, organized, and facilitated this learning space. Thanks to Winslow Township EA President Adam Sheridan for the support you give your members. #NJEA #UnionStrong

On March 3, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson shared photos from a Members of Color event hosted by the Winslow Township Education Association (WTEA) that she attended in Camden County. In her post-event reflection, Robertson was sure to praise the work of WTEA member-leader Tyeisha Jefferies for facilitating a powerful and informative learning session.

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BUILDING A FAMILY WORKSHOP SERIES

Part 2: Parental health topics

Continuing from the winter “Building a Family” series of workshops, the NJEA Women in Education Committee is co-sponsoring a series of virtual interactive workshops with Dr. Lauren Zucker, chair of the WIE Lactation Rights Task Force Committee, a member of Northern Highlands Education Association, and advocate for lactation rights for NJEA members.

She will be joined by industry experts from the New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition, the New Jersey Time to Care Coalition, NJEA UniServ and Legal Services, and others.

Save these dates:

Workshop 1: April 27 – Overview of resources for healthy pregnancy, birth, and early parenting

Workshop 2: May 4 – Access and maximize paid leave options to care for yourself, a child, and/or a loved one

Workshop 3: May 11 – Breastfeeding and pumping rights and resources for educators

All workshops begin at 7 p.m.

The first set of three workshops, presented by Jacqueline Mancinelli, a member from Eastern Education Association, Ambassador for Count the Kicks, and Founder of Start Healing Together, introduced NJEA members to resources available for families experiencing infertility, infant loss, and mother mortality.

To learn more about this series of workshops and register for the next in the series, visit njea.org/familysupport.

GIVE THE GIFT OF NJREA MEMBERSHIP

Some local associations or friends of the retiree purchase memberships for retiring NJEA members. Gifting an NJREA membership is a huge thing! Local associations can do this to honor their retiring staff instead of giving them a plaque or clock. Children, grandchildren, friends can “gift” a membership for a relative, a colleague, a retired educator—especially for an elderly retiree on a fixed income who doesn’t really need another sweater or flannel shirt.

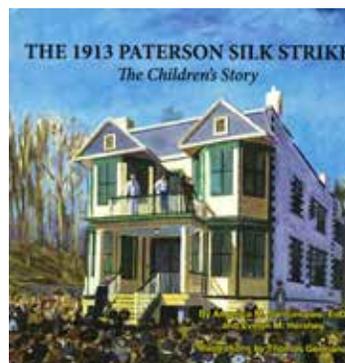
For more details about this opportunity, and payment information, call the NJEA Membership Division at 609-599-4594, ext. 4123.

SISP CORNER

For the 2021-22 school year, Sheila Caldwell, a school nurse in Matawan-Aberdeen Regional School District, is serving as an NEA Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) Fellow. Caldwell is writing a monthly online column that will go live the first of each month at njea.org/sisp. Be sure to check it out.

THE 1913 PATERSON SILK STRIKE: FREE BOOKS AVAILABLE

The American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark, also known as “Labor’s Schoolhouse,” has stood as a beacon of light on labor and



immigrant studies since opening its doors in 1982. This year, to commemorate its 40th anniversary, free copies of the book *The 1913 Paterson Silk Strike: The Children’s Story* are being distributed to public school fourth grade classrooms, school libraries and public libraries throughout the state.

“This valuable gift will inspire students, as they learn about the courage, activism and contributions of workers and

immigrants”, says Angelica Santomauro, Ed.D., NJEA/NJREA member and the museum’s executive director. “It will also enhance the teaching of New Jersey history for fourth grade teachers, with the inclusion of such an integral event that took place in their own state.”

In 2019, the New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC), a division of the Department of State, awarded the museum a grant that enabled Santomauro and the museum’s education director, Evelyn Hershey, to collaborate with artist Thomas Germano of SUNY Farmingdale, editor Mark Torres, and historian Steve Golin, Ph.D. Together, wrote the story of the silk strike through the eyes of four children.

On beautifully and detailed illustrated pages, the story unfolds in a way that enables the reader to compare and contrast the perspectives of two young brothers who needed to work in the silk mills to financially help their family, along with a brother and his sister who had the privilege of attending a public school, with no financial responsibilities. Although the children’s characters are fictional, the actual story and illustrations are based on facts and images of the 1913 Paterson Silk Strike.

The NJHC was awarded a second Project Grant to the Museum, which provided funding to print 30,000 copies of the book for statewide distribution throughout New Jersey.

“We’ll get those books out, even if we have to hand-deliver them ourselves,” Santomauro quips. “We do hope, however, that NJEA members will visit the museum, view the incredible exhibit of oil and watercolor paintings of the books illustrations and pick up enough books for their school district.”

Because postage is not a component of the grant, the museum hosted book distribution on Jan. 19 that featured the original paintings that illustrate the book, with Germano in attendance. Santomauro and Hershey discussed the book and accompanying teaching materials. NJEA members and librarians from across the state attended picking up books or arranging delivery.

To learn more about the American Labor Museum, please visit labormuseum.net. To volunteer for your community, town, district or school to pick up and distribute free books, please contact the American Labor Museum at (973) 595-7953 or labormuseum@gmail.com.

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COOL STUFF



STUDENTS CAN HONOR SCHOOL HEROES

The Trenton Thunder baseball team and NJEA are once again sponsoring a student essay contest open to all New Jersey public school students.

The topic of the contest is “My Hero Works at School.” Students are encouraged to write a short, thoughtful essay about a school employee who has had a positive impact on them. Essays should be no more than 250 words.

Three winners will be selected. The winning students and the school employees they write about will be guests of NJEA and the Trenton Thunder at the NJEA Back-to-School game on Aug. 18. Each winning student and each honored school employee will receive four tickets to the game.

The winning students and the school employees they write about will participate in pregame ceremonies and receive commemorative certificates. Participants should be available to attend the game—no substitute dates are available. The Thunder will be playing the Williamsport Crosscutters. Fireworks will follow the game.

Entries must include the student’s name, home address, parent’s name and phone number, school name and address, teacher’s name, and grade level.

Send entries to:

[NJEA-Thunder Essay Contest](#)

Attention: Meredith Barnes

Box 1211

Trenton, NJ 08607-1211

Submissions must be postmarked by Friday, May 13.

SOMERSET PATRIOTS AND NJEA TO HONOR A+ EDUCATORS

The A+ Educator program is designed to recognize the work of teachers and educational support professionals (ESPs) who provide an inclusive learning environment and engaging instruction, encourage lifelong learning, and inspire a passion for education beyond the classroom.

The Patriots and NJEA are seeking nominations through the team’s website at milb.com/35p0Nps. In order to be eligible, educators must work at a public school in Somerset, Middlesex, Union, Hunterdon, or Morris counties.

Nominations continue until June 10.

Twenty-five teachers and ESPs will be selected by judges and honored on the Patriots website, social media platforms, at TD Bank Ballpark, and throughout the season. The selected educators will receive four complimentary tickets to enjoy a 2022 Patriots game.

The A+ Educator program continues the Patriots and NJEA’s partnership to honor education professionals who make a difference in the lives of their students and have an impact on the community as a whole.



NOMINATE SCHOLAR ATHLETES FOR NJEA/NEWS 12 RECOGNITION PROGRAM

NJEA and News 12 New Jersey are seeking high school students who excel both academically and athletically. The NJEA/News 12 Scholar Athlete Recognition Program honors New Jersey high school seniors who are successful not only in the classroom, but on the court or on the field.

Thirty students will be selected based on nominations received from high schools around the state. Each week, a scholar athlete will be featured in a news segment on News 12 New Jersey. In May or June, the winners, their families, coaches, and teachers will be honored. One student will be selected as 2021-22 Scholar Athlete of the Year and receive a \$5,000 scholarship. Four finalists will receive \$1,000 each.

To nominate a student, download the form found at njea.org/scholar-athlete. The form must be signed by the principal or guidance counselor, as well as the coach or athletic director. A News 12 sports panel will make the selection.

Selections are ongoing, no applications will be accepted after May 1, 2022.



NEW JERSEY LOTTERY FESTIVAL OF BALLOONING THANKS EDUCATORS

Offers discounts to this summer’s festival

The 39th annual New Jersey Lottery Festival of Ballooning, the largest summertime hot air balloon and music festival in North America, is recognizing educators who continue to give so much of themselves, by offering discounts to attend this year’s festival.

The three-day festival features the majesty and awe-inspiring spectacle of up to 100 sport and special shaped hot air balloons taking flight twice each day over the scenic Hunterdon County countryside. The event also features a live concert series featuring Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Todd Rundgren, preeminent progressive rock band Kansas, multiplatinum-selling rock band Collective Soul, and best-selling children’s recording artist Laurie Berkner. There’s also a nighttime hot air balloon glow, fireworks, family entertainment and attractions, the Running with the Balloons 5K, children’s amusement rides, exciting interactive exhibits, hundreds of crafters and food vendors, and more.

The festival will be held from July 29-31, 2022 at Solberg Airport in Readington.

Hot air balloon rides are available at the festival, adding another dimension to the lifelong memories this event has been creating for generations.

Teachers, educational support professionals and administrators at both public and private K-12 schools and colleges/universities are eligible to save \$5 on general admission tickets by visiting GovX.com.

Lawn seating for concerts is included in the general admission price. To learn more about this year’s festival, visit balloonfestival.com.

NJEA Report

\$60K The First Day

Professional pay means teachers stay!

By Pete Vala

Money matters, yet when conversations about teachers, school counselors, school nurses and the multitude of other certificated staff working in our state's school buildings reaches the public, the reality that money makes a difference is rarely discussed. In fact, the subject is often buried as if to reflect a sort of embarrassment or shame in stating for school employees what is true about almost all other professions: money matters. That is why the NJEA has for decades been educating its members and the communities they serve about the importance of competitive starting salaries that create salary structures to attract and retain the best and brightest college prospects into the teaching profession.

The goal of a \$60K starting salary is the latest iteration of a salary campaign that began in late 1990s. To date New Jersey has 77 school districts that have reached this benchmark and two, Riverside (Burlington County) and Westfield (Union County), that have crossed over the \$70K mark. For certificated staff in those districts the economic burdens of living in New Jersey are just a little easier.

The importance of celebrating our success in reaching this goal cannot be overstated. As more districts negotiate a \$60K starting salary the pressure on surrounding districts to match them increases. This "pattern of bargaining" is what starting salary campaigns are intended to create, an atmosphere of competition between districts. More importantly, by negotiating strong starting salaries local associations have been able to improve salaries across the board for all members.

Local negotiating teams are now well educated on the importance of a competitive starting salary. It has become ingrained into their bargaining DNA. That understanding was not always clear, and our members paid the price as their salary increases stagnated.

Pete Vala is an associate director in the NJEA Division of Research and Economic Services. He can be reached at pvala@njea.org.

By the fall of 1998, NJEA staff assigned to assist local associations negotiate higher settlements and construct salary guides noticed an alarming trend: the average salary of employees in these districts was not keeping pace with the settlements the locals had previously negotiated.

A workgroup of NJEA staff and local leaders was convened and charged with determining the cause of this phenomenon and developing strategies to reverse the trend. After two years of exhaustive study, the workgroup determined that the way locals had been developing salary guides was the root cause of lagging average salary growth.

The workgroup also developed a series of remedies to help turn the situation around. A list of salary guide best practices was developed and adopted by the NJEA Representative Assembly in March of 2001. The list, titled "Best Practices for Salary Guide Development," became the center-

piece of negotiations training workshops across the state, educating local leaders on how the decisions made when constructing salary guides impacted the growth of average salary in their locals. The first best practice focuses on starting salaries, stating that "Starting salaries should be increased by the same amount as maximums and never decreased."

This concept, relatively obvious to anyone currently bargaining salaries, was somewhat revolutionary at the time of its introduction. Boards of education regularly argued that existing starting salary was adequate, and in many cases too high. In the early to mid-1990s it was not uncommon for starting salaries to be frozen or lowered in order to secure a deal. A new strategy was needed to combat this trend, leading to the birth of the of the a starting-salary campaign, "\$40K the First Day!"

Local negotiating teams all over the state created a new bargaining pattern by focusing on starting

Number of districts at \$60K

By county

There are currently 74 school districts in New Jersey with a bachelor's degree starting salary at or above \$60,000 for those on a teacher's salary guide. Listed below are the number of such districts in each county, noting as well how many districts are contained in the county.

Atlantic: 4 of 24

Bergen: 3 of 76

Burlington: 4 of 41

Camden: 2 of 38

Cape May: 2 of 17

Cumberland: 4 of 15

Essex: 2 of 23

Gloucester: 1 of 28

Hudson: 2 of 13

Hunterdon: 1 of 27

Mercer: 2 of 11

Middlesex: 1 of 25

Monmouth: 10 of 53

Morris: 6 of 40

Ocean: 4 of 29

Passaic: 4 of 41

Salem: 2 of 14

Somerset: 7 of 19

Sussex: 4 of 26

Union: 7 of 23

Warren: 2 of 24

salaries. Pushing for a \$40K starting salary soon became a need for boards of education wishing to remain competitive in the hiring market. By March of 2006 four hundred districts had negotiated a starting salary exceeding \$40K and three had negotiated a starting salary of at least \$50K. By 2008 it was apparent number of districts successfully reaching the \$40K benchmark required a pivot to a new “\$50K Right Away” campaign. By 2011 local associations were retaining more than 70% of their previously negotiated settlement in their average salary, allowing them to negotiate higher dollar increases for all members.

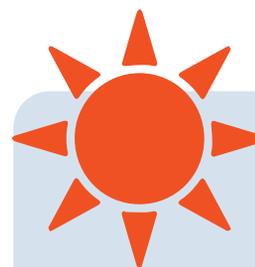
After two decades of education and hard work NJEA local affiliates are continuing to push salary boundaries. Over 200 contracts now contain certificated staff salary guides where the \$60k benchmark is within reach, with 74 having successfully negotiated a \$60K starting salary.

Compensation is a primary concern of all our members, especially during contract negotiations. Let us not accept the stigma associated with teacher pay. The attitude established within our local associations and at the bargaining table when we declare that “We are Worth It!” makes it clear to all involved: money matters.

Best Practices for Salary Guide Development

1. Starting salaries should be increased by the same amount as maximums and never be decreased.
2. Increments should be paid without devaluing steps or adding steps.
3. Increments should be uniform throughout the guide.
4. There should be as many training/educational columns as possible with uniform differentials.
5. Employees should reach maximum as quickly as possible.

Adopted by the NJEA Delegate Assembly, March 2001.



njea
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NJEA recognizes COUNTY **ESPs** OF THE YEAR

In addition to NJEA Educational Support Professional (ESP) of the Year Nancy Cogland, NJEA honors the County ESPs of the Year. These members will be recognized at the annual ESP Conference to be held on Sept. 23-25.

For more about the conference, and to register, visit njea.org/espconference.



Atlantic

Ashley Vitullo, Custodian
Mullica Township
Education Association



Gloucester

Debra DiJohn,
Principal's Secretary
Washington Township
Education Association



Ocean

Lori Paton, Secretary
Central Regional
Education Association



Bergen

Eugene Wojna,
Paraprofessional
Carlstadt Education
Association



Hudson

Joanne Seitz, Secretary
Bayonne Education
Association



Passaic

Trent Johnson,
Assistant Custodian
Passaic City Education
Association



Burlington

Marijean Andl,
Bus Driver
Lenape District Support
Staff Association



Hunterdon

Theresa Bruno,
Para-educator
Readington Education
Association



Salem

Amy Tighe,
Instructional Aide
Penns Grove-Carneys
Point Regional School



Cape May

Debra Falck, Secretary
Lower Township
Elementary Education
Association



Mercer

Linda McRae,
Paraprofessional
Trenton Education
Association



Somerset

Laura Page,
Para-educator
Bernards Township
Education Association
Employees Association



Cumberland

Damita White-Morris,
Attendance Officer
Bridgeton School
Employee Association



Middlesex

Nancy Cogland,
Paraprofessional
Old Bridge Township
Education Association



Sussex

Nancy Richeda,
Classroom Assistant
Sussex-Wantage
Education Association



Essex

Trisha Butts,
Teacher Assistant
East Orange Maintenance
Association



Monmouth

Michael Byers,
Head Custodian
Asbury Park Education
Association



Union

Susanne Waldt,
Paraeducator
Greenwich Township
Education Association



Morris

Susan Berardinelli,
Secretary
Pequanock Township
Education Association



Warren

Robert Lilly,
Custodian-Maintenance
Phillipsburg Education
Association



NJEA honors five leaders in social justice, equity and service

NJEA honored five members for their commitment and actions for social justice and equity: paraprofessional Lisa Richardson Hall, math teacher Thomas Tamburello, elementary school teacher Tamar LaSure-Owens, Spanish teacher Rocio Lopez, and retired elementary school teacher Eleanor Clark.

The awards were presented at the NJEA Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Celebration, which came at the conclusion the association's Equity Alliance Conference. The conference was held remotely on Jan. 15.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Award

NJEA Human and Civil Rights Committee



Lisa Richardson Hall, a paraprofessional in the Lawrence Township School District, is the founder of the Rays of Hope. The organization engages youth, ages 8 to 18, in cultural awareness, community service and social activism. Rays of Hope organized a Black Lives Matter rally in Jackson after the murder of George Floyd. Marchers spoke about their personal experiences with racial injustice. Richardson Hall took it a step further, helping the youth organize a meet and greet with the New Jersey Civil Rights Division, the State Police, and the Ocean County prosecutor's office.

Richardson Hall initiates numerous community and statewide service projects, including food, clothing and book drives, senior citizen engagement activities, park construction, and the collection of prom dresses and school supplies for youth living in underserved areas. Richardson Hall led youth in canvassing efforts to register voters on college campuses.

In 2019, Richardson Hall helped Rays of Hope youth organize a petition on Change.org, calling for Gov. Phil Murphy to sign legislation to end lunch shaming by providing free lunch to all students, regardless of socioeconomic status. Again, taking things a step further, she led Rays of Hope youth in a letter writing campaign to the governor on behalf of the same issue. The petition and the campaign garnered national attention and was featured on various news affiliates such as CBS2 in New York, WPIX, and NJ101.5.

Urban Educator Activist Award

NJEA Urban Education Committee



Tamar LaSure-Owens is an elementary school teacher at Leeds Avenue School in Pleasantville.

LaSure-Owens has organized and revised many of the Amistad, Holocaust, and Latino history (AMHOTINO) curriculum documents that are being rolled out in her district as well as the state. Currently, she is revising content maps to include English language arts (ELA) integration and writing lesson plans for grade levels K-5. In addition, she established in her district seven AMHOTINO Google Classrooms for each grade

level, including visual and performing arts.

LaSure-Owens advocated AMHOTINO professional development, modeling the value of cultivating partnerships to strengthen curricula and build resources. She brought leaders from the New Jersey Amistad Commission, NJEA, Atlantic County government, and the local chapter of NAACP together with Pleasantville school staff for two days of professional learning. LaSure-Owens facilitated the training and empowered educators to make connections with community stakeholders to ensure their voices are heard when advocating for honest curricula.

During the 2018-19 school year, LaSure-Owens successfully advocated for 76 staff members, including educational support professionals, teachers and other certificated staff and administrators at Leeds Avenue School to receive state Senate commendations from Sen. Chris Brown for successfully implementing the Amistad Curriculum.

