

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

June 2017
NJEA.ORG

REVIEW



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REVIEW
JUNE 2017

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I AM NJEA



LEFT: Members of the Riverdale Education Association prepared for PARCC with shirts that carried a reminder that reduced student stress by showing that everyone was in the same boat. Bottom Row from left: Eileen DeFilippis, Megan Dutkowsky and Jennifer Corbett. Top Row from left: REA President Michele Miller, Samantha Baietti, and Alyssa Radomski.

BELOW: At the Atlantic County Retired Educators Association luncheon on May 2, members were serenaded by the Seven Mile Chorus from Cape May County. Pictured here (l-r) are Joanne Palladino of Camden County, Jeanne Degatano of Cape May County and Martha Chiarulli of Atlantic County. Degatano is a member of the Seven Mile Chorus.



BELOW: From left: Kelee Mitchell-Hall of Union County, Ray Vojtash of NJEA staff, Alexandra Protopapas of Essex County-retired, and Romaine Street of Cumberland County-retired, sell NJEA swag at the NJEA MLR Conference on May 5-6. You'll find them and their wares at most statewide NJEA conferences.



Keith Olkewicz of the Jersey City Paraprofessionals Association discusses issues for educational support professionals (ESP) during the Diversity Curriculum for ESP at the Minority Leadership and Recruitment Conference on May 6.

JOIN US

Check the events calendar for upcoming events and conferences you can attend.

PHOTO GALLERY ONLINE
flickr.com/njea/sets

A Pride-supported prom fashion show put students at Burlington County Special Services in the spotlight. See story on Page 19.



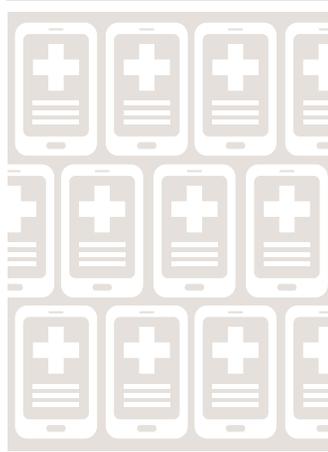
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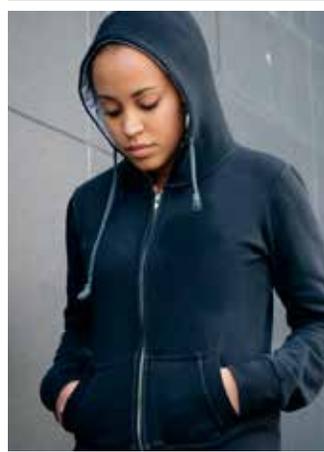
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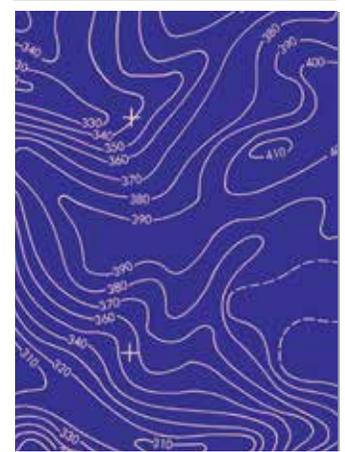
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South Brunswick High School Student Assistance and Wellness Supervisor Amy Finkelstein offers information to ninth-grade student Jamila Wright during a wellness fair at the high school.

PHOTO BY PATRICK RUMAKER

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NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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Annual membership dues are: Active professional: \$866 (full time); \$433 (part time) \$433 (on leave). Active supportive \$424 (full time) \$212 (part time) \$212 (on leave). Retired: \$79; \$985 (retired life). Retired ESP: \$54; \$610 (retired ESP life); Student \$19. 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*.



Goodbye and thank you

As the school year draws to a close, my time as an NJEA officer is also drawing to a close. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for what has been one of the most challenging and fulfilling experiences of my life.

When I began my career in education in 1978, my one goal was to be an excellent math teacher. At that time, the profession looked very different from today, but it was not without its challenges. To meet those challenges, I turned to my union, and its county and local branches. As I became more involved at each level, I was increasingly convinced of the power of collective action to change our professional lives, to accord educators the respect they deserve, and to transform the lives of our students.

I have been proud to serve New Jersey's public school employees at every level—from negotiations teams to county president to NEA Director and, eventually, to elected NJEA officer. Your votes of confidence in me have taken me from Riverside to Trenton and across the country advocating for teachers, educational support professionals, higher education members, preservice educators and retired educators.

It has been an honor and a privilege.

As each school year ends, a chapter closes and a new one begins. I continue to be a firm believer in the power of unionism, the potential of public education to change lives, and the passion of our members to fight for the profession and the students we serve. Thank you for all that you do, and will continue to do, for New Jersey's public school students, and thank you for the support, advocacy, and dedication that you show your fellow educators and union members each and every day.

Wendell F. Steinhauer



NJEA President Wendell Steinhauer with delegates to the 2016 NEA Representative Assembly from the West Windsor Plainsboro Education Association. From left: Joseph Cifelli, Corrine Egner, Steinhauer and Lisa Rizzello.

Wendell's Picks

Twitter

@PhilMurphyNJ: Wouldn't be here today without the #PublicEducation I received growing up. Proud to be endorsed by @AFTNJ & @NJEA. #NationalTeachersDay

On National Teacher Day, May 9, NJEA's and AFTNJ's endorsed candidate for governor, Ambassador Phil Murphy, expressed his pride in his public education. Primary Election Day is June 6.

Great Idea

School Based Wellness Fair

For the last two years, South Brunswick High School has held a wellness fair to ensure that students know all the resources available to them for mental and physical health. SBEA member Meryl Orlando initiated the fair and writes about it for the *Review*. See Page 24.

Proud member

Einstein Fellowship

Brick Township EA member Jennifer Lane is wrapping up a year making New Jersey proud as an Albert Einstein Distinguished Fellow assigned to work with NASA. But her assignment while on leave included so much more. Read about her on Page 12.

Protecting students

Schools are Safe Havens

NJEA and the Education Law Center (ELC) want the N.J. Department of Education to remind school leaders that our schools are safe havens for all students, regardless of immigration status. The ELC has written to Acting Commissioner Kimberley Harrington. Learn more on Page 55.

Know. Lead. Act.

The circle of leadership

By Carolyn Schultz, immediate past president,
Pennsauken Education Association

NJEA and NEA have placed a strong emphasis on encouraging early-career members to become more involved in the local, county, state and national associations. This is an exciting direction, and it is one that, as a former local president, I've embraced.

When I was a local president, I felt it was imperative to know what all of my members wanted and needed, and this was especially true for my early-career members. This journey has led me to work with two of my favorite Pennsauken "peeps," one a past president and one an early-career member.

That past president, Jim Boice, now works for NJEA. Over the last several years, Jim and program assistant Kathy Byrne have worked with members to brand NJEA's early-career network. I knew it was something that I had to be a part of. Our early-career members deserve it.

At about the same time, a third-year "newbie" entered our local association wanting to become more involved. As the newly elected local president, I admired her energy and thought that I could help her channel it.

Three years later, she has been instrumental in catapulting the South Jersey early-career network into the game. She has been a wonderful member to work with, and our relationship now goes beyond association business.

For example, last semester she was teaching about the Reformation and wanted her students to get a better feel for social change. She came to me and asked what I thought about her lesson idea. For the lesson, she planned to have her students create a school-wide conversation in which students would brainstorm changes that they would like to see enacted in our high school. The student

would research and defend their ideas in front of teachers and administrators.

This new teacher came to me because she is nontenured and considered this a risky lesson. In reality, the lesson was a home run, so she repeated it with another group of students. This time, she asked me to attend the arguments portion of the lesson.

I was impressed with the students' research and argumentation skills, and I suggested that they attend that night's board of education meeting and present their ideas to the board during the public comment portion of the meeting. The students elected a spokesperson.

The student spokesperson presented the background and outcomes of the lesson to the school board in a professional and scholarly manner. It was the kind of moment that all educators dream about.

That experience reminded me of the circle of which we are all a part. It's been said that the most important job of any local president is to prepare the next president. Our task is to help develop leadership not only in potential association presidents, but in our members and in our students. I am proud to continue the cycle with our early-career members and would encourage every local president to do the same. There's a portion of the early-career member network in your county, which you can find at njea.org/earlycareermembers, and your members would love to be involved.

Carolyn Schultz has been a special education teacher in Pennsauken for 30 years. She is the immediate past president of the Pennsauken Education Association. Schultz can be reached at carolynschultz@gmail.com.

NJEA Convention to focus on social justice

Planning for the 2017 NJEA Convention in Atlantic City is well underway. The convention theme, "Standing Together: Education Justice = Social Justice = Student Success," will focus NJEA and its members on how to achieve social equity through public education. A number of program elements are being planned to support the theme.

Convention attendees will have an opportunity to engage in a multisensory learning experience through a walking tour called The Awakening. Multiple paths will take participants on a journey through information and visual displays that reveal stories of students' journeys through life. Options attendees choose along the pathways will change the outcome of these stories. The experience seeks to deepen understanding of the impact of educators on students of color, LGBTQ+ students, and immigrant students at every level of education. Informative and moving displays will include student art that represents the theme of each path on the journey.

Classroom sessions offered on both days of the convention will address social equity issues. Of particular note is a session titled Courageous Conversations: Race, Equity, Gender and Social Justice.

To strengthen the connection of these issues of social justice to our work with students, a student panel discussion will be integrated into the Thursday morning plenary session. This will provide a live platform for the students to engage in critical dialogue with one another on the social issues that affect them at school. Immediately following the keynote session, audience members will be invited to learn from the student panelists and participate in hosted conversations on the issues raised.

The 2017 NJEA Convention will take place on Nov. 9-10. Additional information about the convention can be found on the next page.

Nominate a human and civil rights advocate

Nomination forms and documentation for the NJEA Human and Civil Rights Award are due Dec. 1, 2017. Awards will be presented at the NJEA Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Human and Civil Rights Celebration next January. Nominees may be an individual, group or

organization working in the area of civil rights, and if eligible, NJEA members.

For award criteria and to make a nomination, go to njea.org/HCRnomination. For more information call 609-599-4561, ext. 2290.

NJEA election results available at njea.org

Earlier this spring, NJEA members elected statewide officers and state and county representatives to the NJEA Executive Committee, NJEA Delegate Assembly (and Alternates), and NEA Representative Assembly in some counties and units, as well as some county association offices.

Results can be found at njea.org. To find the results quickly, enter “2017

NJEA Election Results” in the search tool. Results are provided by county. A link to the results for uncontested offices is also provided. Results of NJREA elections can be found by searching “NJREA election results.”

A story on NJEA’s newest officer team—Marie Blistan, Sean M. Spiller and Steven Beatty—can be found on Page 17.

Join NJREA before retirement and save!

Are you dreaming of retirement or are you actively preparing for it soon—maybe even in 2018? If so, consider this NJREA membership opportunity.

Active professional and support staff members may join NJREA before they retire by paying the lifetime dues at the 2017-18 rate. Membership in NJREA also includes membership in NJEA, NEA, and a county retired education association (CREA). As the word “lifetime” suggests, once you pay lifetime dues to NJREA, you will not have to pay annual dues to NEA-R and NJREA throughout your subsequent retirement.

Nearly all CREAs now have lifetime dues for membership in their CREAs as well.

Lifetime dues vary by county but average about \$1,200 for a professional and \$900 for an ESP member. NEA anticipates an increase in its lifetime dues for retirees in the 2018-19 membership year. Consequently, it would be economically advantageous for an active member to join NJREA as a pre-retiree during the 2017-18 membership year.

Pre-retirement lifetime dues may be paid in ten installments, beginning in September. To set up the payment schedule, phone the NJEA Membership Division at 609-599-4561, ext. 4123. 📞

SELFIE OF THE MONTH



Camden EA acting Vice President Larry Blake, Monroe Township EA member Joyce Farr, and Buena Regional EA member Sandra Peart snapped a selfie at the NEA-NJEA Minority Leadership Training Meet and Greet held in Trenton on April 22.

Attending a local, county or state training or meeting? Working a PRIDE event? Send your selfies to njeareview@njea.org. Be sure to identify where the picture was taken and the members who appear in the photo.



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COOL STUFF

Next year, celebrate Incredible Kid Day

On April 21, Elms Elementary School in Jackson, celebrated Absolutely Incredible Kid Day, a special day created by Camp Fire, a national youth development organization.

The idea is simple: adults write letters to the absolutely incredible children in their lives letting them know they are loved and supported.

"A letter is personal, tangible and something a person can hold onto for years to come," says Kelly Nitti, Camp Fire NJ's Associate Executive Director. "The right words of encouragement can come at just the time a child needs them most, helping the child make better decisions, build self-esteem, and even be more compassionate and successful."

"This was the first Absolutely Incredible Kids Day in Jackson and in Ocean County. We wanted to make sure that our students know how important and loved they are!" said Elms teacher Erin Schnorbus.

To learn more about Campfire NJ's Incredible Kids Day, contact Kelly Nitti at knitti@campfirenj.org or visit campfire.org/absolutely-incredible-kid-day.

NY Jets offer NJEA discounted tickets

The New York Jets created a special program for NJEA members to participate in a ticket pre-sale that provides deep discounts, including:

- Access to an exclusive offer for all New York Jets Regular Season home games, including marquee matchups vs. the New England Patriots and Atlanta Falcons.
- Ability to purchase upper level, lower level, and club tickets with the deepest possible discount available (Up to 40 percent in certain sections).
- A complimentary parking pass for every four tickets purchased.
- NJEA members who organize a group of over 20 people will have the opportunity to take a group photo on the Jets bench following the game.

