

REVIEW



an education and advocacy resource

REVIEW

MAY 2023



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TAKES ON A GIANT

28 THE CONSORTIUM AND
REPRESENTATIVE CURRICULA

32 PATHWAYS FOR ESPS
TO BECOME TEACHERS

36 RETHINKING DUTY PERIODS

*A labor
movement's
Jersey roots*



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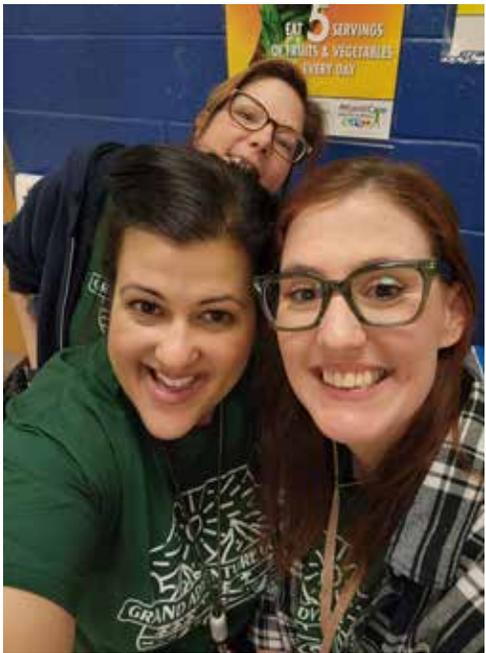
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1. At its April rep council meeting, the Lower Township Elementary EA (LTEEA) took time to honor **2023 Cape May County ESP of the Year Debbie Young**, a paraprofessional and member of LTEEA. From left: LTEEA Treasurer Bonnie Barcas, Young, LTEEA Secretary Cyndi Rosenberg, LTEEA and Cape May County EA President Stacey Salerno and LTEEA Vice President Danielle Buckley.



The **Clayton Education Association (Gloucester)** is proud to have seen a huge turnout for its "Camp Read A Lot." With funding from an NJEA Pride in Public Education grant, CEA Treasurer Lauren Campisi called it a "big Pride event for our small town." Group photo: From left, Campisi, CEA Vice President Amanda Datz, and CEA member Emily Moore. Tent photo: CEA member Flavia Masino with one of the "campers."

FEATURES



22 | A LABOR MOVEMENT'S JERSEY ROOTS

Chris Smalls and Derrick Palmer had been disappointed by Amazon before, but nothing compared to the health and safety violations and discrimination they witnessed once the global pandemic—and Amazon—made them “essential workers.” Neither man had much experience with labor unions, but that was about to change.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



28 | THE CONSORTIUM AND REPRESENTATIVE CURRICULA

In April 2022, the National Education Association awarded NJEA a three-year grant titled “Cultivating Community, Action, Justice, and Understanding through the NJEA Consortium: Connections. Community. Curriculum.” Composed of three cohorts of NJEA member design-teams, The Consortium has partnered with more than 25 colleges and universities, museums and historical commissions, and social and racial justice advocacy organizations.

BY LIZANDAA ALBURG



32 | PATHWAYS FOR ESPS TO BECOME TEACHERS

Educational support professionals (ESPs) have a proven track record of working well with students, inspiring and motivating them. However, there are far too many cases in which there is no practical way for an ESP to move into the role of teacher. This was partly addressed when the New Jersey Department of Education recently approved eight new alternate route programs offered by the New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning that lead to initial certification in physics, chemistry, biology or mathematics.

BY DR. ROBERT GOODMAN



36 | RETHINKING DUTIES

Duty periods are not typically a school employee’s favorite part of the day. But an educator in South Jersey has found a way to make the interactions she has with students during her duty period an opportunity for social-emotional learning for students and an unplanned joy for her.

BY KATY Z. LYNCH

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The union dividend

The number \$2.4 million

Since 1994, The NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Educational Excellence has awarded more than \$2.4 million in grants to 460 recipients, funding innovative educational programs that benefit New Jersey's public school students.

Source: NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation. To learn how you can apply for a Hipp grant visit njea.org/hipp.




GOOD NEWS

New Jersey's community college graduates who go on to four-year institutions have a great head start

Ninety-one per cent of New Jersey community college students who earned an associate degree as of fall 2021 and then transferred to a senior public college or university in the state had all of their credits accepted. Of the remaining 9%, those who changed their majors were likely to fewer credits accepted. Transfer students who first graduate from a New Jersey community college earn their bachelor's degree at higher rate overall within six years of entry to their institution than their first-time student counterparts.

Source: New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, "Transfer of Credit Report," (bit.ly/3zUYZR4).




Amazon Labor Union (ALU) President Chris Smalls (r) and ALU Vice President Derrick Palmer made history as leaders of the first Amazon warehouse to unionize. They shared their story with NJEA member Theresa Fuller's U.S. history classes at North Plainfield High School.

PHOTO BY
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REVIEW

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Organizational Directory

NJEA headquarters, Trenton

To reach any of the offices at headquarters, call NJEA's main number, 609-599-4561.

Executive Office: includes NJEA's statewide officers and the offices of the Executive Director; Human Resources; Human and Civil Rights, Equity and Governance; Legal Services; Organizational Development; and the Labor Management Collaborative.

Business Division: includes the offices of Accounting and Finance; Information Systems, Facilities, Mailroom and Production; Membership; and Comptroller.

Communications Division: responsible for all aspects of the association's communications efforts, both internal and external. The division produces the *NJEA Review* and njea.org; manages the Hipp Foundation and assists local and county affiliates with internal and external communications.

Government Relations Division: includes the Office of Policy and Politics, which addresses legislation, administrative code, policy and advocacy at a statewide and federal level, and the Office of Member and Political Organizing, which works with members at the county and local level to organize around local, state, and federal issues that affect public education.

Professional Development and Instructional Issues: assists members and local and county affiliates with instructional issues and professional learning. The division also monitors state level and school level implementation of administrative code as promulgated by the New Jersey Department of Education.

Research and Economic Services: Provides information to support state and local association programs and activities, including collective bargaining and policy analysis. Offers guidance on retirement issues and administers NJEA Member Benefits.

UniServ regional offices

Provides extensive field services to members and local and county affiliates throughout the state, including negotiations assistance, contract administration and grievance adjudication, member organizing and local member consultation and representation. UniServ field representatives train local leaders and assist in the coordination of NJEA and NEA resources. UniServ regional offices are organized under four zones.

UniServ South

Reg. 1-3
Director's office
856-234-0522

Region 1 (Atlantic and
Cape May counties):
609-652-9200

Region 2 (Cumberland,
Gloucester and Salem
counties):
856-628-8650

Region 3 (Burlington and
Camden counties):
856-234-2485

UniServ Central

Reg. 7-9, 11, 13 and 29
Director's office
732-287-6899

Region 7 (Ocean County):
732-349-0280

Region 8 (Mercer County):
609-896-3422

Region 9 (Monmouth County):
732-403-8000

Region 11 (Middlesex County):
732-287-4700

Region 29 (Higher Education):
609-689-9580

UniServ Northeast

Reg. 15, 19-21, and 25
Director's office
973-321-3221

Region 15 (Union County):
908-709-9440

Region 19 (Hudson County-
North and Newark):
201-861-1266

Region 20 (Hudson
County-South):
201-653-6634

Region 21 (Essex County,
except Newark):
973-762-6866

Region 25 (Bergen County):
201-292-8093

UniServ Northwest

Reg. 13, 17, and 27
Director's office
973-347-0911

Region 13 (Hunterdon,
Somerset and Warren
counties):
908-782-2168

Region 17 (Morris and
Sussex counties):
973-515-0101

Region 27
(Passaic County):
973-694-0154

MEMBERSHIP

Active professional: \$999 (full time); \$199.80 (full time *low-earner); \$499.50 (part time); \$499.50 (on leave); \$199.80 (part time *low-earner). Active supportive: \$488 (full time); \$97.60 (full time *low-earner); \$244.00 (part time); \$97.60 (part time *low-earner); \$244 (on leave). Retired professional: \$88; \$1,095 (retired life). Retired ESP: \$60; \$675 (retired ESP life); Preservice \$15. General professional (outside N.J. public education employment): \$250. Subscribing \$250. Only those in education positions in N.J. public schools and colleges are eligible for active membership. Payment of annual dues entitles a member to receive the Review for one year, from January through December. Dues include \$5 for the NJEA Review. *Low-earner threshold 2020-21 is \$21,700.





PRESIDENT'S *Message*

Celebrating a resurgence in unions

Workers across the country are embracing a union resurgence in companies such as Starbucks, Apple and others. As we support their efforts as union members, it's an excellent time to appreciate the benefits we have earned from our long-established statewide union, our national counterpart, NEA, and the local and county associations that have made NJEA one of the strongest unions in New Jersey, as well as one of the most successful public school employee unions in the country.

Thanks to our hard work, and the struggle of generations of workers before us, we have successfully negotiated respectable salaries, pensions and benefits, when compared to fellow educators throughout the nation. We are always working to improve members' compensation and working conditions, while advocating for the profession and the best interests of our students.

Because NJEA members understand the importance of collective bargaining and action, we are a powerful voice for our members and the students we serve. It's another one of the reasons why New Jersey leads the nation with the best public schools, and it's why all of the top performing public school systems in the country are from highly unionized states.

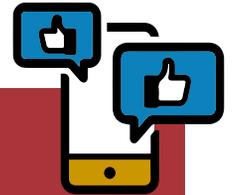
Without the support of NJEA members, our union could not be as strong as it must be to face the economic and political challenges that threaten our quality of life and that of our students and their families.

That is why hearing the story of labor organizers Chris Smalls and Derrick Palmer in our cover story, and how they took on Amazon and successfully built the Amazon Labor Union, is so inspiring. Chris and Derrick are New Jersey public school graduates, and we are all extremely proud of them.

Even though our union was established in 1853 and their union was recognized in 2022, we are connected in the struggle to fight for workers' safety, security, dignity and success.

Thank you for the work you do as advocates and educators to maintain our excellent schools and to advocate for the dedicated people who make them great.

In Unity,



SEAN M. SPILLER

Facebook

@SpillerforNJEA: As a proud Rutgers graduate and union advocate, I stand unapologetically with my fellow NJEA officers in support of striking faculty and staff at Rutgers. I know the importance of great educators at every level, and I'm grateful for the Rutgers professors who helped me get where I am today. They deserve the dignity and security of a fair contract.

On April 10, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller shared NJEA's official statement demonstrating support for the faculty and staff of Rutgers University, who went on strike on Monday, April 10. Spiller expressed his support for his fellow union members and pointed out that respect and dignity for educators are the foundation of a strong education.

STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

@SteveBeattyNJEA: Nothing quite like the last day of school before a much needed spring break—and great to spend it with the members of Little Egg Harbor EA at Frog Pond and George Mitchell Elementary and Robert Wood Early Childhood Center. Fantastic people doing fantastic work for our kids, our communities, and our union! Thank you to all the members who came out to chat during lunch and to President Jackie Finnegan and field rep Colleen Neil!

On April 7, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty spent the day before spring break with the Little Egg Harbor Education Association. He shared photos from his visit and celebrated the hard work of the association leaders and the entire membership.

PETAL ROBERTSON

Facebook

@PetalForNJEA: We closed out our Winter Leadership Conferences with our members from Central Jersey. It was great seeing some first-time faces and reconnecting with all of our members.

On April 3, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson shared photos from NJEA's 2023 Winter Leadership Conference-Central. Robertson emphasized the importance of connecting with NJEA members and celebrating the important role that all three of NJEA's Winter Leadership Conferences play in strengthening local associations across the state.

OFFICERS ONLINE



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MEMBERSHIP CHAIRS: USE THE POTENTIAL MEMBER REPORTING FORM

The Workplace Democracy Enhancement Act (WDEA), which became state law on May 18, 2018, requires boards of education to send local associations information about their respective members and potential members.

Specifically, it requires public employers to provide—within 10 calendar days of hiring—the organization the following information about a new employee:

- Name
- Job title
- Worksite location
- Home address
- Work telephone number
- Date of hire
- Work email address
- Any personal email address and home and cellphone numbers on file with the public employer.

Additionally, this information should be supplied to the association for all negotiation unit members every 120 days. Preferably in September, January and June.

NJEA requests that each month you have new employees, submit a Potential Member Reporting Form, with the appropriate information. This form will be used to help keep your membership and potential membership records up to date. This form can be found on njea.org. Slide over to “My NJEA,” click on “Docs and Downloads” and the select “Forms.”

WHERE ARE THE ELECTION RESULTS?

While NJEA elections were held in April for representatives to the NJEA Executive Committee, NJEA Delegate Assembly, and NEA Representative Assembly, as well as for positions as NJEA Delegate Assembly-Alternates, the process concluded after press time for this edition of the *NJEA Review*.

Election results will be posted on njea.org after the Elections Committee certifies the election results, which was scheduled to take place after press time on April 27.

NONTENURED? KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

By May 15, all nontenured teachers must be notified of reemployment. If the school board fails to notify nontenured teachers, they are entitled to continued employment for the next year.

In addition, many locally negotiated contracts include similar requirements for educational support professionals (ESP).

If a nontenured teacher wishes to accept employment, they must notify the board in writing on or before June 1. ESP staff members should consult their collective bargaining agreements to determine if they have similar response requirements.

Members who have been notified of their nonrenewal should contact their local president.

CHANGING SCHOOL DISTRICTS? SALARY GUIDE PLACEMENT IS NEGOTIABLE

Did you know that placement on a salary guide is negotiable for members moving from one school district to another?

According to Statute 18A: 29-9, “Whenever a person shall thereafter accept office, position, or employment as a member in any school district of this state, his initial place on the salary schedule shall be at such point as may be agreed upon by the member and the employing board of education.”

In other words, if you are leaving School District A for School District B, you have the right to negotiate placement on your new salary guide with the board of education. Some locals have contract language to this effect. Some contracts may require the board to give full credit to an employee moving from one district to another while others may spell out limitations.