LaSure-Owens also organized Rabbi Shalom Ever's visit to Leeds Avenue School in March 2020 for Purim. Ever leads Atlantic City's only synagogue, Rodef Sholom. In addition, LaSure-Owens provided teachers with classroom resources for Jewish holidays prior to Rabbi Ever's visits.

Elizabeth A. Allen Women in Education Award

NJEA Women in Education Committee



Rocio Lopez, the president of the South Orange-Maplewood Education Association and a Columbia High School Spanish teacher, is president and co-founder of We Empower Women. We Empower Women advocates for women of color and develops strategies to help them achieve their goals. Through

We Empower Women, Lopez has identified community allies to more comprehensively meet the needs of the women they serve.

Lopez also serves as the adviser for Columbia High School’s first intersectional feminist—and gender fluidity—empowerment group, “People on Women of Equity Rights” (POWER). POWER has presented workshops centered on consent, collected feminine products to be distributed throughout the district, created task forces to address allegations of sexual assault, and worked to eliminate language from the district’s code of conduct that was inequitably targeted at women and girls.

Judith M. Owens Spirit Award

Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee



Eleanor Clark was a teacher at Osage Elementary School in Voorhees Township for 42 years. Her belief in equity, equality and social justice led her to ensure that students of color and economically disadvantaged students have the tools to achieve to the highest expectations. Clark implemented the Before and After School Reading Club for first and fifth graders. She served as a mentor focusing on at-risk youth, English language learners, and students with special needs. She was also the co-chairperson for the Black History Committee at Osage Elementary School.

Clark’s passion to share knowledge and experience with her students has led her on many domestic and international travels, particularly the New Jersey Holocaust Commission’s NJEA-sponsored tour to sites of the Holocaust in Europe. These tours came with the responsibility to be a more informed educator on issues concerning the Holocaust and genocide and their long-term effects.

Clark’s love for her students went beyond the classroom. In March of 1995, Clark learned that a former student had become homeless. The former student requested that the then-named Division of Youth and Family Services call Clark. Without hesitation, she answered the call and went on to help raise him until he left for college.

Equality Champion Award

NJEA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee



Thomas Tamburello has been the adviser for the Lenape High School Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) for the past 13 years. Under his guidance, the GSA has held or participated in countless events to promote appreciation for LGBTQIA+ diversity and to promote inclusion at school and the community. These activities

include Ally Week, the Philadelphia AIDS Walk and fundraising for charities that support LGBTQIA+ families and youth. In April, the GSA participates in The Day of Silence to help bring awareness to the impact of bullying that queer students often face.

When the New Jersey Inclusive Curriculum Law was passed in 2021, Tamburello met with Lenape’s history supervisor to discuss how curricula would be updated to include the contributions of the queer community. He also assists Lenape staff when parents or students are looking for LGBTQIA+ resources.

Tamburello sits on the board of the Collingswood chapter of PFLAG, an organization that helps parents and friends of LGBTQIA+ persons.

Tamburello served on the NJEA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Committee for over a decade and as its chairperson for most of that time. With help from the SOGI Committee, he worked with NJEA staff to establish the first LGBTQIA+ professional development conference and was instrumental in helping the committee develop the Equality Champion Award. Under his leadership, the committee held its first annual brunch at the NJEA Convention and participated in various pride events throughout the state, most notably at Asbury Park.

Tamburello worked with NJEA to lobby in Trenton numerous times when Marriage Equality was up for debate in New Jersey. He also served on committees and panels with members from the Department of Education when the NJ Anti-Bullying law was amended to make sure it addressed the needs of LGBTQIA+ students.

PENSION UPDATE

TOTAL PENSION FUND: \$99.12 BILLION

The totals below reflect market values as of November 30, 2021, and for comparison, May 31, 2021. The figures, which are rounded, may not reflect the current market values of some alternative investments through the period noted, because of lags in reporting under industry standards.

	Nov. 30, 2021		May 31, 2022	
	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation
Global Growth	\$57.07	57.58%	\$54.16	58.44%
Income	\$18.04	18.20%	\$15.40	16.61%
Real Return	\$7.57	7.64%	\$7.13	7.70%
Defensive	\$14.38	14.51%	\$14.15	15.27%
Other	\$2.04	2.06%	\$1.84	1.97%
Total	\$99.12	100%	\$92.68	100%

A LEADER IN EVERY SEAT

How the first cohort of teacher leaders are using their endorsement

BY RICHARD WILSON

A leader in every seat: this is one of the key tenets of the NJEA Teacher Leader Academy (TLA), a state approved program that leads members to the New Jersey teacher leader endorsement. Imagine a school district in which teacher voice is elevated in a true model of shared decision making. That is the visionary promise of teacher leadership.

In 2015, the teacher leader endorsement was established through legislation strongly supported by NJEA. It took four years to work through the regulatory process, and in early 2020, NJEA opened its own Teacher Leader Academy to lead candidates to the endorsement.

But this endorsement was unlike any other license issued by the New Jersey Department of Education. Every other certificate or endorsement is a license to do a particular job, or to teach a particular cluster of classes. Someone with an instructional certificate and an elementary endorsement can teach in an elementary classroom. The students with disabilities endorsement will allow someone to teach students eligible for special education services. At the secondary level, a

subject area endorsement allows one to teach classes within a specific subject area. But what exactly does one do with a teacher leader endorsement?

Approved programs of study that lead to the endorsement are required to be based on a set of standards commonly referred to as the Teacher Leader Model Standards. Developed in 2010, these standards cover a wide range of areas commonly addressed by teacher leaders, from fostering collaborative cultures to professional learning to advocating for students and the profession. Depending on a teacher's work context and their own passions and interests, teacher leadership exhibits itself in a great variety of ways.

So, we return to the question: What exactly does one do with the teacher leader endorsement? In recognition of the variety of ways in which teacher leadership shows itself, there is not yet a prescribed list of job titles from the Department of Education that the endorsement entitles its holders to attain. The New Jersey Teacher Leader Advisory Board, which studied the issue for two years to advise the Department of Education on regulations, recommended that it be up to local school districts to decide how best to use the endorsement and that it would be foolish to try to develop a list of "jobs" at the statewide level.

One way to look at the endorsement and how it can be used is to follow those who were among the first to earn the endorsement.

The NJEA TLA graduated its first cohort in the spring of 2021. Recently, we went back to visit with some of the graduates to ask them how they have used the endorsement in the year that followed.

Even with all the restrictions that the pandemic brought in the last year, we discovered that some of the TLA graduates found ways to use their new understandings in their own districts while others went outside their districts to explore leadership opportunities, both in nonprofit and union spaces. Many TLA graduates have been active in some combination of district, nonprofit and union spaces. But wherever they have exerted their leadership, it has been to build the capacity of their peers in order to better the lives of their students and the communities in which they work.

LEADING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Justin Saxon is a teacher in the therapeutic intervention program at Northern Valley Regional School District. He has been a longtime advocate for teacher leadership. The Northern Valley Regional School District has a long history of high quality professional learning for the high school and the seven elementary districts that send students to the high school.

As a special educator, Saxon knew that the needs of special educators could be met in the districts' shared professional development center. Using some of what he

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



Teacher Leader Syreeta Primas with her students in Pleasantville.

had learned as a student in the teacher leader academy, he advocated for those needs among the superintendents of all eight districts in the Northern Valley region.

Saxon was able to carve out new duties for himself this year. He continued to teach while spending several periods a day engaging in professional learning for special educators. This year, he took on building capacity with colleagues in the therapeutic intervention program, as well as building a sustained professional learning pathway around social and emotional learning (SEL) in Demarest, one of the elementary districts that is part of the regional system. That pathway included 12 formal learning sessions on SEL coupled with individual coaching for all the teachers and paraprofessionals who signed up to be part of the program.

LEADING IN CONVERSATIONS ON EQUITY

One of the unique features of the Teacher Leader Academy is that most of the work and class meetings are done in small regional study groups. The groups become incubators of leadership, with the members developing close bonds. Many in the

first cohort report that this structure led to great learning opportunities and relationships that have continued beyond the program itself.

Charlene Gerbig, an elementary teacher in Closter credits her study group with helping her on her journey to develop a greater understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion, (DEI) and has led her to become a leader on issues of DEI in her own district.

Gerbig reports that she “felt changed on a cellular level” from the conversations in her study group meetings, which provided a much more diverse group than the staff in her district. Those conversations shifted her entire perspective in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the greater visibility of the Black Lives Matter movement.

When Gerbig’s district began to require that teachers address issues of DEI in their classrooms, she took it upon herself to initiate conversations with colleagues to help them be ready to engage in those lessons. She created a library of resources in a Google app for teachers to use.

Gerbig serves on a regional professional development committee made up of seven school districts. She took it upon herself to create

and facilitate a workshop promoting cultural competence and multicultural understanding during a regional professional development day. That workshop led to more conversations where Gerbig tried to find the entry point with each of her colleagues and then challenged them to grow in their own understanding.

Gerbig sums it up best when she says, “It’s important to have the conversations and have the professional development—examine our pedagogy and our classroom resources. We must examine what our classrooms look like so that they reflect the students in our classrooms, the communities in which we teach, and the world beyond.”

LEADING IN HEALING COMMUNITIES

As an English language learner (ELL) teacher, Dr. Johanna Amaro found herself at the intersection of several NJEA programs that have transformed her teaching and leadership practice. Her school in Plainfield was an NJEA Priority School, a program that supported challenged schools by creating leadership teams and providing coaching support for educators. Amaro credits the TLA with giving her the skills to negotiate her



Teacher Leader Lateefah Scott conducts a math lesson with seventh graders in Atlantic City.

way through the leadership team and support her colleagues and students.

Amaro found that these skills along with the learning she had done with NJEA around adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and healing-centered schools were the combination she needed to help the school to create a community focused on the healing and support of students during the pandemic. The leadership team would meet in a virtual circle to develop strategies to support staff and students. She put that experience of circle practice to use with both her colleagues and her students—a practice that has continued with her students as well to build community following the time away from school.

REDEFINING LEADERSHIP

Christin Walsh has been an educator for 19 years, and most recently served as a reading specialist in the Manasquan School District. Through the pandemic, and when she was attending the TLA, her job responsibility shifted to teaching second and third grades in an online environment.

Walsh has always found herself in leadership positions, whether it be through her local association or through assorted committee

work in the district. Trying to negotiate her way through several leadership opportunities, she struggled with the question of moving into administration. In her discernment process she came to a realization: “I can teach people to read. Why would I want to spend my time as a vice principal dealing with nothing but discipline?”

That realization shifted the way Walsh saw her new role in leadership emerge. In meeting with her superintendent, she was able to articulate her passion for education in the district and the role she could play in her school in helping to build the capacity of her peers. New building administrators, who had experience with instructional coaches in their former districts cemented the deal, and Walsh’s role as a reading specialist morphed into supporting colleagues as much as supporting struggling readers.

Running the Intervention and Referral Services team, supporting the staff with new Tier 1 interventions, and coaching teachers in new assignments are among some of the responsibilities Walsh has taken on. She has a laundry list of new initiatives and projects that she sees as possibilities. They are the kinds of possibilities that people only see when they are occupying the seat of a teacher, as opposed to

an administrator who is separated just enough from the everyday work of teaching and learning.

LEADING FROM EVERY SEAT

A key belief of the TLA is that there is a leader in every seat, but some people are destined to lead from every seat in which they sit. Teacher leadership can show itself both inside and outside the school district, building capacity among individual colleagues as well as leading for systemic change. A perfect example is Syreeta Primas who has served as the team leader of her first-grade team in Pleasantville for many years. This was the place where she saw her leadership when she entered the TLA in January 2020. She also has done her part in her union, serving as an association representative.

Through the TLA Primas recognized more of her leadership potential. Being the kind of person who always says “Yes,” she has found herself in more and more leadership roles both in and out of the school building.

Inside of the district, she mentors new teachers, and this year is yet again mentoring a novice teacher. Taking the notion of “a leader in every seat,” Primas understood that one job of a teacher leader is to discover and build the leadership skills

“

One way to look at the endorsement and how it can be used is to follow those who were among the first to earn the endorsement.

of others. The novice teacher that Primas is mentoring this year is, as she describes it, “a tech genius,” so Primas went right to work to integrate the teacher into the team and let her share her skills so that the rest of the first-grade team saw her value and embraced her as well.

This year, Primas upped the ante in her union leadership, serving as a vice president of her local. When there was a change in leadership at the district level, she decided to use the influence of her association position to meet with a new superintendent with a focus on building morale and creating a culture in which her colleagues feel valued, so they can be successful with their students.

Primas’ leadership does not end at the door of her school building, or even within the boundaries of her school district. An interview to tutor with an outside nonprofit, Future Leaders, that provides leadership and tutoring opportunities for students in her district turned into a much greater opportunity for Primas to have an impact on both students and her school district. As she described her work with the TLA she got hired, but she is doing far more than tutoring. Primas is creating curricula and connecting with teachers throughout the district to act as a liaison between the Pleasantville School District and Future Leaders. This ensures that Future Leaders can create curricula that supports the district students.

FINDING YOUR VALUE AS A LEADER

For some, shifting to a more formal teacher leader role is not possible in the district where they had been teaching. This was the case for Brittany Bloss, who had been looking to exert her teacher leadership through an instructional coaching position. In the middle of last year, she learned of a position in Howell, a district not too far from her home.

From the start, Bloss credits the learning from the TLA for helping her make it through the interview process and in her now current position as a middle school math coach. When she recounts the story of her interview process, she says that every question she was asked was a topic covered in the TLA curriculum. She has found that every challenge in this new position was also something that was addressed in the TLA program. Bloss is particularly proud that she



Top: Teacher Leader Justin Saxon in a coaching session with special education teacher Ashley Graham at Northern Valley Regional schools.
Middle: Teacher Leader Dr. Johanna Amaro with Evergreen School Vice Principal Juanpablo Jimenez in Plainfield. (Photo by Gloria Montealegre, PPS)
Bottom: Teacher Leader Syreeta Primas with staff at Leeds Avenue Elementary School in Pleasantville. From left Patricia Davis, Romise Austin, Jennifer Dunn, Amanda Lenahan, and Primas.



Teacher Leader Dr. Johanna Amara with Plainfield High School seniors, Emily and Naidelyn.

is only the second instructional coach ever hired from outside the district, and of the outside hires, the only one without prior coaching experience.

As a math instructional coach, Bloss works in one building supporting anyone who teaches math, either directly or as part broader job classification. That means providing resources for math teachers as well as special education and ELL teachers in implementing a new math curriculum as well as heading up the response to intervention process for math. She is also able to work in the classroom with some of the struggling math students.

Bloss describes her process of coaching as helping teachers form their goals and work toward them. She is working hard to not be seen as a supervisor, which means building trust with her colleagues.

Bloss describes the TLA as “yearlong professional development—the growth I took

away as a person; I changed in my listening, my availability, how I hear people, how I communicate with people, how I honor other people’s voices and vision and lift other people up. It’s so much more than learning reading strategies; it was a life changing year.”

That awakening has been particularly important in dealing with the impact the pandemic has had on school culture. She describes a common symptom of trauma as going inward and isolating oneself. This conflicts with what we know from the research: schools work best when there is a sense of collective efficacy among the staff. As an instructional coach, she sees it as part of her responsibility to create space where teachers can come together and reestablish their relationships, so they can build those communities in their classrooms to lead to healthier students and better learning.

“

Wherever they have exerted their leadership, it has been to build the capacity of their peers in order to better the lives of their students and the communities in which they work.

LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Lateefah Scott in Atlantic City found herself stepping into leadership roles both within and outside her school district. Scott had been a participant in the NEA Leaders for Just Schools program, but the skills and knowledge she had gained in the TLA gave her the confidence to seek out the role of facilitator in that program. As such, she works with educators from across the country to dive into understanding equity, to investigate how bias impacts the conditions of teaching and learning, and to explore ways in which they can improve school culture so that every student has the opportunity to succeed. As a facilitator, she not only leads workshops, she builds ongoing relationships among educators across the country and works with them to develop and implement plans to create more just schools.

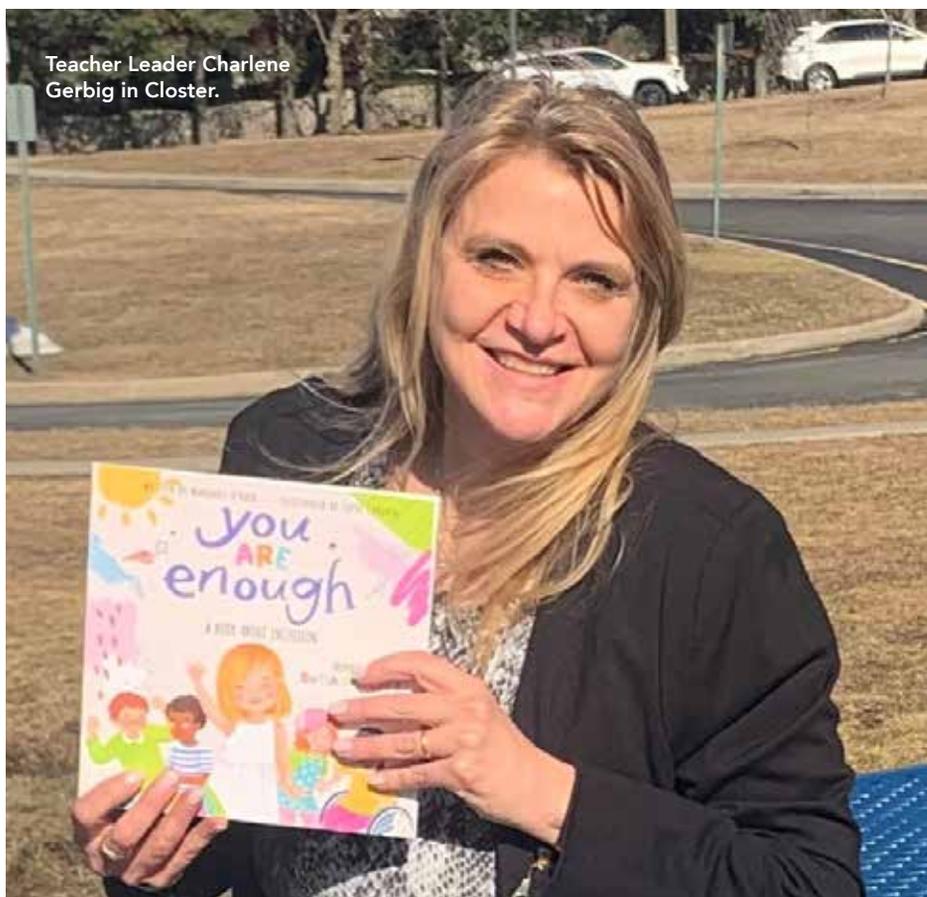
Scott's knowledge of adult learning and professional development, combined with her passion for equity within the union, was the perfect combination for her to seek opportunities to provide workshops for the statewide NJEA Members of Color (MOC) Network. One of her aims with MOC was to facilitate sessions on navigating the union at the local level as a member of color. Within her own school district, she shifts that knowledge of adult learning to host sessions for co-teachers on how to work together as a team.

On the local level, Scott continues to take her skills and apply them to supporting her colleagues and her school district. She has collaborated with her district in developing NJEA FAST programs (Families and Schools Together) as well as providing workshops in co-teaching for her colleagues.

THE CHALLENGE OF DEFINING TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Looking at this small sample demonstrates the challenge of defining “teacher leadership” and any attempt to attach a set of specific responsibilities to holding the teacher leader endorsement. At the same time, it also shows the value of participating in a high-quality teacher leader program.