To order tickets, go to njea.org/community/partnerships-contests and look for the online version of this offer. Use the code **NJEA2017** to enter.

This promotion is intended for NJEA members only. Questions? Contact Thomas Giuletta at tgiuletta@jets.nfl.com and tell him you are an NJEA member.

A+ Effort

Hamilton Township teacher accepted for NEH program

Susan Conrad, a special education teacher from Hamilton Township's Grice Middle School in Mercer County, has been accepted to attend the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for Teachers. She will visit the Crow Archaeological Center in Colorado from June 25 to July 15. With other institute scholars she will spend several days each at Mesa Verde National Park and in historic Pueblo and Spanish colonial communities in northern New Mexico. During this time participants will examine Pueblo Indian history from roughly 2000 B.C. to the present, the many ways to explore and interpret that history, and the relationship between history and Pueblo identity.



NJEA and Yankees Radio team up to salute educators

Is there an ESL/ELL, world languages teacher or paraprofessional in your school who celebrates diversity? Or maybe a school secretary, security guard, or cafeteria worker who helps all students feel at home?

NJEA and the Yankees Radio Network Spanish broadcast have teamed up to recognize educators who make their schools and communities welcoming environments for all students, regardless of language or background. All NJEA membership categories are eligible. Thirteen winners will each receive two tickets to a Yankees home game.

To nominate an NJEA member, provide his or her name, position, and a few sentences explaining how he or she makes a difference. Also, if that person speaks Spanish (not required), please let us know.

Email entries to Dawn Hiltner at dhiltner@njea.org. Please put "NJEA/Yankees" in the subject line.

Deadline for entries is noon on June 30, 2017.

Yankees offer NJEA discounts

NJEA and the New York Yankees have teamed up to offer NJEA members the opportunity to attend Yankees home games at special discounts. To access the discounts, visit ticketmaster.com, choose the game you want to attend and enter the promo code "NJEA."

To order you'll need a Yankees Account ID. If you do not have an account, click "Create an account."

When accepting or confirming any location, please avoid using a smartphone, tablet, or mobile device unless it is connected to a printer. Once you click "print tickets," your PDFs will automatically download and will be ready for you to print.



A+ Effort

Ocean County science teacher wraps up year as Einstein Fellow with NASA



Jennifer Lane, a science teacher for 12 years at Lake Riviera Middle School in Brick, is nearing completion of her year as an Albert Einstein Distinguished Fellow. During the 11-month program, Lane and the 12 other teachers from across the nation named as fellows are working in federal agencies or in U.S. Congressional offices, applying their knowledge and classroom experiences to national education program and policy efforts. The fellowship focuses on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Lane is working in the NASA Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD).

"As an Einstein Fellow in NASA ARMD, my primary function is to provide education and outreach to agencies, schools, museums and informal educator groups in support of

STEM education with a focus on aeronautics and specifically, NASA's role in aeronautics," Lane said.

One of Lane's first assignments took her to the International Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which attracts more than 850,000 balloon enthusiasts and their families every October. Lane staffed an exhibit that highlighted the tagline, "NASA is with you when you fly," and promoted NASA's scientific balloon research and development. She demonstrated "Peeps in Peril," to facilitate public understanding of the need high-altitude pilots have for pressure suits.

"That exhibit communicated the often misunderstood or forgotten mission of the first "A" of NASA, Aeronautics," Lane said. "Going to Albuquerque allowed me to promote my personal fellowship goal of researching inquiry-based learning and STEM education through the lens of NASA Aeronautics' contributions to flight."

Although Lane's official placement is at NASA ARMD, the obligations of the Einstein Fellowship program played a large role her experience. Fellows create a professional development plan (PDP) to follow throughout the year that guides the spending of their educational and travel stipend. They are encouraged to choose activities and materials for their PDPs that will develop leadership skills and skills as a STEM educator.

Fellows attend monthly professional development opportunities designed

by program managers at federal agencies and notable organizations with strong education programs. They are sometimes asked to either give feedback to existing programs or are there to learn about an agency's mission.

Fellows learn about federal policy in education by attending briefings and hearings held by Congress. Lane attended briefings on the Every Student Succeeds Act, STEM education, school choice, makerspaces, 3-D printing, and computer science for all, among other topics in education debated at the federal level. Fellows are also invited to speak on various panels hosted by national academies and attend events in Washington hosted by education societies such as Association of Supervisors and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

"The fellowship has informed my practice as a STEM educator ten-fold," Lane said. "It has provided me opportunities to learn about inquiry-based, authentic experiences in STEM education while giving me much needed time I would not have had in the classroom."

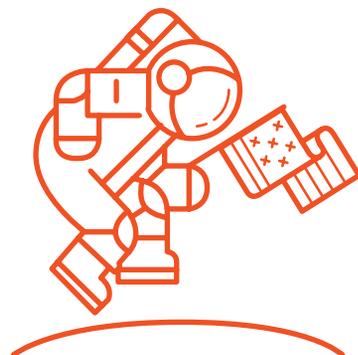
As she began her fellowship in the fall, Lane was concerned about the underrepresentation of women and minorities in STEM careers, but believes that a genuine commitment to STEM for all students, regardless of gender, ethnicity or learning style is key to expanding access to work in STEM fields.

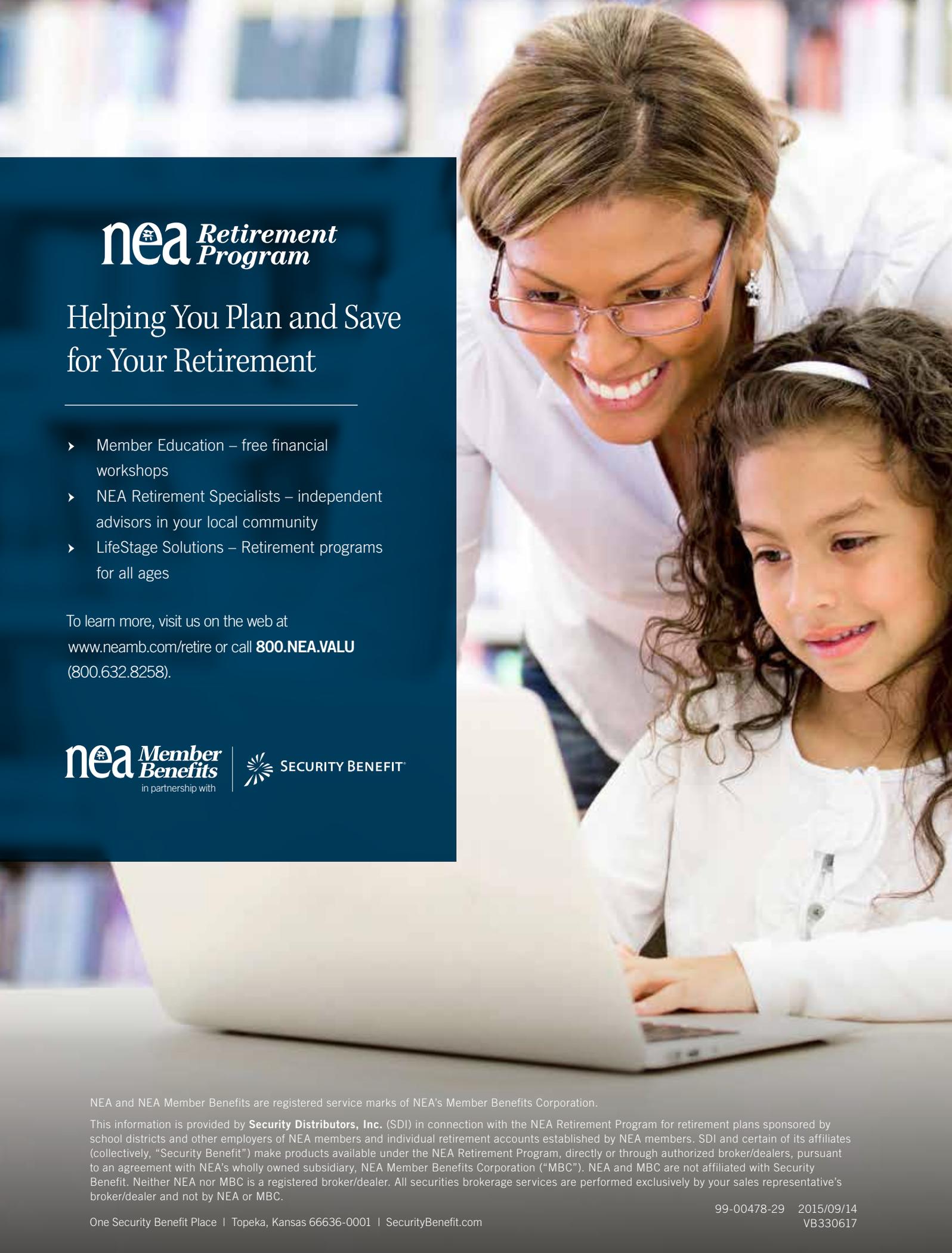
"I don't believe that STEM should be a reserved for 'gifted and talented' students, because a lot of the problems we're seeing are going to need

solutions by people from different backgrounds," Lane said. "You're starting to see it when you see those articles online about siblings who have brothers and sisters with a disability, so they redesign a shopping cart for Target. Not everyone is going to become an aerospace engineer, but we have to engage all students to solve problems using their abilities. It comes down to knowing your students, engaging them fully and letting them know what's out there."

Over the course of her fellowship, Lane was surprised at the number of agencies and nonprofits "dying to share their resources with educators," noting in particular the National Geographic Society, the National Academy of Sciences, Library of Congress, ASCD, the Smithsonian Institution, the Patent and Trademark Office, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. As Lane returns to New Jersey, she will be seeking opportunities to share the treasure of resources she has found. Look to the *NJEA Review's* Bulletin Board column in the 2017-18 school year as one place where Lane will share those resources.

In the meantime, you can keep up with Lane on Twitter at @jlaneylady. To learn about Einstein Fellowship, visit science.energy.gov/wdts/einstein. 🇺🇸





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NJEA REPORT

NJEA PAC endorses Murphy, five others for general election

On May 2, NJEA's PAC Operating Committee met and endorsed Ambassador Phil Murphy for governor in the Nov. 7 general election. The committee also endorsed Vin Gopal (D) for Senate, Asw. Joann Downey (D), and Asm. Eric Houghtaling (D) for Assembly in Legislative District 11 and Asm. Andrew Zwicker (D) and Roy Freiman (D) for Assembly in Legislative District 16 in the general election.

The committee also made endorsements in the June 6 primary election for Sen. Samuel Thompson (R), Asm. Ronald Dancer (R), and Asm. Robert Clifton (R) in Legislative District 12 and Asw. BettyLou DeCroce (R) and John Cesaro (R) in Legislative District 26. Finally, the Committee endorsed Asm. Nicholas Chiaravalloti (D) and NJEA member Kristen Zadroga-Hart (D) in Legislative District 31.

"NJEA's endorsements are well aligned with NJEA's organizational goals," said NJEA Government Relations Director Ginger Gold Schnitzer. "We have been very clear about our commitment to changing the leadership in the New Jersey State Senate, and it is critical that we help to deliver victories for candidates who share our members' values so that we can create opportunities to get better policy outcomes in the next legislative session. Finally, after eight years of Gov. Christie's failed leadership, we want to give Republicans an opportunity to re-build their relationships with our members in the post-Christie era."



Ambassador Phil Murphy addresses NJEA members at their spring luncheon on April 27.

Suit attacking teacher seniority statute dismissed

Judge Mary Jacobson dismissed a lawsuit on May 3 that sought to overturn New Jersey's seniority protections for tenured teachers. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of 12 Newark students but was funded by a special interest group, former CNN host Campbell Brown's Partnership for Educational Justice. The suit alleged that New Jersey's seniority policies could cause ineffective teachers to be retained over more effective, but less senior, teachers if Newark were to carry out staff reductions.

NJEA was not originally named in the case, but was granted the opportunity to intervene as a defendant. NJEA, along with the AFT, filed the successful motion to have the case dismissed.

In her ruling from the bench, Jacobson called the facts cited by the plaintiffs "palpably insufficient," noting that Newark has not enacted a reduction in force and has no plans to do so in the foreseeable future. Moreover, she observed, the plaintiffs could not identify any way in which they had been harmed by the statutes that they sought to have declared unconstitutional.

NJEA attorney Richard Shapiro and AFT attorney Steve Weissman argued, and Jacobson agreed, that TEACHNJ—the state's teacher tenure and evaluation law—addresses questions of teacher effectiveness and provides a pathway to ensure that effective teachers are in every classroom. If successful, the lawsuit would have gone against the legislative intention of TEACHNJ, because the Legislature explicitly chose to retain seniority rights for teachers when adopting that law in 2012.

In a statement applauding Jacobson's ruling, NJEA President Wendell Steinhauer noted that seniority policies are

in place to ensure that politics do not enter into decisions about who teaches New Jersey's children.

"We are very pleased that the judge saw through this transparent attempt to undermine New Jersey's seniority statute by making false claims and denigrating Newark's dedicated educators," said NJEA President Wendell Steinhauer. "That statute exists to protect our schools from political interference in personnel decisions. It's an important protection for students and educators alike."