If you are accepting employment in a different school district, you may want to contact the local president there before you agree on salary guide placement.

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COOL STUFF



FESTIVAL OF BALLOONING OFFERS MEMBERS DISCOUNTS

As part of its 40th anniversary celebration, the New Jersey Lottery Festival of Ballooning is recognizing educators who continue to give so much of themselves by offering discounts to attend this year's festival. The annual event is the largest summertime hot air balloon and music festival in North America and a must on everyone's summer calendar.

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; affordable family entertainment including a popular live concert series featuring KC and the Sunshine Band, Fitz and the Tantrums, Everclear, and Lit, and best-selling children's recording artist Laurie Berkner; a nighttime hot air balloon glow; family entertainment and attractions; the New Jersey Lottery "Lottery Land" entertainment complex; the Running with the Balloons 5K; children's amusement rides; exciting interactive exhibits, and hundreds of crafters and food vendors; and more!

The festival will be held from July 28-30, 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 of Garden State families.

Teachers, administrators and educational support professionals at both public and private K-12 schools and colleges/universities are eligible to save \$5 on general admission tickets by visiting balloonfestival.com and entering the code NJEA23 at checkout.

Lawn seating for concerts is included in the general admission price.

To learn more, follow the festival at [#njballoonfest](https://twitter.com/njballoonfest) or visit balloonfestival.com.



RECYCLE INK, RAISE FUNDS FOR HIPPI!

The NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation has partnered with Planet Green Recycle to recycle ink cartridges, reducing waste in landfills and raising funds for a worthy cause.

Did you know that more than 375 million empty ink and toner cartridges are thrown out every year, with most ending up in landfills? It can take up to 1,000 years for these cartridges to decompose.

By recycling your ink cartridges through Planet Green Recycle, you'll help reduce this colossal amount of waste.

By using the Hipp Foundation's unique program code, 31808, you'll help to support our efforts to fund innovative educational projects. The only foundation of its kind in New Jersey, the Hipp Foundation has disbursed more than \$2.3 million in grants for projects that represent a bold, fresh approach by public school employees. Help us raise funds so we can support even more projects and help protect the environment.

It's simple to do!

1. Gather four or more ink cartridges.
2. Go to planetgreenrecycle.com to print out free USPS labels.
3. Use the Hipp Foundation's Program ID Code 31808 to ensure the foundation receives the credit for your donations.
4. Use any box to mail the ink cartridges to Planet Green Recycle for free.
5. Ask friends, family, and businesses to participate, as well.

Learn more about the Planet Green Recycle program at planetgreenrecycle.com and the Hipp Foundation at njea.org/hipp.

A secretary gets the job done

Meet 2022 Hudson County ESP of the Year Joanne Burti Seitz

Thirty-two years ago, Joanne Burti Seitz was a young widow with two small children. She needed a job with a schedule that would allow her to care for her children.

"I started working at the free preschool at the library in town because I couldn't afford private preschool," Seitz remembered. "I became friends with the teacher, and I worked with her for several years, but my mother urged me to get a permanent job that would secure my future with benefits and a pension."

Seitz was hired in Bayonne, where she lived, to work with an elementary school principal who was unaware that he was getting a new secretary.

"The principal didn't know I was the new secretary because his secretary got transferred," Seitz said. "He told me, 'If you're a shrinking violet, feel free to ask the superintendent for a transfer.' But I have never had a boss I didn't adore, respect or learn to love. And I was fortunate enough to be able to read all their handwriting when others could not. So, apparently, I was meant to do this!"

After 10 years at the elementary level, Seitz moved to the high school for 10 years. Then she moved back to the elementary level and has been there ever since.

"I love what I do," Seitz said. "I have 740 kids and 200 adults, and it's just me and my two bosses in the office. I have a strong connection with the principal and vice principal. We worship the quicksand each other walks on!"

Fast-paced days

Seitz loves her fast-paced days. She, like many of her colleagues, comes in early to get a jump on her day.

"What I love about my day is that I blink, and it's time to go home," Seitz said. "I come in at 7:30 even though my hours start at 8. I pull up the attendance and see who will be out. We have to make sure everything is covered, and coming in early helps me get a handle on that."

Seitz has adapted to every new policy, procedure and technological change over her long career, but some things are evergreen. She is also in charge of the pretzel money and runs the hot dog sales on half days.

"People do not realize the craziness," Seitz laughed. "Every day is different. A rainy day can cause havoc. When



we have to fit in fire drills and other things—it has a ripple effect on the day."

A resource for parents

Seitz is also a personal resource for parents in her diverse community, many of whom are not comfortable navigating the school's website or email system.

"I had people call my house on Sunday mornings during COVID because they needed information about their kids' internet access or device issues," Seitz said. "You get to know your families really well."

Seitz now has five children—two with her first husband who passed away, two more with a second husband who has also passed, and a stepson with her third husband. She has six grandchildren.

She brings her same loving energy to her school and her family. She fully embraces her boss's motto: The sun is always shining, and I'm grateful to work in an office where a dance party just might break out during the morning announcements.

"It's amazing and awesome to be named the 2022 Hudson County ESP of the Year," Seitz said. "So many people wish for the end of the school year or retirement. And you just don't realize that it's going to come; it's what you do in the middle that matters. Just come in and do the best that you can for the day. Don't worry about anything else. Don't worry about standardized testing, SGOs and PDPs. Just come in and do the best that you can do." 🏠

Proud of the ESP team

Meet 2022 Monmouth County ESP of the Year Michael Byers

Michael Byers, head custodian at Asbury Park's Martin Luther King Jr. Upper Elementary School, is arguably one of the hardest-working people in the state. In addition to his responsibilities in Asbury Park, he is also a nighttime custodian at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School in Neptune City. He averages 18-hour days, seven days a week. When he's not working, he's the devoted parent to three children.

Byers grew up in and around Asbury Park schools.

"My father worked in the schools for almost 40 years," Byers recalled. "My father worked so much that the only way I could spend time with him was by getting up with him and going to school with him while he worked."

Byers's father didn't want him to follow in his footsteps as a custodian. He dreamed his son would go to college, but for Byers, working in the schools was the perfect fit.

"I like the team camaraderie," Byers said. "I like to work with people. I love the kids. In every kid I see, I see a piece of me. That's what keeps me motivated: the kids—just to see them and watch them grow. I like being part of making a kid's future."

Building relationships

When Byers's father had a heart transplant, the principal wanted Byers to take over for his father. Ultimately, father and son got to work together for about five years.

Byers recognizes the impact custodians have on students in the schools.

"It's not always about cleaning floors and cleaning classrooms; you're building relationships," Byers said. "These children have issues, and we can help, even as custodians."

Byers was surprised to be named the 2022 Monmouth County Educational Support Professional of the Year.

"I've worked with some of the best people," Byers said. "I like being on a team. I'm honored and humbled to receive this recognition, but I couldn't get this without the people I work with. I've been blessed with the best people around me, and I want to dedicate the award to the people of Asbury Park and this district."



A local leader

In addition to everything else on Byers's plate, he is also the second vice president for the Asbury Park Education Association. He appreciates NJEA's efforts to recognize support staff for their contributions.

"It's important to recognize educational support professionals," Byers said. "When you go to a classroom and you see the paraprofessionals working with the teachers and the security officers monitoring the schools, you can see how the ESPs are the backbone of the district."

Byers especially appreciates the unseen efforts of nighttime custodians.

"I'm primarily a daytime custodian, but 95% of the work happens at night and those employees don't get the credit they deserve." 🏠

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NJ Department of Labor updates family leave insurance regulations

By David Bander, Esq.



The New Jersey Department of Labor (DOL) recently published a proposal to update its regulations for the Family Leave Insurance (FLI) program, which is administered by the DOL. FLI provides monetary benefits to individuals who are unable to work for a variety of reasons, including to bond with a new child or provide care to a family member with a serious health condition. The regulations needed updating because of the numerous legislative changes to FLI during the Murphy administration.

Benefits more generous

The overall generosity of the program's benefits increased substantially in 2020, going from a maximum payment of six weeks at two-thirds of an individual's average weekly wages to 12 weeks at 85% of average weekly wages. Benefits are capped at \$1,025 per week for claims filed in 2023. The law was also changed to permit an individual to receive FLI benefits to recover from an incident of domestic or sexual violence and to provide care during a public health emergency.

Expanded definition of family member

The proposed regulations detail some significant operational changes to the program. First, they would expand the definition of "family member" to reach a wider array of individuals, including siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, parents-in-law, any blood relative, and even an individual with a "close association to the employee that is the equivalent of a family relationship." Related to this, they would also clarify that individuals may receive benefits for bonding with or for providing care to a newly fostered child, as well as a child born to a surrogate. These regulations reflect the changing nature of family life and will allow many more individuals to receive financial support for important life events.

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

"Waiting Week" eliminated

The proposed regulations reflect the legislative change eliminating the one-week waiting period—known as a "waiting week"—before FLI benefits become payable. Because the waiting week was eliminated, benefits are payable as of the first date of eligibility.

Intermittent leave restrictions lifted

The proposed regulations remove restrictions regarding intermittent leave benefits—meaning where an individual does not take the leave in one continuous period—for all types of qualified leave. Depending upon circumstances, intermittent leave may be more advantageous than taking it all at once. Taking a family member to medical appointments one or two days per week is one such potential intermittent leave.

Information requests streamlined

The proposed regulations would require employers to promptly notify the DOL of any requested information to establish the eligibility of a claim, with a copy to the individual filing the claim as well. This would allow DOL to determine eligibility more quickly and establish better communication with claimants.

Status of proposals

The proposed regulations were published on March 6, and the notice and comment period ends on May 6. The final rule should be published by the end of the summer. 🇺🇸

If you have questions about the FLI program, there is a wealth of information available at the department's official FLI website, myleavebenefits.nj.gov, including numerous FAQs, videos, and other resources. You can also contact your local association representative who can put you in touch with your UniServ field representative for questions about your particular situation.

NJEA Report

NJEA hosts second Celebration of Women Event honors women and their allies in education

By Kathryn Coulibaly



Participants in the NJEA Members of Color Network gathered for a group photo during the Celebration of Women.

With energetic music and powerful messages of inspiration, NJEA hosted the second Celebration of Women on March 18, honoring women and their allies in public education.

From its inception, the conference was planned to stand apart from other NJEA events. The program began with a quote from Audre Lorde that reflected the spirit of the day: “The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference.”

The celebration was hosted by NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson and NJEA Field Representative Fatimah Hayes. It was organized in conjunction with the Women in Education Committee, chaired by Lisa Veit. There were frequent breaks for music and dancing as well as inspirational messages and calls to action from the speakers.

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.

“NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty and NJEA President Sean M. Spiller are the epitome of what it means to be strong, unwavering allies,” Tamara Beatty said in her introduction. “They are with us. They stand with us arm-in-arm and march beside us because they know just how important our fight for equity is for the future of our schools and society.” Tamara Beatty is the president of the Cinnaminson Education Association and represents Burlington County on the NJEA Executive Committee.

As Spiller pointed out, the celebration comes at a time when the rights of women are increasingly at risk.

“It’s not an exaggeration to say the rights of women are under attack as we speak,” Spiller said. “Our daughters are living in a world with fewer rights than their mothers. And this is terrifying to me. But I look around this room and see hope, joy and power. I see our union as a vehicle for change. And I see all of us working together, and as we do, I know our future will not be decided for us. We will set the terms, and it will take hard work, but we will do it—together.”

The overall message of the day was one of hope and energy. NJEA honored four outstanding women in our communities for their work advocating for students.



Four women were honored at the celebration for their accomplishments. Congratulating them, from left, are Women in Education Committee Chair Lisa Veit, UniServ Field Rep Fatimah Hayes, and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson. The honorees, from left, are teacher Nicole Alzamora, NJREA President Joan Wright, school librarian Martha Hickson, and community organizer Ronsha Dickerson.

Fighting for students' rights to public education in Camden

Ronsha Dickerson, a community ally in Camden who is married to NJEA member Jamal Dickerson, is a national organizer for the Journey for Justice Alliance, an organization that advocates for education as a human right and that organizes for community-driven alternatives to stop the privatization movement and the devaluing of public education.

Dickerson is also the co-founder of Camden Parents Union, a community group of parents, caregivers, alumni, and business and community leaders who advocate for equitable education, equal funding, resources, and the retention and recruitment of Black and Brown teachers in Camden public schools.

She is also the lead organizing parent of Camden Students Union, a group of public school students and alumni who are working to save public education in the city.

Protecting students' right to read

Martha Hickson is a school librarian at North Hunterdon High School, a fervent activist against book banning, and an ardent supporter of students' right to read.

Hickson has successfully fought six attempts to ban books and actively protects students' right to read in the school district. She has worked to share intellectual



Willingboro Education Association Treasurer Tomika Lamb.

freedom best practices with librarians by presenting at conferences and webinars, including the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), Future Ready Schools, Freedom to Read foundation, and the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL).

Through her writing, appearances on podcasts, and presentations to community groups, libraries and churches, Hickson is also raising awareness about censorship among the general public.

Keeping students safer with common sense gun storage

Nicole Alzamora is a teacher in Jersey City at the Regional Day School. She volunteers at Be SMART, a campaign to raise awareness about secure gun storage. Storing guns locked, unloaded and separate from ammunition can save children’s lives.

As one of the thousands of Be SMART volunteers in communities and neighborhoods across the country, Alzamora is leading the way in Jersey City and keeping children safe.

Whether it is through educating school leaders about their role in keeping students safe or passing school safety resolutions through PTAs, Be SMART has inspired millions of people to get involved in the national dialogue about gun safety.

A lifetime of advocacy

NJREA President Joan Wright is a lifelong public education advocate and NJREA’s first president of color. Wright retired after 44 years in education from Conackamack Middle School in 2010, where she taught sixth-grade math and served as president of the Piscataway Township Education Association, among many other leadership positions.