These teacher leaders also reveal the potential to consider a new paradigm for school leadership. Consider the possibilities for schools and our students if we shifted from the hierarchical structures in schools and truly embraced the notion of a leader in every seat. 🌱



Teacher Leader Charlene Gerbig in Closter.

Apply to join the NJEA Teacher Leader Academy

Has this article sparked your interest in pursuing the teacher leader endorsement?

The NJEA Teacher Leader Academy is a New Jersey Department of Education approved one-year program for candidates seeking to earn the teacher leader endorsement. Through the program you can also earn 12 graduate credits from Thomas Edison State College.

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

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

A new cohort begins this July. The application deadline is May 15.

For more information and to apply, visit njea.org/tla. Questions? Write to teacherleader@njea.org.

Livingston launches ESP mentor program

By Kathryn Coulibaly

The Livingston Education Association (LEA) has become the second association in the state to launch an educational support professional (ESP) mentor program, thanks to the hard work and advocacy of its members.

The teaching assistants in Livingston have had a rough road. Fourteen years ago, Lisa Bonvini, Beth Waldron and Cathy Lindsey were full-time employees with benefits. Two years later, the teaching assistants were outsourced, and they all lost their benefits. When the board brought them back, it was on a part-time basis at 28.75 hours and without benefits.

This change affected only the teaching assistants, and it spurred many of them to become more involved in their local association.

“We all became building representatives,” Waldron recalled. “We began going to meetings and got more and more involved in the union. We wanted to make sure that the voices of our teaching assistants continued to be heard in our union and in our executive board meetings.”

“Then, about six years ago, I got on the negotiations team,” Bonvini said. “My goal was to get our benefits back.”

During their last round of bargaining, the teaching assistants got single benefit coverage for teaching assistants, but no family coverage. They also were restored to full-time status and were able to eliminate a horrible practice where every teaching assistant would get a reduction-in-force (RIF) letter every May. They would not know until June if they would be hired for the next school year.

Thanks to these wins at the bargaining table, Livingston won the 2021 NJEA Jim George Collective Bargaining Award, but Bonvini, Waldron, and Lindsey weren’t done. They felt strongly that the damage that had been done to the teaching assistants’ morale could not be undone at the bargaining table.

Bonvini was on Facebook during last Memorial Day Weekend, a rainy one, and saw a post about the ESP mentoring program offered by NEA.

“I thought it was a great idea; there’s nothing worse than seeing a teaching assistant come in and be thrown into a classroom. You don’t know where to park, when to sign in, how lunches work,” Bonvini said. “I knew that Beth and Cathy would jump on this idea, so we decided to apply.”



Beth Waldron, Lisa Bonvini, and Cathy Lindsey developed the Livingston EA teaching assistants mentor program.

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.

“

Each month, the board announces new hires. Bonvini monitors the list, and if there are new teaching assistants she lets the mentors know to reach out.

Livingston’s application to NEA was approved and LEA President Anthony Rosamilia recommended working with Lisa Steiger, the assistant superintendent, on the mentoring program.

“Having Lisa Steiger work on this with us was very beneficial,” Bonvini said. “We knew what administration would support, and we could work with that. Beth, Cathy, and I met with Lisa over the summer, as well as our NEA liaison, and our in-state mentor, Olive Giles, who is the vice president of the Princeton Regional Educational Support Staff Association. Olive started the state’s first ESP mentor program in Princeton, and we have benefited so much from her experience.”

The team worked all summer, primarily via Zoom, to learn all they could from NEA and Giles and to create the program and materials. Waldron, Lindsey, Bonvini, and Steiger spent countless hours developing a program that would meet the unique needs of Livingston’s teaching assistants.

“We had our hair up in scrunchies sitting around a table working on this all summer long,” Bonvini remembered.

MENTORS ARE LEADERS AND AMBASSADORS

Their hard work and hair neglect paid off. By the end of the summer, they were ready. The program began with the 2021-22 school year. The team brought the mentors in and trained them. They went over the things they learned from NEA and compiled a folder for each mentor on the topics they should make sure to cover. Each month, the mentors meet with their mentee for at least an hour and log it, but they are available any time to their mentees.

Some of the topics they make sure are covered at the beginning are the teaching assistant job description, the teaching assistant handbook, the culture in the building, and the importance of confidentiality. They stress to the mentors that they are leaders and ambassadors; they are not evaluating mentees. They also go over the ethics and professional boundaries about dealing with students, parents and staff. The topics range from practical to those that are vital, but unique to the school environment. For example, in October, they talk about how to sign up for benefits and the protocol for Halloween.

Each month, the board announces new hires. Bonvini monitors the list, and if there are new teaching assistants she lets the mentors know to reach out.

Currently, there are 11 mentors—one for each building and two at the high school. One elementary school has an applied behavior analysis (ABA) program. At that school there is one mentor for the mainstream program teaching assistant and one for the ABA teaching assistant, because the needs and protocols may be different. In total, there are about 45 mentees.



The Livingston Public Schools TA Mentor team.

ELEVATING THE WORK OF ESPS

The impact of the mentoring program is already being felt in Livingston, not just among the teaching assistants, but across the school community.

“It’s important to help teaching assistants feel comfortable, engaged, and a valued part of our school community,” Lindsey said. “That’s good for the students, the teachers, and the rest of the staff.”

“Here in Livingston, we really see the power of mentoring and the potential it has to help people succeed and stay in the profession, so we wanted to extend that to teaching assistants who work hand-in-hand with teachers,” LEA President Anthony Rosamilia said. “Every chance we get, we want to elevate the work that ESP members do, but our teaching assistants specifically need to be in the spotlight. We’re really happy that administration saw the value in this program and that the assistant superintendent participated over the summer to collaborate on the mentoring program.”

“NEA was impressed at the relationship we have with administration,” Bonvini said. “It meant a lot to have Lisa Steiger working around the table with us; not all districts have that.”

Bonvini, Waldron, and Lindsey are hopeful for the future of the program.

“Our team is going to meet midyear and again at the end of the year to evaluate what we believe is working and what we would like to change,” Bonvini said. “We’re funded through NEA this year, but we’re going to have to work to find funding in the future. I hope people see the value in this. Our goal is to get our program firmly established so that we can go out there like Olive and help other districts start ESP mentor programs across the state. Every district in NJ should have an ESP mentor program!” 🍌

New Voices Law strengthens student *journalists'*

First Amendment rights

Protects educators from retaliation
when supporting students

By Thomas McHale





The staff of the student newspaper, *The Highlander*, from left: Lauren McMahon, Evan Gorny, Aidan English, and Holliday Woodard.

In 2013, Kylie Sposato was 17-year-old senior at Pemberton High School working on a column for her journalism class. She decided to write her piece about a problem with girls smoking in the bathroom. Sposato interviewed students and school security, wrote the column and submitted it for publication.

To her surprise, the column was removed by the principal because she said it was inappropriate for publication in *The Stinger*, the school's newspaper. This would set off a controversy that would play out in the local press and result in the removal of Sposato's adviser, Bill Gurden.

Sposato is now a kindergarten teacher at Springfield Elementary in Mount Laurel.

Thomas McHale is a journalism and English teacher at Hunterdon Central Regional High School. He is a board member of the Garden State Scholastic Press Association. He can be followed on Twitter at @tmchale42 and Medium at @tmchale. He can be reached at tmchale@hcrhs.org.

"Until that moment, I didn't realize how political schools could be," Sposato said. "It made me use my voice more. You should be able to write what you want."

Incidents like this have not been uncommon in New Jersey, but a new law provides protections that make censorship like this illegal.

WHAT IS NEW VOICES?

The New Voices of New Jersey Act, P.L. 2021, Chapter 309, protects the First Amendment rights of student journalists and protects school employees from retribution for simply supporting the rights of student journalists.

"Having this in place now is going to open up new doors to students writing about what they care about and what they think is important," Sposato said.

The law provides better guidance for administrators on what they can restrict. For the last 34 years, schools have relied on the standard of "legitimate pedagogical concern" for guidance on when they can censor speech in student media.

**“
I would like to see
students be bold
and go after what
they feel needs to
be covered.”**

That standard stems from the U.S. Supreme Court's 1988 decision in *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*.

Hillary Davis is the advocacy and organizing director for the Student Press Law Center, which has supported New Voices legislative efforts throughout the country. The SPLC also provides free legal help for anyone involved with student journalism.

"Legitimate pedagogical concern was never defined," Davis said. "Different people have



Holliday Woodard, a student journalist, celebrates the New Voices Law. The QR-code on her poster links to a website for Student Press Freedom Day.

“
**Robust student
 media plays a vital
 role in a school’s
 culture.**

interpreted it in different ways. And in a large number of cases, that meant censorship for any reason that caused discomfort to the school or the school administration. New Voices fixes that by clearly defining when students may cross a line where the administration needs to step in. But for the most part, it really just makes clear that students are able to publish what they feel they need to be able to publish.”

New Voices of New Jersey went into effect immediately when it was signed by Gov. Phil

Murphy last December. School districts, however, will have until the beginning of the 2022-23 school year to change their scholastic publications policies to adhere to the law. The Student Press Law Center is providing districts with model policies that are posted to their website (splc.org), and they will be mailing out comprehensive brochures to advisers, principals and administrators.

“We’re going to go ahead and make this easy on everybody,” Davis said. “Nobody should be in a position of inadvertently violating the law. And so we’re going to help with that effort.”

SPREADING THE WORD

Now that the law has been passed, the focus has shifted to education and awareness. Sara Fajardo is one of a group of students in New Jersey who have been trained through the Student Press Law Center’s New Voices Leadership Institute. Fajardo worked to get the bills passed last year while also acting as co-editor-in-chief of *The Highlander*—the

student newspaper at Governor Livingston High School in Berkeley Heights.

For her, the experience has been life-changing. “Speaking to legislators made me see how much my voice can matter and how much of a difference young people can make,” Fajardo said.

Now a freshman at Rutgers University, Fajardo continues to work as an intern with the SPLC to create Instagram content, work with the New Voices Leadership Institute and anchor Zoom meetings with students from other states.

“I would like there not to be fear in journalism classrooms,” Fajardo said. “I would like to see students be bold and go after what they feel needs to be covered.”

For that to happen, students, teachers, and administrators must be aware of what the law requires and the intent behind it. Staci Toporek was Fajardo’s adviser on *The Highlander*, and she currently has students who continue this work. One of those students, Sasha Rtischchev, was also trained at the New Voices Summer Institute.

“She was instrumental in spreading awareness at the school and keeping everyone updated on the Senate and Assembly vote,” Toporek said.

Her students also made flyers that they posted around the school to raise awareness of the new law during Scholastic Journalism Week in February.

Toporek believes that student journalists should meet with school administrators to review the district’s scholastic media policy to ensure it adheres to the law. She hopes that doing this will open up a line of communication among all stakeholders involved in student media.

NJEA’S SUPPORT PROVES VITAL

While there is still much to be done, getting to this point was a journey in itself. I have worked for the past eight years with John Tagliareni. He is a retired journalism teacher and adviser from Bergenfield High School, a current board member of the Garden State Scholastic Press Association, and a member of the Journalism Education Association’s Scholastic Press Rights Committee. Tagliareni worked on legislation to protect student journalists before, getting as far as a Senate floor vote in 1989 before it was defeated.

The journey with this bill started in a political science classroom at Hunterdon Central Regional High School when a local Assemblywoman, Donna Simon, agreed to sponsor legislation to protect the First Amendment rights of student journalists. The resulting Assembly bill was introduced in a lame-duck session in 2015 with one sponsor, but eventually grew to bills that had 34 sponsors. The bills that became the New Voices of New Jersey

Act had bipartisan sponsorship with Sen. Nia H. Gill (D-Essex), Sen. Shirley K. Turner (D-Mercer), Asm. Ralph R. Caputo (D-Essex), and Asm. Harold J. Wirths (R-Sussex) as primary sponsors.

Tagliareni credits NJEA's endorsement for helping to grow that support and get the legislation passed. Along with the Student Press Law Center and the Garden State Scholastic Press Association, NJEA was the most important supporter we had, he said.

Beth Schroeder Buonsante, then an associate director of Government Relations who now coordinates the NJEA Member Benefits program, worked with us early on. She set up a meeting with the Working Conditions Committee at NJEA headquarters, which voted unanimously to support our legislation and eventually led to NJEA's support for our legislation.

As the bills got introduced, Francine Pfeffer, associate director of Government Relations, gave us advice and contacted key legislators.

"Francine was there at every Assembly hearing or took part in it and guided us—'Do this.' 'Don't do that.' 'Here's the time to do this'—so the advice that we got was excellent," Tagliareni said. "And then the other part of it was having their endorsement which was publicized on their website. That was invaluable, really."

With NJEA's published endorsements, other legislators came on board as co-sponsors.

"It certainly was helpful to be able to call legislators and tell them that our bills were NJEA-endorsed," Tagliareni said.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR THE ENTIRE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Robust student media plays a vital role in a school's culture. Hillary Davis points out that scholastic media has played a key role in keeping schools unified even during hybrid and remote learning in the last two years.

"The student media was the only thing that was linking a lot of these people together, making sure that stories that were important were being brought to light," Davis said.

She says that student media also allows students to think about big, complex ideas in a way that is written for them. It provides an opportunity to pull conversation off social media and into a public forum where all voices can be heard in an ethical and responsible way.

"And beyond that, we have to think that if we are censoring students, if we're telling them to doubt themselves first, if we're telling them to question what is important versus what is popular and convenient for them to tell, how does that impact all of us as they go out into the world?" Davis said. "So while people may like to write off student media and think that it doesn't apply to them, it certainly does. And the censorship of student journalists certainly does weaken everybody who's involved."

John Tagliareni reflected on how New Jersey's New Voices Law is one of the few that protects school employees from retaliation for solely supporting the First Amendment rights of their students.

"This is a victory for all teachers, he concluded. 🏠



What's in the New Voices Law?

The New Voices Law affirms that public school student journalists have the right to exercise freedom of speech and of the press. The law covers all New Jersey public school students whether in school districts, charter schools, renaissance schools, or public institutions of higher education.

The New Voices Law, P.L. 2021, Chapter 309, was sponsored by Sen. Nia Gill (D-Essex), Sen. Shirley Tuner (D-Mercer), Asm. Ralph Caputo (D-Essex), and Harold Wirths (R-Sussex). Gov. Phil Murphy signed the legislation on Dec. 21, 2021.

The law also protects student media advisers from retaliation for protecting students' rights under the law, including, but not limited to, dismissal, suspension, discipline, reassignment or transfer. The adviser, however, is not prohibited from teaching professional standards of English and journalism to student journalists.

Under the New Voices Law, a student journalist has the right to exercise freedom of speech and of the press in school-sponsored media, regardless of whether the media is supported financially by the school district or by use of school district facilities or produced in conjunction with a class in which the student is enrolled. A student journalist is responsible for determining the news, opinion, feature and advertising content of school-sponsored media.

School officials may restrict student journalists from distributing content that:

- Is libelous or slanderous.
- Constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy.
- Is profane or obscene.
- Violates federal or state law.
- So incites students as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of an unlawful act, the violation of school district policies, or the material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

A school district cannot authorize any prior restraint of any school-sponsored media except for the types of expression described above. When a school official determines that the restraint of student expression is necessary, the school official must identify the provisions of the law under which the limitation of student expression is appropriate.

By the 2022-23 school year, school districts must adopt a written policy concerning student freedom of expression in accordance with the law.

If your student journalists have experienced or are at risk of censorship, they may contact the Student Press Law Center's legal hotline at splc.org/legalrequest. For more information, visit the Student Press Law Center at splc.org.

If, as an adviser, you believe that you have suffered retaliation as a result of protecting the rights of student journalists, contact your association representative or local association president.



2022 NJEA JACK BERTOLINO
SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

njea[®]
SLC
2022

Session I - August 6-8, 2022 (Saturday-Monday)
Session II - August 8-10, 2022 (Monday-Wednesday)

Hilton East Brunswick
Three Tower Center Boulevard
East Brunswick, NJ

2022 JACK BERTOLINO SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



The 2022 NJEA Jack Bertolino Summer Leadership Conference will offer a broad menu of workshops that equip members to become stronger association advocates. Most workshops offer 7.5 hours of training. A longer workshop providing additional hours of training is available for newer presidents and other local officers.

There are two sets of three-day programs:

- Workshop I – Aug. 6-8 (Saturday to Monday)
- Workshop II – Aug. 8-10 (Monday to Wednesday)

Not all of the 30 workshops are offered in each workshop period. The workshop descriptions provided on the following pages indicate when any given program is scheduled. To accommodate educational support professional members (ESP) who may wish to limit use of vacation or personal time, Workshop Number 20 runs from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon.

For all other workshops, registration begins on Day One at 1 p.m. The first program, a “mini-course,” begins at 4:15 p.m. Day Three ends with a brunch, which is served at 10:30 a.m. following the final workshop session.

This year’s summer leadership conference will take place at Hilton East Brunswick. The conference is dedicated to developing association advocate representatives. Accordingly, no professional development credit is given for attendance in any seminar.

How do I register?

If you are an NJEA member, you are eligible and encouraged to attend this summer leadership conference offering 30 advocacy workshops. You will find topics that will prepare you for your current or future roles, sharpen your leadership skills and show you how your local can develop to its full-functioning capacity.

The purpose of this article is to alert members to this training opportunity and describe the 30 workshop programs available this year, but to register you need to talk to your local and/or county association president.

Local and county association presidents will receive registration brochures with detailed information on the 2022 NJEA Jack Bertolino Summer Leadership Conference. You must contact your local president and consult that brochure to learn more about lodging, daily schedules, accommodations for members with special needs, and registration.

If you have a special physical or communication need or other disability that may require assistance or accommodations to permit or facilitate your attendance and participation, or if you have any questions or concerns about housing arrangements, please contact NJEA by June 1 at slc@njea.org or at 609-599-4594, ext. 2270.

Scholarships

Scholarships are available for first-time attendees. See your local and/or county president for more information.

Health and safety protocols

SLC is planned to be an in-person conference this year. However, during the pandemic, all arrangements are subject to change in response to public health directives. Current NJEA policy requires that face masks must be worn. In addition, all attendees are required to show proof that they have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or have had a negative result on a PCR test within 72 hours prior to the beginning of the conference. Registrants will be notified of the health and safety protocols well before the conference so necessary precautions can be made to meet the requirements, if any.

Which workshop should I take?

NJEA offers many advocacy conferences with a large array of workshops. Selecting which to take can be a daunting task. Whether you are currently serving in a leadership position or you have aspirations to become involved in some capacity within your local association, there are trainings that can help develop and hone your skills. To guide you, positions within the association are listed on the next page, followed by workshops that would be beneficial to you. You will discover that being an officer is not the only position within your association and there are opportunities to get involved in other ways. Additionally, we have included a track for those exploring future leadership. Please note that not all of these workshops are offered at the Summer Leadership Conference and may be offered at other conferences throughout the year. These courses are not listed in any particular order and are not mandatory to serve in any position. Not all of the workshops offered at the Summer Leadership Conference are listed on this, so please review this menu of works before making your selection.



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Engaging All Members *
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VICE PRESIDENT

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Calling All Policy Wonks! 23

*Workshops not offered at 2022 SLC; please check future NJEA conferences.