"Every student deserves a great public school and our members have worked hard to create the best public schools in the nation," added NJEA Vice President Marie Blistan. "We are very happy that Judge Jacobson didn't let an out-of-state, anti-educator special interest group come to New Jersey and disrupt that work. Now we must continue to focus on getting students in every New Jersey community the resources and support they need to thrive."

NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Sean M. Spiller noted that it is the state's mismanagement, not teacher effectiveness, that is at the heart of the issue in Newark.

"The lawsuit was a malicious attempt to blame educators for problems the state has created through its mismanagement of Newark's public schools," Spiller said. "Educators, parents and students in Newark have done incredible work in very challenging circumstances for many years, and deserve credit, not blame, for their efforts."

This is not the first setback for the group that brought this lawsuit. A similar suit it filed in Minnesota was dismissed last year as well.

ICYMI Check out these stories on njea.org.

NJEA statement on International Workers' Day, May 1
Published April 28.

Union joins forces with community to protest budget cuts
Published April 28.

New Jersey's public schools named best in the nation
Published May 2.

NJEA offers amendments to State Board of Education's lead testing measures
Published May 3.

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The number of times
Chris Christie has
fully funded SFRA

The number of
times Chris Christie
has made the full
actuarially required
pension payment

The number of governors with a lower
approval rating than **Chris Christie**, who
in May had an approval rating of only 18
percent among New Jersey voters.

Source: Quinnipiac University Poll, May 4, 2017
(poll.qu.edu/new-jersey/release-detail?ReleaseID=2455).

Buena paraprofessionals win privatization vote

With less than a week's notice, approximately 175 parents, school employees and community members spoke out at the Buena Vista Township (Atlantic County) Board of Education meeting on April 4 to oppose a measure that would have fired 61 paraprofessionals and outsourced their jobs to Insight, a for-profit subcontracting company.

Insight, which is in the first year of a three-year deal to provide the district with substitute teachers and paraprofessionals, has already caused numerous problems in the district. Staff reported a convicted felon working in the district as one of Insight's hires. Another substitute intentionally threw an object in a classroom teacher's face, forcing the teacher to seek immediate medical attention because of an initial loss of vision. Still another substitute engaged in an inappropriate conversation with students.

Yet because of the district's decision to close a budget shortfall by sacrificing educational support professional (ESP) jobs, the administration was willing to subject students and staff to more subcontracted employees.

Gretta Bohren, the president of the Buena Regional Supportive Staff Association (BRSSA), believes that the district could find the money in other areas, but has chosen to target paraprofessionals because "we have become so disposable to boards of education."

That sentiment is echoed across the state as ESPs, their colleagues and community supporters fight to save essential staff positions. In Paterson, nearly 500 instructional aides' positions were in danger. In Freehold Borough, 42 paraprofessional positions were at risk. In a devastating move, Penns Grove-Carney's Point School District's board of education voted to lay off 53 classroom assistants, despite vocal opposition from parents, school employees,

NJEA members across the state, and community members. In addition to paraprofessional positions, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, and custodians are facing privatization threats in districts across the state.

"After 17 years in the district, I make \$22,250," Bohren said. "Despite the low salaries, our district is able to attract people because they provide health benefits. Most of our members are working here to get those benefits. To fire these dedicated employees, 70 percent of whom are Buena residents, is misguided and wrong, especially since we could all find ways to close the budget shortfall if we just worked together."

"If you cut my benefits, or you cut my hours, I have to walk away, even though this is a job I love and do well," said Bohren, speaking on behalf of many of the paraprofessionals.

Even in the current climate, many paraprofessionals are struggling to make ends meet and provide for their families. A loss of salary or benefits would be devastating, and it would be guaranteed if Insight took over the positions. Even if Insight hired each of the paraprofessionals back, they would not provide the same salary and benefits, threatening not only the health of the paraprofessionals and their families, but the vulnerable students with whom the aides work every day.

With a short time frame, and a potentially devastating outcome for the students, staff, and community, the members of the association immediately sprang into action, contacting parents, neighbors and township officials.

"We were so grateful for the parental support we received, even on such short notice," Bohren said. "And that's a testament not only to the excellent work that our paraprofessionals do every day, and the relationships they have built, but also the hard work they did to make sure

that our community was aware of what was happening in our schools."

The subsequent outpouring of support surprised the administration and the board, many of whom were not even informed of the privatization vote ahead of time. Several members of the township committee spoke on behalf of the paraprofessionals and passed a resolution calling on the board to "develop a reasonable plan to reduce the costs within the budget without subcontracting, reducing or eliminating classroom assistants or aides."

Bohren and her members were very appreciative of that resolution and the support of Mayor Chuck Chiarello, Deputy Mayor Theresa Kelly, Councilman Steve Martinelli and others.

"The board doesn't have to listen to the township committee, but it really empowered our members to have the committee's support," Bohren said.

At the board meeting, the board only had to allow 30 minutes for discussion and five minutes per person to speak, but it waived that and listened to parents and community members for an hour and 45 minutes, with no time limit on individual speakers.

One of the speakers was the student representative to the board who described the dubious advice one Insight substitute gave her. "Don't follow your dreams, follow the big money," the student recounted.

Despite the successful outcome, the members of the BRSSA remain vigilant, as do parents and community members. Over the past several years, the Buena Regional School District has privatized transportation and cafeteria services, an action that no one is happy about.

"Parents are saying that they are not missing another board meeting," Bohren said. "They want to ensure that they know what's going on here in the district."

With a short time frame, and a potentially devastating outcome for the students, staff, and community, the members of the association immediately sprang into action, contacting parents, neighbors and township officials.



Gretta Bohren is the president of the Buena Regional Supportive Staff Association.

Blistan, Spiller and Beatty prepare to take the reins

NJEA members have elected Marie Blistan as NJEA president, Sean M. Spiller as NJEA vice president and Steve Beatty as NJEA secretary-treasurer. NJEA officers are elected by a vote of the entire membership and serve a maximum of two consecutive two-year terms in each office. Their terms will begin Sept. 1, 2017.

Marie Blistan, a special education teacher from Washington Township in Gloucester County, currently serves as NJEA's vice president, a position she has held since 2013 following four years as secretary-treasurer. Before her election to NJEA office in 2009, Blistan served as president of the Gloucester County Education Association and held a number of offices in the Washington Township Education Association including, among many other positions, executive vice president and grievance chair. Prior to teaching in Washington Township, Blistan was a teacher in Somerdale, where she served as president of the Somerdale Education Association.

"I look forward to working with Sean and Steve as we face current and future challenges," Blistan said. "We will fight to see Chapter 78 repealed, make sure our members' pensions and retirement health benefits are secure, protect collective bargaining, end privatization, demand full funding of our public schools and community colleges, and fight for social justice for families in the communities we serve."

Blistan also plans to continue elevating the work of NJEA members.

"The vilification, undermining, and underfunding of teachers and educational support professionals by political leaders and corporate 'reformers' who seek only to profit from public schools must end," Blistan said. "Our members—from preservice through retired—must be respected as the experts in what it

takes to provide a first-class education to all of the children in New Jersey."

Blistan will succeed Wendell Steinhauer, whose term expires on Aug. 31.

Spiller elected vice president

Sean M. Spiller, a science teacher at Wayne Valley High School in Passaic County, will be NJEA's next vice president, following four years as secretary-treasurer. Before his election to NJEA office in 2013, the former president of the Wayne Education Association held a number of other leadership roles in NJEA, including serving on the Delegate Assembly, NJEA's policy-making body. Spiller is also a councilman in Montclair.

"I am honored to serve as NJEA's next vice president and will fight for our members, our profession, our students, and the values we share," Spiller said. "Together, we will face our challenges and return to a place where we are respected for the work we do and appreciated for the difference we make in the lives of our kids."

Beatty elected secretary-treasurer

Steven Beatty, a social studies teacher at Bridgewater-Raritan High School in Somerset County, is the newest addition to the NJEA leadership team. Beatty is currently the president of the Somerset County and the Bridgewater-Raritan education associations, and holds a number of other leadership roles in NJEA, including serving as chair of the Government Relations Committee and on the Delegate Assembly.

"I'm humbled and excited to have been elected as NJEA secretary-treasurer and to have the opportunity to work with Marie and Sean on behalf of all of our members," Beatty said. "Thank you, NJEA. Time to get to work!"



NJEA President-elect Marie Blistan



NJEA Vice President-elect Sean M. Spiller



NJEA Secretary-Treasurer-elect Steve Beatty

NJEA celebrates NJ's All-State Academic Team, county colleges

On May 4, NJEA President Wendell Steinhauer joined students, families, faculty and administrators to celebrate the achievements of 39 community college students at the 23rd annual Phi Theta Kappa Day.

NJEA is one of the primary sponsors of the event and Steinhauer spoke about the value of New Jersey's exceptional county college system and the impact community colleges have on students and their families and communities.

"NJEA is proud to sponsor this event and to honor the achievements of these students," Steinhauer said. "They are not only fine examples of the quality of education that our higher education members provide, but also the quality of our pre-K-12th grade public education system."

Steinhauer also referenced the recent graduation of his daughter from Burlington County College.

"We know firsthand the kind of resources and support that our community colleges can provide

to students and their families, and the commitment they make to help students achieve their goals," Steinhauer said.

"Each year, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC) invites New Jersey's top community college students and their families to celebrate their outstanding academic achievements and exceptional service to their communities as members of Phi Theta Kappa at their local community colleges," said NJCCC President Dr. Lawrence Nespoli. "The event, sponsored by Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for community colleges, the Coca-Cola Foundation, and NJEA, provides deserving community college students statewide recognition by policymakers and legislators."

To read more about the honorees visit bit.ly/ptkhonorees.



NJEA President Wendell Steinhauer and Mercer County College student Jasmina Biller, who hopes to become a world languages teacher.

NJEA members advocate for student journalism bill in Legislature

After years of advocacy, the New Voices of New Jersey bill, A-4028 and S-2506, is finally gaining some momentum in the Legislature. Perhaps it's in response to the national debate over the responsibilities and limitations of journalism, but it's certainly because of the activism of people like Hunterdon Central Education Association member Tom McHale and retired Bergenfield Education Association member John Tagliareni.

Both are members of the Garden State Press Association and veteran educators and journalism advisors. McHale has been teaching for 19 years; Tagliareni retired after 39 years.

According to Tagliareni, "this bill will re-establish the First Amendment rights of student journalists under the Tinker standard [which holds that speech is protected unless it is illegal or may cause a material disruption to the education process]. The bill also protects journalism teachers and advisers in public high schools and institutions of higher learning from retribution for supporting their students."

Protecting student journalists' First Amendment rights and protecting teachers and advisers from retribution for support-

ing their students is important for many reasons.

"When students are trusted, guided and supported to make these decisions, they are able to develop into the ethical citizens our country needs," McHale says. "When they are not, they tend toward self-censorship and produce lifeless publications."

But if the student publications are lifeless, students usually turn to social media to communicate with their peers. At a time when nearly every student carries a smartphone and is able to stream live video, a robust journalism training program teaches students responsibility and ethics.

"Isn't it better for kids to be trained in a journalism program with a qualified advisor?" Tagliareni asks. "Especially since those advisors educate students about the law and journalism."

"This bill doesn't change the limits and restrictions on students," Tagliareni adds. "Students can't do anything libelous or disruptive to the school day. They can't invade someone's privacy or do anything that violates the school policy."

The bills are part of the New Voices network, which is supporting campaigns in 16 other states. Three states, North Da-

kota, Maryland, and Illinois, have recently enacted this.

Since the New Jersey bill was originally introduced two years ago, it has received the support of the editorial boards of the Times of Trenton and Gannet Newspapers, and the Student Press Law Center.

For Tagliareni, McHale and other members of the Garden State Press Association, the effort to pass this bill will be worth it if it helps to reinvigorate student journalism and protect the teachers and advisers who guide them.

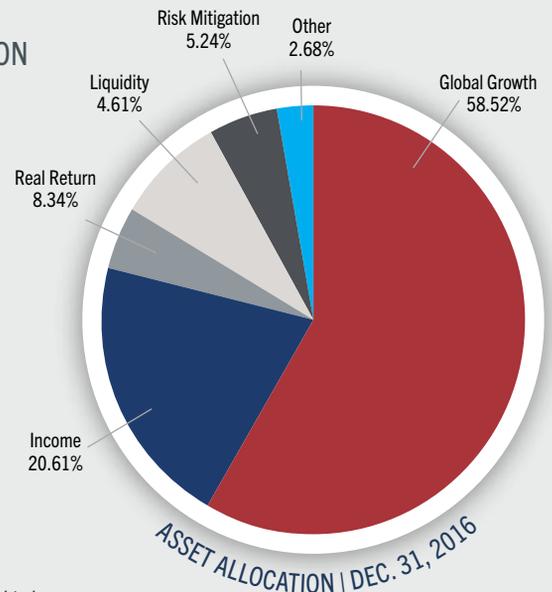
"Seeing students get excited over a story they are reporting on that they know matters to their audience is one of the highlights of my career," McHale said. "This bill ensures that all New Jersey public school students will be able to do that in a responsible and ethical way."

S-2506 is sponsored by Sens. Diane Allen, R-Burlington, and Nia Gill, D-Essex. A-4028 is sponsored by Asw. Gail Phoebus, R-Sussex, and Asm. Troy Singleton, D-Burlington.