Wright previously served as NJREA secretary and first vice president, the president of Middlesex County Retired Educators’ Association, and as a member of the NJREA Executive Committee, Delegate Council, Policy Committee and the Ad Hoc Pen Ben Committee.

Going forward with your own fire

As Hayes said in her speech, “No one is going to give us the equity and progress we want; we’re going to have to work for it, and that means sharing our stories and committing to being beacons of light and hope and love and joy for women—and people—everywhere.”

Robertson closed the event with a final quote from Audre Lorde, “You cannot, you cannot use someone else’s fire. You can only use your own. And in order to do that, you must first be willing to believe that you have it.”

For more photos from the celebration, visit [flickr.com/njea/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/njea/albums/).



Top: From left: NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty, Assemblywoman Linda Carter (an NJEA member honored at the 2022 Celebration of Women), NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson and NJEA President Sean M. Spiller.

Middle: NJREA President Joan Wright with her brother Kenneth Lay, the former secretary of revenue for the state of North Carolina.

Bottom: 2023 NJEA ESP of the Year Trina Jenkins with NJEA Executive Committee member Lisa Simone.

Ewing's 'Wash and Learn' brings literacy center to local laundromat

By Kimberly Crane

Amid the cozy hum of washing machines and dryers, there is now a special place in Ewing Township where children can relax with a book while their caregivers do laundry.

On March 4, the Wash and Learn program at Laundry Depot of Ewing on North Olden Avenue was launched during a high energy grand opening. All who attended left with a book in hand.

The event boasted many sponsors including the Ewing Township Education Association (ETEA), the Mercer County Library System, the Ewing Township Police Department, the Ewing Township Fire Department, The College of New Jersey, the Trenton Thunder and numerous other contributors.

Jesse Ambriz, a Fisher Middle School special education math teacher, is responsible for the creation and success of the program.

Ambriz was inspired to start a Wash and Learn after hearing BookSmiles Executive Director Larry Abrams and former Reading Rainbow host LeVar Burton speak at the NJEA Convention in November 2022. Both speakers emphasized the importance of making books accessible to children to support literacy.

"Many people in our community do not have access to books for their children," Ambriz said. "I needed to do my part to take action and change that."



From left: Ewing teacher Eric Thomas, Princeton teacher Dr. Joy Barnes Johnson, Ewing teachers Lisa Leibowitz, Amanda Marroquin, and Jesse Ambriz, Ewing public librarian Susan Seiden. Ambriz's son, Max, and daughter, Eve, stand in front.



From left: Ewing teacher Jesse Ambriz and Laundry Depot owner Sean Spicer.

Ambriz then led a holiday book drive resulting in 9,500 book donations to BookSmiles. Encouraged by the turn out, he reached out to Laundry Depot owner Sean Spicer and began gathering sponsors. In addition to hosting the literacy center in his business, Spicer donated \$500 to support the project.

Wash and Learn programs are becoming more common in New Jersey and across the country. They are a great way to get books to kids. Ambriz took note of the recent Wash and Learn in New Brunswick prior to starting a program in Ewing Township.

"Clients return weekly and wait an average of 90 minutes for their clothes," Ambriz said. "Literacy stations with books to take home give children something educational to turn to while they are there. Having books will help kids start their own libraries."

In communities like Ewing Township, where the percentage of students receiving free and reduced-price lunches is high, a Wash and Learn program can help inspire a love of reading and promote pathways to lifelong literacy.

For more information about the program, or to learn how to donate books, contact Jesse Ambriz jambriz@ewingboe.org.

Kimberly Crane is an art teacher in the Highland Park School District, 1st vice president of the Highland Park Education Association, and an NJEA Communications Consultant.



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East Windsor EA takes lead in PD

By Dawn Howlen

One of the benefits of NJEA membership is access to the workshops provided by Professional Development and Instructional Issues (PDII) Division consultants and staff. These workshops are conducted throughout the state in collaboration with local and county associations. The East Windsor Education Association (EWEA), which has roughly 500 members, provides ongoing professional development through the services of PDII.

EWEA has hosted a robust number of workshop participants over the last few years, drawing a significant proportion of its members. NJEA's PDII team was interested in learning EWEA's strategies to keep members engaged in the work and coming back for more.

According to EWEA President Ellen Ogintz and Professional Development Chair Vanessa Rosa, their plan is simple. They help members understand that they can fulfill local and state professional development mandates through EWEA and NJEA programs. In addition to the state-mandated annual 20-hour requirement, East Windsor Public Schools require 10-hours of professional development beyond what the district provides.

When school buildings reopened after COVID closed them, EWEA found that members preferred virtual workshops over in-person workshops. When the professional development sessions are virtual, the association uses the funds that would have been used for dinner to give members a \$5 Dunkin' gift card as an added incentive to attend.

Local and county associations can gather data about their members' preferences by surveying them via platforms such as Google or Microsoft Forms. Learning about member preferences when planning upcoming professional development opportunities is helpful and can increase member participation.

While a local association can do amazing work independently, having district support is essential. Every September, Ogintz and Rosa meet with their district superintendent to discuss professional development needs and how they align with district goals. This ensures that members receive quality professional development and creates a conversation around best practices for educators, which, in turn, means great opportunities for student success. Additionally, members can sign up for NJEA workshops on the district's professional development page.

As we move into a new season of learning and engaging with our members, we look forward to hearing more stories like East Windsor's. If your local or county association has been successful with your NJEA-hosted professional development sessions, please contact me at dhowlen@njea.org so we can share your story.



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A LABOR MOVEMENT'S JERSEY ROOTS

AMAZON LABOR UNION TAKES ON A GIANT,
REPRESENTS A NEW GENERATION OF WORKERS

By Kathryn Coulibaly



ALU President Chris Smalls and Vice President Derrick Palmer with North Plainfield Humanities Supervisor Cathline Tanis and NPEA President and history teacher Theresa Fuller (r). Smalls and Palmer are New Jersey public school graduates.

To hear Christian (Chris) Smalls and Derrick Palmer tell the story, they were just two New Jersey guys eager to work hard and earn their way through the ranks at Amazon's Staten Island facility, JFK8, until the pandemic changed everything.

Smalls, who is now the president of the Amazon Labor Union (ALU), and Palmer, ALU vice president, had been disappointed by Amazon before, thanks to promotions that never materialized even as people hired after them moved up. But nothing compared to the health and safety violations and discrimination they witnessed once the global pandemic—and Amazon—made them “essential workers.”

As the two men told North Plainfield Education Association President Theresa Fuller's U.S. History 2 and AP U.S. History students, the pandemic changed everything.

In March 2020, Smalls was a supervisor at JFK8, which employs between 5,000 to 8,000 workers. He'd been a supervisor for four and-a-half years, managing 600 to 800 people, and helping to open up two Amazon facilities.

Growing up in Hackensack, Smalls loved sports—from basketball to track to football—and music. He studied music and audio research in college and was a rapper. He began working at Amazon's facility in Carteret in 2015 where he was an entry level employee making \$12 an hour. One year later, he was promoted to supervisor.

Palmer grew up in Piscataway. The same age as Smalls, he had an interest in theater and studied it in college for a time before joining Amazon's Robbinsville facility. He later moved to the JFK8 facility on Staten Island and was promoted to manager.

Neither man had much experience with labor unions, but that was about to change.

“I remember driving to work on empty roads,” Smalls told the students. “The death toll was rising in New York and northern New Jersey. There was no vaccine, but there was also no PPE or safety guidance in place to try to keep employees safe.”

When their requests for safety protocols and personal protective equipment went unheeded, Smalls and Palmer organized a protest outside the warehouse. Smalls was fired by Amazon, but the protest made the news and, as Smalls said, “It changed my life forever.”

Smalls was singled-out for attacks on his character and intellect by Amazon.

“I didn't realize at the time that they had broken the law,” Smalls said. “Jeff Bezos talked about me a week after I was fired. He said I'm not smart or articulate, and he made me the face of the Amazon organizing efforts.”

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.

“On April 1, 2022, the employees at JFK8 became the first union in American history at an Amazon facility.”

Doing everything it takes for workers' rights

Galvanized by the response to the protest, Smalls and Palmer spent the next year organizing protests at locations that included some of Bezos' many houses, including a penthouse in New York City and mansions in Washington, D.C., Seattle, and Beverly Hills.

“We wanted to amplify the malpractices of Amazon,” Smalls said. “We were uplifting essential workers; we weren't trying to organize a union.”

They heard of efforts to unionize at an Amazon facility in Bessemer, Alabama, so the two friends took a road trip down to observe the efforts.

“Amazon spent \$25 million to stop workers who make \$35,000 a year from protecting themselves,” Smalls said. “The facility included 5,000 workers, 85% of whom were Black and/or Hispanic. We learned from them and we decided to form an individual, worker-led union.”

The idea for the ALU was formed. For the next 11 months, approximately 300 people a day stood outside the Staten Island facility, rain or shine, throughout the summer and winter. Smalls and Palmer were there to greet them.



Smalls and Palmer posed with a student after their talk.



Smalls discussed how he and Palmer organized their colleagues to build the first labor union at an Amazon facility.



“ Smalls and Palmer hope that their efforts encourage those workers trying to unionize at Starbucks, Apple, Trader Joe’s and many others.

“I talked to workers every day as they got on and off the bus,” Smalls said. “All those conversations were about how forming this union was the only way to protect yourself.”

In the meantime, Amazon was making their own moves against the union organizers. According to paperwork filed by Amazon with the U.S. Department of Labor, Amazon spent \$4.3 million to stop the effort. They mandated meetings where workers were inundated with anti-union rhetoric. Signs declaring “Vote NO” dotted the warehouse. The organizers’ social media was monitored and Amazon vilified the organizers.

“We were under surveillance,” Smalls said. “We were followed home. They fired people who supported the union organizing efforts. They scared people. Managers watched you closely and tried to get you terminated.”

Smalls was arrested for giving out food and Amazon made up lies about the organizers. They claimed Smalls was going to buy a Lamborghini. Meanwhile, the entire operation was being run on a shoestring, thanks to donations.

Amazon brought in union busters and paid them \$10,000 a day to provide anti-union propaganda.

“Traditionally, these tactics work,” Smalls said, “But we were able to counteract the lies.”

Meeting Amazon workers where they are

Smalls and Palmer created a looser, lighter union organizing effort. They held cookouts and played music. They made s’mores for employees waiting to be ferried between their cars and the warehouse. They made TikTok videos and posted on social media.

By the fall, they had delivered more than 2,000 signatures to the National Labor Relations Board, but they were rejected. Amazon claimed that half the people who had signed cards were no longer employed.

It was a rough time for the organizers, but they continued to build relationships with the employees by being there every day, talking about the union and what they hoped they could accomplish together.

“I did that to show them I will be here; I will be here for them no matter what,” Smalls said.

Come to the table and treat your workers right

That effort paid off. On April 1, 2022, the employees at JFK8 became the first union in American history at an Amazon facility. Even as they celebrated the victory for the 9,000 workers now in their union, their focus shifted to defending the union they had won and settling a contract.

“We’re negotiating with Amazon now, and they’re up to their same tricks,” Palmer said. “We’re asking for \$30 an hour, job security,



Smalls and Palmer's presentation aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies in addressing industrialization, urbanization and the role of labor unions.

better medical, a pension, breaks, free college for the employee, their spouse, and their kids."

"The contract is everything," Palmer said.

As Smalls and Palmer pointed out, Amazon has unlimited resources while they continue to rely on donations. Last year, Smalls and Palmer each made \$30,000. Palmer is still employed full-time at Amazon.

"They're trying to deplete our resources, drag it out in court, and target our members," Palmer said. "But since we're certified, they're legally bound to come to the table."

When a student asked what they would say to Bezos right now, Palmer was ready to reply.

"Come to the table and treat your workers right."

Smalls and Palmer point to parts of society that students are very familiar with to make their case about the power of unions.

They cite statistics that workers in unionized shops make \$12,000 more than nonunionized workers; most make \$30 or more an hour.

"The NBA is a very exclusive club, but those players are protected by a union," Smalls said. "The NFL and MLB players also belong to a union. Celebrities are in unions—actors, directors, and Hollywood writers. Being in a union is an exclusive club."

In addition, the ALU is taking a stand on police brutality, women's rights, gun violence, environmental justice and more.

"Without a union, we don't have a cavalry coming to save us," Smalls said. "We're on our own, as individuals. The working class is divided; the ruling class is making decisions for all of us."

A new vision for union organizing

Smalls and Palmer are proud that their first school visit to talk about union organizing is in their home state of New Jersey.

"I'm here today, talking to you, because I wish I'd had somebody cool to talk to me about union organizing," Smalls said. "When I was in school and we had career day, it was police officers, firefighters and nurses, but no union organizers. If I'd known I could be as cool as a rapper and be a union organizer, I'd have done that."

The ALU also is working to help other workers unionize. They are starting to grow and expand as workers in California and upstate New York work to unionize their Amazon warehouses.

"We're working hand in hand with other workers trying to organize," Smalls said. "That's the labor movement: if you're in a fight, we stand with you. We're working together; if one of us wins, we all win."

They hope that their efforts encourage those workers trying to unionize at Starbucks, Apple, Trader Joe's and many others.



Smalls and Palmer want to show students that becoming union organizers allows them to address issues they care about, from the environment to social and economic justice.

You can help the ALU



Follow the ALU on social media

Twitter – @amazonlabor

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Visit amazonlaborunion.org and sign up for emails.

Donate to the ALU.

Contact Amazon and ask them to settle the contract with the ALU—post on social media, on Amazon’s Instagram ads, etc.

Shop local and patronize unionized stores and businesses.

“There’s never a dull moment as an organizer; it’s 24/7 and it’s stressful,” Palmer said. “We hope we change history forever. But the contract will really change things. We hope this movement trickles down to Walmart, Whole Foods, Target and more.”