Workshops

1. Now That I'm President, What Do I Do? (offered 8/6-8 and 8/8-10)

PART 2 – 9/30-10/1 – 1-½ Day Workshop

For: Newly elected presidents

The job of an effective local president is the most challenging you'll ever face in your association. This workshop is designed to help newly elected presidents identify those challenges, develop strategies to deal with them, and build a strong, effective association. We will discuss advocacy topics so you leave empowered and with all the information you need to lead your association.

This training begins prior to the start of the conference at 1:15 p.m. Participants should plan to arrive by 12:45 p.m.

Resident: \$458* Commuter: \$371*

**If a single room is requested for Workshop 1, the cost is \$626 since an additional overnight occurs in September*

2. Vital Skills for Experienced Presidents (offered 8/8-10)

For: Experienced presidents

Prerequisite: At least one year of experience as a president

In this workshop, experienced local presidents will have the opportunity to learn not just from the presenters, but from each other. As the light at the end of the COVID tunnel becomes brighter, the workshop will help leaders prepare to regain a sense of normalcy. Membership, advocacy, communications, and legal updates will be highlighted. Through these topics and others that may arise, we will explore what you learned about yourself as a leader during this current moment and how to move your association forward. The goal is for presidents to leave the workshop feeling energized, renewed, and ready to face the upcoming school year with confidence.

Resident: \$297 Commuter: \$257

3. Basic Treasurer's Training (offered 8/6-8 and 8/8-10)

For: Local treasurers

Learn the ABCs of being a local treasurer. Understand the fiduciary responsibilities of this important association role. Learn about building a budget and fiscal issues, implementing time management tools, taking the fear out of treasury audits and payroll, and laying the foundation for a computerized treasury. Lastly, understand the benefits of the Local Association Financial Assistance Program (LAFAP) form and learn how to complete a LAFAP through our online system.

Resident: \$297 Commuter: \$257

4. Advanced Treasurer's Training (offered 8/8-10)

Prerequisite: Treasurers who have completed Basic Treasurer's Training

This course is designed for the experienced treasurer interested in using Quicken® to maintain the association's books and conform to Local Association Financial Assistance Program (LAFAP) reporting requirements.

Enrollment limited to 18 participants (one per local). Computers will be provided.

Resident: \$397 Commuter: \$357

5. Basic Grievance Processing (offered 8/6-8 and 8/8-10)

For: Any member who is new to grievance processing as either an association representative (AR) or as a grievance committee representative

This workshop will provide an introduction to the basic vocabulary, essential tools, complete process, and changing laws of grievance work from the local association level through court appeals. Problem-solving options will be made available to local grievance representatives. These will be reviewed through case studies illustrating specific solutions to real problems.

Participants need to bring a copy of their collective bargaining agreement.

Resident: \$297 Commuter: \$257

6. Advanced Grievance Processing (offered 8/6-8 and 8/8-10)

Prerequisite: Basic Grievance Processing or experience in processing grievances

Learn the skills needed, and why it is necessary, for the local association to present grievances effectively at the board of education level. Case studies and role playing will be utilized in group activities in order for participants to present a grievance to a board of education. Participants will be instructed in the following concepts prior to preparing their cases: past practice, clear versus ambiguous contract language, just-cause standards, management rights, maintenance of benefits, and duty of fair representation.

Resident: \$297 Commuter: \$257

7. Legal Issues Affecting School Employees (offered 8/6-8 and 8/8-10)

For: All members

This workshop is an in-depth review of pertinent provisions of school and labor laws and administrative and legal decisions affecting members. We will examine the impact of school and labor laws on employment, analyze techniques for proper forum selection for dealing with disputes (i.e., role of PERC, the commissioner of education, courts, and agencies), review decisional law and legislative enactments, recognize statute applications/interpretations through case-by-case determination, and examine, analyze, and review association roles.

Resident: \$297 Commuter: \$257

8. PERC Law (offered 8/6-8 and 8/8-10)

For: Negotiators, grievance committee representatives, and other association leaders

To assist in negotiations and representation, this workshop will focus on unfair labor practices and court cases outlining negotiability/arbitrability disputes including discipline, transfers, extracurricular assignments, and duty of fair representation. What constitutes past practice, just cause, and relief from unilateral changes in working conditions will be explored in depth.

Resident: \$297 Commuter: \$257

9. AR – Key to a Strong Organization (offered 8/6-8 and 8/8-10)

For: Association representatives; open to all members

Learn the fundamentals and develop skills to become an association advocate. This program concentrates on contract enforcement, basic school law, member benefits, membership promotion, emerging instructional issues, legislative action, and your state and national association.

Resident: \$297 Commuter: \$257

10. Basic Collective Bargaining (offered 8/6-8 and 8/8-10)

For: New and inexperienced negotiators

Master the essential phases of bargaining with particular emphasis on the role of laws in the negotiations process; organization of and preparation for negotiations; negotiations tactics and techniques; the use of mathematics in negotiations; the 2010 bargaining law; impasse resolution including mediation, fact-finding, and superconciliation; job actions and communication; and ratification.

Resident: \$297 Commuter: \$257

11. Advanced Collective Bargaining (offered 8/6-8 and 8/8-10)

For: Experienced negotiators who have completed Basic Collective Bargaining or members who have actively participated in the bargaining process as a member of a team

Advanced Collective Bargaining workshop topics include hot topics at the table, how to get to where we want to go, salary guides (alternative methods of distribution), what to do when the going gets tough, legislation affecting bargaining, and bargaining health benefits.

Resident: \$297 Commuter: \$257

12. Basic Salary Guides (offered 8/6-8)

For: New local negotiators preparing for successful salary negotiations

Methods of costing, analyzing, and understanding salary guides will be presented. Successful salary negotiations techniques such as developing comparisons, member input, district's ability to pay, planning salary guide workshops, and planning a successful ratification will be emphasized. Challenges facing ESP and inclusive local associations will be stressed. Current issues of importance will be discussed and successful strategies in these areas will be presented.

Participants need to bring a copy of their collective bargaining agreement.

Resident: \$297 Commuter: \$257

13. Advanced Salary Guides (offered 8/8-10)

Prerequisite: Basic Salary Guides

The workshop will give participants an understanding of how salary guides are constructed and calculated. Participants will construct a base-year cost-out and salary guides for three additional years on an Excel spreadsheet. Knowledge of how a spreadsheet functions is essential. This training will expand on issues raised in Basic Salary Guides, as well as explore additional concerns and techniques.

Enrollment limited to 18 participants (one per local). Computers will be provided.

Resident: \$397

Commuter: \$357

14. Bargaining Health Benefits (offered 8/8-10)

For: Negotiators and leaders with interest in benefits

Learn how to deal with board demands on health insurance issues at the bargaining table. This training will provide participants with a thorough understanding of the role of insurance benefits in achieving economic security. There will be extensive instruction on medical, dental, prescription, and optical plans. This workshop will enable participants to review the legal framework, prepare for negotiations, and analyze board proposals.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257

15. Health Benefits and Pensions for Your Local (offered 8/8-10)

For: All members

Become your local's go-to person for all your members' health benefits and pension questions. Learn the ins and outs of what you need to know when assisting your members in understanding health plan options, minimizing out-of-pocket health care costs, premium sharing contributions, preparing for retirement, understanding their pensions, and more.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257

16. Managing Conflict Effectively (offered 8/8-10)

For: All members

This workshop is designed to increase personal and association effectiveness in dealing with conflict in a positive fashion. Participants will learn a variety of techniques that enhance this process by developing new strategies for identifying and handling conflict. Discussion will focus on what causes conflict and how better communication can help prevent or resolve conflict.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257

17. Leadership Development 101 – A Beginner's Guide for Association Leaders (offered 8/6-8)

For: All members

In this workshop, we will explore principles of effective leadership and team building, effective communication and listening skills, principles of time and stress management, facilitation skills for leaders, importance of change management, and leadership scenarios for association leaders.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257



18. Passion. Purpose. Power. (offered 8/8-10)

For: All members

Join us for an interactive, empowerment experience designed to activate and inspire potential leaders. Identifying your passion and purpose in our association is the key to securing voice and power. From ESPs to early career to members of color, all are encouraged to join us for this engaging workshop.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257

19. Membership Chair Training (offered 8/6-8 and 8/8-10)

For: All membership chairs: novice and experienced

During this course, we will examine the calendar of yearly responsibilities, as well as best practices and new techniques to help you meet those requirements. The course will be broken into four parts that will include Redesigning Your New Employee Orientation, How to Make the Membership Ask, Authentic Engagement and Follow-up, and Member Retention.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257



20. Educational Support Professionals (ESP): You Are Essential, You Matter! (offered 8/5-7)

For: ESP members

Join fellow ESP members and experts on ESP issues in this lively workshop where you'll gain the tools necessary to build your career and safeguard your interests. Just as you play an essential role in your school, your contribution to this workshop will ensure its success. Don't miss out!

This workshop has a special schedule. Registration is at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 5 and the workshop concludes with lunch on Sunday, Aug. 7.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257



21. Taking a Deep Dive into Strengthening Your Health and Safety Committee (offered 8/8-10)

For: All members

Learn how to take full advantage of your health and safety committee. We will review the process for establishing your local committee, identify potential health hazards in the workplace, and learn how to use federal and local regulations to hold your employers accountable. Become a vital part of your association, better understand your obligations as committee members, and use health and safety as an organizing tool to advocate for the rights of all workers.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257

22. Unleashing the Potential Political Power of Your Local Association (offered 8/6-8)

For: All members

Across the state, NJEA members go to work each day, where someone else makes decisions that have an impact on their profession. Learn how through organizing and collective action, your local association can build its political power to make sure your members have control over their professional world and their lives and influence over the people who make decisions about public education.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257

23. Calling All Policy Wonks! (offered 8/8-10)

For: All members

Are education issues and education policy on your mind? Do you consider yourself a wonk? Learn about the policy-making process and hear from experts on current issues facing public education. Hear from lobbyists and policymakers who work on education policy and join the discussion on why we need to be part of the organizing and lobbying process in order to achieve good outcomes.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257

24. Organizing Around Evaluation (offered 8/6-8)

For: All members

After nearly a decade under TEACHNJ and AchieveNJ, evaluation continues to present challenges for individual members and local associations. This session will provide an overview of the evaluation statute and associated regulations, and will engage participants in developing organizing strategies that will promote fair, effective, and transparent evaluation practices that reinforce strong instruction.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257

25. Organizing for Participatory Leadership (offered 8/6-8)

For: All members

Looking for ways to increase participation in your association? Interested in finding ways to build consensus and allow new leadership to emerge? Trying to find ways to include all the voices in the room when you run a meeting? Using practices from the Art of Hosting Meaningful Conversations, develop new skills to work collectively to harness the shared knowledge and wisdom of your membership, creating a stronger union that can move forward toward wise action.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257

26. Organizing for Participatory Leadership Advanced: Planning and Harvesting (offered 8/8-10)

For: All members

If you have some experience with World Café, Open Space, Circle Practice, or other hosting practices but have wondered about how to plan the right practice for the right project, or what to do with the harvest after the conversation is over, this workshop is for you. This workshop will focus on learning to choose and design the right hosting practice, developing questions to lead you to the conversation you want to have, and using the information you harvest to plan next actions.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257

27. Social Media for Local Associations (offered 8/6-8)

For: Local association social media editors

Learn how to create and optimize a social media presence for your local association. Once established, social media can support your ability to activate your membership, engage your community, and maximize your organizing efforts.

This workshop is for advanced social media users.

Enrollment limited to 18 participants (one per local). Computers will be provided.

Resident: \$397

Commuter: \$357

28. Digital Communication Tools with NJEASites (offered 8/6-8)

For: Association editors and webmasters with an NJEASites website in the newest Ocean theme

This session will cover how to customize your website and build pages using Page Builder with custom NJEA Modules. Other topics covered include creating posts, events, galleries and forms, sending email with Sendy Creator, text messaging tools, and other digital communications resources.

Enrollment limited to 18 participants (one per local). Computers will be provided.

Resident: \$397

Commuter: \$357

29. How to Be a Powerful Public Speaker (offered 8/6-8)

For: All members

Learn how to look and sound your best when presenting to a group. Participants review techniques for preparing and delivering a speech. Each participant will be videotaped for a self and group critique.

Enrollment limited to 18 participants (one per local).

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257

30. Moneywise Members (offered 8/8-10)

For: Member Benefits coordinators and all members

This training will encompass all programs and services offered through NJEA Member Benefits. Attendees will learn more about the full referral service of AID-NJEA and important financial matters including life insurance, income protection, supplemental retirement income, and member discounts on everyday items and services.

Resident: \$297

Commuter: \$257

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VIOLENCE

IS MUCH MORE THAN GUNS

Prevention must go further too

By Dorothy Wigmore

In late January, Morris Knolls High School got a scare. A student brought a device resembling a 9-mm gun to school. It turned out to be an airsoft gun, which is like a paintball gun but uses plastic pellets. It is still considered a weapon in New Jersey.

No one was hurt. After a report to the principal, the school resource officer (SRO), principal and a school administrator went into the student's classroom, took him to an empty room, with his backpack, and then got the student out of the school. There was no lockdown.

Two days later, the principal sent a one-paragraph explanation to staff and nothing to parents. Within a week, the Morris Hills Regional District Education Association (MHRDEA) leadership filled the information gap by giving members details about the incident and their follow up.

UniServ Representative John Williams also got information from New Jersey Work Environment Council about dealing with job-related violence and set up meetings with the district superintendent, local police, the MHRDEA health and safety committee chair, and NJEA.

"I want this whole thing to be a learning experience," Williams says. "We've been blessed with a golden opportunity. We can't let it pass us by."

WHAT'S JOB-RELATED VIOLENCE?

Violence and harassment are a range of unacceptable behaviors and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment.

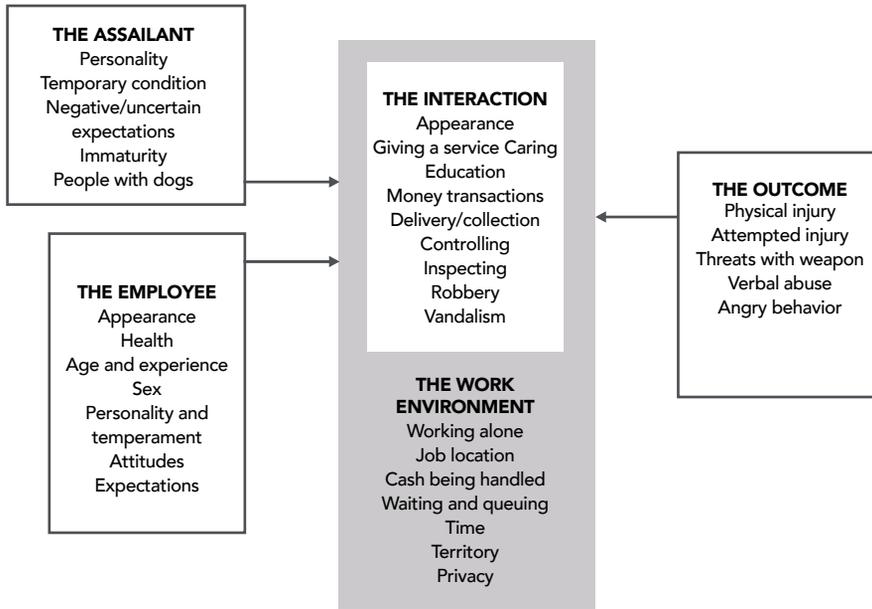
- International Labor Organization, 190 In 1996, the World Health

Organization declared violence is a "leading worldwide public health problem." Following union pressure, in 2019 the International Labor Organization (ILO) passed Convention 190 "Eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work." (See the pull quote.)

Unlike OSHA, the ILO definition recognizes job-related violence ranges from verbal abuse (e.g., disrespect and intimidation) through bullying and harassment to physical assault that may cause death. From a nonviolent communication perspective (see NJEA Review, September 2018), it's also "a tragic expression of an unmet need." Both understandings are key to prevention measures.

A 1980s United Kingdom framework offers a way to combine these. (See graphic.)

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.



WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING?

Despite public perceptions, guns are rare in school-related violence.

New Jersey is low on the list of states with known school shootings. Weapon incidents were 3% of 28,121 reported incidents in 2018-19, according to the state's Student Safety Data System (SSDS). Knives were most common while six involved a handgun. School districts must produce this data about violent incidents (e.g., fights, assaults, threats), harassment, bullying and intimidation, illegal substances, vandalism, weapons (possession or use) and programs and training for educators.

Despite the attention on students, violence also is a serious and common hazard for education staff. Typically, it is not physical, although a 2016 report found U.S. educators had almost twice the incidence rate of physical assaults as all workers.

As union surveys and studies tell us, verbal abuse is the most common type. For example, that was true for Pennsylvania educators in 2009-10, followed by threats, bullying and sexual harassment. Co-workers were most likely to be bullies; students were most often responsible for the other incidents. Almost 30% of those education workers faced this nonphysical violence, similar to earlier studies. Furthermore, administrations often didn't respond in a supportive way.

In Ontario, Canada, most unionized education workers (not teachers) reported that during the 2018-19 school year they faced at least one type of harassment, while almost 90% faced at least one act/attempt/threat of physical force from students, parents, colleagues or administrators. Black, Indigenous and other people of color survey participants faced higher reprisal rates for reporting harassment or violence.

Violence also seems to have increased in US schools since they reopened during the pandemic.

PREVENTING AND DEALING WITH SCHOOL-RELATED VIOLENCE

Following the incident, some Morris Knolls staff focused on "active shooter" rules and school security plans. Yet studies and experiences show there are less drastic and more effective solutions.

Security-focused responses don't deal with the root causes or nonphysical assaults. For example, SROs come at a high price. A 2021 study conducted by the Annenberg Institute at Brown University found the presence of an SRO does not reduce shootings or gun-related incidents. Instead, it increases the use of student suspensions, expulsions, police referrals and arrests. Black students are on the receiving end of such consequences twice as often as white students. Disabled students also pay a price.

On the other hand, studies show that supportive school culture, restorative justice, and nonviolent communication—longer-term efforts—are more effective.

Neither OSHA nor New Jersey have specific violence prevention rules for schools. However, the health and safety law clearly states employers have a "general duty" to deal with this kind of hazard. For example, violence prevention standards in New Jersey and California provide guidance, including:

- A joint committee.
- Assessment and hazard identification.
- Prevention and response training.
- Post-incident procedures and services.
- Reporting and record-keeping procedures.

Health and safety committees can:

- Use the U.K. framework (see Taking back the workplace resource).
- Review NJOSH 300 work-related injury/illness logs, workers' compensation and SSDS data.
- Survey members.

Resources

California

"Workplace Violence Prevention in Health Care regulation"
bit.ly/3tOEcvk

Dorothy Wigmore

Taking back the workplace
"Workplace Violence: A Hidden Risk in Woman's Work"
bit.ly/3KzxVdB

International Labour Organization

"Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work"
bit.ly/3l6AvGI

New Jersey

SSDS and more
"Keeping Our Students Safe, Healthy & in School"
bit.ly/3Jlftp3

"Violence Prevention in Healthcare"
bit.ly/35R6o8D

New Jersey Work Environment Council

Violence prevention training, and more.
njwec.org/event

New York

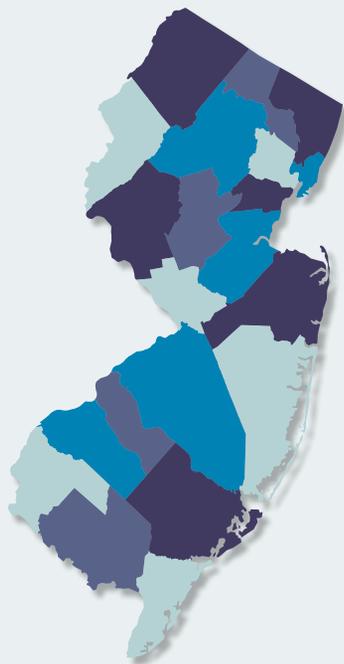
"Workplace Violence Prevention Law"
dol.ny.gov/workplace-violence-prevention-information

University of Ottawa

Harassment and Violence Against Educators
educatorviolence.net

- Push for contract language informed by the healthcare standards and New York State's violence prevention law.
- Provide workshops about and push for restorative justice and non-violent communication processes to respond to violence.