PENSION UPDATE TOTAL PENSION FUND: \$71.16 BILLION

The totals below reflect market values as of Dec. 31, 2016, and for comparison, Oct. 31, 2016. The figures, which are rounded, may not reflect the current market values of some alternative investments through the period noted, because of lags in reporting under industry standards.

	Dec. 31, 2016		Oct. 31, 2016	
	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation
Global Growth	\$41.64	58.52%	\$40.80	56.90%
Income	\$14.66	20.61%	\$14.83	20.68%
Real Return	\$5.94	8.34%	\$5.70	7.95%
Liquidity	\$3.28	4.61%	\$4.97	6.93%
Risk Mitigation/Capital Preservation	\$3.73	5.24%	\$3.53	4.92%
Other	\$1.91	2.68%	\$1.87	2.61%
Total	\$71.16	100%	\$71.71	100%



All reports and financial statements are posted on the Division of Investments' website at www.nj.gov/treasury/doinvest/index.shtml.

Pride-supported prom fashion show puts Burlington County Special Services students in the spotlight

The catwalk glowed, the music pounded, and 19 students strutted their stuff in prom finery to the applause, gasps and cheers of their families and friends in the Burlington County Special Services multipurpose room. The district's first prom fashion show gave the students the opportunity to express themselves through fashion, and show off the runway moves they'd perfected with the help of family and staff.

"We hold a prom every year, but this year we wanted to add an event that expands the experience and gets the parents involved," said event organizer Becky Polito. "We were fortunate to get donations from a number of organizations, so the students really got an opportunity to select clothes that reflected their personalities."

David's Bridal, Drexel University's Delta Zeta sorority, and Macy's donated gowns and formal wear. Flowers and other materials were provided by Northern Burlington School District families and Vintage Oceans – Wedding & Event Flowers. The Burlington County Special Services Education Association sponsored the event and donated food and drinks through an NJEA Pride in Public Education grant.

"For a long time, we've had prom dresses and formal wear donated so our students can easily participate in the prom," Burlington County Special Services Education Association (BCSSEA) President Christine

Hewitt said. "This year, we thought a prom fashion show would be a great Pride event that would build on that while getting the parents and community involved."

None of the students pay for their prom fashions so that every student can participate regardless of his or her income level. The experience of selecting and modeling the clothes is unique for many of them. One 16-year old girl said she had never worn a dress before, let alone a formal gown.

The students who participated in the prom fashion show come from each of the school's programs—autistic, multiple disability, and behavioral.

Students are told that they can wear comfortable shoes, but some selected high heels for their turn on the runway.

Teaghan, 17, was an enthusiastic participant. She modeled two dresses to a crowd that included her mother, a retired teacher from Florence Township, and aunt, a retired teacher from Lawrence Township.

"I've always loved fashion," Teaghan said. "When I was younger, I wanted to learn to be a designer."

Teaghan's dress selections were influenced by her love of "things that sparkle."

To the surprise of staff, many more boys than girls wanted to participate in the fashion show, so each girl was paired to walk the runway with at least two boys.

Ean, 18, was one of the many boys who

participated. "I wanted to be part of the group and be confident," he said. "I love to dress up." His perfectly polished shoes were evidence of that, as was a staff member's testimonial that Ean is fashionably dressed every day. He practiced his catwalk moves with his mother, from his walk to his turns, and some cover model-worthy poses.

Kyshawna, 18, changed out of her formal gown but kept a floral crown in her hair for the after-party. "I like to model and take pictures and have a good time," she said, in between posing for selfies with her friends.

Despite her comfort in front of the camera, she admitted to some apprehension. "I was nervous until I walked down the runway with my best friend."

The BCSSEA holds a variety of Pride-funded events throughout the year.

"These events are critical for us to connect the community with the schools and show the great things our students are achieving," said Pat Niehaus, BCSSEA Pride chair and the 2016 NJEA ESP of the Year. "We rely on the support of our freeholders to ensure we have the resources necessary to provide our students with the opportunities they need, and we need the communities we serve to see the value of what we provide. Getting more people involved and interacting with our students doesn't just strengthen our school and benefit our students, it strengthens our communities."



Burlington County Special Services students and staff celebrate a successful prom fashion show. At left in light blue blouse is 2016 Educational Support Professional of the Year Patricia Niehaus.

NJEA honors social justice advocacy

At the annual NJEA Minority Leadership and Recruitment Conference, NJEA honored two members for outstanding advocacy in the cause of social justice. Through the NJEA Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee, the association recognized Shirley Santos, a first grade bilingual teacher at Gloria M. Sabater Elementary School in Vineland. Through the NJEA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee, the association recognized Christopher Cannella, a drama teacher at Cedar Grove High School and the president of the Cedar Grove Education Association.

Santos receives Image Award

Santos received the NJEA Ethnic Minority Affairs and Leadership Image Award for her advocacy for the inclusion of ethnic-minority members in political action and leadership as well as for an extensive record of service in the communities of Cumberland County. In accepting the award, Santos noted that her personal struggle with identity became the foundation for her work. Born in the continental United States, Santos was raised in Puerto Rico. She said that her fair skin often led to surprised reactions.

“While living in the United States, I was made to feel that I acted too ‘Puerto Rican’ to be considered American, and while living in Puerto Rico I looked too ‘American’ to be considered Puerto Rican,” Santos recalled. “In other words, I was never enough of one or the other.”

Santos says that as a bilingual teacher for 26 years, it has become her mission to help her students navigate the “beautiful complicated world” of growing up bilingual and bicultural.

She created LETS (Learning English Together Successfully) and wrote a monthly column for the Vineland Daily Journal’s “Nuestra Comunidad” edition. She also hosted a weekly show on Radio 1270AM that focused on community issues. While serving on the board of

trustees for the Vineland Public Library, she helped with the translation of materials and the expansion of Spanish language story times for children ages 1 to 5. Santos has founded six college scholarship funds that have awarded ethnic-minority students a total of \$50,000.

In addition, Santos joined the Vineland Boys & Girls Club Board of Trustees in 2010 and has served as its president since 2013. In 2016, the nonprofit opened the first teen youth center in Cumberland County.

In her role as Vineland Education Association legislative contact, she strongly advocated for the support of ethnic-minority candidates who reflected the diversity of the school district. She served on the NJEA Congressional Contact Committee for two years and since 2008 has served on the NEA Activities Committee.

“Over the years and with the help of many local organizations, I’ve been fortunate to be able to work on increasing minority students’ access to a college degree, scholarships, and affordable after school programs that focus on healthy lifestyles, academic success and good character and citizenship,” Santos said. “Our most recent effort is the establishment of the Vineland Bridges Immigrant Rights Committee, where we are working to address the incredibly difficult issues of deportation that our students and families are facing today.”

Cannella receives Equality Champion Award

In addition to his work as a drama teacher and in his leadership in the association at the local and county levels, Cannella was recognized with the NJEA Equality Champion Award for his advocacy to ensure equal rights for all students, including for LGBTQ+ youth.

Cannella credits his impulse for advocacy to the example provided by his parents.

“I fight because my parents taught me to,” Cannella said. “My father was a laborer in New York City and a union delegate with the Laborers International Union of North

America for over 50 years. Not only did he provide for his family—including my eight siblings—but he understood the power that unions have to help create a thriving middle class. My mother was passionate, a fighter, dealing with many of life’s hardships and still managing to enjoy it to the fullest.”

In 2012, Cannella staged *The Laramie Project* with his drama students. His cast met with members of the original *Laramie Project* cast and took part in an acting workshop with cast member Barbara Pitts. In addition to the production, the cast held discussions with students and community members discussing the lessons learned from Matthew Shepard’s story.

With the Cedar Grove High School student government organization, Cannella encouraged participation in AIDS Walk New York and with the school’s Gender Sexuality Alliance, he supported a safe space for LGBTQ+ students.

Drawing on his personal experiences and his work at Cedar Grove High School, Cannella has made presentations on safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students in his district and neighboring communities. He has also been named co-chair of the Essex County Education Association LGBTQ+ Committee, which will provide professional development for colleagues across the county.

In Cedar Grove, Cannella has worked with administration to make sure that the district’s transgender policy has the best interests of students in mind. In addition, he has worked to make sure that as the district enforces its policies on harassment, intimidation and bullying that a student’s sexual orientation or gender identity is not revealed against the student’s wishes.

“Each and every student deserves an equal education free from fear and repression and an opportunity to have the same success that I have had,” Cannella said.

NJEA honored social justice advocates at the 2017 MLR Conference. From left: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee Chair Tom Tamburello, Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee Chair Charisse Parker, Equality Champion awardee Christopher Cannella, Image Award winner Shirley Santos, and NJEA President Wendell Steinhauer.



ESSA provides opportunity for local stakeholder input

On April 3, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) released its highly anticipated final proposal for implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA replaces the discredited No Child Left Behind Act and provides an unprecedented opportunity to rethink how schools are measured and what students learn. ESSA also requires local stakeholder engagement at the community level with parents, NJEA members, retirees and others to shape local schools.

With its emphasis on local stakeholder engagement, ESSA may reflect a turning point for bottom-up change in our public schools. Ideas long neglected at the state level may now be pursued locally, with buy-in from stakeholders across the community. Stakeholder engagement provides a chance for NJEA members to build a public school system at the local level that works best for students.

While opportunities abound at the local level, the state plan itself takes some advantage of newfound flexibility on issues such as graduation rates, but ultimately keeps PARCC as the single most important accountability measure. In some cases, PARCC scores would account for as much as 85 percent of how a public school is measured.

NJEA members spoke strongly against the over-reliance on testing in multiple meetings across the state with the department. Instead, NJEA members called for a true system of multiple measures—such as a student success index—that would change the focus to what really works to improve student development. A proposed student success index would include factors such as adequate support, materials and resources.

While the NJDOE added a new measure—student chronic absenteeism—as part of ESSA accountability, this is a far cry from a true system of multiple measures of success. The NJDOE committed in the state plan to develop additional measures in the coming school year that could eventually diminish the focus on standardized testing. The work on experimenting with new and innovative ways of measuring the success of schools could begin on the local level this year.

NJEA members should consider joining a local ESSA Stakeholder Team to help shape the direction of public education in New Jersey in light of the new federal law. Reach out to your local president to volunteer. NJREA members should send their contact information to Sean Hadley shadley@njea.org.



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Freehold Township EA travels the World Café

The Freehold Township Education Association (FTEA) journeyed to iPlay America on April 5 to join community and board of education members for a “World Café” event.

Discussing collective hopes for Freehold Township students, identifying if those hopes are currently being realized by the district, and determining what may be missing for students, were the focal points of the evening.

The gathering of 100 participants was hosted by FTEA President Tracie Yostpille and NJEA staff. Yostpille was inspired to hold the event after district administration moved to put kindergarten through eighth-grade students into personalized learning plans.

The new direction in student instruction is a collective concern for the school community, which has an enduring history of positive communication and respect between parents and association members.

“We decided to hold this event to continue the excellent communication between the EA and the community,” said Yostpille. “We hold the education of Freehold Township students as a common interest. Parents are very pleased with the work that we do and we appreciate their longstanding support. Together, we are an unstoppable force in advocating for public education.”

Ensuring that dialogue continues is also a goal of parent representative Kerry Vendittoli, president of the special education group Parents Advisory Council for Excellence (PACE).

Vendittoli is worried that the recent rapid-fire deployment of technology by the district will present challenges for students and staff. This concern was echoed by many of the participants throughout the evening and surfaced as the most prominent area in need of further investigation.

Assemblywoman Joann Downey, who represents Legislative District 11, is a parent in the district.

“I think it’s wonderful to get parents involved at all levels of the educational process so it’s not just one perspective,” said Downey. “It develops and strength-

ens the unique bond we have in Freehold Township. I am getting ideas about what we should be talking about and how we can best help our schools.”

The World Café method is an interactive means of creating a safe space for group dialogue. It promotes the investigation and collection of thoughts and potential actions. Participants’ viewpoints are equally weighed.

Café discussion questions are tailored to the specific purpose of the gathering and presented to small table groups of four or five people. The information from each question’s discussion period is “harvested,” then participants reconfigure into new small groups.

NJEA associate directors of Professional Development Rich Wilson and Mike Ritzius are experienced at hosting world cafés. They have logged many hours of training and facilitation of this method. Both note that they learn something new each time they host cafés with members.

Ritzius and Wilson encouraged everyone to broaden their sense of what the school district is and what it can be. Participants were directed to speak their minds and with their hearts. Conversation remained slow and reflective to allow time for thought and the connection of ideas.

The café method resonated with participants. Three Freehold school board members embraced the process with the group. The association was later invited to present the café harvest at a board of education meeting.

FTEA plans to hold a follow-up “Open Space” meeting. These are the first of many discussions that the local plans to host as it continues to partner with the community to ensure the stability of the school district.

World Café and Open Space are methods used in an approach known as the Art of Hosting Conversations that Matter. To learn more about these meeting styles and how they can stimulate dialogue in your district visit www.artofhosting.org.



Hosted by Freehold Township EA, the school district community came together to discuss their hopes for Freehold Township students.

Top: (l-r) Rebecca Todd, Shannon Murphy, and Kim Mulligan.

Middle: (l-r) Linda Altini, Danielle Celano, and Jessica Kolodziej.

Bottom: (l-r) FTEA President Tracie Yostpille and Vicky Neron.

Higher Education Student Assistance Authority approves changes to benefit borrowers

Two new proposals have been approved by the state Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) on the heels of media investigations critical of the authority's rules and collection practices.