For Theresa Fuller, the decision to invite Smalls and Palmer to speak fit nicely into the curriculum.

“This guest speaker event directly supports the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies, which includes a detailed examination of the problems related to industrialization and urbanization in the late 1800s and early 1900s,” Fuller said. “Our classroom lessons engaged students in a variety of discussions about how industrialization and urbanization affected class structure, family life, the daily lives of men, women, and children, and the environment, as well as how events led to the creation of labor and agricultural organizations and the impact of those organizations on workers’ rights, the economy, and politics across time periods.

“When I met Chris and Derrick at the NJEA Convention, I immediately knew that I wanted to invite them to speak with my students so they could share their experiences in building a modern labor union, as well as fighting for worker rights in our society. This experience helped provide my students with context for the real-world and encouraged students to envision their own futures.”

Smalls and Palmer are eager to share their story with other schools and organizations. To request speakers, go to amazonlaborunion.org/contact.

One thing is clear: they want to encourage high school students, and everyone who hears their story, to take this message with them.

“Don’t take this moment for granted,” Palmer said. “Look at what we’ve been doing. You’re young, but you understand your value.”

Smalls and Palmer have not forgotten the people who lost their lives working in the warehouse during the pandemic.

“We know people who died in that warehouse,” Palmer said. “The law says they cannot fire you for protesting over health and safety. We have a class-action lawsuit against Amazon. It’s going to be a long legal battle.”

But as Smalls and Palmer have already proven, they should not be underestimated.

“No amount of money in the world can overcome people who are together,” Smalls said. 🇺🇸

MULTIPLE VOICES SWEETEN THE SONG

How mandates create the harmony for The Consortium and the soundtrack of inclusive education in New Jersey

by *Lizandaa Alburg*

In April 2022, the National Education Association awarded NJEA a three-year grant titled “Cultivating Community, Action, Justice, and Understanding through the NJEA Consortium: Connections. Community. Curriculum.”

The Consortium is composed of NJEA staff members and three cohorts of member design-teams. It is partnered with more than 25 colleges and universities, museums and historical commissions, and social and racial justice advocacy organizations. The Consortium leads an innovative initiative that intends to infuse historically marginalized identities into K-12 teaching and learning.

Curriculum alone is not enough; the Consortium will also focus on developing high-quality professional learning for members and foster meaningful community conversations that will prepare all stakeholders to understand, embrace and celebrate New Jersey’s diversity.

To understand the work of The Consortium and its mission to create seamless, representative curricula and resources for educators statewide, we must begin with the basic histories and intentions of New Jersey’s diversity mandates.

The melodies of the mandates

The New Jersey Holocaust education mandate, created by the state Legislature 29 years ago, laid the foundation for the ensuing Amistad (2002), LGBTQIA+ (2019), Persons with Disabilities (2019), Diversity and Inclusion (2020), and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI, 2022) legislative mandates. All were born out of passion, urgency and a strong need to include the histories, contributions and experiences of diverse communities in the education of

all New Jersey students. Implementing the mandates has been slow and steady.

After 20 years, many New Jersey educators are unaware of the Amistad Commission and its efforts to infuse African and African American voices into K-12 education. The new executive director of the Amistad Commission, Dr. Patrick Lamy, is building on the legacies of Assemblymen William D. Payne and Craig A. Stanley challenging the false narrative of “your problem, your issue” and replacing it with a mindset of “our contributions, our history.”

“All I learned in school excluded the beautiful, contributions of many communities,” Lamy says. “I am proud that today New Jersey is leading the charge to intentionally develop more inclusive and diverse K-12 curricula.”

Carol Watchler, community outreach coordinator for The Bayard Rustin Center in Princeton and a retired educator of 37 years, began laying the groundwork for LGBTQIA+ rights decades prior to legislative mandates. Her many accomplishments include successfully lobbying the state Legislature to strengthen the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination in 1985 to include sexual orientation as one of its protected identities, taking a pivotal leadership role in the incipient NEA Gay and Lesbian Caucus (later the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+ Caucus) in 1988, and founding the NJEA Lesbian and Gay (later LGBT) Caucus in the early 1990s.

About a decade later, Watchler championed the creation of what became an NJEA standing committee: the NJEA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee. Watchler testified for positive LGBTQIA+ legislation and continues to advocate for sexual orientation and gender identity concerns in schools and communities.

“We opened conversations with fellow educators by hosting a retreat where education and education-adjacent folks joined us to raise questions and offer

Lizandaa Alburg is an associate director in the NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division. She can be reached at lalburg@njea.org.



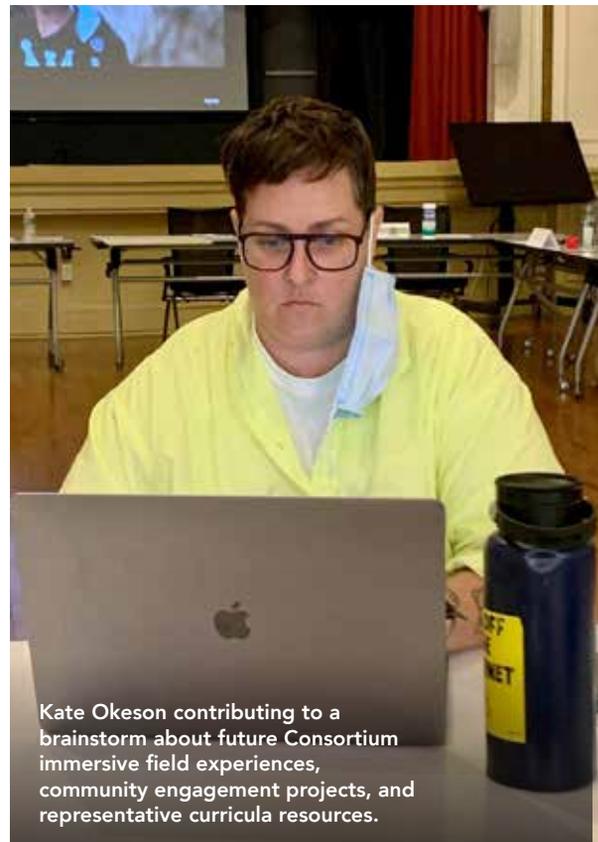
Consortium Design Team Ambassadors examine curricular goals developed by the Amistad Design Team through the lens of the various education mandates.

potential solutions to an unfunded mandate that we knew would be crucial to improving educational and wellness outcomes for LGBTQIA+ youth,” says Kate Okeson, an NJEA Consortium Design Team Ambassador, who used awareness, conversations, and relationships to further the LGBTQIA+ legislation. Okeson, a teacher and association president in Rumson-Fair Haven, is also a founder of Make it Better for Youth, a nonprofit organization in Monmouth County comprised of education professionals and community partners who wish to improve outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth in New Jersey and around the county.

Make Us Visible NJ, which advocates for thoughtful and comprehensive inclusion of AAPI studies into K-12 curriculum for New Jersey public schools, researched previous New Jersey education mandates and modeled the AAPI curriculum after the LGBTQ+ and Disabilities bill. The group reached out to legislators, rallied, held press conferences, formed coalitions, and formed alliances with more than 60 organizations including AAPI Montclair, Asian Youth Act, Jersey City AAPI Coalition, Livingston AAPI Youth Alliance, and the Parents and Children Education Club.

Lamy pointed out one stakeholder group we should never overlook: “We forget the people we serve are students. It is important to include their perspectives.”

Make Us Visible NJ not only included students but



Kate Okeson contributing to a brainstorm about future Consortium immersive field experiences, community engagement projects, and representative curricula resources.

“ How might we explore and express our intersectional identities without diminishing the identities of others? ”

empowered them in their work to create the AAPI legislation.

“We are so proud of our student activists,” says Sima Kumar, a West Windsor-Plainsboro teacher and Make Us Visible NJ education advocate. “They talked to their teachers, school boards, organized their fellow students, created video testimonies, wrote op-eds, called and wrote to legislators and testified at the Statehouse. They are amazing and melted legislators’ hearts. Their voices are incredibly important.”

A four-part harmony

While the mandates may seem to focus on vastly different topics, there are common themes that underpin each, such as:

- Awareness and education: Raising awareness about experiences, history, culture and struggles of marginalized and underrepresented communities.
- Elevating the importance of diversity: Highlighting the importance of diverse values and different perspectives by acknowledging the contributions and experiences of all communities, leading New Jersey to become more inclusive and equitable.
- Promoting empathy and understanding: Encouraging empathy, connections and conversations among diverse groups of people and promoting mutual understanding and respect. Working to create a more cohesive, compassionate society.
- Advocacy for justice and equality: The mandates advocate for justice and equality for these communities. Whether promoting greater representation, fighting against discrimination and oppression, or ensuring that these communities have access to the resources they need to thrive, New Jersey is committed to creating a more just and equitable society.

“One assumption I was shocked to confront in the public school space was the belief that literature by AAPI authors does not merit the same literary value as works by such authors as Fitzgerald and Hemingway,” Kumar points out. “The underlying assumption informing this belief is that English is a second language for AAPI authors, so the quality of their English prose is somehow inferior. While it is true that for some AAPI authors English is a second language, for others English may be their only language.”

Experiences such as these reinforce the need for inclusive curricular for all New Jersey students.



Design Team Ambassadors Mary Joyce Laqui and Tariq Raheem at the Penn Museum during an immersive field experience in Philadelphia.

Inclusion: The soundtrack of education in New Jersey

Steve Koumoulis, a history teacher in Middletown Township and a NJEA Consortium Design Team Ambassador, notes that inclusive curricula means that the entire story is being told.

“As a history teacher that is the most important thing to me,” Koumoulis says. “The inclusion of all perspectives is important because when a group is left out of a story there is a gap in understanding and truth telling. With inclusive curricula, student learning has a greater sense of purpose.”

The first step in the journey toward inclusive curricula is self-reflection.

“It is important to know ourselves, understand our own identities and dwell in them to appreciate their meaning in our lives—then open our eyes to other’s identities,” Watchler reminds us.

How might we explore and express our intersectional identities without diminishing the identities of others? The Consortium Design Team Ambassadors are collaboratively



Consortium Design Team Ambassadors during an immersive field experience in Philadelphia that occurred in early December.

exploring the answer to that question as they use an Understanding by Design framework to develop a macro-curriculum and representative resources.

“Part of the answer comes from our individual willingness to walk into each day with an understanding that we ‘don’t know what we don’t know,’” Okeson reflects. “I cannot *know* about my colleagues, my students—meaning that knowledge is not always there for me to see, so I need a community to walk with where I commit to sharing and listening and learning in connection with people. And when I do that as a teacher, showing that authority and knowledge is not absolute, I model for my students that this exploration and expression is a journey, not a single space to be occupied.”

To learn more about the Understanding by Design process, visit bit.ly/ubd-vanderbilt.

The hook: The Consortium

We live in times where civility is a lost art, causing tremendous challenges when engaging in conversation with others who hold different worldviews.

“Had we invested in understanding each of us better and teaching from a lens of diversity, we would have been at a better place,” says Lamy. “With inclusive curricula we are headed in the right direction.”

The time for us to see, hear, respect and work together is now. Let’s begin with the unifying connections, community, and curricula of the Consortium.

After all, multiple voices sweeten the song! 🎶

For more information

Amistad Commission

The Summer Curriculum Institute, will be held the week of July 17 both in person at Paterson University and virtually. Visit njamistadcurriculum.net for details.

Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice

Email the Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice at rustincenter@gmail.com or visit rustincenter.org and facebook.com/rustincenter to submit a guest speaker request, arrange for a field trip, or other programs, and for opportunities to volunteer/participate in the Princeton PRIDE Parade on June 17.

The Consortium

Look for Design Team Ambassador-presented workshops at the NJEA Impact conference on July 12, visit the Consortium space on the Exhibit Hall floor at the NJEA Convention, or send an email of interest to consortium@njea.org.

Holocaust Commission

The Holocaust Commission surveys the status of Holocaust/genocide education; designs, encourages and promotes the implementation of Holocaust and genocide education and awareness; provides programs in New Jersey; and coordinates events that provide appropriate memorialization of the Holocaust on a regular basis throughout the state. Visit nj.gov/education/holocaust.

Make Us Visible NJ

Join the E Pluribus Project (TEPUP). This grassroots coalition advocates for integrated curricula that reflect the diversity of our state and our country. Write to theepuproject@gmail.com.

A new pathway for ESPs to become teachers

By Dr. Robert Goodman

Educational support professionals (ESPs) have a proven track record of working well with students, inspiring and motivating them. However, there are far too many cases in which there is no practical way for an ESP to move into the role of a teacher.

At a time when New Jersey needs many more teachers, especially teachers of science and mathematics, we need to create pathways for those who love working with children to become teachers. This was partly accomplished when the New Jersey Department of Education recently approved the New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning (NJCTL) to offer eight new alternate route programs that lead to initial certification in physics, chemistry, biology or mathematics.

Four of these programs follow the “traditional” alternate route, which require a degree (or 30 credits) in the subject and a GPA of at least 3.0. While these programs open the door to many prospective teachers, they do not meet the needs of people whose GPA falls below that minimum or who did not major in science or mathematics.

Shortage area alternate route programs

The other four programs are designated as shortage area alternate routes. These programs take a revolutionary approach that opens opportunities to become a science or mathematics teacher to anyone with a bachelor’s degree in any subject, with any GPA. That means that a person’s choice of major, or the GPA they earned from a bachelor’s degree they may have earned long ago, need no longer hold them back.

NJCTL also has options for ESPs who would like to become teachers but do not yet have a bachelor’s degree. NJCTL has partners that provide fast, inexpensive pathways to earn a bachelor’s degree online, opening ESP

access to NJCTL shortage area alternate route programs.

These shortage area alternate route programs are modeled after NJCTL’s successful add-on endorsement programs. Those programs have made NJCTL a national leader in producing new science and mathematics teachers—425 in the last decade.