As Williams said, "Maybe we'll learn in areas that we're not even thinking of initially. We're not going to let it die. It's going to continue. We're involved. The message is loud and clear." 📢



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

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO MEET THE NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL CIVICS MANDATE

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 mandates that, beginning in September 2022, New Jersey school districts teach a minimum of two quarters of civics in a middle school grade.

The new law directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education (NJCCE) 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 NJCCE's website at civiced.rutgers.edu.

Since in-person professional development is much more effective, NJCCE is also offering free, all-day, in-person workshops starting this month at several locations around the state.

- April 7: Rutgers University, Piscataway
- April 27: Drew University, Madison
- May 4: Rowan University, Glassboro
- May 19: Rutgers University, Piscataway
- May 26: Ramapo University, Mahwah
- July 14: Rutgers University, Piscataway
- July 20: William Paterson, Wayne

Workshops will begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude by 3 p.m. Coffee and lunch will be served. Materials will be distributed. Ideas, lessons, activities and resources for teaching a civics course in middle school will be demonstrated and discussed with time for group work. Only register for ONE workshop. For questions of other information contact Robert O'Dell at ro205@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.



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THE SHORTAGE OF ASPIRING EDUCATORS LONG PREDATES THE PANDEMIC

BY SARAH ADAMO

Teachers rank among the heroes of America, but as myriad media outlets now lament, these dedicated public servants now find themselves on the endangered species list. New Jersey's legislators, among many others, have labeled the growing teacher shortage in America a crisis.

This trend toward fewer people wanting to become teachers predates the pandemic by at least a decade and promises no easy resolution. In fact, to attribute this shortage solely to the pandemic is to dismiss the long-held concerns of the teachers who have committed their lives to educating generations of leaders and citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated rather than initiated the steep reduction in the number of students interested in joining the profession.

This crisis is symptomatic of a routine devaluation of the teaching profession, a chronic disease often left unspoken but felt at some point in every educator's career. As an aspiring educator myself, I have sometimes been made to feel that this essential position in our society is not what I know it to be in my heart. When I tell others that I want to be a teacher, there is perhaps no comment more disheartening than, "You are too smart to be a teacher."

What does that response suggest about the value our friends and neighbors place on a career assigned the lofty task of inspiring and empowering students, regardless of their backgrounds and the adversities they may face? Should those entrusted with transmitting values of inclusion and self-efficacy, those who must cultivate critical thinking in today's youth, and those who help select what our children are exposed to during their most formative years not be intelligent? To suggest such a thing is not only dangerous but demeaning to all of the educators who bring so much passion and wisdom to the classroom.

Many other deterrents to entering the teaching profession exist, such as costly assessments like the edTPA or knowing that public school teachers' weekly wages continue to lag behind the earnings of comparable workers, even when taking the

greater wage disparity for women overall into account. Sylvia A. Allegretto and Lawrence Mishel pointed this out in a report for the Economic Policy Institute titled "The Teacher Pay Gap is Wider Than Ever" long before the pandemic.

Regardless of these added variables, the sense of being underappreciated in this profession alone can take its toll, dissuading potential teachers from entering this important career. According to a 2019 article by Lauren Camera titled "International Survey: U.S. Teachers are Overworked, Feel Underappreciated," American educators work longer hours than their counterparts abroad but largely share the sentiment that society does not appreciate their efforts.

Meanwhile, the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) by the National Center for Education Statistics, also in 2019, found that job satisfaction remained high among U.S. teachers, with 90% of participants affirming their satisfaction. But the study also found that only 36% of participants believe their society values what they do for a living. This warrants concern. Prospective educators, who have not yet experienced the joys and sense of purpose that come with teaching, will decide that what society deems unworthy of recognition is not the right fit for them.

All of this is why, as the secretary of NJEA Preservice and a proud aspiring educator, I hope to let students like myself know that their skills will be put to good use. I want them to realize that membership in this union ensures that future and current educators will not have to martyr themselves just to put food on the table for our own families or gain the respect befitting our work. I want aspiring educators to know in their bones that, in the words of Henry Adams, their impact as a teacher transcends the present and "affects eternity: [one] can never tell where [one's] influence stops." 🌱

Sarah Adamo is the secretary of NJEA Preservice and a student at The College of New Jersey.

PLAYING FAIR

LGBTQIA+ issues in youth sports

By Amy Moran, Ph.D. and Kate Okeson

Kate began writing this article after yet another news cycle highlighted efforts in several states to advance anti-LGBT and anti-transgender legislation—170 bills so far this year. While there are efforts in some states to strengthen anti-discrimination laws, they're outpaced by bills written to target and inhibit transgender youth in sports and transgender youth access to affirming, lifesaving health care.

In only a few weeks, three more states codified laws that harm queer and trans youth by criminalizing the seeking of affirming health care, limiting participation in sports based on "sex," or legislating LGBTQIA+ identities as taboo through "no promo homo" laws like the "Don't Say Gay" bill in Florida's recently passed legislation.

The opportunity to play sports aligns to better outcomes for youth. But even though most U.S. students have access to sports and play them nearly year-round on community or school teams, athletic contexts continue to be less-than-welcoming and highly contested spaces, especially around participation by trans athletes.

Two elements are in play:

- Maintaining open, accepting, and affirming spaces for all youth to play sports.
- Allowing all youth to play as who they say they are.

To achieve these, we need to understand that organized athletics do not always welcome LGBTQIA+ athletes, and—even if they do—there has been a social cost to participants. Although we witnessed the meteoric rise in "out" Olympians in 2020—185!—the tides aren't turning similarly in other arenas.

Let's notice a discrepancy. Conservative estimates suggest 7.1% of adults are LGBTQIA+, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics says there are 16,700 professional athletic jobs in the U.S. Accordingly, there should be 1,100 "out" professionals in athletics, but reality doesn't bear

that out. Instead, *Outsports* (September 2021) reports "Each of America's Big 5 Sports Currently has an Out Gay Man in the Pros. That's Never Happened." Just five?

For youth, the visibility of "out" athletes plays a huge role in how our culture perceives our LGBTQIA+ kids, and how we—in turn—either allow or limit access to quality sports programming that has a long list of irrefutable positive impacts on all youth.

Concurrent with the writing of this article, there were at least 34 bills moving through legislatures nationally that seek to prohibit or limit transgender youth participation in sports. Often the bills were titled something innocuous or even misleading, like the "Fairness in Women's Sports" Act. These aim to define participation aligned with birth "sex," not gender identity. New Jersey saw the introduction of one of these bills, S-3540 (and Assembly companion bill A-5545) which is currently in committee. It's a tactic to create conflict in spaces where, even with Title IX rules in place, fewer resources and greater exclusion are the result.

Participating in sports can lead to better physical and mental health, higher self-esteem, and the development of leadership and teamwork skills. Those positive outcomes are amplified for vulnerable youth who typically have lower rates of participation in sports, which is why sports are built into educational curricula and why the medical establishment continues to encourage physical activity, no matter your age.

The positive impacts of athletics for young people are wide-ranging.

- High school and college student-athletes are at lower risk for anxiety, depression, suicide attempts and substance abuse.
- Sports participation is associated with increases in self-esteem and self-confidence, improvement in academic performance, and increased feelings of school connectedness

and school-based social connection.

- These benefits have been found to extend to social settings and community connectedness as well.
- These are for all student-athlete, including and especially LGBTQIA+ student-athletes.

The Center for American Progress's 2021 report *LGBT Inclusion in Sports* stated, "Paramount in sports and in life are the emotional capacities we develop or deepen, feelings of camaraderie, sportsmanship, and the ability to work hard and persevere. Not least, participating in sports can lead to lifelong friendships with teammates and coaches." It continues: "Sports participation can also help increase opportunity for vulnerable school-age youth. For those who have experienced adverse childhood events—including poverty, disruption in family structure or family deaths, or learning or behavioral problems—sports participation can be a source of resilience and empowerment, protecting against short- and long-term negative impacts to mental health and well-being."

"I've had students who are gay and trans on my team and knowing who they are—their identities and school, home, and social lives—helps me build strong relationships so I can coach them from a place of understanding. I also look to the integrity of captains and more seasoned students who set an example of how we operate together, making the team a place where everyone feels comfortable and welcome. Giving students the opportunity to be a great human is Job #1 as a coach. Job #2 is to help them be better, more competitive athletes. Our team does both. That means that we accept and support each other. No exceptions."

Zach Wilson,
Boys Swim Coach,
Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School

“

Sport plays an influential role in the lives of young Americans. ...68% of high school seniors play at least one sport. Comparatively, just 24 percent of LGBTQ youth, and only 21% of high school seniors, currently play on a sports team for their school, with 13 percent of reporting that they avoided playing sports all together because they “do not feel [they] will be accepted on the team because [they are] LGBTQ.”

– From the Human Rights Campaign report “Play to Win”

This report echoes other data that point toward lifelong benefits of playing sports: participating in high school or collegiate athletics is also associated with higher wages and better jobs, including the benefits of promotions and related advantages that aren't direct compensation. Given what we know, why would we increase barriers for the very population that could be best served by participating in athletics? And why would we do so with knowledge that so many of our most vulnerable youth are already at very high risk for family and/or peer rejection and ostracism, physical and psychological victimization, and other social stigmas? Worse yet, these risks only go up when the LGBTQIA+ students are students of color.

Let's connect this with school culture. Teachers and educational support professionals (ESPs) are frequently the coaches, scorekeepers, timers, ticket takers, and the very people who suggest team sports to their students. They are the ones who know their kids' names (and pronouns!) and know the benefits of being part of a team. It's each of those relationships that can save a kid, even if just a little each day when they show up to practice or to play.

Regardless of your relation to a sport—whether you're a coach, an athlete, or a spectator—consider the number of kids that could benefit from your outreach to them. The individual actions of teachers, ESPs, and coaches—whether suggesting a sport that might be a fun fit or inviting a student for serious competition—create the bridge from school to sports, making them both more welcoming and affirming for our LGBTQIA+ kids. In doing so, we create more open and affirming spaces for all youth.

For more information on these harmful laws, legislation trackers, and detailed data, see this month's QR code. 🏠



Watch this now! Gendercool Champions “Play it Out”: <https://vimeo.com/643744734>



Rebekah Bruesehoff, a 15-year-old ninth grader in New Jersey, is a student athlete, activist, and so much more. Her identity may have been the reason she raised her voice, but she hopes to inspire other young people to use theirs and for the adults on the scene to make the world safer, affirming, and inclusive for trans kids.

“I've been playing field hockey for my school since fifth grade, and it's been such a positive experience. I love to be a part of the team. I love that we win, lose, and grow together. I work harder because I know my teammates are counting on me. Plus, we have fun on and off the field. I moved to a new town in eighth grade in the middle of the pandemic, and that was really hard. Field hockey gave me an instant community, a place where I belonged, and that helped me feel more comfortable through the rest of my school day.”

Follow Rebekah on Instagram: @therealrebekah



See this QR code for resources like *Fair Play: How LGBT Athletes Are Claiming Their Rightful Place in Sports*, by Cyd Zeigler and the *Outsports* book list from minor league pro baseball player Bryan Ruby.

What does the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) say? Transgender student athletes are not required to provide proof—such as a physician's note or revised birth certificate—to play on sports teams. In fact, transgender athletes are eligible to compete in accordance with either their birth sex or their gender identity.





KNOW YOUR WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

A primer

By Kaitlyn Dunphy, Esq.

You may have heard a fellow association member use the term “Weingarten rights” before, but do you know where that name comes from and what those rights are? The term refers to a case the Supreme Court of the United States decided back in 1975, *National Labor Relations Board v. Weingarten*.

Leura Collins worked at the lunch counter at a Weingarten store and was accused of theft by her employer, accusations she was quickly cleared of. But in the process of the employer’s investigation, Collins asked for a union representative to be present and was denied that request. As a result of the ensuing litigation, the courts found that the federal labor law gave her the right to have a union representative present during that investigatory interview, and thus “Weingarten rights” were born.

Since the Weingarten case was decided under federal law applicable to the private sector, Weingarten rights did not belong to New Jersey public sector union members until the Weingarten case was adopted by the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) in 1979. It wasn’t until much later, in 1996, that the New Jersey Supreme Court blessed PERC’s adoption of Weingarten rights.

WHAT ARE WEINGARTEN RIGHTS?

Weingarten rights empower a worker to request a union representative’s presence and assistance at an investigatory interview that the employee has a reasonable belief may result in discipline. If the worker invokes these rights, the employer has the following options: to allow representation at the interview, to discontinue the interview, or to offer the employee the choice of continuing the

interview unrepresented or having no interview.

You will notice that the worker must request the assistance of a union representative. The employer has no obligation to automatically include the representative in the interview if a request is not made, which is why education around Weingarten rights is so important. The right must be invoked by the union member.

Weingarten rights apply only when the worker has an objectively reasonable belief the interview may lead to discipline. They do not apply to meetings where a disciplinary decision that has already been made is being communicated, or to other noninvestigatory conversations with a supervisor, such as giving feedback, instructions, or training. This is not to say that union members are without rights in these scenarios, of course, but that Weingarten rights are not involved.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THE REQUEST IS NOT HONORED?

Members should not refuse to attend a meeting called by an administrator, as that would make one vulnerable to accusations of insubordination. Instead, you should attend the meeting and make your request for a Weingarten representative clear. You can ask for clarification on the purpose of the meeting to confirm that it is an investigatory interview and your belief in possible disciplinary action is reasonable.

You should insist on your Weingarten rights until the employer allows for your representative to attend the interview, the interview is discontinued, or you are offered the choice between an unrepresented interview or no interview.

You should not answer any questions without your representative present. Note that you cannot insist on a particular union representative of your choice be present, though you can certainly state your preference. Which representative attends the meeting may depend upon availability.

“

Weingarten rights empower a worker to request a union representative’s presence and assistance at an investigatory interview that the employee has a reasonable belief may result in discipline.

WHAT IS THE WEINGARTEN REPRESENTATIVE’S ROLE?

The Weingarten representative is there to be the member’s witness and advocate during the meeting. However, the representative cannot obstruct the investigation or turn it into an adversarial proceeding. The employer, on the other hand, cannot compel the representative to remain silent.

The representative is there to assist the employee. They are entitled to information about the interview that will give them the ability to perform their duties as a union representative. They can ask that the employer’s questions be clarified, object to intimidation tactics, and inform the employer of additional information that supports the member’s position. The representative can also ask to privately caucus with the member and advise them on how to answer the questions, although they cannot answer instead of the member.

In short, the Weingarten representative is there to support the member, protect their rights, guard against overstepping by the employer, and help the member clearly set forth their position. 🇺🇸

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

JOYFUL CHAOS

BY DAVID REYES

In tabletop role playing games, such as Dungeons and Dragons, there is a concept called alignment, which describes a character's moral and ethical beliefs. It ranges on two axes. One goes from good to evil and the other goes from lawful to chaotic. It's common for players to think of themselves and their actions in respect to these axes.

As educators, often concerned with classroom management, we tend to see chaos as a negative thing. But as I sit here writing this, I can't help but bask in the joyful chaos that is the Gaming Club for which I am the adviser.

When I became the club's adviser last year, we met once a week. This being 2020-21 school year, we met virtually. Students would hang out and talk about games, and we used the share screen feature to stream games to each other.

Eventually a student expressed interest in Dungeons and Dragons (D&D). I play a derivative of D&D called Pathfinder. I agreed that if he could get players for it, I would GM (Game Master) a campaign. I set up a separate day to run meetings with this small subset of the club. Pathfinder games generally take longer to run than our usual one-hour sessions, so these meetings would be about two hours. Over time this party of adventurers would become the most loyal and interested members of the club.

As we have moved back to in-person school days this year, I received a request from "the Champion," "the Cleric" and "the Swashbuckler." They wanted to run their own games. I was so proud. Not only were they liking their new hobby, they were pulling more people into it and taking ownership of it. As the adviser, I felt that this was a "hang out club," and there was no real need for leadership beyond me. But all that changed around the time of the Club Fair.

“

Mr. Reyes, we could have helped you!" the Investigator chided. "Why did you take on all that work yourself?"

WHY AM I DOING THIS?

After spending an afternoon on Canva making posters for Game Club's display for the fair, I had a thought: "Why am I doing this?" I sent out a message to the club inviting members to work on the poster board the next day, but only if they wanted to. The students who showed up were the Champion, the Cleric, the Wizard, the Swashbuckler, and a student new to the club, the Investigator. As we worked, I joked with the students, saying that even though our club did not need an executive board, I would gladly back up their claim to have served on a board if they wanted to add that to their college applications.

The Club Fair was in early October. I planned an escape room for Halloween. I deliberately avoided telling "the Party," so they could participate in it. But when the Party found out that I had spent the day before working on the event until 7 p.m., they reacted like disappointed parents.

"Mr. Reyes, we could have helped you!" the Investigator chided. "Why did you take on all that work yourself?"

Shortly thereafter, the Party started taking on more responsibility. The Cleric became the vice president and would take it upon himself and to clean up after meetings. This eventually morphed into the entire Party cleaning up while I escorted

the rest of the club out of the building at the end of the day. Soon after that we were having Party meetings at the end of the regular meetings and discussing ways to improve the club.

This brings us to now. The Party is currently planning a Karaoke night. They have subcommittees for advertising, music choices and technology. They plan to have a concession stand. They are doing all of this with very little input from me. My hand isn't on the wheel. I'm like a driving instructor with the little passenger's side brake. That's all I need.

After a meeting where they explained that they were expanding their roles, the Cleric asked me, "Are you OK with this? Or are you just going along with it because it will make us happy?"

I told him that as they take power from me they also take some of the responsibility, not all, but just enough that sometimes I get to sit back relax and revel in the joy of chaos. 🙌



**Early Career
Network**

David Reyes is a teacher at Linden High School and adviser to the school's Gaming Club. He is a member of the NJEA Early Career Network (ECN). Learn more about the ECN at njea.org/early-career.

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GET THE FACTS ABOUT ENROLLMENT IN MEDICARE

As required by law, retired members or their dependents who qualify for the School Employees' Health Benefits Program (SEHBP) state-paid, post-retirement medical benefits, or those more recent retirees who may be contributing a percentage of the premium and are eligible for Medicare, must enroll in both Medicare Parts A and B.

Medicare Part A is paid for while actively employed and Part B is paid for during retirement, usually through a deduction from Social Security checks. State law requires the SEHBP to reimburse these eligible retirees and their dependents for the cost of enrolling in Medicare Part B.

Most members and their dependents will qualify for Medicare benefits under one of the following four conditions:

- Have reached age 65.
- Have received Social Security disability benefits for 24 months.
- Have end-stage renal disease.
- Have ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.)