The primary target of those investigations was HESAA's collections practices when a borrower dies or becomes permanently disabled. An investigation by ProPublica and The New York Times found that "New Jersey's student loan agency aggressively sought repayment of loans with already onerous terms, even after some of the recipients had died. The efforts had traumatized grieving families, and forced some into financial ruin."

In December, Gov. Chris Christie signed legislation ending the most criticized practices. In April, the HESAA board approved resolutions to forgive New Jersey College Loans to Assist State Students (NJCLASS) loan obligations if a student dies or

becomes permanently disabled, and to defer payments if the borrower is temporarily disabled.

The authority also approved a new program to assist students with financial hardships. The Repayment Assistance Program (RAP) will set the monthly repayment amounts at 10 percent of the borrower's disposable income and would apply all payments to the principal. HESAA would cover the interest for a maximum of two years. After the RAP period ends, the monthly payments would be recalculated based on the remaining term and the principal balance. The goal is to lower the amount owed each month.

However, this program applies only to NJCLASS borrowers starting with the 2017-18 school year.

Several other bills intended to address student loan debt continue to make their way through the legislature.

Voters show continued support for public schools

Voters went to the polls on April 25 and passed school budgets in 85 percent of the school districts where elections took place. That's great news for the handful of districts in New Jersey that have chosen not to move elections to November. In those 13 communities, residents continue to vote on school district budgets.

Initial reports show that budgets passed in 11 of the 13 districts. All results are preliminary and will not become official until all mail-in ballots are in and the elections have been certified by county clerks. The process could take up to a month, and as of press time, had yet to be completed.

Additionally, thanks to the hard work of both retired and active members, board candidates endorsed by the Education Association of Passaic and supported by NJEA were successfully elected in Passaic City.

The remaining New Jersey school districts will hold their school elections—including board candidates—in November, but many will not put their budgets out to the voters. Under the 2011 law allowing school boards to move their elections from April to November, the budget vote requirement was eliminated—as long as the budget remains under the statutory two percent revenue cap. Any portion of a school budget proposal that exceeds the cap must be put on the November ballot as a separate question. 



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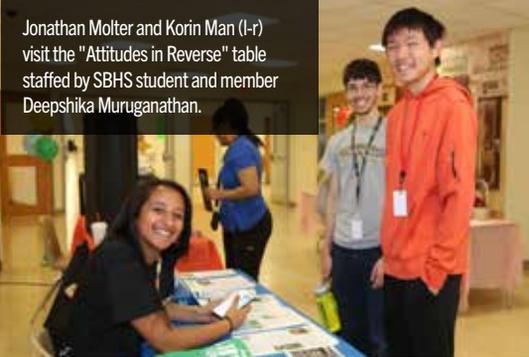


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School-based mental health wellness fair makes resources accessible to students

By Meryl Orlando

*I'm in my darkened room.
I don't want the light on.
I can't explain this awful feeling.
Why do I feel this way?
What's wrong with me?
I wonder if anyone knows how I feel.
This can't be normal.
I don't want to tell anyone how I feel.
I don't want to tell anyone at school.
I don't want to walk into someone's office and say that I need help.
I don't want people to think that I'm weird or that something is wrong with me.*



Jonathan Molter and Korin Man (l-r) visit the "Attitudes in Reverse" table staffed by SBHS student and member Deepshika Muruganathan.



Students try their hands at creating stress-reducing Zentangle designs.

Guidance counselor and club advisor Anastasia Marcella and intern Jessica Molnar (seated l-r) are joined by Hi-Tops students Kariman Shama and Yahzini Shanmugan (standing l-r) at the GSA and Hi-Tops table.



Students sample aromatherapy oils with Jason Wendroff-Rawnicki of the Shine Yoga Center.



Ritika Jain and Allie Hardeo (l-r) assist as Samantha Lane tries out Chartwells' smoothie-making bicycle at the Sweet and Savory club table.

Mental illness still carries a stigma, and, sadly, the issues are more pervasive than ever. Whether it's the isolation of using social media, increasing academic pressure and expectations, or difficulty navigating relationships, our students are suffering. Wouldn't it be great to finally admit our challenges and say out loud that we are human, that we all have issues, that it's OK to feel what we are feeling, and that it's OK to be who we are right now?

Fortunately, South Brunswick High School seems to be thinking along the same lines. In August 2015, the high school unveiled the district's "Dashboard Goals." Four goals were selected for the high school: self-regulation, school climate, physical wellness and mental health wellness. I immediately took note of the mental health wellness goal and thought about the challenges in meeting it.

Having dealt with some mental health issues in my own life, and knowing others in similar situations, I knew that people are sometimes reluctant to seek help. Despite the fact that we have wonderful services at South Brunswick High School, I knew that there had to be students who wouldn't knock on the door of a student assistance counselor or who wouldn't make an appointment with their guidance counselor to seek help.

What if the student who felt alone and "weird" was able to meet professionals from throughout the mental health field in a casual and fun environment? What if it was all part of an upbeat, informative, and well-attended student event where everyone felt comfortable learning, participating and starting important conversations?

The South Brunswick High School Mental Health Wellness Fair—which we've now held two years in a row—was born out of that dream. If we could make the event festive, fun and informative, I believed all students would want to take part. Those who really needed help could begin the conversation with representatives from treatment and recovery groups and still be among those who would be perusing the tables discovering ways to de-stress.

The need for this type of event is validated by the statistics. In 2015, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, an estimated three million adolescents in the U.S. aged 12 to 17 had at least one major depressive episode within the year—that's 12.5 percent of the U.S. population in that age group.

According to *TeenHelp.com*, untreated depression is the number one cause of suicide and the third leading cause of death among teenagers. Ninety percent of suicide victims suffer from a mental illness, and suf-

fering from depression can make a teenager as much as 12 times more likely to attempt suicide. Less than 33 percent of teens with depression get help, yet 80 percent of teens with depression can be successfully treated.

Getting started and keeping it going

I spoke to one of our vice principals, April Gonzalez, and the supervisor of Student Assistance and Wellness, Amy Finkelstein, who were both heading up the Mental Health Wellness subcommittee. In that first year, school librarian Shannon Kish expressed interest in working on the Fair Committee. We worked together and were assisted by several members of the Guidance Department.

With a successful inaugural fair under our belt and a commitment to make this a yearly event, I spoke with April Gonzalez in the summer of 2016 to get administrative approval and to explore dates for this year's fair in the spring. We put it on the calendar and began planning.

We reached out to local treatment centers, followed up on referrals from our nurses and student assistance counselors, and made calls and sent emails to providers we found in local and reputable wellness publications.

We reached out to the private sector to secure funds instead of dipping into our own pockets—as was the case last year—to fund the event. One of our team members reached out to private sponsors and was able to secure some funds in the form of cash, gift cards and raffle prizes.

The theme for this year's fair, "Stop the Stigma...Stamp out the Stress," was meant to address the heavy-duty mental health issues that many students face, as well as to introduce them to new—and fun—methods for reducing the stress in their lives. We bought brightly colored tablecloths and blew up polka dot balloons. We included music and smoothie-making. We had a coloring table, a positive thoughts table, a crocheting table, yoga table and a Zentangle table. Zentangle is a relaxing way to create beautiful images by drawing structured patterns. It increases focus and creativity, provides artistic satisfaction along with an increased sense of personal well-being.

At a craft store, I found a set of coloring books that I just loved. In the books, author Jess Volinski extended an invitation to her fans to get in touch with her to share their beautiful work. I emailed her to tell her what we were doing and to ask permission to reproduce her pages. She got right back to me, thrilled that we were going to introduce her work to help students de-stress. She told me that she wanted to contribute some of her books to us. We used them, along with

Students learn how to create stress balls using bread dough and balloons from Isha Patel and Avantika Thakur (l-r).

colored pencils that I purchased with a donated gift card from Target, as raffle prizes.

The goal of making the fair as comprehensive as possible guided who we contacted and the choices we made. We called presenters who attended last year and added additional presenters, mostly through referrals. We anticipate adding even more presenters next year. We sought the participation of related student groups such as HiTops and the Gay Straight Alliance as well as the Sweet and Savory Club, which created stress-reducing smoothies using a bicycle lent to us by Chartwell's Dining Services. Pedaling the stationary bike rotates the blades on a smoothie blender.

Increasing student foot traffic

After considering several locations in the school building, we decided to hold the fair in the alcove outside our cafeteria. Students could finish their lunches and then step out of their respective cafeterias into the fair area. It proved to be the perfect spot.

We created a detailed floor plan that allowed for smooth traffic flow, took into account our presenters' electrical and technological needs, and encouraged students to visit presenters from one end of the fair to the other. We worked with the custodial staff to secure additional tables and to assist in set-up.

Our school runs on block scheduling so we asked presenters to arrive at 8:30 a.m. for set-up, which is one half hour prior to our second block. Our physical education supervisor and his department supported us in sending the gym and health classes to the fair beginning second block. Our Help and Access teachers and various other teachers who were able to spare the block brought their classes to the fair as well.

All three lunches were extremely well-attended. Last year, we had about 400 students attend the fair. This year, we estimate that almost 600 attended.

Teamwork makes a difference

To plan and execute the fair, we had a great team that included guidance counselors, nurses, and teachers. Aaron Millman, a student assistance wellness counselor with whom I worked closely, brought a wealth of information and contacts to the table. This fair required the cooperation and shared intent of many other players as well, including food service staff, administrators, custodians, and other support staff.

This year, we added student volunteer participation. We had a student volunteer coordinator and held student interest orientation sessions.

Students staffed areas such as the stress ball table, the positive thoughts table and the coloring table. Students also baked treats and sold them as a fundraiser to support the fair. They made posters and signs, and worked with the Sweet and Savory Club to prepare many pounds of bread dough for the stress ball table. Students also acted in a short promotional video, which two members of our committee created for our school's television network to broadcast.

Publicizing the fair

In the weeks leading up to the fair we worked to generate publicity. We reached out to South Brunswick's Community Resource Team, which includes the police department, the public health department, senior services, the mayor's office, local clergy, and more. We wanted to let them know about the good work that we were doing to address mental health





If you see the need for students in your school to receive help in the area of mental health, consider an activity such as a mental health fair. Your efforts will go far toward making the area of mental health as mainstream as physical health.

in our schools and invited them to attend. A message about the event was also shared in a South Brunswick High School parent newsletter.

Counselors from our elementary and middle schools were invited to join us, to make connections with our presenters and learn more about the mental health needs at the high school level. Several of them were excited to make stress balls, talk about nutrition and come away with new resources for the K-8 level.

The staff of our Bridge Center program (a school-based mental health program staffed by Rutgers clinicians) promoted excitement for the event by creating posters related to mental health facts and reducing stigma.

A librarian from the public library set up a table with books related to mental health as well as bookmarks with resources, apps and websites. She shared upcoming library programs that promote creativity, academic support and a safe space after school.

Planning for future fairs

In an effort to assess the value of the fair, we solicited feedback from the presenters.

"I had a student come up during the fair and ask about our services," said Ben Brisson, the director of the Bridge Center. "She said that she was new to the district, and had difficulty connecting with her counselor and case manager. She told me that she was familiar with the Bridge program, but did not know where we were located. She explained that she was looking for some support in the school when she was struggling. I feel as though if we had not had that table, we may not have made that connection."

"The comments we heard from students were positive," another presenter said. "Some students liked hearing about therapy and others were interested in working in mental health in the future."

One treatment program presenter noted that a student who appeared isolated came back a number of times just to talk. The same presenter mentioned another student who approached her saying, "I think I need that program—my family says I'm crazy."

A few presenters mentioned that anxiety was a concern many students expressed.

Final thoughts

If you think you would like to have a mental health fair in your school, following are some tips I've learned and want to share.

People are happy to be a part of something so worthwhile. Collect and work with a committed team. Reach out to the people in your community. "Sharing the wealth" will make

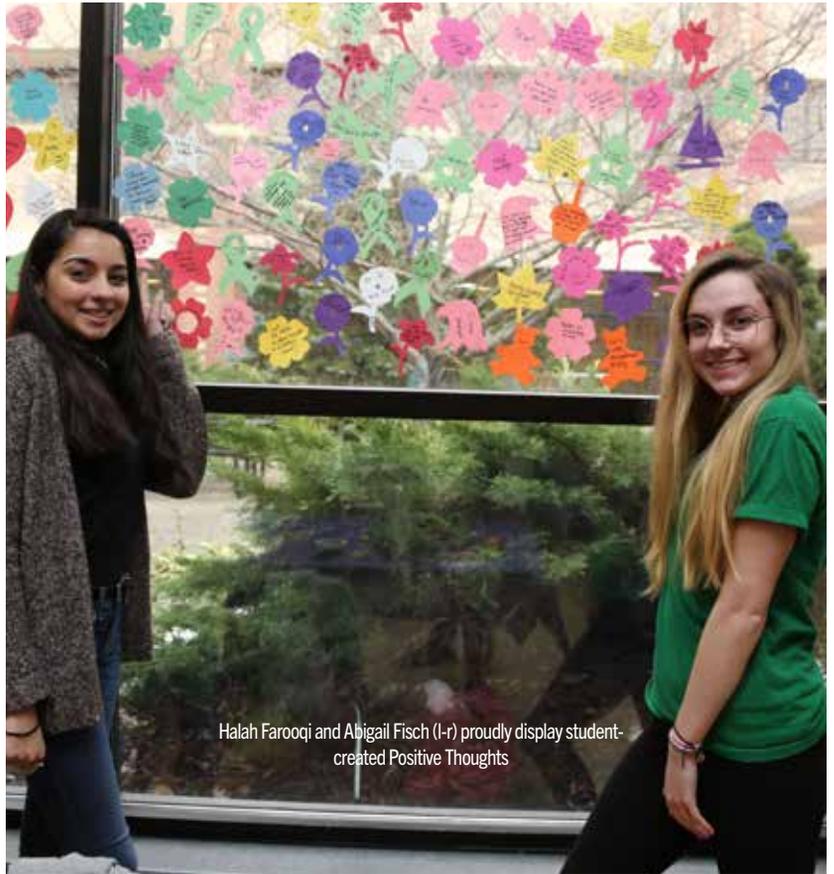
everyone's role manageable.