NJCTL add-on endorsement programs have proven successful in teaching current teachers of any subject the content of science and mathematics and how to teach it. The courses in those programs are all completely online and asynchronous, so candidates can start anytime and proceed at their own pace. They assume no prior knowledge of the new subject area; everything teachers need to know is taught within the program.

The courses in these add-on endorsement programs are just what is needed in the new shortage area alternate route programs. Marrying together existing shortage area regulations and these proven courses led to this new approach to alternate route.

How it works

Candidates take online, asynchronous coursework to learn the subject and pass the required Praxis exams. Their GPA in this 15+ credit post-baccalaureate program replaces the GPA from their bachelor’s degree, so if they earn a 3.0 or better, that former GPA obstacle has been eliminated.

Then, they get their certificate of eligibility (CE) and take the NJCTL teaching methods course to meet the requirement for a 50-hour preservice course, while looking for a job. Once they pass that course and have a job, they enter the classroom.

All the work they did to earn the CE counts toward their remaining required 350 hours, which they complete with additional asynchronous, online courses to learn how to teach their subject at the Advanced Placement level. They are teaching—and earning the salary and benefits of a teacher—while completing the program.

Upon completing their program, they are also awarded a Master of Science in Teaching and Learning (MSTL)

(continues on Page 34)

Bob Goodman is the executive director of the New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning. Formerly a physics teacher at Bergen County Technical High School, he was named New Jersey State Teacher of the Year in 2006. He can be reached at bob@njctl.org.

Meet two ESPs on the path to becoming teachers

Robert Kershenblatt

Robert Kershenblatt is paraprofessional in a fifth-grade classroom in Galloway Township Public Schools. He is enrolled in the Shortage-Area Alternate Route Mathematics program. He loves his district and hopes to be able to teach middle school math next school year. He has his certificate of eligibility for the elementary level, but he never converted it to a provisional. He started his first class with NJCTL in September—he was the first to enroll in an NJCTL alternate route program. He writes:

Even as adults, we need a little encouragement sometimes. That's what I found so striking about NJCTL. There is so much support. Everyone is quick to answer questions, and there is clear communication about what is expected and what I need to do to succeed. It feels like everyone is rooting for me.

I enjoy the challenge of learning new problem-solving methods. I now think about math completely differently. Not only am I mastering the content, but I am discovering new ways to present it to students.

When I first started, I was worried about what kind of student I would be. But I realized that being a student is very fulfilling at this stage in life. I am much more focused on what I want to achieve, and this program is helping me get there.

Growing up, I never really enjoyed math and just slogged through it. I think struggling students could benefit from my non-math background. I can empathize with them because I struggled with it myself. I love teaching, and I am excited to apply my newly acquired skills.

I've been a classroom assistant in elementary school for many years, but I also tutor for middle and high school students. Becoming math certified opens up so many options for me in my education career.

This program is excellent for people who haven't been in the learning game for a while. Online learning

is new to me, but the NJCTL instructors were there to help until I got comfortable with the process. I like that I can complete the courses at my own pace and take control of the learning environment.

Debra Steinbrecher

Debra Steinbrecher is a paraprofessional in an Early Childhood Center in Camden. She had been a nurse outside of public education. She enrolled in the NJCTL Shortage-Area Alternate Route Biology program at the end of January. The Camden Education Fund is paying 80% of the costs and the Camden City school district is paying the other 20%. She writes:

My background is in nursing. I knew I wanted to teach, but I didn't know which way to go. I wanted to work with an older group of students to share my interest in science and show them possible career paths. I was so happy to find this program.

When I first began, I thought, "Can I do this? It's been so long since I've been in school." But I'm interested in biology, and once I started, I knew this is where I wanted to be.

I really like how the courses are laid out, and how the information is broken down. All the sessions are bite-sized, so you can take it in a little at a time. I love that you can take quizzes to ensure you know the material before moving on. You never feel like you are doing it all on your own.

I am the type of learner who prefers hearing a lesson rather than reading exclusively on my own. With this program, I can listen to the videos and take notes. I can play them back anytime and take quizzes to test my understanding.

Definitely check out NJCTL. I have taken part in other programs where you are doing a lot of reading, and you feel like you are all on your own. Not with NJCTL. Everyone has been helpful, and I never feel uncomfortable asking questions.

degree in their chosen subject (Note: The MSTL Biology is pending approval). NJCTL is licensed by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and is currently seeking accreditation.

The science programs are 37 credits, and the mathematics program is 38 credits. Due to NJCTL's low tuition rate of \$180 per graduate credit, the science programs, with master's degrees, cost \$6,660. The mathematics program, with a master's degree, costs \$6,840.

NJEA members receive a 20% discount, reducing the tuition rate to \$144 per credit and the program costs to \$5,328 for certification with an MSTL degree in a science and \$5,472 for certification with an MSTL degree in mathematics.

NJCTL can keep its tuition rates low because of NJEA's support and a commitment to focusing spending on improving courses and programs, nothing else. As a nonprofit online institution, NJCTL does not need to own facilities, have sports teams, pay for landscaping and maintenance, or any of the overhead that is typical for a brick and mortar institution. Consequently, all of NJCTL's spending is focused on programs to place more teachers in more classrooms. 🏠

The New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning (NJCTL) is a nonprofit organization that provides a simple, scalable solution for our nation's STEM teacher shortage and the social injustice that comes from depriving underserved students access to STEM education.

NJCTL was founded in 2006 by NJEA. To learn more, visit njctl.org.

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- Teacher Leader Certificate*†
- Teaching English as a Second Language Certificate*

RTC-Based Certificates

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RETHINKING DUTIES

By: Katy Z. Lynch

It's August, and our schedules have been posted. Now comes the influx of texts from my teacher friends: "What period do you have lunch?" and "When is your planning period?" but most importantly, "What duty did you get this year?"

When the schedule shows "Main Floor Hallway" during last period, I am well-aware that, first, this does not simply mean I get to finish my day by getting my steps in and walking around the hallways, and, second, I am going to be BUSY. High school bathroom duty has a reputation for being a, well, crappy job. Pun totally intended.

Five minutes into the period, I find myself greeted with a line of students already waiting to go. I have to enter each restroom before they do, smelling all the smells, and checking all the stalls. So. Much. Fun.

I sit down with my computer and log each kid in via our computer pass system. I have to be on high alert because high school bathroom duty comes with the responsibility of checking for vandalism and vaping. I average 30 to 40 students within a 40-minute window. That leaves no time for the stack of papers I brought to grade, no time to catch up on those emails I need to send, and no time for any type of peace, quiet or decompression.

But do you know what it does leave? Time to connect with kids. I cannot accomplish anything else. I've realized this after day two.

Katy Lynch is an English language arts (ELA) teacher at the Gloucester County Institute of Technology. At the time she wrote this article, she was an ELA teacher at Woodstown High School in Salem County. In both schools, Lynch notes, has been coincidentally assigned bathroom duty. When she's not teaching or monitoring restrooms, she can be reached at katzlynch@gmail.com.

What I CAN do is say hi to "Tony," a student who was in my class for two years—after failing the first time during the 2020-21 pandemic year. I can tell Tony I'm so proud of him for making the honor roll this marking period. Yay, Tony! He smiles and blushes at the attention, but he's proud. I can tell.

I can check on "Liam," who is going for "Round 3" of World History, but he is still in school, still trying for that diploma.

I can give "Andrew" a place of refuge when he needs it. He sits on the floor in the hall next to me, feeling comforted by my presence when the rest of the world just wasn't so kind today.

I'm there for "Maria" when she comes out of guidance crying and just needs a space to breathe before she can reenter her classroom.

I can check on all my babies who have since left my freshman English class; those who don't walk by my room anymore but are so happy just to talk about life for 20 quick, but oh-so-important, seconds.

Changing my perspective

Bathroom duty is not supposed to be fun. It never has been. This year, I decided I was going to change that. I'm stuck there, as are eight other teachers for one glorious period of the school day. It is a necessity, though, and as we trudge our way down the steps (or up them). Why not take these lemons and turn them into lemon bars? (Lemon bars with powdered sugar are better than lemonade anyway.)

For my eighth-period duty, I've decided that all kids that come by have to answer a question of the day before they can go into the bathroom. It gives me a chance to learn the names of those I don't know and learn more about



“ Bathroom duty is not supposed to be fun. It never has been. This year, I decided I was going to change that.”

Something as mundane as a duty period can be a chance to help staff and students improve their social and emotional well-being. Pictured at Woodstown High School, from left, are Katarina DeWitt, teacher Katy Lynch, Demetri Belitsas and Akshita Singh.

those I do. I ask them each something lighthearted and fun, like “What’s your favorite cookie?” or “Dogs or cats?”

The kids who don’t know me, look at me cross-eyed at first. Who is this lady, asking me all these weird questions? I’m just trying to pee! But, as they got used to it, most of them come to love it, and many even look forward to it.

One of my current freshmen, Akshita, comes and sits by my side any day she can to be my “question assistant.” She giggles, she has fun, and most importantly, I see kids talk to kids, in-person again.

An opportunity for SEL

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is so important for ALL of us. Administrators often want it to be structured, but some of that learning can happen in the smallest, quickest and slightest of ways.

It is no secret that duty periods are often the most dreaded periods of our days. In that dread, I decided that I wasn’t going to dread it anymore. We should rethink those moments and turn them into moments of social, emotional and intrapersonal productivity.

High school teachers love teenagers. They have to love them in all of their awkward, immature, emotional glory to keep coming to work each day. We want to make a change in their lives that sets them on a better life path. So whether it be cafeteria duty, bathroom duty, study hall or office duty, rethink your purpose. Think of those duties not as a mundane task, or something that is a hindrance in your day, but as another chance to make a change—a change that we all want to help make anyway. 🧠

The importance of understanding heat-related illness in schools year-round

By Yvette Way, BA, MPH (c) and Derek G. Shendell, D.Env., MPH

Within recent years in the U.S., some of the hottest weather has been recorded. This trend is only expected to continue and will cause an increase in incidences of heat stress for those working at schools, both indoors and outdoors.

Heat stress is the body's response to exposure to high temperatures or overheating. Various heat-related disorders are associated with heat stress, particularly heat stroke, heat exhaustion, fatigue, heat cramps and heat rashes. While the impact of heat can be felt by anyone, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) notes that a person's age, weight, fitness level and medical conditions are among several factors that can determine a person's sensitivity to heat.

Recognizing the signs of heat stress can be vital in saving a person's life. Generally, the most obvious signs of heat stress are confusion, nausea, weakness and cramping. If someone is showing any of these symptoms, get them into a cooler space and give them water and rest. In addition, immediately alert the school nurse (if one is present on campus) and the principal's office. In extreme cases call 911.

Exposure for those working outdoors

Within the school system, those who work outdoors, such as physical education teachers, coaches, landscapers

Dr. Derek Shendell is a professor at the Rutgers School of Public Health where Yvette Way is working toward her master's degree in public health, majoring in environmental health sciences. They worked in coordination with the New Jersey Work Environment Council to produce this article.

and other outdoor maintenance workers, are the most often exposed to high temperatures. These outside occupations leave workers exposed to the sun for long periods while working in areas such as pavement or turf, which can absorb more light, and therefore, conduct heat. While the overall temperature as locally reported may be one number, the temperature on rooftops, blacktops or fields will be much higher.

An important step in preventing heat stress is acclimatizing to the climate. By acclimatizing to the temperature over a period of seven to 14 days, the body will be able to improve its heat tolerance. However, this should not be taken as meaning that overheating is not a risk regardless of how used to the heat an individual appears to be.

Indoor heat stress

While working outside can lead to higher exposure and increased risk of heat stress, those who work inside should be aware of how heat stress can negatively impact them as well. Indoor temperatures should be kept between 68 to 78 degrees Fahrenheit with humidity held between a range of 30% to 60%.

Working in hot conditions interferes with cognitive ability, reducing academic performance in students and faculty. On a practical level—especially when classes are canceled, or schools close because of the temperature—there will be less time for students to learn and teachers will have to revise their lesson plans to compensate for the lost time.

Most U.S. schools, including those in New Jersey, were built in the 1950s and 1960s when the climate was not as hot as it is today. The best defense that older schools have

against the heat is the heating, ventilating, and air conditioning system, or HVAC.

HVAC systems can better regulate school temperatures and keep them from overheating. But in most schools, the HVAC system has one or more issues affecting its optimal performance. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (USGAO), roughly 40% of public school districts need to update or replace their HVAC system.

A 2014 report from The National Center for Education Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education (NCES) found about 30% of each assessed school's HVAC system was in fair or poor condition. While HVAC system updates and overall ventilation with filtration improvements made from available funding during the COVID-19 pandemic may have reduced this number, much work remains to be done.

For schools without a central HVAC system, instead relying on window-mounted air conditioning units, there may be electrical issues or spaces/gaps between the window and the air conditioner. As a result, the cold air can escape while warm air can enter.

Despite the growing need to repair or replace HVAC systems, schools are often not provided the necessary funding. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) report card noted how state-based capital funding for schools in 2017, compared to 2008, declined over 30% (or nearly \$20 billion), and 38 of 50 U.S. states cut school capital spending from 2008 to 2017.

What can local associations do?

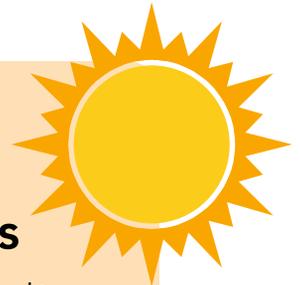
Environmental hazards such as heat stress are difficult to fight, but some methods can be taken to protect yourself and others against it.

Seek assistance from your local association worksite health and safety committee. If you don't have one, work with your local to create one. Local associations should ask administration to manage the time of day to do activities, including school-based sports, to reduce how much heat a person is exposed to. Instead of canceling activities such as practices or competitions because it is too hot outside, administration may consider changing the time of day to either early morning or late afternoon when it may be cooler.