If a member is currently receiving Social Security retirement benefits, they will be automatically enrolled in both Medicare Part A and Part B. They do not need to contact anyone. They will receive a package in the mail three months before their 65th birthday with the new Medicare card.

However, if a member is 65 but is not receiving Social Security retirement benefits, they will need to actively enroll in Medicare. Members should sign up for Medicare online at medicare.gov or ssa.gov approximately three months prior to turning 65.

To continue post-retirement medical benefits without interruption, when a Medicare-eligible member or dependent receives their Medicare card, they must send a copy of the card to New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits to show proof of enrollment in Parts A and B. If this is not done before they are eligible for Medicare, their health benefits could be temporarily terminated. More importantly, retirees enrolled in SEHBP must not sign up for alternate supplemental Medicare coverage. Enrollment in another plan would result in the loss of SEHBP coverage.

The New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits will send a reminder letter to those who are about to qualify by means of turning 65, but the division will not send a reminder letter to those who qualify by the other identified means. Any questions about this process should be directed to the New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits at 609-292-7524.

Important prescription details

In late December, an erroneous letter was sent to retirees about their prescription coverage being canceled. This led to confusion and in some cases caused retirees to inadvertently dis-enroll from their prescription programs following the letter's misdirection. It's important to understand the situations that may affect retiree prescription coverage and the steps you can take to ensure you remain covered.

Retirees who have additional questions and/or wish to learn more can visit the division's website at nj.gov/treasury/pensions or by calling 609-292-7524.

LEARN MORE ABOUT MEDICARE PART D

Retirees who are members of the School Employees Health Benefits Plan (SEHBP) and are enrolled in Medicare are automatically enrolled in the OptumRx Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan (PDP). Retirees may waive the OptumRx Medicare PDP only if they are enrolled in another Medicare Part D plan. To request that your coverage be waived, you must go to MBOS site to submit a Cancel/Decline/Waive Retirement Coverage Form, along with proof of other Medicare Part D coverage, to:

NJ Division of Pensions & Benefits Health Benefits
P.O. Box 299
Trenton, NJ 08625-0299

Medicare Supplement Plan (Horizon)

Retirees who choose to enroll in another Medicare Part D plan, such as their spouse's, will lose any prescription drug benefits provided by the SEHBP. However, their medical benefits will continue.

Medicare Advantage Plans (Aetna)

Retirees who are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan may only waive their prescription drug coverage for another group Medicare Part D plan. Please note: If you waive coverage for an individual Medicare Part D plan, your SEHBP Medicare Advantage Plan for both medical and prescription will be terminated.

Returning to the SEHBP

Retirees who have previously waived their prescription drug coverage for another Medicare Part D plan and wish to re-enroll in the OptumRx Medicare PDP must send proof of their termination from the other Medicare Part D plan. Acceptable proof is a letter from the other Medicare Part D plan confirming the date upon which they officially are disenrolled. The New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits must receive this proof within 60 days of the termination from the other Medicare Part D plan.

Retirees who have additional questions and/or wish to learn more can visit the division's website at nj.gov/treasury/pensions or by calling 609-292-7524.

Around the counties

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

CAMDEN COUNTY REA

April 28: Nonperishable food drive for Senior Citizens United Community Services at the CCCEA office in Voorhees from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monetary donations also accepted. For more information call Susan Ronca at 856-816-1289.

May 5: Spring meeting/luncheon at Tavistock Country Club in Haddonfield. Cost is \$27. To attend call Barbara Haasa by April 22 at 856-627-3391.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY REA

May 11: Spring meeting/ luncheon on May 11 at Eastlyn Golf Course in Vineland. Cost is \$35. To attend, call Irene Savicky by April 22 at 856-863-8424.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY REA

May 10: Spring meeting/luncheon at Four Star Event Catering. Cost is \$25. To attend, call Candy Zachowski at 570-710-5514.

MERCER COUNTY REA

May 11 Spring meeting/luncheon at the Mercer Oaks Golf and Country Club. Cost is TBD. To attend, call Call Susan H. Karolkiewicz by April 27 at 609-223-2570.

MONMOUTH COUNTY REA

April 12: Spring meeting/ luncheon at Our House Restaurant in Farmingdale. Cost is \$34. Reservations are closed.

June 14 June meeting/luncheon at Spring Lake Manor. Cost is \$34. To attend, call Sue Shrott by June 3 at 732-995-7754.

MORRIS COUNTY REA

May 11: Spring meeting/luncheon at the Birchwood Manor in Whippany. Program will be music of the 70s and 80s with Karickur. Cost is \$35, \$44 for guest. To attend, contact John Beekman at 973-514-1080 by May 1.

May 15: Scholarship fundraiser at the Birchwood Manor in Whippany. Program will be a Tricky Tray. Cost is \$42. To attend, call Cheryl Doltz at 973-818-1358 by May 1.

June 8 scholarship awards meeting/ luncheon at the Birchwood Manor in Whippany. Program will be scholarship awards. Cost is \$35, \$44 for guest. To attend, contact John Beekman at 973-514-1080 by June 1.

OCEAN COUNTY REA

May 12: Spring meeting/luncheon at the Jack Baker's Lobster Shanty. Cost is \$28. To attend, call Barbara Miller by May 5 at 732-854-2253.

PASSAIC COUNTY REA

June 1: June meeting/luncheon at The Brownstone in Paterson. Meeting will include officer elections. Cost is \$35. To attend, call Kitty Sausa by May 27 at 201-445-7577.

SOMERSET COUNTY REA

May 4: Spring meeting/luncheon at the Elks Lodge in Bridgewater. Cost is \$22. To attend, contact Kathy Kapp at 908-722-7715 by April 29.

SUSSEX COUNTY REA

June 6: Summer meeting/luncheon. The program will be a scholarship event. Location TBD— pending COVID-19 status. More information will follow.

WARREN COUNTY REA

April 6: Spring meeting/luncheon at Hawk Pointe in Washington Twp. Cost is \$35. Reservations are closed.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

YEARS ENDING AUG. 31, 2021 AND 2020

TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF NJEA

We have audited the accompanying consolidated financial statements of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) which comprise the consolidated statements of financial position as of Aug. 31, 2021, and the related consolidated statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the consolidated financial statements.

Management's responsibility for the financial statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these consolidated financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these consolidated financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan

and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the consolidated financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to NJEA's preparation and fair presentation of the consolidated financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of NJEA's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the consolidated financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the New Jersey Education Association as of Aug. 31, 2021, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Report on summarized comparative information

We have previously audited NJEA's 2020 consolidated financial statements, and we expressed an unmodified audit opinion on those audited consolidated financial statements in our report dated December 14, 2020. In our opinion, the summarized comparative information presented herein as of and for the year ended August 31, 2020 is consistent, in all material respects, with the audited consolidated financial statements from which it has been derived.

Novak Francella, LLC

Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania
Dec. 20, 2021

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	August 31		August 31	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
ASSETS				
Cash and cash equivalents	\$20,638,335	\$21,098,056		
Receivables				
Membership dues	1,767,351	787,497		
Due from National Education Association	1,093,554	87,610.4		
Contributions receivable	7,000	7,000		
Advances to employees	56,209	57,315		
Accrued investment income	100,376	106,355		
Total receivables	3,024,490	1,045,777		
Investments - at fair value	188,782,765	153,997,100		
Prepaid expenses and other assets	2,564,304	1,674,587		
Fixed assets - at cost				
Land and building improvements	30,943,883	29,580,404		
Computer equipment	7,403,206	6,290,891		
Furniture, equipment and vehicles	5,503,252	5,089,592		
	43,850,341	40,960,887		
Less: accumulated depreciation	(24,895,671)	(23,205,162)		
Net fixed assets	18,954,670	17,755,725		
Total assets	\$233,964,564	\$195,571,245		
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
Liabilities				
Accounts payable			\$2,837,900	\$3,127,085
Unremitted NEA dues			746,181	574,788
Accrued expenses			232,308	256,285
Deferred revenue			975,476	988,681
Current maturity of capital lease obligations			277,973	105,944
Long-term liabilities			1,290,747	490,513
Accrued vacation			7,449,509	6,889,450
Accrued postretirement benefit cost - other			85,839,141	127,897,944
Accrued pension cost			20,532,615	36,500,027
Total liabilities			120,181,850	176,830,717
Net assets				
Without donor restrictions			\$102,804,491	\$10,745,865
Board-designated restrictions			4,248,911	3,439,033
With donor restrictions			6,729,312	4,555,630
Total net assets			113,782,714	18,740,528
Total liabilities and net assets			\$233,964,564	\$195,571,245

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2021
(WITH SUMMARIZED COMPARATIVE TOTALS FOR YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2020)

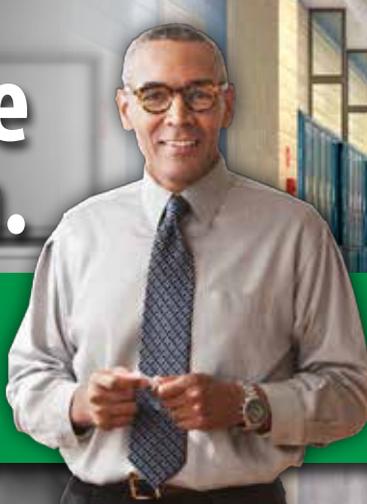
	2021			2020	
	Without Donor Restrictions	Board-Designated Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Total
REVENUE					
Membership dues	\$124,931,251	\$ -	\$ -	\$124,931,251	\$123,207,015
Pride dues	12,531,945	-	-	12,531,945	12,290,045
National Education Assn. grants and reimbursements	6,480,831	-	-	6,480,831	5,712,114
Conferences	108	-	-	108	418,528
Convention	140,015	-	-	140,015	498,405
Investment income, net	21,874,232	798,365	-	22,672,597	11,514,243
Member benefits income	81,387	-	-	81,387	101,136
Publication income	177,323	-	-	177,323	242,509
Teacher Leader Academy administrative fee income	40,500	-	-	40,500	90,000
Contributions	-	53,049	-	53,049	116,245
Disaster Relief Fund	7,000	-	-	7,000	15,000
Other income	43,763	-	-	43,763	74,848
Net assets transferred to other funds (released from restrictions)	(11,586,851)	-	11,586,851	-	-
Total revenue	154,721,504	851,414	11,586,851	167,159,769	154,280,088
EXPENSES					
Program services					
Governance	5,301,241	-	-	5,301,241	5,933,979
Executive org development UniServ	6,490,003	-	-	6,490,003	12,154,002
Regional offices	25,585,435	-	-	25,585,435	26,092,706
Field office	6,052,934	-	-	6,052,934	6,716,723
Legal services	12,775,391	-	-	12,775,391	12,996,632
Communications	6,148,359	-	-	6,148,359	6,398,949
Professional development	4,828,410	-	-	4,828,410	4,966,484
Research and economics	6,002,714	-	-	6,002,714	5,897,623
Government relations	4,223,059	-	-	4,223,059	3,960,706
Conventions	1,677,088	-	-	1,677,088	2,153,817
Organizational services	7,304,689	-	-	7,304,689	7,189,924
Campaign					
Organization Project	-	-	9,401,669	9,401,669	7,867,835
Pride	10,942,994	-	-	10,942,994	12,463,855
Frederick L. Hipp Foundation	-	41,536	-	41,536	102,012
NJEA Affiliates Risk Purchasing Group	212,263	-	-	212,263	208,861
Disaster Relief	7,000	-	11,500	18,500	15,300
Total program services	97,551,580	41,536	9,413,169	107,006,285	115,119,408
ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL					
Executive office	\$5,201,045	-	-	\$5,201,045	\$4,895,250
Business division	14,601,691	-	-	14,601,691	14,628,066
Depreciation and amortization	2,749,989	-	-	2,749,989	2,487,072
Deferred compensation	37,773	-	-	37,773	966,085
Total administrative and general	22,590,498	-	-	22,590,498	22,976,473
Total expenses	120,142,078	41,536	9,413,169	129,596,783	138,095,881
INCREASE IN NET OPERATIONS ASSETS	34,579,426	809,878	2,173,682	37,562,986	16,184,207
Pension and post retirement -related charges other than service cost	57,479,200	-	-	57,479,200	34,749,611
Net increase	92,058,626	809,878	2,173,682	95,042,186	50,933,818
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	10,745,865	3,439,033	4,555,630	18,740,528	(32,193,290)
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$102,804,491	\$4,248,911	\$6,729,312	\$113,782,714	\$18,740,528

**NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2021**

	<u>Governance</u>	<u>Executive Organizational Development</u>	<u>Uniserv Regional Offices</u>	<u>Uniserv Field Office</u>	<u>Legal Services</u>	<u>Communications</u>	<u>Professional Development</u>	<u>Research and Economics</u>	<u>Gov't Relations</u>	<u>Conventions</u>
Personnel	\$1,803,628	\$3,076,177	\$23,623,319	\$2,687,640	\$1,062,382	\$4,630,036	\$3,690,261	\$5,620,152	\$3,551,524	\$ -
Administrative	403,843	1,062	8,424	24,710	-	27,872	-	72,383	40,994	180,573
Facilities	148,476	19,188	1,953,692	53,795	9,444	389,228	323	3,352	1,894	66,785
Conventions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,039,187
Communications	14,678	6,267	-	-	-	952,695	-	2,186	-	-
Legislative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	628,647	-
Consultants	-	-	-	3,151,594	-	143,790	950,572	215,148	-	-
Membership services	2,769,978	3,387,309	-	135,195	11,703,565	3,216	187,254	87,268	-	390,250
Governance	122,647	-	-	-	-	1,500	-	-	-	-
Campaign	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Committees	37,434	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
General	557	-	-	-	-	22	-	2,225	-	293
Disaster Relief Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation and amortization	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred compensation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<u>\$5,301,241</u>	<u>\$6,490,003</u>	<u>\$25,585,435</u>	<u>\$6,052,934</u>	<u>\$12,775,391</u>	<u>\$6,148,359</u>	<u>\$4,828,410</u>	<u>\$6,002,714</u>	<u>\$4,223,059</u>	<u>\$1,677,088</u>

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Organizational Services	Campaign: Garden State Forward	Pride	Frederick L. Hipp Foundation	NJEA Affiliates Risk Purchasing Group	Disaster Relief Fund	Total Program Services	Executive Office	Business Division	Other	Total Admin. and General	Total Expenses
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$49,745,119	\$4,031,359	\$10,028,126	\$ -	\$14,059,485	\$63,804,604
-	-	-	16,544	-	-	776,405	393,738	1,587,150	-	1,980,888	2,757,293
4,312	-	-	25	-	-	2,650,514	75,018	2,985,986	-	3,061,004	5,711,518
-	-	-	-	-	-	1,039,187	-	-	-	-	1,039,187
-	-	10,942,994	170	-	-	11,918,990	-	-	-	-	11,918,990
-	-	-	-	-	-	628,647	-	-	-	-	628,647
-	-	-	-	-	-	4,461,104	-	-	-	-	4,461,104
7,300,377	-	-	24,797	212,263	-	26,201,472	698,517	-	-	698,517	26,899,989
-	-	-	-	-	-	124,147	-	-	-	-	124,147
-	9,401,669	-	-	-	-	9,401,669	-	-	-	-	9,401,669
-	-	-	-	-	-	37,434	-	-	-	-	37,434
-	-	-	-	-	-	3,097	2,413	429	-	2,842	5,939
-	-	-	-	-	18,500	18,500	-	-	-	-	18,500
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,749,989	2,749,989	2,749,989
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37,773	37,773	37,773
<u>\$7,304,689</u>	<u>\$9,401,669</u>	<u>\$10,942,994</u>	<u>\$41,536</u>	<u>\$212,263</u>	<u>\$18,500</u>	<u>\$107,006,285</u>	<u>\$5,201,045</u>	<u>\$14,601,691</u>	<u>\$2,787,762</u>	<u>\$22,590,498</u>	<u>\$129,596,783</u>

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**NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2021 AND 2020**

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Cash received from		
Members' dues	\$123,938,192	\$122,425,741
Members' Pride dues	12,531,945	12,290,045
National Education Association	5,646,280	5,872,096
Conventions, conferences and other sources	544,251	1,559,046
Investment income	5,603,828	5,434,328
Cash paid for personnel costs	(63,791,560)	(65,200,113)
Cash paid to suppliers, vendors and service providers	(63,213,180)	(72,793,798)
Interest paid	(37,699)	(80,016)
Grants paid	(23,310)	(41,664)
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>21,198,747</u>	<u>9,465,665</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Payments for the purchase of fixed assets	(4,085,436)	(4,175,077)
Payments for the purchase of investments	(42,104,675)	(18,076,021)
Proceeds from sale of fixed assets	136,503	
Proceeds from the sale of investments	<u>24,501,084</u>	<u>20,233,478</u>
Net cash used for investing activities	<u>(21,552,524)</u>	<u>(2,017,620)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Principal payments on capital leases	<u>(105,944)</u>	<u>(105,945)</u>
Net cash used for financing activities	<u>(105,944)</u>	<u>(105,945)</u>
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	(459,721)	7,342,100
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Beginning of year	<u>21,098,056</u>	<u>13,755,956</u>
End of year	<u>\$ 20,638,335</u>	<u>\$ 21,098,056</u>

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from those who have walked in your shoes.



**NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AUGUST 31, 2021 AND 2020**

NOTE 1. NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Type of Activity - The New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) was established to promote the education interests of the State; to promote equal educational opportunity for all students; to secure and maintain for the office of teaching its true position among the professions; and to promote and guard the interests of employees who are in employment categories eligible for membership, exclusively in the State of New Jersey.

Method of Accounting - The financial statements are prepared using the accrual basis of accounting.

Basis of Presentation - NJEA reports the amounts for each of two distinct classes of net assets and changes therein - net assets with donor restrictions and net assets without donor restrictions.

Basis of Consolidation - The consolidated financial statements include the accounts of the New Jersey Education Association, the Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education, Inc., Garden State Forward, NJEA Affiliates Risk Purchasing Group, and the Bolivar L. Graham Intern Foundation, Inc. NJEA maintains a political action committee as a separately segregated fund. The assets, liabilities, and activity of this related fund are not included in the accompanying financial statements. All significant intercompany account balances have been eliminated in consolidation.

Comparative Financial Information - The accompanying financial statements include certain prior-year summarized comparative information in total but not by net asset class. Such information does not include sufficient detail to constitute a presentation in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP). Accordingly, such information should be read in conjunction with our audited financial statements for the year ended August 31, 2020, from which the summarized information was derived.

Investments - Investments in fixed income mutual funds, equity mutual funds, international equity mutual fund, and short-term investments and real estate mutual fund are carried at fair value as provided by the investment manager, which generally represents quoted

market prices or net asset value of the mutual funds as of the last business day of the year. The investment in the real estate mutual fund carried at estimated fair value as provided by the investment manager. The real estate limited partnership and hedge funds of funds are carried at estimated fair value based on the net asset value of the limited partnerships as provided by SEI the investment manager.

Membership Dues - Membership dues are recognized as revenue based on the membership period covered by the individual member's dues. Allowance for uncollectible accounts is considered unnecessary and is not provided.

Fixed Assets - Fixed assets are stated at cost. Major additions are capitalized while replacements, maintenance, and repairs which do not improve or extend the lives of the respective assets are charged to expense on a current basis. Depreciation and amortization of fixed assets are computed using the straight-line method at rates calculated to allocate the cost of the applicable assets over their estimated useful lives, which are generally from two to fifteen years on furnishings, fixtures, vehicles, and equipment, and from ten to fifty years on buildings and improvements. Depreciation and amortization expense totaled \$2,749,989 for the year ended August 31, 2021 and \$2,487,072 for 2020.