Make sure that you have enough materials for the hundreds of stress balls that students will want to create. Bread dough or Play-Doh and balloons are all that you need to make these simple but fun de-stressors. We ran out of supplies within an hour and had to make more bread dough and shop for more balloons in the middle of the fair!

Don't be afraid to reach out to area businesses to support your fair. We used a raffle as a way to encourage visits to various presenters. Each student received an activity card to be stamped by the presenters. Students could turn the card in to win prizes. We were fortunate to receive support for those prizes and other fair expenses from Princeton Fitness and Wellness, Target, Whole Foods, Best Buy, AMC Theatres, Shine Yoga Center, Conte's Pizza, JaZams, and Lindt Chocolate.

Most important, if you see the need for students in your school to receive help in the area of mental health, consider an activity such as a mental health fair. Your efforts will go far toward making the area of mental health as mainstream as physical health. The many positive comments that you'll hear and receive as well as the enthusiasm that will be generated from the fair will make all of your time and effort well worth it. 🏠

Meryl Orlando is a Family and Consumer Sciences teacher at South Brunswick High School. She would be delighted to serve as a resource to NJEA members who are considering a similar fair in their schools. She can be reached at Meryl.Orlando@sbschools.org.



Halah Farooqi and Abigail Fisch (l-r) proudly display student-created Positive Thoughts

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Patients appreciate more time with doctors in new kind of medical practice

SEHBP pilots Direct Primary Care Medical Home program

By Sarah Geiger, NJEA staff



Personal experiences with physicians are not highly rated in New Jersey and around the country. Too often, patients are spending more time in waiting rooms than with their doctors. After being rushed through an appointment, patients are often left with more questions than answers about their health. Adding insult to injury, insurance premiums and other out-of-pocket costs continue to rise each year. Navigating the maze of the current health care delivery system is neither as easy nor as pleasant as it should be.

NJEA members have been vocal about what changes they would like to see in their health care and how the patient experience can be improved. This feedback was received in focus groups with members. Three areas of concern were consistently heard. Members want:

- Easier access to a physician.
- More time with a physician.
- Lower out-of-pocket costs.

In response, NJEA and other public sector unions in New Jersey launched an initiative to tackle all of these issues, and more. Last year, the School Employees Health Benefits Program (SEHBP), through which about half of the school districts in New Jersey provide health benefits, approved a pilot program to enhance primary care at no additional cost. This was the Direct Primary Care Medical Home (DPCMH) pilot program. The program officially began enrolling members in January.

The DPCMH model restores a cherished feature of American health care that has all but disappeared over recent decades: health care delivered by a trusted family physician who knows his or her patients and takes personal responsibility for their care and health outcomes.

What is the program?

The DPCMH program is voluntary for any individual enrolled in the SEHBP PPO plans

and his or her dependents. The benefits of participation in the program include more time with your doctor at each visit, no out-of-pocket costs at the point of service, 24/7 access to your personal physician, and more. These services result in better health outcomes and high patient satisfaction.

Patient access to personalized care in the DPCMH option is made possible by limiting the number of patients under each doctor's care to fewer than 1,000. Comparatively, the typical primary care physician practice has a patient-to-physician ratio of 3,000 to 1. Because of the increased pressure on physicians to see more patients as insurance companies lower their reimbursement rates, that ratio for typical primary care physicians is growing.

Physicians in traditional practices are stuck on a hamster wheel, continuing to churn out more visits per day and per month, in order to be able to receive enough payment from

insurance companies to keep their practices open. Physicians in these circumstances do not have the opportunity to focus on their patients as much as their training and skills allow. The patient sees his or her doctor for less time and is often unsatisfied with the outcome of their visit.

The picture looks quite different for physicians in the DPCMH practices because they are not dependent on the traditional fee-for-service payment system. In this model, the reduced patient load gives family doctors the opportunity to spend more time with their patients, getting to know their individual health needs and preferences, attending to their patients' preventative, acute, and urgent care needs. With the additional time, doctors can develop individualized patient care plans, cure illnesses and coordinate appropriate specialist and hospital care.

The DPCMH model restores a cherished feature of American health care that has all but disappeared over recent decades: health care delivered by a trusted family physician who knows his or her patients and takes personal responsibility for their care and health outcomes.

"The gift of time"

Dr. Suzanne Gehl, a primary care doctor who practices with Paladina Health—one of the two practices that are offering the DPCMH program in New Jersey—is a DPCMH provider. The other provider is R-Health.

Dr. Gehl observes that the DPCMH care model provides primary care doctors with the "gift of time." They can build genuine, personal relationships with their patients, deepening their understanding of the individual lifestyles, preferences, and social factors that affect their patients' health.

"I know from experience that when I have the time to build partnerships with my patients, we can produce better health outcomes," Dr. Gehl says. "It's why I entered family medicine."

While the new DPCMH option restores the central importance of a personal patient-to-physician relationship in modern health care, it also sets out to assure that participating family doctors are equipped with tools of 21st-century medical technology that enable them to deliver high-quality care to their patients.

The DPCMH option gives each enrollee the choice of a personal physician who is accessible 24/7 by telephone, online, by email, and through secure text messaging.

Urgent care appointments are guaranteed, but the traditional physician's office appointment is just one of the many ways patients can access their personal doctors in the DPCMH model. For example, patients typically have their physician's cellphone number. Doctors in a DPCMH practice encourage patients to call them directly if medical questions or urgent care needs arise. For the patient, this means you are never wondering if you need to run to the urgent care center or emergency room, wasting the time to do so.

Why is this health care delivery model important?

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 75 cents of every health care dollar spent by Americans goes towards treating chronic illness. Many of these chronic illnesses could be avoided with better care at an earlier time. More effective primary care and early intervention for these conditions will reduce the need for more extensive, and more expensive, care in the long run.

Studies undertaken by the CDC and the World Health Organization reveal that at least 80 percent of all heart disease, stroke, and Type 2 diabetes, and up to 40 percent of cancer cases, is preventable.

It makes financial and medical sense to encourage NJEA members and their families to access primary care on a routine basis. Our members and their families deserve a more effective and affordable health care experience with better outcomes. The DPCMH program is an opportunity for members to have regular, convenient, and cost-free access to high-quality primary care that will help them avoid illnesses later on that are expensive to treat and diminish their quality of life.

Who is eligible?

Through the pilot program, all SEHBP enrollees who participate in any of the PPO plans can enroll with a DPCMH provider at no additional cost. This benefit is part of their already existing network of doctors. Any other eligible dependents covered under the plan can enroll as well.

Pre-Medicare retirees and their covered dependents are also eligible to enroll. However, it is important to know that once you become Medicare eligible, you can no longer participate in the program at

no cost.

Should any NJEA member who is not covered under these eligible SEHBP plans wish to participate, there are still some options. Members can enroll directly with a provider. There will be a membership fee to participate if you are not enrolled in an SEHBP plan. However, once you are a DPCMH patient, you get the same benefits at no additional cost as any other enrollee.

Enrollment and locations

Through the bidding process, there are two DPCMH provider groups that have created a partnership with the SEHBP and the SHBP. Those two providers are R-Health and Paladina Health. With offices in various locations throughout the state, interested members can enroll directly through the provider website.

Enrollment with R-Health can be accomplished through its website, www.r-health.md/nj, or call 800-797-1289. R-Health has four participating locations: Haddonfield, Moorestown, Ewing in New Jersey, and Washington Crossing,

Pennsylvania. Each office has one provider in it. Members are encouraged to research which doctor and location would best fit their health needs and the needs of their families. More can be learned about the physicians here: www.r-health.md/nj/#physicians.

Paladina Health is the second DPCMH provider in SEHBP. Currently, Paladina has one location in Hamilton, Mercer County and has plans to expand into the Passaic-Bergen County region. To learn more about Paladina Health and for information on enrollment, visit their website at www.paladinahealth.com.

Both R-Health and Paladina Health have agreed to the same terms with the SEHBP. Therefore, both will be limiting their practices to no more than 1,000 patients. They have each committed to opening more facilities when enrollment increases to accommodate the needs of NJEA members, other public employees, and their families. So, if there is not yet a location that is convenient for you, stay tuned. One might open soon.

Patient experience

The expanded role of the family doctor as a provider and coordinator of care in the DPCMH model does not involve gatekeeping or referrals. NJEA members who have SEHBP plans and choose to enroll with a DPCMH provider will retain the same choice among specialists and hospital providers that they have in their currently selected health plan options. The networks have not changed; in fact they have grown to include these new providers at no additional cost.

Should a member decide to see a physician who is not a DPCMH participating provider, he or she will still be able to do so. The difference is that when going to these providers, the patient will be subject to the same copayments, deductibles, and coinsurances that the plan currently designates for that provider – there is no additional cost beyond what the plan design is for seeing a physician who does not participate in the DPCMH program.

Members Benefit

NJEA members are already enrolled and seeing DPCMH physicians. Jaime Witsen is a retired educator from Somerset County. A few months ago, she received a flier in the mail about an open house for R-Health as a new benefit in her health plan. She receives post-retirement medical benefits through the SEHBP. Witsen was intrigued by the advertisement and was happy to see that NJEA was in support of the project.

Witsen had been with her previous primary care physician for 25 years. Even with the length of time she was a patient, she still was frustrated that the nurses and staff did not recognize her and her visits were so short. She felt her doctor was always rushed. After visiting

the R-Health open house, she was willing to try it out. After her first visit, Witsen was sold on her doctor and the health care model.

Witsen loves that the conversations she has with her doctor are not rushed and that the visits take an approach beyond treating symptoms. She feels that her doctor is focused on wellness and improving her quality of life through a whole person approach, which no physician has ever had the time for before.

“What I really appreciated was that my doctor liked that I was a science teacher,” Witsen recalls. As a result, her physician talked with her about her DNA and other medical science. “No one before this has taken the time to extend their understanding of the science behind what they’re doing and talk to me about it. I feel like I’ve hit the lottery.”

Heidi Furman is a teacher in the Mercer County Special Services district and came to find R-Health a different way—her doctor left her previous practice and began working at the Ewing office. Furman followed her there.

At R-Health, Furman feels that she’s in a partnership with her physician.

“We work together to navigate my health and to keep me healthy,” Furman says. “We also work together for prevention. She’s also a great educator.”

Furman trusts and respects her doctor because they have been able to build a relationship based on mutual health goals.

When comparing her old practice to R-Health, Furman is very pleased with the access to her doctor and how she is recognized by the staff at the front desk.

“I’ve never waited in the waiting room for her at R-Health,” Furman says.

She noted that when she

walked in, her first name was used and she was greeted warmly by the staff. Before, there were time constraints. Now, she never feels rushed and her physician gives her the time she needs to ask any questions and makes sure that she understands the answers.

Both Witsen and Furman encourage their fellow NJEA members to try out a DPCMH practice.

“This is a really good way to go for public employees,” Furman says. “It’s convenient. There’s no copay. It provides unlimited access to my doctor. There are evening and weekend hours with digital and cell phone access to her.”

“I feel valued as a person and as a patient,” Witsen asserts. “I feel like my concerns are my doctor’s concerns. I could never say that about my doctor of 25 years.”

DPCMH family doctors have the time and tools to provide valuable support to patients in managing their overall health care. They serve as partners and coordinators for their patients’ care. Rather than creating a physician gatekeeper, the DPCMH option provides SEHBP members with access to a physician who can help guide them through a fragmented and sometimes confusing health care system. In the DPCMH program, authority to make the health care choices remain squarely with the patient. 🏠

Sarah Geiger is an associate director of research in the pensions and benefits unit of the NJEA Research and Economic Services Division. She can be reached at sgeiger@njea.org.

The DPCMH option gives each enrollee the choice of a personal physician who is accessible 24/7 by telephone, online, by email, and through secure text messaging.



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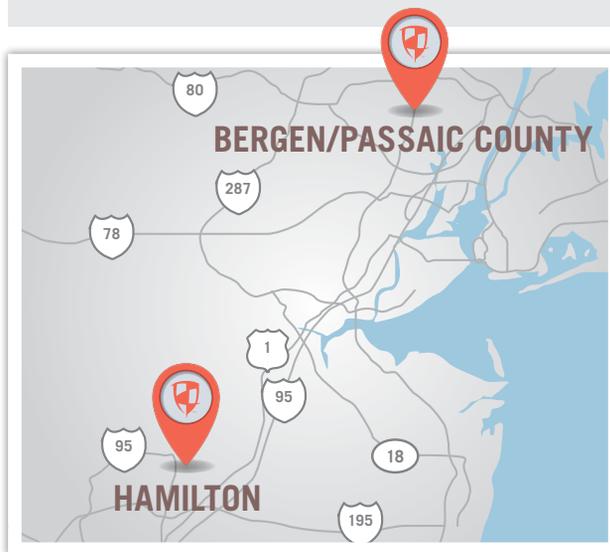
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– Toria, Paladina Health patient



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Promoting student behavior and learning through multi-tiered systems of support

By Barbara Bole Williams, Ph.D., NCSP

Let's imagine the following scenario: You are a middle-school student who has just transferred into a new school midway through the school year. You and your family have moved 400 miles from a midwestern state to New Jersey. What might you be thinking and feeling as you enter your new school that first morning?