Monitor classroom temperature by recording the date, time and temperature in a log to keep a record of how hot the classroom is and at what times. This can be used as evidence to show the school district and government officials how hot the classrooms are becoming and demand HVAC system maintenance or the expansion of properly installed HVAC systems in all district facilities. 🏠

Heat legislation under consideration in NJ

The biggest step that can be taken to reduce heat-related illness at K-12 schools is supporting A-1164/S-1358, which would require each board of education to adopt policy establishing temperature control standards and guidelines for school district facilities.



References and resources

The resources below were used to develop this article and provide more information for those who wish to dig deeper into the issue of heat in schools and other workplaces.

American Society of Civil Engineers

"Report Card for America's Infrastructure," 2021
bit.ly/3KK1tYR

Athletic Trainers Society of New Jersey

"Staying Safe in the Heat"
bit.ly/3Mvoj7M

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

"Heat Stress," 2022
bit.ly/3ZYCyVY

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

"Heat Stress Guide"
bit.ly/3MvoEY6

University of California, Los Angeles

"Impacts of Warming Temperatures on Education and Learning," by R. Jisung Park
Oct. 8, 2020
bit.ly/3MziXbW

NJEA Review

"Tackle harmful heat with ventilation and AC," by Dorothy Wigmore
September 2021
njea.org/harmful-heat

U.S. Government Accountability Office

"K-12 Education: School Districts Frequently Identified Multiple Building Systems Needing Updates or Replacement"
June 4, 2020
bit.ly/3mnSbZe

Google and you

Free stuff to make your job easier

By the NJEA Technology Committee



Google Suite for Education has evolved over the years and even its name has changed: G Suite for Education is now Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals. This multilevel platform creates endless possibilities across the board for all educators, from organizing emails, creating folders for notes, to staying on top of your calendar events or scheduling meetings and more.

In this article we provide teachers, educational support professionals (ESPs) and nonclassroom professionals with a guide on how they can use Google and other related programs effectively.

All items listed are free unless otherwise noted.

Teachers

Canva [canva.com](https://www.canva.com)

Canva is a graphic design web-based program that helps users to design presentations, flyers and much more with various layouts, images, photo filters, shapes and fonts. This program works well with Google Classroom. (Free but offers additional features for a fee.)

CloudConvert cloudconvert.com

CloudConvert is an online file converter. This program supports audio, video, document, eBook, archive, image, spreadsheet and presentation formats. It is free for up to 25 conversions per day. This extension is located in the Google Marketplace.

Video Dictionary

[Videodictionary.kwebpia.net](https://videodictionary.kwebpia.net)

Video Dictionary is an app that allows users to perform quick searches, watch videos and movies, and listen to songs on the Chrome browser. It helps you find a video you're looking for from its seemingly endless video library. This extension is located in the Google Marketplace.

Microsoft Teams Meetings

support.microsoft.com/en-us/teams

Schedule Microsoft Teams Meetings directly from Google Workspace. Team meetings include video and audio conferencing, screen sharing, meeting chat, digital whiteboards and more. Stay connected and organized to get more done together across work, school and life with Microsoft Teams meetings. This extension is located in the Google Marketplace.

Koalendar

koalendar.com

Koalendar allows you to schedule your appointments faster and there is no need for email communication for appointments. Your calendar stays full and you stay productive. This extension is located in the Google Marketplace.

Mote

[Mote.com](https://mote.com)

Mote allows integrations with Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals that allow for verbal feedback or verbal responses. This tool is great for language arts teachers who provide feedback on essays.

IT, secretaries, clerical aides

Google mail merge

spreadsheetpoint.com/mail-merge-google-sheets

Many districts produce a large quantity of printed and mailed information for the community as well as certificates for programs such as student of the month and honor roll. Using a mail merge, office staff can simplify the process for printing awards each month or create new ones in Google Slides. Google mail merge takes only five minutes to learn. Perform mass mailing and/or send mass emails.

Google Drive drive.google.com/drive

Google Drive is a great tool for collaboration, creating folders for school documents, managing labels and for keeping things organized.

Foxy Labels foxylabels.com

Foxy Labels helps you design and print aligned labels, merge data from Google Sheets, customize labels using fonts and colors, insert images, create QR and barcodes and design each label individually. These templates are compatible with Avery® labels. This extension is located in the Google Marketplace.

Maintenance

Draw.io app.diagrams.net

Draw.io is web-based diagram editor, built around Google Drive, that enables users to create flowcharts, UML, entity relation, network diagrams, mockups and more. Data is stored only in Google Drive. This extension is located in the Google Marketplace.

Custodial Staff google.com/forms

As we embrace new protocols for cleaning, it is important that we reach the people who apply and use these chemicals in buildings. Use Google Forms to develop a survey of what is working and what is not along with providing the ability to voice one's concerns in a one-stop shop. Located in Google Drive.

Bus Drivers

Google Maps google.com/maps

Google Maps is a great tool for bus drivers to customize routes for pickups and drop offs, or for finding alternate routes as needed. The ability to save areas of interest in folders is a helpful addition. The Street View option allows you to select a street area to view the location before arriving.

Paraprofessionals/teacher aides/ instructional aides

Google Slides drive.google.com/drive

In Google Slides, you can create checklists for the students. Additionally, you can keep track of attendance, lunch, breakfast, snack packs or any other items. These can also be made using Google Docs.

Security Guards

google.com/forms

Use Google Forms to keep track of staff vehicles, license plate numbers, permit numbers and more for parking on district grounds. It's great resource when a vehicle needs to be moved or is damaged. This will allow for the data listed on the Google Form to be converted into a Google Sheet as a reference tool.

Guidance counselors/child study team / nurses

Google Drive drive.google.com/drive

Google Drive applications can help you organize and identify important files quickly. The ability to edit and create reference guides is made easier when folders are color coded and accessible for students and staff needs.

Lunch aides

QR Codes drive.google.com/drive

Generating a QR Code that can be stored in Google Drive is useful for students to scan in for attendance and to use the restroom during lunch time. A QR code can also be used for students and staff to scan to keep track of the lunch menu.



Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals is constantly updated with new features to streamline and become more of an efficient tool for staff and students. Visit bit.ly/3MB6y74 stay up to date on new and upcoming features on the platform.



NJEA Tech Talk

youtube.com/@njeaweb

Check out the NJEA Technology Committee's NJEA Tech Talk series. The committee has released a new video on Screencastify on the NJEA YouTube Channel.

NJEA Technology Committee

Sabina Ellis, Essex County, chair
Christopher Bowman, Burlington County
Daniel Cyckowski, Somerset County
Laurie Floyd, Monmouth County
Olive Giles, Mercer County
Bethany Hannah, Salem County
Virginia Hoden, NJREA
Kayla Kanarkowski, NJEA Preservice
Dali Kilpatrick, Camden County
Melissa Krupp, Ocean County
Lori Lalama, Passaic County
Pete Moran, Hunterdon County
Ann Moyle, Monmouth County
Michael Ryan, Bergen County
Laurie Schorno, Morris County
Pallavi Shetty, Middlesex County
Julie Stratton, Cape May County
Stephen Whitehead, Gloucester County

STAFF NEWS

HIRES AND PROMOTIONS



NJEA welcomed **CHARDAE INGRAM** to NJEA staff on Feb. 16 as a secretary in the Government Relations Division Office of Member and Political Organizing. Prior to joining staff, Ingram was an administrative assistant to the director of special education in the Paulsboro School District. While an NJEA member, Ingram represented Gloucester County on the Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee, serving as MLR chair for Gloucester County, the Youth Services Committee, and as a Delegate Assembly Alternate, as well as a Gloucester County representative for ESPs and a Members of Color influencer. Nationally, she served on the NEA Resolutions Committee. Ingram holds an associate degree in criminal justice from Rowan College of South Jersey. She lives in Woodbury with her teenaged son, Chace Hood, who loves basketball.



NJEA welcomed **KATRINA HOMEL** to NJEA staff on March 16 as an associate director in the Office of Legal Services/Member Rights. Prior to joining NJEA staff, Homel worked as legal counsel at the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) in Trenton. Before NJSBA, she was a school and labor and employment attorney at Hill Wallack LLP and a special education attorney at a plaintiff-side disability law firm.

While studying law, Homel held internships in the U.S. Senate and with various nonprofit organizations. Prior to law school, she worked with the AmeriCorps VISTA program in Washington, D.C. Following law school, Homel served as a legal fellow at the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board.

Homel is a recipient of the 2022 Service to the Bar Award from the New Jersey State Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division. She is the chair-elect of the Young Lawyers Division and a trustee of the New Jersey State Bar Foundation. Homel holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Vassar College and Juris Doctor degree from Georgetown University Law Center. She lives with her fiancé, Wade Koenecke, in Pennington, where she is a member of the Historic Preservation Commission.



NJEA congratulates **ILEANA RIVERA** on her promotion to administrative assistant in the UniServ Region 9 office in Wall Township. Rivera initially joined NJEA staff in March 2014 as an office assistant in the Region 12 office. In March 2022, she was promoted to secretary in that office. Prior to joining NJEA staff, Rivera had worked as the office manager for five years at Edison Memorial Tower Corporation, the nonprofit organization that preserves, promotes and manages the Edison Memorial Tower and Museum in Menlo Park. Rivera lives in Tinton Falls with her husband, Ray.



NJEA welcomed **DAVID BANDER** to NJEA staff on March 1 as an associate director in the Office of Legal Services/Member Rights. Prior to joining NJEA staff, Bander worked as executive director of the Policy Office at the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD). Additionally, Bander directed the Healthcare Ombudsperson Program, which assisted New Jersey state workers concerning the State Health Benefits Program. Prior to the NJLWD, Bander was a labor attorney at Mets, Schiro and McGovern, LLP, where he represented public and private sector unions in all aspects of labor-management relations, and regularly appeared in federal and state courts and agencies as well as mediation and arbitration proceedings.

Before practicing as an attorney, Bander served as a union organizer with 1199SEIU. He represented members at 11 worksites across the state, bargained contracts, and defended members at grievance hearings and before the National Labor Relations Board.

Bander holds a bachelor's degree in government from the University of Virginia and a Juris Doctor from Vanderbilt University School of Law. He lives in Plainsboro with his wife, Heather, and their son, Hadden.

MAKING MATH INTUITIVE IN PHYSICAL SCIENCE

A powerful principle for developing
“math sense” in physics and chemistry

BY ROBERT OÑOZ

What do we teach as physics and chemistry teachers? Some say it's the study of matter and energy. Others say it's the study of space and time. Personally, I believe what we're teaching is just common sense.

The trick, however, is that common sense is not always obvious! More times than not, common sense actually takes a great deal of studying, practicing with examples and deriving complex equations from the ground up. Between tough concepts, long problems and abstract mathematics, the physical sciences can make a student's brain spin (with great torque!) if you're not clever in how you present the material.

Some teachers try to rectify this by reducing the amount of math in their courses. Others double down on math and devote whole lessons to introducing calculus to high school students.

I propose a third way: using mathematics as an extension of physical intuition.

“Math sense” is one of the greatest superpowers you can give your students. When I write a number like 10^{23} on the board, I pay careful attention to how my students react. If they stare at the number like dry paint on a wall, I know I have failed at conveying how numbers should *feel* in their mind.

To put this number in perspective, the average student has 10 fingers—let's call that 10^1 . A small classroom of 10 students would, by common sense, have 10 times this number of fingers, 100 fingers in all—let's call that 10^2 . Ten small classrooms would have 1,000 fingers— 10^3 .

A pattern has obviously emerged and, if you are a careful reader, your sense of magnitude for the original number I wrote on the board has shifted tremendously.

If we return to our original number, 10^{23} , we now recognize this number as one hundred sextillion or a one

“ I propose a third way: using mathematics as an extension of physical intuition.

followed by *twenty-three zeroes* (100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000). To have these many fingers, we would need ten sextillion people (100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 or 10^{22} people) to raise their hands. With only about eight billion people on our planet ($\sim 8 \times 10^9$ people), we need about *one trillion of our Earths* ($\sim 10^{12}$ Earths) to reach that number of fingers.

Why overwhelm students with such unfathomably large numbers? Am I not creating more cognitive demand for my students? I stop and let my students feel the utter magnitude of this number. Then, I give them the kicker: “Although it would take a trillion Earths worth of people to hold up 10^{23} fingers, you can hold 10^{23} atoms *in the palm of your hand.*”

The overwhelming dread of numbers now transforms into shock and awe. The enormously large has now transformed into the conceptually small. You haven't *told* students how small atoms are, you've made them *feel* how small atoms are. You've built an intuition for the physical world. More importantly, you've replaced a fear of numbers for an intuition with numbers—the “math sense” that students need to be successful in physical science.

Students can now progress through their physical science courses with more confidence in their sense of numbers. If their calculators say a car weighs 170 newtons, they can say, “Wait a minute. If Mr. Oñoz says one newton is about the weight of an apple, there's no way a car can weigh 170 newtons. That's just not enough apples!” A quick math check can confirm their suspicions that the weight of a car should really be 17,000 newtons, not 170 newtons.

Numbers can easily be used to extend students' physical intuition about the universe, especially if those numbers tap into students' previous real-life experiences. 🍏

Robert Oñoz is a student at Montclair State University and an NJEA Preservice ambassador. To learn more about NJEA Preservice, visit njea.org/preservice.

CREATING THE BERGEN COUNTY GSA CONSORTIUM

Educator organizing and activism

By William Andresen with Amy Moran, Ph. D. and Kate Okeson

William Andresen is a social studies teacher and Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) adviser at Park Ridge High School, and the host of a podcast called "Speaking with Students." He's also the founder and coordinator of the new Bergen County GSA Consortium.

RC: What was the inspiration for the Bergen County GSA Consortium?

WA: During the 2021-22 school year, our GSA maintained record participation. It was motivating to see so many students show up for each other. As our momentum grew, we wondered: Are neighboring schools seeing this type of growing presence and opportunity for support?