Deferred Revenue - Deferred revenue consists of exhibit fees, National Educational Association (NEA) grants and reimbursements, membership dues, subscriptions, and advertising received in advance.

Cash - For purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents are considered to be amounts in bank checking accounts and overnight sweeps accounts, subject to immediate withdrawal.

Functional Allocation of Expenses - The costs of providing the various programs and other activities have been summarized on a functional basis in the consolidated statements of activities. Expenses directly attributable to a specific functional area of NJEA are reported as expenses of those functional areas.

NOTE 1. NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Net Assets with Board-Designated Restrictions - NJEA records applicable membership assessments, gifts, and other assets as additions to the net assets with board-designated restrictions of the Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education, Inc. Investment income from the Foundation's investments is restricted for use for the Foundation's program service. The Foundation was organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes to advance and improve the quality of education and the teaching profession in New Jersey through the study, creation and funding of innovative programs or projects which will further educational and instructional excellence. It is intended that grants for all Foundation programs or projects will be funded by earnings from the Foundation's investments.

NJEA records all applicable contributions to Garden State Forward as net assets with donor restrictions of NJEA. The purpose of Garden State Forward is to make independent expenditures regarding New Jersey candidates, or support of committees or organizations that make only independent expenditures regarding such candidates. Garden State Forward is funded by contributions from NJEA.

Net Assets with Donor Restrictions -- NJEA records all applicable contributions and donations received from members, the general public, and NJEA affiliates for the NJEA Disaster Relief Fund (the Disaster Relief Fund) (formerly the Hurricane Sandy Back to School Fund) as net assets with donor restrictions of NJEA. These contributions and donations can only be used for either a direct benefit to a member such as replacing belongings lost as a result of the

hurricane or for general support to a school such as replacing damaged books, repairs, etc.

Contributions from NJEA to the Disaster Relief Fund are unrestricted contributions that are designated for the Disaster Relief Fund. These contributions can be for either a direct benefit to a member or for general support to a school.

Contributions from the NJEA Member Benefits Fund to the Disaster Relief Fund are net assets without donor restrictions contributions that are designated for the Disaster Relief Fund. These contributions can only be used for a direct benefit to a member and cannot be used for general support to a school.

Estimates -The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

NOTE 2. RECEIVABLES

Amounts due from the NEA represent funds due on various projects and programs supported in total or in part by NEA.

Advances to employees represent initial expense advances made to employees. Upon termination or retirement, a final expense reconciliation is required for all amounts advanced.

NOTE 3. INVESTMENTS

The following summary presents the cost and fair value for each of the investment categories as of August 31, 2021 and 2020:

	2021		2020	
	Cost	Fair Value	Cost	Fair Value
WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS:				
Fixed income mutual funds	\$ 86,898,740	\$ 87,556,778	\$ 75,793,882	\$ 76,921,836
Equity mutual funds	37,149,259	49,848,980	29,997,305	35,320,154
International equity mutual fund	26,354,215	35,819,434	24,893,152	28,721,526
Short-term investments	287,310	287,309	261,807	261,804
Mortgage-backed security	87,746	31,990	98,264	37,458
Real estate limited partnership	3,967,865	8,831,147	3,967,865	7,960,497
Alternative investments	1,225,935	1,841,953	892,432	1,006,952
Total without donor restrictions	<u>155,971,070</u>	<u>184,217,591</u>	<u>135,904,707</u>	<u>150,230,227</u>
WITH BOARD-DESIGNATED RESTRICTIONS:				
Fixed income mutual funds	\$ 1,574,947	\$ 1,563,591	\$ 1,518,729	\$ 1,477,688
Equity mutual funds	1,469,414	1,777,417	1,519,950	1,476,270
International equity mutual fund	526,342	748,109	551,567	642,905
Real estate limited partnership	450,917	476,057	196,417	170,010
Total with board-designated restrictions	<u>4,021,620</u>	<u>4,565,174</u>	<u>3,786,663</u>	<u>3,766,873</u>
Total investments	<u>\$ 159,992,690</u>	<u>\$ 188,782,765</u>	<u>\$ 139,691,370</u>	<u>\$ 153,997,100</u>

Investment income for the years ended August 31, 2021 and 2020 consisted of the following:

	2021	2020
WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS:		
Interest and dividends	\$ 6,018,531	\$ 5,655,958
Realized and unrealized gain on investments	16,480,634	6,193,112
Investment fees	(624,933)	(620,585)
	<u>\$ 21,874,232</u>	<u>\$ 11,228,485</u>
WITH BOARD-DESIGNATED RESTRICTIONS:		
Interest and dividends	\$ 214,041	\$ 246,431
Realized and unrealized gain on investments	594,114	48,161
Investment fees	(9,780)	(8,834)
	<u>\$ 798,375</u>	<u>\$ 285,758</u>

NOTE 4. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

The framework for measuring fair value provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (Level 1) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (Level 3). The three levels of the fair value hierarchy are described as follows:

Basis of Fair Value Measurement:

Level 1 - Level 1 - Inputs to the valuation methodology are unadjusted quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets that NJEA has the ability to access.

Level 2 - Inputs to the valuation methodology include: quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets; quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets; inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability; inputs that are derived principally from or corroborated by observable market data by correlation or other means.

If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

Level 3 - Inputs to the valuation methodology are unobservable and significant to the fair value measurement.

The asset's or liability's fair value measurement level within the fair value hierarchy is based on the lowest level of any input that is significant to the fair value measurement. Valuation techniques maximize the use of relevant observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs.

FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS AT AUGUST 31, 2021

	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Fixed income mutual funds	\$ 89,120,369	\$ 89,120,369	\$ -	\$ -
Equity mutual funds	51,626,397	51,626,397	-	-
International equity mutual funds	36,567,543	36,567,543	-	-
Short-term investments	287,309	287,309	-	-
Real estate mutual funds	31,990	-	31,990	-
Total assets in the fair value hierarchy	177,633,608	\$ 177,601,618	\$ 31,990	\$ -
Investments measured at NAV (A)	11,149,157			
Total investments	\$ 188,728,765			

FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS AT AUGUST 31, 2020

	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Fixed income mutual funds	\$ 78,399,524	78,399,524	\$ -	\$ -
Equity mutual funds	36,796,424	36,796,424	-	-
International equity mutual funds	29,364,431	29,364,431	-	-
Short-term investments	261,804	261,804	-	-
Real estate mutual funds	207,468	-	207,468	-
Total assets in the fair value hierarchy	145,029,651	\$ 144,822,183	\$ 207,468	\$ -
Investments measured at NAV (A)	8,967,449			
Total investments	\$ 153,997,100			

(A) In accordance with Subtopic 820-10, certain investments that are measured at fair value using the net asset value per share (or its equivalent) practical expedient have not been classified in the fair value hierarchy. The fair value amounts presented in this table are intended to permit reconciliation of the fair value hierarchy to the amounts presented in the Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits.

The availability of observable market data is monitored to assess the appropriate classification of financial instruments within the fair value hierarchy. Changes in economic conditions or model-based valuation techniques may require the transfer of financial instruments from one fair value level to another. In such instances, the transfer is reported at the beginning of the reporting period.

For the years ended August 31, 2021 and 2020, there were no transfers in or out of levels 1, 2 or 3.

The unfunded commitments and redemption information are as follows at August 31, 2021:

	201 Fair Value	2020 Fair Value	2021 Unfunded Commitments	2020 Unfunded Commitments	Redemption Frequency	Redemption Notice Period
Real estate limited partnership:						
SEI Core Property Fund	\$ 9,307,204	\$ 7,960,497	\$ -	\$ -	Quarterly	65 days*
Hedge funds of funds:						
SEI GPA IV Fund	1,841,953	1,006,952	1,673,965	2,007,466	N/A	N/A
	\$ 11,149,157	\$ 8,967,449				

*- Withdrawal request is capped at 90% with a 10% holdback in escrow until the completion of the fund's annual audit.

The investment objective of the SEI Core Property Fund is to invest in a diversified pool of private investment vehicles that invest in commercial real estate. The investment objective of SEI GPA IV Fund is to invest in a diversified pool of global private asset funds.

The SEI Core Property Fund is measured at fair value net of management and incentive fees or allocations payable to the investment and fund managers, without adjustment by NJEA, based on the net asset value (NAV) per share or NAV equivalent as of August 31, 2021 and 2020, respectively.

The SEI GPA IV Fund is measured at fair value net of administrative expenses and underlying fund expenses, without adjustment by NJEA, based on the NAV or NAV equivalents as of August 31, 2021 and 2020, respectively.

NOTE 5. FIXED ASSETS

The following is a summary of fixed assets by category as of August 31, 2021 and 2020:

Category:	2021	2020
Buildings and Building improvements		
180 West State Street	\$ 14,133,710	\$ 14,594,155
186-190 West State Street	5,678,676	5,595,203
176 West State Street	2,788,840	2,744,522
172 West State Street	2,637,501	2,147,457
Regional offices	<u>3,027,002</u>	<u>2,987,411</u>
Total buildings and building improvements	28,265,729	28,068,748
Land	1,511,656	1,511,656
Computer equipment	7,403,205	6,290,891
Furniture, equipment, and vehicles	<u>6,669,751</u>	<u>5,089,592</u>
Total fixed assets	43,850,341	40,960,887
Less: accumulated depreciation	<u>(24,895,671)</u>	<u>(23,205,162)</u>
Net fixed assets	<u>\$ 18,954,670</u>	<u>\$ 17,755,725</u>

NOTE 6. OBLIGATIONS UNDER OPERATING LEASES

NJEA is obligated under certain leases accounted for as operating leases. For the years ended August 31, 2021 and 2020, rent expense relating to these leases amounted to \$1,878,342 and \$1,952,182 respectively. As of August 31, 2021, the future minimum rental payments required under these non-cancelable operating leases are as follows:

Year Ending August 31,	
2022	\$1,213,592
2023	831,440
2024	736,638
2025	745,680
2026	649,989
Thereafter	<u>2,224,886</u>
Total	<u>\$6,402,225</u>

Under the normal course of operations, NJEA expects to continue to lease the facilities and equipment or similar facilities and equipment covered under such leases beyond the expiration of the current agreements.

NOTE 7. LONG-TERM LIABILITIES

Long-term liabilities as of August 31, 2021 and 2020 consist of deferred compensation arrangements of one former NJEA president totaling \$497,249 and \$389,924, respectively, and obligations under capital leases totaling \$1,119,313 and \$206,534 as of August 31, 2021 and 2020, respectively.

At August 31, 2021, the fixed assets under capital leases had an original cost of \$1,417,351 and accumulated amortization of \$309,958. During the year ended August 31, 2021, \$162,763 of amortization was charged to expense.

At August 31, 2020, the fixed assets under capital leases had an original cost of \$1,765,208 and accumulated amortization of \$1,557,812. During the year ended August 31, 2020, \$259,210 of amortization was charged to expense.

The following is a schedule by years of future minimum lease payments required under these capital leases with the present value of the net minimum lease payments as of August 31, 2021:

Year Ending August 31,

2022	\$ 390,542
2023	284,695
2024	284,695
2025	284,695
2026	<u>23,615</u>
Total minimum lease payments	1,268,242
Less: Amount representing interest	<u>(148,929)</u>
Present value of net minimum lease payments	<u>1,119,313</u>
Less current portion	<u>(277,973)</u>
Long-term portion	<u>\$ 841,340</u>

NOTE 8. DISCLOSURES ABOUT PENSION AND OTHER POSTRETIREMENT BENEFIT PLANS

NJEA has a defined benefit pension plan covering substantially all employees. Under terms of the plan, eligible employees contribute 3.50% of their salaries and NJEA contributes an amount that is based on the recommendation of the consulting actuary. NJEA has multiple non-pension postretirement benefit plans. The plan provides postretirement medical and life insurance covering substantially all employees. NJEA reports in accordance with U.S. GAAP.

	Pension Benefits		Other Benefits	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
Projected benefit obligation at August 31	\$ 494,975,802	\$ 497,339,683	\$ 230,624,183	\$ 237,198,650
Fair value of plan assets at August 31	<u>474,443,187</u>	<u>460,839,656</u>	<u>144,785,042</u>	<u>109,300,706</u>
Funded status	<u>\$ (20,532,615)</u>	<u>\$ (36,500,027)</u>	<u>\$ (85,839,141)</u>	<u>\$ (127,897,944)</u>
Accumulated benefit obligation at August 31	<u>\$ 439,493,973</u>	<u>\$ 440,490,256</u>	<u>\$ 230,624,183</u>	<u>\$ 237,198,650</u>
Accrued benefit cost recognized in the consolidated statement of financial position	<u>\$ (20,532,615)</u>	<u>\$ (36,500,027)</u>	<u>\$ (85,839,141)</u>	<u>\$ (127,897,944)</u>

Amounts recognized as deductions from net assets include:

	Pension Benefits		Other Benefits	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
Prior service (credit) cost	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (14,368,842)	\$ (19,126,956)
Net loss	<u>119,345,930</u>	<u>128,930,606</u>	<u>45,201,257</u>	<u>79,974,597</u>
	<u>\$ 119,345,930</u>	<u>\$ 128,930,606</u>	<u>\$ 30,832,415</u>	<u>\$ 60,847,641</u>

The amounts that will be amortized from net assets into net periodic benefit cost over the next fiscal year are:

	Pension Benefits		Other Benefits	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
Prior service (credit) cost	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (4,758,114)	\$ (4,758,114)
Net gain	7,039,266	7,039,266	1,867,657	4,812,355

Weighted average assumptions at August 31

	Pension Benefits		Other Benefits	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
Discount rate	2.80 %	2.70 %	2.80 %	2.70 %
Expected return on plan assets*	7.50	7.50	8.00	8.00
Rate of compensation increase	6.58	6.58	6.58	6.58

*The expected return on plan assets was determined by review of historical rates of return on assets similar to those in the plan's portfolios.

NOTE 8. DISCLOSURES ABOUT PENSION AND OTHER POSTRETIREMENT BENEFIT PLANS (Continued)

	Pre-65 Plans				
	Age	Grandfathered Plan			New PPO
		Traditional	PPO	HMO	
For measurement purposes, the per capita costs of covered health care were assumed to be the following:	55	\$ 16,879	\$ 16,298	\$ 14,900	\$ 15,874
	60	20,243	19,530	17,814	19,009
	Post-65 Plans				
	Age	0/0/0 Plan	0/7/7 Plan		
	65	\$ 13,707	\$ 10,715		
	70	14,677	11,378		
	75	15,481	11,928		
	80	16,095	12,348		

The healthcare trend rate has a significant effect on the amounts reported. If the assumed rate increased by one percentage point, that would increase the liability as of August 31, 2021 and 2020 by \$42,059,814 and \$43,993,107, respectively.

	Pension Benefits		Other Benefits	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
Service Cost *	\$ 12,864,275	\$ 11,886,278	\$ 6,640,462	\$ 6,554,278
Interest Cost	13,117,935	13,998,408	6,109,884	6,654,169
Expected return on plan assets	(34,082,476)	(31,176,760)	(9,091,002)	(6,990,018)
Amortization of net loss	6,774,414	8,644,204	4,149,340	-
Amortization of prior service cost/(credit)	-	19,419	(4,758,114)	(4,758,114)
Recognized net actuarial loss	-	19,419	-	5,167,176
Net periodic benefit cost	\$ (1,325,852)	\$ 3,371,549	\$ 3,050,570	\$ 6,627,491

* Service cost is allocated to personnel compensation for each respective expense line item.

The following table sets forth the changes in Plan assets as of August 31, 2021 and 2020:

	Pension Benefits		Other Benefits	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
Actual return on plan assets	\$ 26,796,613	\$ 52,104,304	\$ 26,289,538	\$ 9,912,402
Employer contributions	5,000,000	5,000,000	15,094,147	15,239,058
Plan participant contributions	1,176,579	1,125,463	-	-
Benefits paid	(19,138,902)	(19,452,053)	(5,899,349)	(6,225,703)

The Pension Plan's expected long-term rate of return on assets assumption for 2021 and 2020 is 7.5%. The Other Postretirement Plan's expected long-term rate of return on assets assumption for 2021 and 2020 is 8%. As defined in FASB ASC 715, this assumption represents the rate of return on plan assets reflecting the average rate of earnings expected on the funds invested or to be invested to provide for the benefits included in the benefit obligation. The assumption has been determined by reflecting expectations regarding future rates of return for the investment portfolio, with consideration given to the distribution of investments by asset class and historical rates of return for each individual asset class.

Changes Since the Prior Valuation

The discount rate of assumption was changed from 2.70% as of August 31, 2020 to 2.80% as of August 31, 2021. The mortality improvement scale was changed from the 2020 SSA projection scale to the 2021 SSA projection scale.

NJEA's overall strategy is for its Plans to invest in securities that will achieve a rate of return sufficient to meet or exceed the benefit plans' actuarial interest assumption. In general, NJEA's goal for its Plans is to maintain the following allocation ranges:

	Pension Benefits	Other Benefits
Equity securities	50%	65%
Debt securities	34%	30%
Real estate	8%	5%
Opportunity investment	8%	-

NOTE 8. DISCLOSURES ABOUT PENSION AND OTHER POSTRETIREMENT BENEFIT PLANS (CONTINUED)

Following is the information about the fair value measurements of the Pension Plan's assets:

The framework for measuring fair value provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (Level 1) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (Level 3). The three levels of the fair value hierarchy are described as follows:

Basis of Fair Value Measurement:

FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT AT AUGUST 31, 2021

	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Level 1 - Inputs to the valuation methodology are unadjusted quoted prices for identical assets or liabilities in active markets that the Plan has the ability to access.				
U.S. Government and Government Agency obligations	\$ 36,951,999	\$ 36,951,999	\$ -	\$ -
Mutual Funds	339,480,994	339,480,994	-	-
Interest bearing cash	<u>1,747,985</u>	<u>1,747,985</u>	-	-
Level 2 - Inputs to the valuation methodology include: quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets; quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets; inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability; inputs that are derived principally from or corroborated by observable market data by correlation or other means.				
Total assets in the fair value hierarchy	378,180,978	<u>\$ 378,180,978</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Investments measured at NAV (A)	<u>96,262,209</u>			
Total investments	<u>\$ 474,443,187</u>			

If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT AT AUGUST 31, 2020

	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Level 3 - Inputs to the valuation methodology are unobservable and significant to the fair value measurement.				
U.S. Government and Government Agency obligations	\$ 48,574,536	\$ 48,574,536	\$ -	\$ -
Mutual funds*	332,078,049	332,078,049	-	-
Interest bearing cash	<u>1,746,890</u>	<u>1,746,890</u>	-	-
Total assets in the fair value hierarchy	382,399,475	<u>\$ 382,399,475</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Investments measured at NAV (A)	<u>78,440,181</u>			
Total investments	<u>\$ 460,839,656</u>			

* One mutual fund accounts for 45.5% of net assets at August 31, 2020.

(A) In accordance with Subtopic 820-10, certain investments that are measured at fair value using the net asset value per share (or its equivalent) practical expedient have not been classified in the fair value hierarchy. The fair value amounts presented in this table are intended to permit reconciliation of the fair value hierarchy to the amounts presented in the Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits.