Are you thinking, "Boy, I can't wait to continue learning about the American Revolution in social studies," or, "Now that I've mastered division with fractions, I hope I get a chance to use it."

Probably not. More likely you are wondering, "Will I be able to make new friends?" "Is this school an accepting place for newcomers?" "Will my teachers welcome me as a new student?" and "Will I be bullied and threatened?"

Essentially, this hypothetical middle school student is asking questions about the social/emotional/behavioral climate within his or her new school. The student is wondering if the new school is a healthy learning environment to which he or she can adjust emotionally and socially and be able to learn.



Healthy learning environments

What are the policies and practices that help schools become healthier, more effective learning environments for students? Many of these factors will not surprise you. According to the National Association of School Psychologists the following are common school-based themes that promote improved student behavior and learning:

- Positive school climate.
- Effective discipline practices.
- Bullying and harassment prevention.
- Social-emotional learning.
- Promotion of student wellness programs.
- Drop-out prevention.
- School safety.
- Positive behavioral interventions and supports.
- Access to specialized instructional support personnel and school-based mental health services.
- Learning support programs for struggling learners.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

In December 2015, President Barack Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to replace the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). As its name implies, the language of ESSA includes an emphasis on providing educational services to all students. The National Association of School Psychologists identified the following themes of ESSA as key initiatives to promote services to all students:

1. Effective, coordinated use of data that informs instruction, student and school outcomes, and school accountability.
2. Comprehensive, rigorous curricula provided to all students.
3. Effective coordination of services across systems and within schools.
4. Provision of evidence-based comprehensive learning supports.
5. Integration of comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services into learning supports.
6. Integration of school climate and safety efforts into school improvement efforts.
7. Provision of high-quality, relevant professional development.
8. Maintaining a comprehensive accountability system.

ESSA places an emphasis on high-quality instruction, professional development for teachers and other staff, and comprehensive learning supports based on the unique needs of the school community. ESSA also promotes a multi-tiered system of support as a method of delivering services to all students.

What are multi-tiered systems of supports?

MTSS is an evidenced-based, multi-tiered framework for effectively integrating multiple systems and services to simultaneously address students' academic achievement, behavior and social-emotional well-being. Consistent with the goals of ESSA, MTSS expands the school's capacity to provide strategies for improving academic, mental health, and behavioral health outcomes for all students, while also helping to create safe and supportive learning environments free of bullying, harassment and discrimination.

These goals are accomplished through a three-tiered system that provides universal, targeted and intensive supports.

Specifically, varying levels of supports, or tiers, are defined as:

- Tier 1 universal supports: evidence-based instruction and programs are available to all students.
- Tier 2 targeted supports: available to those students who, despite being exposed to Tier 1 instruction, require additional assistance/instruction through services such as small-group counseling, tutoring and targeting behavioral skills training.
- Tier 3 intensive supports: provided for those students whose needs have not been resolved through either Tier 1 or Tier 2, and who continue to require individualized interventions, e.g., individualized assessment and instruction, community-based, after-school wraparound services, etc.

Plans to implement MTSS within New Jersey public schools

Guided by models of MTSS within other states and based upon evidence-based practice, the New Jersey Department of Education is planning to implement its own brand of MTSS within New Jersey schools. Referred to as New Jersey Tiered Systems of Support (NJTSS), an NJTSS Development Team of approximately 30 people has been formed to assist with planning.

Under the leadership of members of the New Jersey Department of Education, the Development Team is a combination of district-level teachers and administrators, child study team members with experience implementing MTSS, representatives from parent and community groups, as well as representatives from New Jersey universities.

The Development Team met throughout the 2015-16 school year and continues to meet this year. The collaborative efforts among these various stakeholders have resulted in establishing a solid foundation for the work ahead to prepare New Jersey school districts to implement NJTSS.

First and foremost, members of the Development Team learned from a review of the research in the area of MTSS that it takes approximately five years for a district to plan and transition to full implementation of NJTSS. For those interested in reviewing the progress of our state's planning for NJTSS, visit the NJTSS website at www.state.nj.us/education/njtss. There you will find this statement explaining the structure and purpose of NJTSS:

NJTSS is a framework of supports and interventions to improve student achievement, based on the core components of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and the three-tiered preventive logic of Response to Intervention (RTI). With a foundation of strong district and school leadership, a positive school culture and climate and family and community engagement, NJTSS builds on Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) and gives schools structure to meet the academic, behavioral, health, enrichment and social/emotional needs of students.

Within the three-tiered model of delivery of services and supports, some common characteristics are inherent within the interventions at each of the tiers.

Tier 1

According to the NJDOE, Tier 1 at the universal level provides "high-quality learning environments, evidence-based curricular and instructional practices, and a continuum of supports and interventions" for all students within general education classes.

Examples of Tier 1 universal supports include but are not limited to:

- Evidence-based curricula in all academic areas with an emphasis on language arts and math.
- Universal academic screening of all students to assess the students' needs.
- Ongoing progress monitoring within a response-to-intervention (RTI) model with appropriate methodologies.
- Collaborative approaches to plan, implement and evaluate evidence-based interventions to improve school climate and increase social, emotional, behavioral and academic competencies for all students.
- Implementation of a system of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) as a specific example of a universal-level intervention to address social/emotional/mental health/behavioral functioning.
- Implementation of data-based decision-making throughout the universal academic and social/emotional/mental health/behavioral interventions in order to monitor students' responses and growth.
- Professional development offered to teachers and other personnel to provide ongoing training in evidence-based intervention and programs in both academic and social/emotional areas.
- Safe-school infrastructure including policies, procedures and practices that support school safety.
- Instruction delivered to students with identified needs, e.g. English language learners.

Tier 2

At Tier 2, students have access to "supplemental supports and interventions that may be delivered in small-group instruction, provided in either the general classroom or during an intervention period." These are additional services, beyond the universal level, designed to intervene with students at risk for learning and behavioral problems.

Examples of Tier 2 targeted supports would include:

- Evidence-based practices and interventions to provide targeted instruction in areas of demonstrated student needs through small-group services.
- Additional teacher and other personnel professional development, as needed.
- Family partnerships.
- Increase in intensity, frequency and duration of services based upon demonstrated student need.
- Continued and more frequent progress monitoring.
- Adherence to data-based decision-making.

Tier 3

At Tier 3, services are designed to be intensive supports and instruction to address continued student needs. Often these services are provided individually or on a pull-out-of-classroom basis. These may be adaptations of supports and interventions for the students, based upon the student's demonstrated needs.

Examples of Tier 3 intensive supports may include:

- Intensive, individualized instruction and interventions.
- Continued use of evidence-based interventions delivered under conditions of treatment fidelity.
- Interagency resources and collaboration.
- Crisis prevention and intervention.
- Collaboration with child study team members.

- Professional development training for teachers and support personnel based on identified areas of need.
- Ongoing progress monitoring and data-based decision-making.

As district-level and school-based groups of educators transition to an NJTSS model, three concepts must remain the focus of discussion. First, continue to examine the relationship between behavior, learning and healthy school environments. Second, explore the connections between ESSA and Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and current federal and state legislation that promotes conducive learning environments. Finally, form a building-level team of professionals dedicated to supporting students by seeking innovative and evidence-based interventions to respond to student needs. It is critical that teachers and child study team members examine how school administrators, counselors, parents and other stakeholders can collaborate to provide comprehensive student learning supports. 🌟

Barbara Bole Williams, Ph.D., NCSP is a professor and coordinator of the School Psychology Program at Rowan University in Glassboro. Prior to joining the Rowan University faculty, she spent many years as a school psychologist and director of special services in Audubon Public Schools. While in Audubon, she was an NJEA member and now continues her affiliation with NJEA as a retired member.

Bole Williams is past president of New Jersey Association of School Psychologists, an NJEA affiliate, and currently a member of the Executive Board chairing the Ethics and Professional Practices committee for NJASP.

She is also a long-time leader within the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and presently chairs the National Certification Board for NASP. In 2013, she was awarded the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award by NASP for her leadership in school psychology.

Of special note, Bole Williams' father, Dr. Robert D. Bole, served as the first research director for NJEA in the 1950s. She grew up in an NJEA family. Her husband, J. Theodore Williams, is a retired teacher from Washington Township (Gloucester County) and a retired NJEA member.

MTSS expands the school's capacity to provide strategies for improving academic, mental health, and behavioral health outcomes for all students, while also helping to create safe and supportive learning environments free of bullying, harassment and discrimination.

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Helping to bridge cultural chasms

By Brett Novick

The school experience has changed remarkably from what students expected only a generation ago. Bullying is no longer considered a harmless rite of passage. Schools move at a frenzied pace and controversies around academic standards and standardized tests rage more than ever. Technology has become an integral part of every aspect of the academic landscape and has created a language that did not exist only a few decades ago. Technology has flattened our planet and put us in connection with those around the world with only a few clicks of the mouse. Education of our students is now, indeed, a global enterprise.

Recognizing culture and being culturally competent is no longer a nicety that allows one to appear “worldly” and engaging; it is now as integral and vital as understanding any other aspect of the school climate.

If we do not embrace and include parents and families of all cultures, we risk building walls rather than bridges between the people we serve. Worse yet, we miss out on the diversity that serves to enrich, enhance and enlighten the school system as a whole. Our communities are at a disadvantage when we don't shine a light on the multicultural nature of our schools, particularly because working and living in a diverse environment is a valuable life skill that will benefit our students throughout their lives.

So how do we ensure that all families see themselves as a part of the whole school community? Here are some suggestions to invite families to weave their influence into the tapestry of the educational atmosphere—an atmosphere that serves as the backdrop for a school system.

Recognize that everyone has a culture

This may seem obvious at first. However, if you don't see the influence of your own culture on your worldview, you may not recognize that others' outlooks are also developed from their cultural influences. This can be a particular challenge if you are a member of a majority culture and are not accustomed to your overarching perceptions and beliefs being questioned.

Be careful not to assume your opinion as “right” or a parent's opinion as “wrong.” When you do so, you serve to isolate yourself, developing tunnel vision through which you cannot see another's perspective and viewpoints. Listening to families is the best way to be sensitive to culture. In short, “you don't know what you don't know” regarding another's culture, so tread lightly. Be ready to have your own unconscious biases and assumptions revealed to you in the process. Be humble and open to learning from those revelations.

Explore the cultural makeup of your school and school district

Culture is a big word and defining it can be difficult. We must remember that cultures don't come from one origin but from a number of different areas. Socioeconomic background, religion, race, region of the country, and a host of other aspects influence our cultural makeup.

If you are going to truly acknowledge culture, it is important to recognize the educational priorities and needs that are unique to the families in your school district. Conducting surveys to solicit ideas for how the school can do better is one way to continue to help build a better environment for all cultures. Such surveys should be created in conjunction with a diverse group of families, staff and administration.

While surveying is easier than ever with the advent of computer-based surveying programs, don't go it alone. Such surveys should only be carried out with the express, written approval of school and district leadership.

The “Multicultural School Climate Inventory” developed by Utah State University Associate Professor Sherry Marx, Ph.D., and Professor Deborah Byrnes, Ph.D. is an example of a survey that has been used by educators to assess and determine cultural diversity within an educational setting. You can view it at bit.ly/marxbyrnes.

In addition, there are many programs and applications that allow you to create your own surveys, such as Survey Monkey, Survata, *Snapsurveys.com*, and a host of others.

The world moves at an ever more frenetic pace. Time is at a premium for everyone connected with a school. That being said, if you go to where the families are—cultural organizations, places of worship, and other gathering places—you have the best chance of understanding your community's genuine needs. Do not assume that if you hear no complaints everyone is satisfied or that you are reaching your goals for multicultural involvement. Listen, be open to suggestions, and—most importantly—expect, accept and learn from criticism. Further, do not take lack of involvement for lack of interest in a child's education.

Encourage events that represent the diverse communities in your school

If you draw in children for evening activities, they come with their families. If you want to open the doors to your school, develop events that reflect the diversity of the students and parents in the community. It is a win/win situation for all involved.

Ensure diversity on school committees

In recent years, parents are more often invited to be involved in school-based committees. But do those who serve on the committees represent community demographics? It is vital that we invite parents who are a voice for our community as a whole, not only those who are always involved because they always volunteer. Committees that are representative of the diversity of the community are vital in all areas. When addressing character education and issues of harassment, intimidation and bullying—where intolerance are often explicitly addressed—diverse contributions are indispensable.

Provide translators

Having someone available to translate what you say may seem obvious when you have child study team or intervention and referral team meetings, but what about other times? If you have a parental enrichment activity, or celebrate American Education Week, do you have someone who can help make these times more meaningful to all involved or all who want to be involved? When you offer programs in a language that families can understand, you demonstrate that you genuinely welcome all families to your school.

It is important that you recognize, however, that the translator should be someone who respects the confidence of the family involved and, if at all possible, is a fellow faculty member.