As co-advisers, Student Assistance Counselor Andrew Yeager and I spoke about how beneficial it would be to hear from other GSA advisers. So, I reached out to several I knew in the area to ask about their experiences and if they might be interested in joining a group dedicated to internal support—a virtual consortium for advisers.

RC: What has the consortium accomplished so far?

WA: In under two years, the Bergen County GSA Consortium has provided opportunities for communication, brainstorming, group support, and camaraderie among educators who are facing the same challenges and working toward the same goals for the LGBTQIA+ people in schools. In our virtual meetings, we share goals and ongoing projects within our schools, address common challenges and build community.

The value of connection

Online surveys and virtual conversations have been a great way to establish routine connections. The first time another adviser engaged the group for advice, it was an affirmation that others saw value in the connection as well and that once the structure was in place, it would continue to grow exponentially. We also show up for other Pride and GSA events in Bergen County and meet other GSA advisers and school leaders who work to support LGBTQIA+ students.



William Andresen is the founder and coordinator of the Bergen County GSA Forum.



Please see the QR code for Andresen's original flyer and Google Form and an expanded version of how he started this invaluable work. And please connect with us at rainbowconnectionnjea@gmail.com to share the wonderful work you're doing in your district to support LGBTQIA+ students!

How can other GSA advisors in other New Jersey counties create similar consortia?

By following Andresen’s lead, other GSA advisors throughout New Jersey can also form county-based GSA consortia to connect around affinity, issues and events. Here’s a brief “how-to”:

- **Collaborate:** GSA co-advisers, Yeager and Andresen, began discussing the idea in October of 2021, and Andresen worked on developing a structure to reach out to other advisers.
- **Create:**
 - **Make a flyer** with a brief introduction, list of goals, link to Google Form invitation, and email contact.
 - **Build an outreach list** by connecting with other GSA advisers you know and researching the staff directories of schools in your county to contact GSA advisers you don’t know yet.
 - **Develop a Google Form invitation** to the Consortium, and collect data too. See this month’s QR code where Andresen’s original flyer and Google Form are posted.
- **Communicate:** Email the invitation flyer and Google Form to the outreach list of GSA advisers you’ve identified in the county, and list dates for the first Zoom share sessions.



Andresen (r) with Pastor Mark Suriano of the First Congregational Church of Park Ridge with Rebekah Bruesehoff, speaking about the rights of all students, including transgender students.

- **Connect:** From there, Andresen hosted at least one Zoom share session a month with five to 15 participants. Participating advisers also started inviting other advisers whom they knew would be interested as well. They connected on area Pride events and LGBTQIA+ themed conferences, and consortium members use meetings and the email chain to promote their own projects or events.

At “Rainbow Connection,” we’re so proud of Andresen and his work in developing the Bergen County GSA Consortium, and we hope GSA advisers in other counties follow his lead to create additional county-based GSA consortia as well. 🏳️‍🌈



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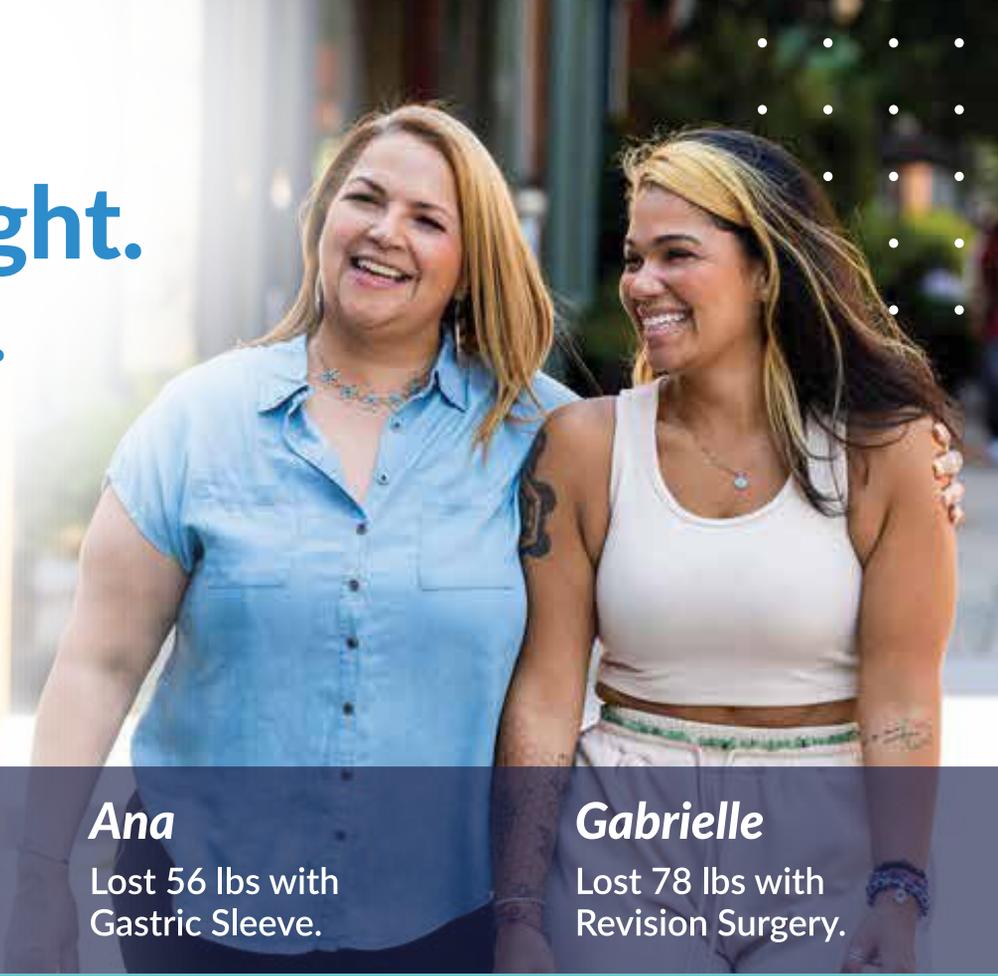
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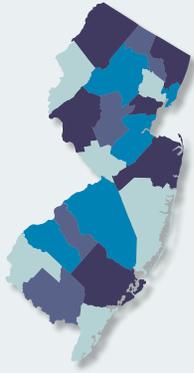


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SUSSEX TO CAPE MAY

Workshops and conferences

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.

RECHARGE ACADEMY TO TRAIN EDUCATORS ON RENEWABLE ENERGY

The 2023 REcharge Academy will focus on offshore wind energy and wind. The REcharge team looks forward to building offshore wind turbines and testing them on a beach. Expect days packed with learning about the politics, technologies and economics of renewable energy coupled with a range of engaging activities you can bring back to your students.

Now in its 17th year, the REcharge Academy is an educator training program focused on renewable energy. This intensive training blends lectures from experts and tours of energy facilities with replicable hands-on K-12 lessons. The 2023 REcharge Academy will launch new offshore wind activity guides, funded by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA), in addition to materials from KidWind, NEED, WhiteBox Learning and Vernier.

Over 550 educators of all disciplines have attended REcharge Academies. After the academy experience, instructors may opt to simply incorporate lessons and curricula into their own classrooms, or they may go further and work with local schools and districts to share the resources they've explored or train other teachers in wind and solar.

Location and date:

Stockton University, Atlantic City campus
July 31-Aug. 3

Registration fee: 0 - \$1,500

Thirty full scholarships are available for New Jersey educators.

For more information, email michael@kidwind.org. Visit bit.ly/recharge-academy to register.

More detailed information on KidWind and the REcharge Academy can be found at kidwind.org/training/recharge-academy.

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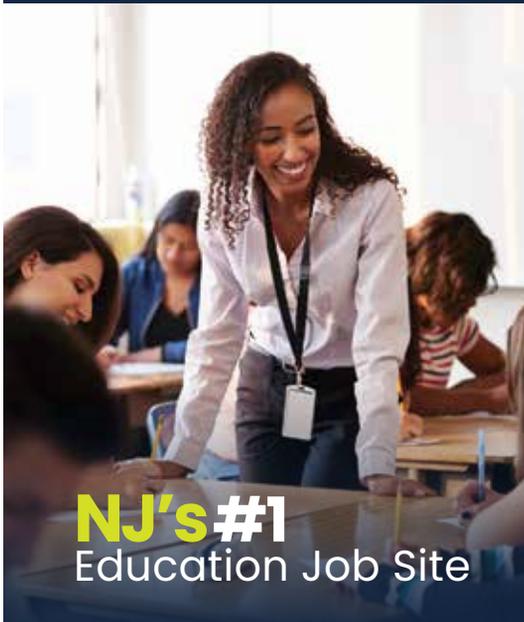
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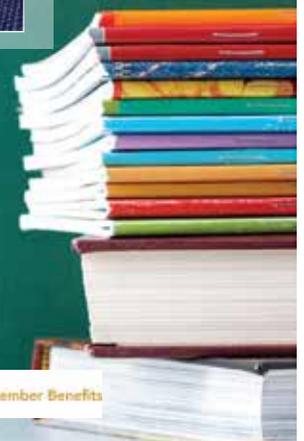
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Furniture-Mattresses	800-631-0286	Real Estate-Buy/Sell	(see website)
Home Security Sys.	888 995-2661	Solar Electricity	800-558-1920
Jewelry-Diamonds	800-635-9136	Travel-Cruises	800-634-8538
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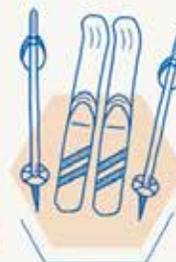
For even more information, resources, and discounts: memberbenefits.njea.org



FACEBOOK: Follow @NJEAMemberBenefits on Facebook for discounts and services that save you money.

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

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Frederick L. Hipp
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in Education

Got a great idea?

Get it funded, just like these NJEA members!

A Feast for Every Season – Students at Montclair’s Mt. Hebron Middle School (now Buzz Aldrin Middle School) are learning that communities build gardens—and gardens build communities. Thanks to a Hipp Grant, students have access to a free-standing greenhouse and the resources to design and build a cold frame addition to the greenhouse where cold-tolerant vegetables will be planted.

NJEA’s Frederick L. Hipp grants provide \$500 to \$10,000 grants for educators just like YOU and projects like this one!

The only foundation of its kind in New Jersey, the Hipp Foundation supports initiatives to promote excellence in education. Since 1993, the foundation has disbursed more than \$2.3 million in grants for innovative educational projects.

Applications are due by March 1 each year. Applications are closed at this time, but learn more and start thinking about your grant ideas and explore previous grants at njea.org/hipp.





NJREA: AN INVESTMENT IN YOUR SECURITY

Union membership is one of the best investments a retiree can make, especially in the current political environment. As a member of NJREA, you have access to a variety of resources to get the most out of your retirement, as well as peace of mind knowing there are people working on your behalf to protect it.

Standing up for ourselves

In today's economic climate, there are some who feel that your hard-earned pension is an entitlement that should be eliminated. But NJREA members know that there is power in numbers.

Time and again, NJREA members have stood together to protect our rights, the rights of active members, and the rights of those just embarking on a career in public education.

It is unfortunate that we have to fight so hard to keep what we have earned. But when we assume we are invulnerable, we forget that change is only a few legislative votes away.

NJREA keeps our legislators aware of who we are and how many we are. We need you to write letters, send emails, make phone calls, and even attend rallies to protect and enhance the benefits you earned serving New Jersey's students.

Benefits of membership

But there's more to NJREA than securing our rights in Trenton. As a retired school employee, membership in NJREA, NJEA, and NEA-Retired enables you to continue your membership benefits and participation in:

- NEA Life, AD&D and Accident insurance
- NEA/NJEA Auto and Home Insurance program
- NJEA and NEA Travel services
- NEA Customized Cash Rewards Credit Card
- Buyer's Edge Discount Buying
- NEA Retiree Health Program – Get help paying for costs not covered by Medicare
- MemberCare, Medicare supplements and in-hospital plans
- NEA Magazine service – Get two free: neamb.com/NJGet2
- NEA Pet Insurance Program
- NEA Discount Marketplace
- NEA Dental and Vision Insurance Program

You'll enjoy benefits you've had for years:

- 30% discount on legal fees through the NJEA attorney referral service
- Discounts at Magic Kingdom, Universal Studios and other entertainment and attractions
- NJEA and NEA publications
- A special quarterly retirees' publication
- A voice in association affairs
- Discounts on car rentals

“ By joining NJREA, you are doing your part to protect yourself and your retired colleagues. NJREA urges you to be one of the many, instead of one standing alone.

Additionally, you can attend the NJREA Convention in Atlantic City, fall and spring NJREA luncheon meetings, and special sessions for retirees at the NJEA and NEA conventions. County retiree associations also hold monthly social and informal meetings.

Lifetime membership for retirees available

The NJREA membership renewal form also list dues for those who want to become lifetime members. If you are a recent retiree, you might want to consider lifetime membership and avoid the annual renewal process. Lifetime membership for retired members may be paid in five installments. Interested retirees may contact the NJEA Membership Division at 609-310-4546, Option 9, to set up a payment schedule.

Pre-retirement lifetime membership for actives

Current active professional and support staff who intend to retire in the near future could also consider joining NJREA as a pre-retired lifetime member. Lifetime dues would be calculated at the 2022-23 rate and then paid in 10 installments. Interested in this option? Contact the NJEA Membership Division at the number listed above to get started.

Around the counties

For questions, call your county REA. For trip details, check your county newsletter.

BURLINGTON COUNTY REA

May 18: Spring meeting/luncheon at Marco's at Indian Springs Country Club in Marlton. Cost is \$25. To attend, call Donna R. O'Malley at 609-268-0838 by May 3.

CAPE MAY COUNTY REA

May 11: Spring business meeting/luncheon at The Flanders in Ocean City at 11 a.m. Cost is \$32. To attend, contact Chic Brandt at 609-774-3452 or chic8852@aol.com.