The SEI Opportunity Collective Fund and SEI Core Property Collective Investment Fund are measured at fair value, without adjustment by the Plan, based on the net asset value (NAV) or NAV equivalent as of August 31, 2021.

In accordance with relevant accounting standards, the unfunded commitments and redemption frequency information and redemption notice periods are as follows at August 31, 2021 and 2020:

	2021 Fair Value	Unfunded Commitments	Redemption Frequency	Redemption Notice Period
Common collective trust funds - hedge fund of funds:				
SEI Special Situations Collective Fund	\$ 40,562,417	\$ -	Biannually	95 days*
SEI GP Asset IV CIT	10,781,892	9,812,906	N/A	N/A
SEI GP Asset V CIT	2,136,547	13,936,693	N/A	N/A
Common collective trust fund - real estate:				
SEI Core Property CIT	<u>42,781,353</u>	-	Quarterly	65 days#
Total	<u>\$ 96,262,209</u>	<u>\$ 23,749,599</u>		

NOTE 8. DISCLOSURES ABOUT PENSION AND OTHER POSTRETIREMENT BENEFIT PLANS (CONTINUED)

	2020 Fair Value	Unfunded Commitments	Redemption Frequency	Redemption Notice Period
Common collective trust funds - hedge fund of funds:				
SEI Special Situations Collective Fund	\$ 33,561,292	\$ -	Biannually	95 days*
SEI GP Asset IV CIT	5,892,806	11,767,906	N/A	N/A
SEI GP Asset V CIT	403,286	15,599,569	N/A	N/A
Common collective trust fund - real estate:				
SEI Core Property CIT	<u>38,582,797</u>	<u>-</u>	Quarterly	65 days#
Total	<u>\$ 78,440,181</u>	<u>\$27,367,475</u>		

* - Withdrawals may be limited to 20% of the net asset value of the fund on any given redemption date in circumstances where the fund's Trustee believe that any such redemption could compromise the ongoing performance or operations of the fund.

- Withdrawals may be limited to 25% of the net asset value of the fund on any given redemption date in circumstances where the fund's Trustee believe that any such redemption could compromise the ongoing performance or operations of the fund.

The investment objective of the SEI Special Situations Collective Fund is to invest in a diversified strategy of hedge fund of funds.

The investment objective of the SEI Core Property Collective Investment Trust is to invest in funds that acquire, manage, and dispose of commercial real estate properties.

Following is the information about the fair value measurements of the Other Postretirement Plan's assets:

	FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS AT AUGUST 31, 2021			
	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Fixed income mutual funds	\$ 41,478,004	\$ 41,478,004	\$ -	\$ -
Equity mutual funds	45,291,775	45,291,775	-	-
International equity mutual funds	42,849,312	42,849,312	-	-
Balanced mutual funds	14,578,039	14,578,039	-	-
Short term security	587,912	587,912	\$ -	\$ -
	<u>\$ 144,785,042</u>	<u>\$ 144,785,042</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

	FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS AT AUGUST 31, 2020			
	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Fixed income mutual funds	\$ 18,971,540	\$18,971,540	\$ -	\$ -
Equity mutual funds	40,623,424	40,623,424	-	-
International equity mutual funds	38,126,083	38,126,083	-	-
Balanced mutual funds	10,979,659	10,979,659	-	-
Short term security	600,000	600,000	\$ -	\$ -
	<u>\$109,300,706</u>	<u>\$109,300,706</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

The amount expected to be contributed to the plans for the fiscal year beginning September 1, 2020 for pension benefits is \$6,000,000. Benefits expected to be paid during the ensuing four years and thereafter are approximately as follows:

	Pension Benefits	Other Benefits
2022	\$ 20,011,236	\$ 7,294,904
2023	20,493,147	7,584,757
2024	21,087,513	7,675,040
2025	21,759,927	8,002,682
2026	22,320,827	8,308,665
2027-2031	<u>117,938,250</u>	<u>46,917,830</u>
	<u>\$ 223,610,900</u>	<u>\$ 85,783,878</u>

NOTE 9. LITIGATION

Certain claims, suits, and complaints arising in the ordinary course of business have been filed or are pending against NJEA. In the opinion of NJEA's management and legal counsel, the ultimate outcome of these claims will not have a material adverse effect on the financial position of NJEA.

NOTE 10. TAX STATUS

NJEA is a not-for-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey and is qualified under the provisions of Section 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code as a labor organization exempt from Federal income tax.

The Bolivar L. Graham Intern Foundation, Inc., the Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education, Inc., and the NJEA Affiliates Risk Purchasing Group are not-for-profit organizations incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey. They are qualified under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are exempt from Federal income tax.

Garden State Forward is a qualified organization under Section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code which provides for the exemption from Federal income tax of "exempt function income" of a political committee that is a separate segregated fund of an exempt organization which is not a political organization. Contributions received are exempt function income provided that the receipts are primarily expended for an exempt function, which is described in Note 1, or for some or all of its administrative expenses. However, interest income, if any, will be taxed.

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require management to evaluate tax positions taken by NJEA and recognize a tax liability if NJEA has taken an uncertain position that, more likely than not, would not be sustained upon examination by the U.S. Federal, state, or local taxing authorities. NJEA is subject to routine audits by taxing jurisdictions; however, there are currently no audits for any tax periods in progress. Typically, tax years will remain open for three years; however, this may differ depending upon the circumstances of NJEA.

NOTE 11. CASH CONCENTRATIONS

NJEA places its cash with institutions deemed to be creditworthy. Cash balances may, at times, exceed insured deposit limits. As of August 31, 2021, NJEA had cash totaling \$19,769,147 in excess of FDIC insured coverage. This included the cash maintained in overnight sweeps accounts which invest in money market mutual funds which are not insured by the FDIC.

NOTE 12. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

NJEA has a common officer with the New Jersey Education Association Member Benefit Fund (the Member Benefit Fund). During the years ended August 31, 2021 and 2020, the Member Benefit Fund donated \$18,500 and \$15,000, respectively, to the NJEA Disaster Relief Fund.

NJEA has common officers with the New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning (the Center). During the years ended August 31, 2021 and 2020, NJEA donated \$750,000 each year to the Center for the purpose of providing professional learning experiences, resources, and research to educators.

NOTE 13. LONG-TERM CAPITAL ASSETS

Management has elected to designate a portion of NJEA's investments and investment income for the purchase of long term capital assets. As of August 31, 2021 and 2020, investments designated for this purpose totaled \$54,490,453 and \$47,347,567, respectively. Investment income earned on the designated investments totaled \$10,396,894 and \$4,087,836 for the years ending August 31, 2021 and 2020, respectively.

NOTE 14. RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

NJEA invests in various investments. Investments are exposed to various risks such as economic, interest rate, market, and sector risks. Due to the level of risk associated with certain investments, it is at least reasonably possible that changes in the values of investments will occur in the near term and that such changes could materially affect the amounts reported in the Consolidated Statements of Financial Position.

The liabilities for accrued pension cost and accrued postretirement benefit cost - other are based on certain assumptions pertaining to interest rates, inflation rates, and participant demographics, all of which are subject to change. Due to uncertainties inherent in the estimations and assumptions process, it is at least reasonably possible that changes in these estimates and assumptions in the near term would be material to the financial statements.

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NOTE 15. AVAILABILITY AND LIQUIDITY

The following represents NJEA's financial assets available within one year of the statements of financial position date for general expenditures on August 31, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
Financial assets available within one year:		
Cash	\$20,638,335	\$ 21,098,056
Receivables	3,390,901	1,045,777
Investments	<u>188,782,765</u>	<u>153,997,100</u>
Total financial assets	212,812,001	176,140,933
Less amounts unavailable for general expenditures:		
Net assets with board-designated and donor restrictions	<u>10,978,223</u>	<u>7,994,663</u>
Financial Assets available to meet general expenditures within one year	<u>\$ 201,833,778</u>	<u>\$ 168,146,270</u>

Excess cash maybe invested in savings accounts and short-term money markets.

NOTE 16. NET ASSETS

Net assets with board-designated restrictions were as follows for the year ended August 31, 2021 and 2020:

	2020	2019
Specific Purpose		
F.L. Hipp Foundation	<u>\$ 4,248,909</u>	<u>\$ 3,439,033</u>
Total financial assets	<u>\$ 4,248,909</u>	<u>\$ 3,439,033</u>

Net assets without donor restrictions for the year ended August 31, 2021 and 2020 were as follows:

	2021	2020
NJEA General Fund	\$ 102,503,4793	\$10,444,853
B.L. Graham Foundations	1,012	1,012
F.L. Hipp Foundation	300,000	300,000
NJEA Affiliates Risk Purchasing	52,182	18,964
Eliminations	<u>(52,182)</u>	<u>(18,964)</u>
Total financial assets	<u>\$ 102,804,491</u>	<u>\$ 10,745,865</u>

Net assets with donor restrictions were as follows for the year ended August 31, 2021 and 2020:

	2021	2020
Garden State Forward	\$ 6,381,976	\$ 4,196,795
NJEA Disaster Relief Fund	<u>347,336</u>	<u>358,835</u>
Total financial assets	<u>\$ 6,729,312</u>	<u>\$ 4,555,630</u>

Net assets released from net assets with board-designated restrictions for the year ended August 31, 2020 were \$11,586,851.

NOTE 17. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

NJEA has evaluated subsequent events through December 20, 2021, the date the financial statements were available to be issued, and they have been evaluated in accordance with relevant accounting standards.

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- Effective metacognitive learning strategies
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- Writing instruction
- Transition essentials

WORKSHOPS (OPTIONAL) • 1:45 – 3 P.M.

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Sometimes you have to put yourself first

By Janet Royal

More than two years have passed since our lives were changed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of us have had to cope with uncertainty, anxiety, feelings of depression, isolation, sickness and the death of loved ones. Add all of that to the challenges we may have already been dealing with prior to COVID-19—financial difficulties, health concerns, relationship issues, job insecurity and many more. To say that our inner strength and stability were tested would be an understatement.

If you are reading this, you have most likely found ways to get through, overcome, or rise above the challenges, obstacles, sadness and disbelief that have been part of our day-to-day lives. It would be amazing if we could tune out all that is negative and surround ourselves with only things that are positive, but that is not realistic. What's happened to us these past two years will be, in some form or fashion, a part of our lives for the foreseeable future.

We must find ways to practice self-care for not only our physical health but our mental and emotional well-being. Be intentional about the time you set aside for recharging and rejuvenating. When we see others suffering, it's common to feel conflicted between managing our own personal needs and assisting others with theirs. At these

times, just remember what is shared on a plane during the safety demonstration: “If there is a change in cabin pressure the mask will drop down. You should put yours on first and then assist others needing help.”

Let me share with you some techniques you may want to lean on when the world around you feels like a battlefield instead of an oasis of peace.

MAKE YOUR NEEDS A PRIORITY.

Often, physical, mental and emotional needs get put on the back burner during periods of heightened stress and tension. These needs are interconnected and a breakdown in one area could leave us open for illness. Make sure you are consuming foods that are both satisfying and nutritious. Try to move every day, realizing this may look very different depending on who you are. If going to a gym works for you, great. Taking a walk around the neighborhood may also give you what you need. And don't forget that your body needs proper sleep to heal and to function at its peak.

STOP AND BREATHE BEFORE MAKING ANY DECISIONS.

Sometimes we rush to solve a problem or emergency without taking some “wait time” that could result in a better choice. When our adrenaline is pumping fast and furious, it can cloud our judgement.

DON'T BE ASHAMED TO REACH OUT TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

We humans are social creatures. The power of community can often bring peace and clarity to help us move forward in a positive and productive way. Sometimes you just need someone to listen. Inviting friends or family to chime in with their views may also help. You decide if it's monologue or dialogue. Even if you cannot connect in person, a call, Zoom, or Facetime may do the trick.

READ AND WRITE.

Many people have found peace and relaxation in journaling—particularly gratitude journaling—or reading. Sometimes just being able to jot thoughts and dreams down allows you to reflect and refresh which in turn can bring about some comfort and peace and help you to garner a sense of purpose.

We cannot do it all alone. No matter what the situation, you should always be honest with yourself and never too proud to ask for help. As I'm sure you may have heard before, two brains are better than one. There will most likely be a need at some point in our lives where we feel the need to turn to our families, community, and maybe even the medical community to provide the supports we need to be OK, and that's OK!

Janet L. Royal is an associate director in the NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division and is the coordinator for the annual NJEA Convention. She can be reached at jroyal@njea.org.

APRIL & beyond

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

APR 01/02	FRI & SAT Winter Leadership Conference-Central	APR 09/10	SAT TO SUN Higher Education Collective Bargaining Summit	MAY 20	FRIDAY Executive Committee and County Presidents Council meetings
APR 06	WEDNESDAY Executive Committee meeting	APR 30	SATURDAY Exceptional Children Conference	MAY 21	SATURDAY Delegate Assembly meeting
APR 08/09	FRI TO SAT Higher Education Conference	APR 30 TO MAY 1	SAT TO SUN Early Career Conference NJEA Preservice Conference	JUN 03/04	SAT TO SUN LGBTQIA+ Conference

for more information go to NJEA.org

DEADLINES

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The conference will focus on LGBTQIA+ issues that our
members are facing in and out of their classrooms and
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Attendees will select one of the following tracks:

- LGBTQIA+ 101
- Advocating for LGBTQIA+ PD in Your Local & District
- NJEA and You! Creating a More Perfect (& Queer) Union
- Legal Issues Around Supporting Queer Students & Staff
- Implementing the LGBTQIA+ Curriculum Mandate
- Supporting Gender Sexuality Alliances in Our Schools
- LGBTQIA+ Members of Color
- LGBTQIA+ Politics



njea

Sexual Orientation and
Gender Identity Committee

A budget for all New Jerseyans

On March 8, Gov. Phil Murphy delivered the first budget address of his second term. As he has done with every budget since first being elected in 2017, he demonstrated his commitment to NJEA members, our students and New Jersey's communities.

Among the highlights of the proposed budget are \$650 million in additional K-12 state aid, \$430 million for school construction and renovation, additional funding for higher education grant programs that drive enrollment in our county colleges and—for the second consecutive year—a full pension payment.

Murphy's sustained commitment to meeting the state's pension obligations helps not only those looking forward to receiving a pension, it benefits all taxpayers. New Jersey's recent credit upgrade—its first in a generation—will lead to lower borrowing costs and more budget resources available for priorities that benefit all the state's residents. And last year, because the state made its pension contribution in one lump sum at the beginning of the fiscal year rather than quarterly, the state is expected to save taxpayers roughly \$2.2 billion over 30 years, rather than the \$1.5 billion in savings initially anticipated through the full funding of the pension.

Murphy is proposing a new Affordable Housing Production Fund, funded at \$300 million. According to the governor, the fund will help the state build the entire current backlog of 3,300 already approved, but yet-to-be-built, affordable housing units by the end of his second term.

Affordable housing is stable housing, and few things are more central to students' well-being than a safe home to return to every afternoon. While NJEA members are rightly proud of everything we do inside their school buildings, those out-of-school factors play a huge role in student success. Affordable housing, access to health care, adequate nutrition and safe communities work together to set the conditions for academic success.

In short, it is a pro-student, pro-education budget that shows the state is committed to keeping its promises. Gov. Murphy's proposed budget demonstrates that he intends to keep his promise to make New Jersey both more affordable and more attractive for the hard-working families who are propelling the state's economic recovery.

“

It is not hard to imagine how different the budget address would have been had Murphy's opponent won.

A pro-public education budget like this does not happen by mere luck. Starting last summer, NJEA members came together in support of Phil Murphy as our association's endorsed candidate for governor. That hard work undoubtedly made the difference in what turned out to be a close election. As a result, Gov. Murphy became the first Democratic governor to win reelection in 44 years.

The governor credited the work of NJEA members to reelect him as a major factor in his win. And it wasn't the governor alone who took notice. Just weeks before the November election, reporter Jeff Pillets of *NJ Spotlight News* recognized 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.”

It is not hard to imagine how different the budget address would have been had Murphy's opponent won.

Elections have consequences, and in the governor's budget address we saw how good those consequences can be when we come together and successfully support the candidates who earn our endorsements. 🇺🇸



See for yourself

Office of the Governor

Text of the Gov. Phil Murphy's budget address

bit.ly/FY2023-address

Note: Bit.ly links are case sensitive.

Office of Management and Budget

“Budget in Brief”

nj.gov/treasury/omb/

NJ Spotlight News

“NJEA's political power goes beyond money”

By Jeff Pillets

bit.ly/3CRXHqL

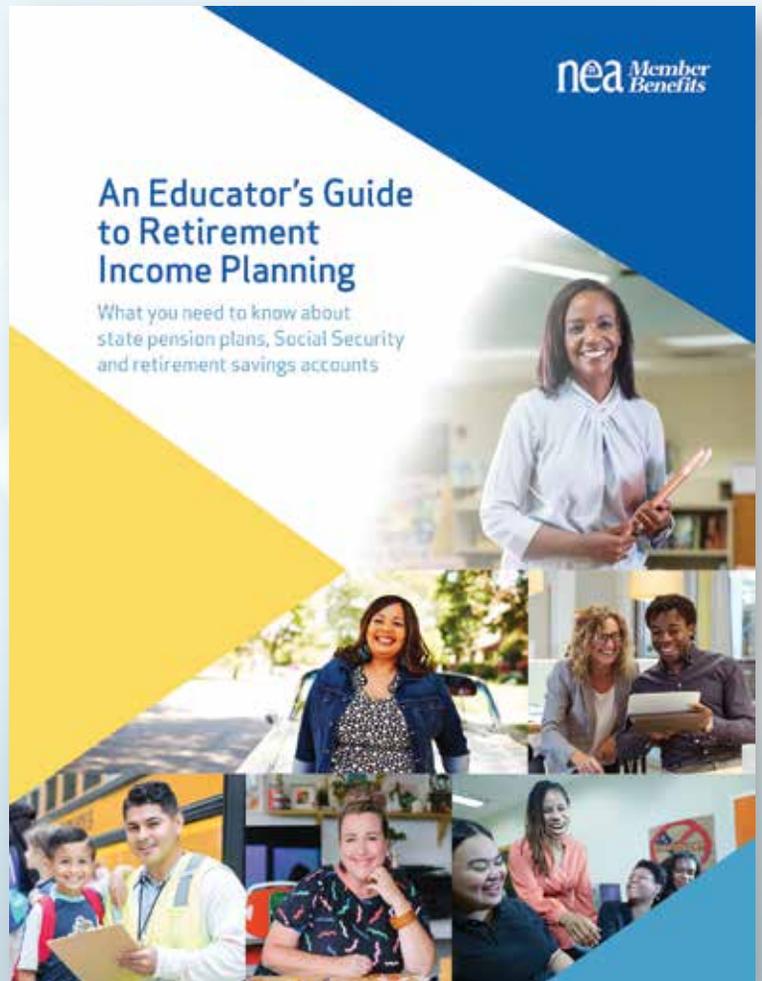
NJEA Review

“What Happens in the Statehouse Makes a Difference in the Schoolhouse”

njea.org/state-school

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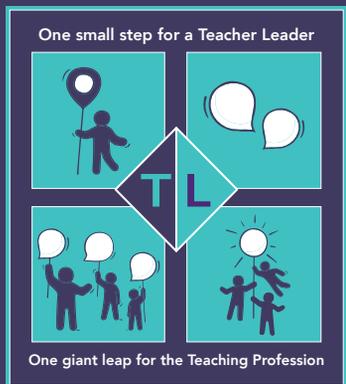


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