ESSEX COUNTY REA

May 17: Spring meeting/luncheon at Hanover Manor in East Hanover. Cost is \$38. To attend, call Andrea Boseman at 973-676-2368 by May 10.

HUDSON COUNTY REA

June 7: June celebration party at San Carlo Banquet and Caterer in Lyndhurst. Cost is \$37. To attend, call Donna Middlebrooks at 973-610-7129 by May 18.

MERCER COUNTY REA

May 10: Spring luncheon at Mercer Oaks Golf Club. Cost is \$32. To attend, contact Iris Tonti at iristonti@msn.com or 609-915-3986.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY REA

June 8: End-of-year luncheon and scholarship awards ceremony at the Grand Marquis in Old Bridge. Cost is \$43. To attend, contact Susan Jaysnovitch at teachtheinternet@aol.com or 732-925-1606 by June 1.

MONMOUTH COUNTY REA

June 13: June meeting/luncheon at Doolan's Shore Club in Spring Lake. Cost is \$35. Topic: Philanthropic recipients. To attend, contact Lois Lyons at MCREAinformation@gmail.com by June 2.

MORRIS COUNTY REA

May 10: General membership meeting/luncheon at Birchwood Manor in Whippany. Cost is \$35 for members, \$53 guests. The luncheon includes a musical program. To attend, call John Beekman at 973-514-1080 by May 1.

June 7: Scholarship awards meeting and luncheon at Birchwood Manor in Whippany. Cost is \$35 for members, \$53 guests. The scholarship awards ceremony will take place. To attend, call John Beekman at 973-514-1080 by June 1.

June 10: General membership meeting at Madison Community House in Madison. Cost is \$35. Guest speaker is Debra DeRosa, a psychic/medium. To attend, call Cheryl Doltz at 973-818-1353 by June 9.

OCEAN COUNTY REA

May 11: May luncheon/meeting at Jack Baker's Lobster Shanty in Point Pleasant. Cost is \$28. To attend, call Barbara Miller at 732-854-2253 by May 1.

PASSAIC COUNTY REA

June 7: Luncheon/meeting at The Brownstone House in Paterson. Cost is \$35. To attend, call Kitty Sausa at 201-410-1325.

SALEM COUNTY REA

May 22: Spring luncheon at St. John's Episcopal Church in Salem. The guest speaker is Bill Hamilton discussing "The Wonders of DNA." Cost is \$17. To attend, call Rosemma Ward at 856-467-4795 by May 15.

SUSSEX COUNTY REA

June 12: General meeting/luncheon at the Farmstead Golf and Country Club in Lafayette. Cost is \$34. To attend, call Sharon Mullen at 908-852-1221.

UNION COUNTY REA

May 16: Spring membership meeting and luncheon held at Gran Centurions in Clark. Cost is \$30. To attend, call Pat Alt at 732-382-6261 by May 9.

NJEA Delegate Assembly

The NJEA Delegate Assembly met Virtually on the Zoom platform on March 27, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. Roll Call was taken. There were 126 delegates out of 127 present. Alternates were seated as follows: Warren for Buttafuoco (Bergen); Rosenberg for Camizzi (Cape May); DeFilippis for Reed (Hudson); McGowan for vacancy (Middlesex); Trzeszkowski for Maher (Monmouth); Haynes for Quinn (Monmouth); Fandino Diaz for Kozlowski (Morris); King for McKinney-Croix (Passaic); Exum for Lawler (Union); Sharp for Shannon (Union). Absent were: Meyer (Burlington); vacancy (Monmouth).

NJEA President Marie Blistan introduced the NJEA State ESP of the Year. Kim Scott-Hayden, who delivered remarks.

Nominations for NEA Director and Alternate Director

Blistan recognized Kathy Paterek, chair of the DA Rules Committee. Paterek detailed the rules and procedures for the NEA Director nominations and election. She indicated that there were three NEA State Director seats open and three alternate director seats open.

The Executive Committee submitted a list of four nominated candidates: Laurie Gibson-Parker, Cherry Hill Twp., Camden Co.; Theresa Fuller, North Plainfield, Somerset Co.; Robert La Morte, Wyckoff Twp., Bergen Co.; Stacy Yanko, Hopatcong, Sussex Co.

Blistan took the following nominations from the floor: For NEA Director, Anthony Rosamilia (Essex) nominated Barbara Rheault, Mullica Twp., Atlantic Co.; For NEA Alternate Director, Mary MacRae (Somerset) nominated Patrick Frain, Somerville, Somerset Co.

President's report

Blistan stated that the president's report was emailed to the delegation but there were some attachments that did not go through. Delegates were asked to view the report.

Blistan gave the following highlight of the report:

U.S. Secretary of Education Cardona agreed to accept a portion of the standardized testing waiver requested by New Jersey, but he needed more time on our request for a waiver that would end the assessment for this year for our students. Blistan called on NJEA staff member John Cottone to show a "Take Action" link for suspension of mandated statewide standardized tests that delegates and members could use to communicate with lawmakers. Blistan reported on various New Jersey and U.S. legislators who have not made their positions clear on standardized testing. Blistan recognized Research Director Denise

Policastro and Associate Director for Research Beth Buonsante to speak about Prudential, the NJEA-endorsed plan for critical illness and disability Insurance and the Visions Federal Credit Union grant that NJEA received.

Blistan introduced Gov. Phil Murphy who then addressed the delegation.

Blistan called on Government Relations Director Al Beaver, who asked members to sign the petition to get Gov. Murphy on the primary ballot for reelection. A live link was set up for delegates to sign the petition.

Nondelegate speakers

Marcella Simadiris (Passaic) asked for an association representative (AR) handbook to be posted on the NJEA website. Tricina Beebe (Burlington) asked for support for school librarians in their efforts to stop the dismantling of school libraries.

Vice president's report

NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller congratulated Kim Scott-Hayden as NJEA State ESP of the Year. Spiller gave an update of the State Board of Education meeting: the State Board discussed the "Road Forward" Plan (addresses post-COVID recovery) and grant opportunities for districts to provide mental health supports for students and staff. Spiller discussed a meeting with the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education. Spiller spoke to the partnership of Visions Credit Union and Higher Education. Spiller discussed the work of the Work Environment Council (WEC).

Secretary-treasurer's report

NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty presented the financial report and answered questions.

Beatty spoke of a meeting with the New Jersey Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (NJACTE) concerning college enrollments and working toward a more diverse equitable teacher workforce. Beatty spoke to looking at teacher recruitment through racial and social justice lenses. Beatty referenced the talks NJEA continues to have the Future Educators Association at The College of New Jersey. Beatty reported on the work of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Workgroup, NJEA's 200,000 Conversations initiative, and work with New Jersey School Board Association Task Force. Beatty also discussed work with preservice members and referenced the work of the staff contact to NJEA Preservice, Marguerite Schroeder.

Executive director's report

NJEA Executive Director Steve Swetsky spoke to the importance of supporting Gov. Murphy, outlining the work NJEA has done with the governor and how it has benefitted NJEA members. Swetsky spoke to the work of the New Jersey Labor Management Collaborative, which had a convening within the previous week. He noted that the National Education Association has committed substantial grant funding to expand the NJEA Labor Management Collaborative to more locals. Swetsky reported that the upcoming Summer Leadership Conference would be virtual.

Committee reports with recommendations

Budget Committee

Steve Beatty presented to recommendations from the Budget Committee.

Recommendation No. 1: that \$250,000 be transferred to Cost Center 0520 Computer Center from the following cost centers to cover the additional software application services engaged to handle the remote office environment and to enhance NJEA's ability to better serve, support, and communicate with its members.

Recommendation No. 2: that the sum of \$75,000, be transferred from Cost Center 0470 Special Activities into Cost Center 0540 Headquarters Operations to cover the additional security services needed at Association Headquarters properties before and after U.S. Presidential Inauguration Day to protect against potential anticipated events following the attack on the nation's Capitol.

Heidi Brache (Monmouth) moved the two recommendations as a block.

The motion carried.

NEA Activities Committee

Recommendation No. 1: that the state and local delegate stipend for the 2021 NEA Representative Assembly be set at \$598 to cover food, technology, and incidental costs as indicated in the report. Members of the NJEA Executive Committee or Delegate Assembly who have been elected delegates at the state or local level will also receive this stipend. Of the adjusted state delegate stipend, \$300 will be paid by June 30, and the remaining \$298 balance will be paid at the conclusion of the Representative Assembly with the reading of the titles of proposed constitutional amendments for the following year.

Recommendation No. 2: that all delegates shall be required to attend all business sessions of the NEA Representative Assembly in which NEA officers are nominated, issues are debated, and policies are formed. Failure of any delegate to fully comply may result in the reduction and/or withholding of the final convention check.

Delegates and/or their affiliate locals who are found to have circumvented the requirements may face prospective penalties which could result in a loss of financial support, sanctions, or other penalties that may be recommended by the NEA Activities Committee to the NJEA president.

Tamara Beatty (Monmouth) moved the two recommendations as a block.

The motion carried.

Pandemic Relief Fund Subcommittee

Recommendation: that \$500,000 be transferred from Net Assets to the Pandemic Relief Fund budget line in Cost Center 0935 to enable the Association to give more eligible members the opportunity to apply for food insufficiency relief.

Deanna Nicosia-Jones (Cumberland) moved the recommendation.

The motion carried.

New business

New Business Item 1

That NJEA will coordinate with the N.J. Association of School Librarians to use existing communication channels, including social media outlets, to elevate the need for school libraries staffed by certified school librarians (school library media specialists) in all New Jersey public schools. This campaign will be conducted throughout the month of April (School Library Month) and highlight National School Librarian Day on April 4, 2021.

Melissa Tomlinson moved NBI 1.

Rheault (Atlantic) seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

New Business Item 2

That NJEA will add Amazon to the list of vendors for which Pride funds cannot be used, effective Sept. 1, 2021.

Adam Sheridan (Camden) moved NBI 2

Tomlinson (Atlantic) seconded the motion.

NBI 2 was referred to the Public Relations Committee as amended.

For the good of the order

Judith Perkins (Retired) reported that NJREA has donated \$25,000 to the Community Food Bank of New Jersey.

Petal Robertson (Essex) thanked the delegation for their support of Montclair Education Association.

Motion to Adjourn: Rheault (Atlantic). Motion carried.

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MAY & beyond

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

MAY 12-13	FRI & SAT Carol Watchler LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference	JUN 09	FRIDAY Executive Committee	JUL 07	FRIDAY Delegates depart from NEA RA
MAY 19	FRIDAY Executive Committee	JUN 10	SATURDAY NEA RA Statewide Caucus	JUL 12	WEDNESDAY Impact Conference (PDII)
MAY 20	SATURDAY Delegate Assembly meeting	JUL 01	SATURDAY Delegates arrive at NEA RA	JUL 13	THURSDAY Radical Imagination Summit for Educators

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

Save the date! NJEA Radical Imagination Summit for Educators July 13, 2023

PRINCETON MARRIOTT AT FORRESTAL

Join us at this year's summit as we shine our collective imagination across our movement for a system of liberatory public education guided by a justice-centered union.

This special program will be led by an all-Filipinx team infusing music, poetry, revolutionary herstory/history into this inspired day of community and learning.



THE UNION DIVIDEND

This month's cover story, "A Labor Movement's Jersey Roots," tells the story of how two New Jersey public school graduates, Chris Smalls and Derrick Palmer, came to understand that when workers are organized into a union, they can force a multibillion dollar corporation to respect their employees and not just their shareholders.

Their story is a reminder of why unions make a difference and why a union is only as strong as its members. And as union membership grows, the outcomes for union members are magnified.

While there are a number of excellent reasons to become a member of NJEA, one of the most significant is the positive impact that union membership has on salary and benefits—one that makes union dues an investment that pays for itself many times over. And, as demonstrated by a recent report from the Labor Education Action Research Network (LEARN) at Rutgers School of Labor Management, the greater the proportion of union members in a given field and given geographic region, the greater return on investment each union member receives.

That report, "The State of Labor in New Jersey: A Profile of Organized Labor in the Garden State," demonstrates the economic power of what's known as union density, or the proportion of workers in a geographic region who belong to a union.

The report's authors, Todd E. Vachon and James Boyle, found that New Jersey is one the nation's most union-dense states, where 16.09% of all workers, and 59.63% public-sector workers are union members.

In a section of the report titled "Union Wage Premium," Vachon and Boyle compare the weekly wages of union and nonunion workers in the public and private sectors. They found that local public-sector workers across the state—a category that includes employees of boards

“ **Local public-sector workers across the state—a category that includes employees of boards of education—earned \$333.41 more a week than their nonunion counterparts.**

of education—earned \$333.41 more a week than their nonunion counterparts.

Vachon and Boyle dug a bit deeper looking specifically at the union wage premium for public-sector employees in education and health, finding that in those two fields combined, unionized workers in New Jersey earned \$399.11 more per week than their nonunion counterparts. They note that the sample size for these two categories was smaller, so some caution should be taken with those results. However, taken together with the results for all local public-sector workers, these figures demonstrate the key role unions play—especially in a union-dense environment—in improving the economic status of their members.

"When workers have the ability to bargain collectively over wages, they tend to bring home a greater percent of the value they produce with their labor," the researchers conclude. Perhaps their findings helped encourage the three Rutgers unions that went on strike together this spring and won impressive settlements, along with important new language to protect workers, by uniting their demands.

New Jersey's union density among education employees is the reason that public school employees in the state are successful at the bargaining table, negotiating respectable salaries and benefits for members. It's also why NJEA is successful at the state level where, among other victories, we have seen three consecutive years of full contributions to our pension system and why educational support professionals now have due-process rights.

Union density means that joining the union is only the first step. The next step is making sure that all of your colleagues join as well. Together we are stronger than any of us are alone. 🌐

SEE FOR YOURSELF

If you would like to read Vachon and Boyle's full report, you can find it at bit.ly/labor-nj-may22.





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Go to njeaconvention.org/hotels to check out the discount rates and to make your reservations.

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