Have field trips and speakers that underline the value of multicultural experiences

Bringing outside cultural influences into the school setting enables students to recognize the importance of valuing cultural diversity as they make their way in the world. It also signals to families the importance of not only teaching tolerance but demonstrating its vital nature as well.

The American education system's cultural diversity, like our country itself, is one of our most vital resources. Within our doors we have an opportunity to learn something from each other. We have the ability to educate students not only in academics, but also on how to be a citizen of the world. As boundaries around the world are blurred by the use of technology and global communication, we must recognize that our students' families are a critical resource in preparing students for the next generation's prerequisites of success. 🌐

Brett Novick, MA, LMFT, has been a school social worker in the Brick Township School District for 17 years. He holds a master's degree in family therapy from Friends University in Wichita, Kansas, and certification in school social work from Monmouth University, West Long Branch. He has written two books, Parents and Teachers Working Together and Productive Educator, both published by Rowman and Littlefield.

Novick has been named his district's Teacher of the Year and the New Jersey School Counselors Association Human Rights Advocate of the Year. In 2011, he was honored with the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities Inclusive Educator of the Year Award and Fellowship and in 2013 with a Community Advocate Award from the Ocean County Mental Health Association. He was the recipient of the 2016 NJEA Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human and Civil Rights Award. Novick can be reached at iambrettj@gmail.com.

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Raising the roof while keeping the hazards down

By Pam Susi

Roofing is the fundamental barrier between a school's indoor environment and the natural elements. Exposure to sun, rain, wind and ice cause wear and tear on roofs that may result in cracks, leaks and more serious damage. Roof repairs are vital to prevent water from entering school buildings and causing mold growth and, if severe, structural damage.

Without maintenance, repair, and eventually, replacement, health and safety problems can result—the most common being indoor air quality (IAQ) related. Since air intakes are often located at roof level, dust and vapors from roofing jobs may migrate into the school and result in exposure to staff and students.

Know the hazards

A surprising number of chemical hazards are encountered in roofing, beginning with the “tear-off” of old roofing. Since asbestos was used in roofing felts into the early 1980s and built-up roofs (BURs) last several decades, asbestos fibers may be released during removal. Asbestos was also used in roofing cements and in some early single ply roofing systems.

The hazards encountered during roofing are dependent on the type of roof. Flat BURs were the longtime norm for schools. These roofs are constructed with alternating layers of felt paper and either coal tar pitch (CTP) or asphalt heated in kettles and mopped onto the roofing deck. Now a wide variety of roofing products are available on the market. Single ply and synthetic rubber roofing systems have become increasingly common.

The products used for “hot” work—CTP and asphalt—generate polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PNAs) and cause irritant effects, particularly on skin and mucous membranes. PNAs found in petroleum asphalt and CTP have also been shown to cause cancer after long-term exposure, with CTP being the more potent carcinogen of the two.

While installation of new roofs using CTP may be less common, these roofs perform well and may last 50 years if well maintained. New Jersey specifications instruct school contractors to “match the existing system and follow... recommended practices wherever possible.” Restoration of existing BURs can be accomplished “hot”—using the process previously described—or “cold,” with solvent based restorants. The odors from these processes, poorly controlled jobs, and existing ventilation deficiencies can conspire to wreak havoc within occupied schools.

According to a report from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), at one Pennsylvania school where roofing repairs were underway involving use

of CTP restorants, numerous children went home with complaints of headaches, burning eyes, and respiratory and other symptoms. Over the course of the school year there were repeated episodes of illnesses resulting in several days of unscheduled school closures. Two students and one teacher suffered with asthma symptoms.

Six months after work was completed and temperatures had warmed up, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from the roof's surface vaporized and traveled into the building. Absent sufficient fresh make-up air and adequate air circulation to dilute the VOCs once in the building, the problem persisted long after the roofing job had ended.

Chemical compounds known as isocyanates are in adhesives and foam insulation material used with newer single ply roofing systems. Exposure to isocyanates is irritating to the eyes, mucous membranes and respiratory tract. The most common serious health effect associated with isocyanates is asthma resulting from sensitization. This usually occurs after repeated exposure over months or years but can occur after a single exposure. Once sensitized, even exposure to nondetectable levels can cause asthmatic reactions.

At one Texas school, NIOSH found asthma occurring in school workers at least three times as often as seen in the general population. It concluded that isocyanates from a roofing project had likely entered through air intakes, windows or other building openings. IAQ problems already existed, but after roofing foams, coatings and sealing compounds containing isocyanates were used while the school was in session, the problem grew much worse.

Take action to control the hazards

Local associations and their health and safety committees should work with their UniServ field representatives to insist on greater transparency, better communication and more involvement in the construction planning process. Locals should act quickly upon notification of upcoming roofing work to insist that districts:

- Schedule work when school is not in session.
- Close windows, air intakes and other building openings to prevent entry of fumes and vapor.
- Flush out contaminants with fresh air before re-occupying.
- Obtain copies of Safety Data Sheets for products used and retain them for future reference.

The local association should insist on a pre-roofing meeting with the district and contractor and ensure the contractor will:



Isocyanate roofing adhesive being sprayed near ventilation intake vents. Ventilation should be off and intakes should be covered.

- Wet asbestos before removal.
- Use less hazardous methods and materials such as mechanical fasteners rather than adhesives containing isocyanates, low-fume asphalts, and application methods that don't require spraying adhesive and foam, including hand-held extrusion pumps.
- Use roofing kettles equipped with after burners and safety loaders that allow for keeping the kettle lid closed, reducing emission of fumes.
- Keep kettle temperatures as low as possible; the temperature used for asphalt varies depending on the type; contractors should not exceed the equiviscous temperature (EVT), which is the optimum application temperature for wetting and adhesive properties.
- Place kettles, pumps and equipment used to channel asphalt to the roof away from windows, doors and air intakes.

Low bid requirements for state contractors may result in nonunion contractors with poorly trained workers getting the work. Urge districts to make sure that contractors are trained and qualified by writing into job specifications that contractors must be participants in joint labor/management apprenticeship programs registered with the U.S. Department of Labor. 🏠

Pam Susi holds a Master of Science in Public Health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in and is a certified industrial hygienist. She is a consultant with the New Jersey Work Environment Council, which is a frequent partner with NJEA on school health and safety concerns.

Since air intakes are often located at roof level, dust and vapors from roofing jobs may migrate into the school and result in exposure to staff and students.

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Serving up “Cookies and Chrome” highlights use of technology in first grade

By Karen Dundas

At Raritan Valley Elementary School in Hazlet, first graders and their teachers launched an initiative this year to use Google applications to support their educational goals. While the first graders were excited to use the Chromebooks for a new purpose, we as teachers looked for ways to use Google’s various applications to promote the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts.

Students created digital books and comic strips using Google Slides to create new stories and retell old ones. Google Slides turned out to be a great way to introduce students to working collaboratively by using the share option.

Google Drawings was another favorite application used in our first grades. Students now use it for various purposes in math and language arts. They created their own graphic organizers in Google Drawings, for example, to aid in reading comprehension.

Smartboards introduced students to the basics of making an effective presentation—even at their young age. For example, students learned that when using contrasting colors their presentations could be read more easily by an audience. They also improved their speaking skills for a real purpose as they practiced presenting information with the smartboard.

That real purpose, “Cookies and Chrome,” was held on March 31. It was an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning for a genuine audience. The event drew in many of Hazlet School District’s stakeholders, including the mayor, district administrators, first-grade parents and local media.

It was a huge success. As attendees to the “Cookies and Chrome” event walked around and questioned the first graders about the Google applications they were using in the classroom, the first graders were able to clearly explain all that they had accomplished throughout the year. As students finished the “Chrome” portion of the event, the “Cookies” portion of the event took over.

Many students are exposed daily to technology at home and can benefit from the use of Google applications to broaden their technological horizons. As educators, we should create meaningful uses for technology in the classroom regardless of the age of our students. 🍪

Karen Dundas is a targeted reading/basic skills teacher at Raritan Valley Elementary School in Hazlet. She can be reached at kdundas@hazlet.org.



First graders prepare to share what they've learned.



Hazlet Mayor Sue Kiley helps a student get ready for Cookies and Chrome.



ABOVE: Left and right: Parents and community leaders enjoy and evening of “cookies and chrome” with first graders at Raritan Valley Elementary School.

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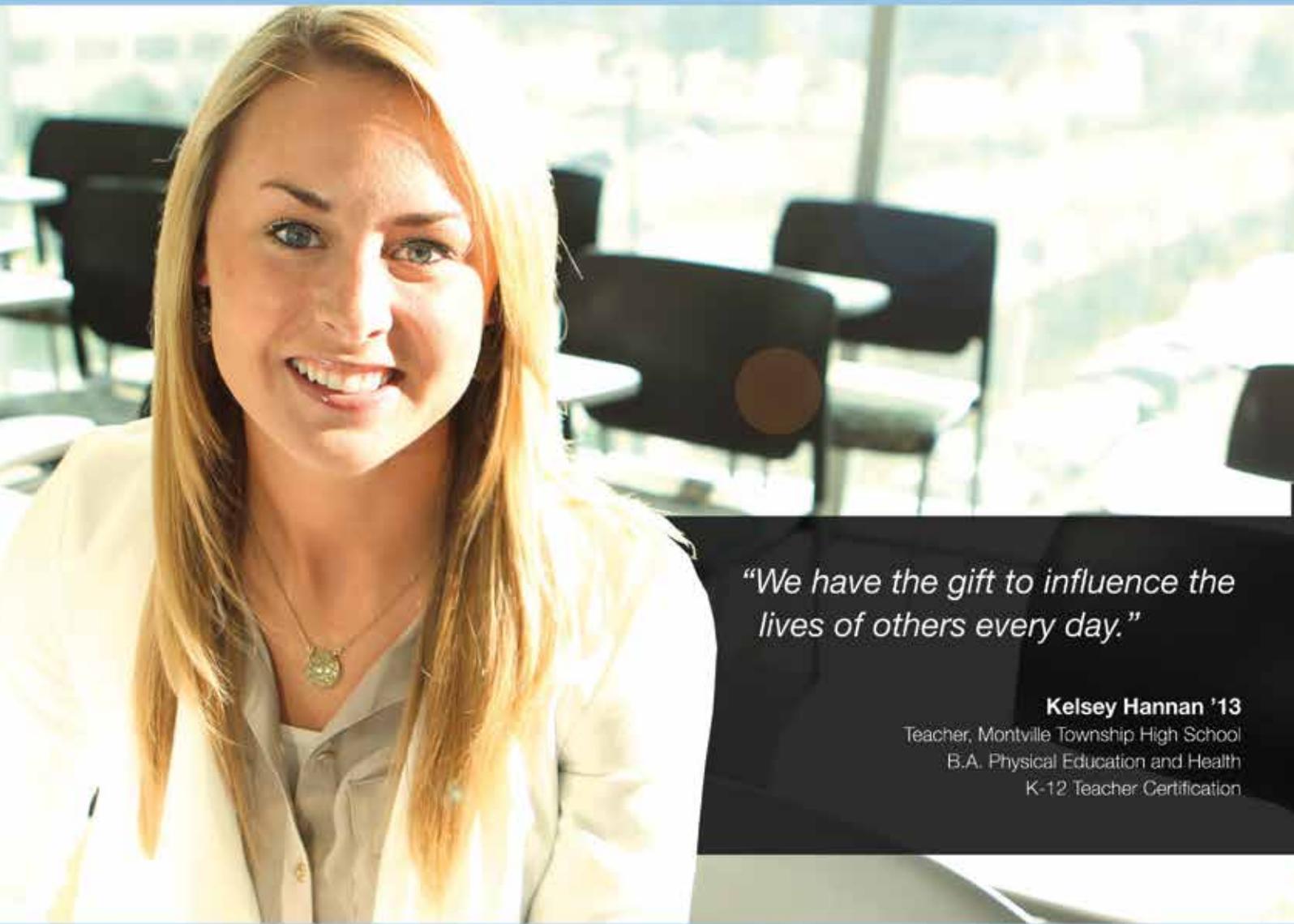
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Your summer reading list

The school year is such a mad rush of lesson planning, grading and working with students that it is difficult to find the time to read a book or explore a website. The slower pace of summer provides the opportunity for reflection and some professional learning.

The staff in the **NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division** has been thinking about their recent professional reading. Here are their recommendations for a summer reading list for educators.

The director of the division, **MICHAEL COHAN**, has been reading *Defying Standardization: Creating Curriculum for an Uncertain Future* by Dr. Christopher Tienken. The author debunks the raft of misinformation surrounding the push to standardize curriculum expectations for 56 million public school students. Tienken presents practical examples for how educators, students, and parents can defy standardization with locally developed and evidence-based practices to create curricula that lead to well-rounded individuals ready for participation in a democratic society and a global community.

MIKE RITZIUS has been thinking about how organizations change and grow. In *Creative Intelligence: Harnessing the Power to Create, Connect, and Inspire*, author Bruce Nussbaum discusses the skills and dispositions that organizations need to embrace in order to thrive in an ever-changing world. Nussbaum sees creative intelligence as a new form of cultural literacy, one that is required for effective problem solving.

In a similar vein, **AMY FRATZ** has been considering the need for public schools to market themselves and tell their own stories to the public. Wondering what makes a new idea spread, she has found some answers in *Contagious: Why Things Catch On* by Jonah Berger. Read about the science behind word-of-mouth and social transmissions. Berger outlines the six basic principles that drive all kinds of ideas to become contagious.

CAMY KOBYLINSKI's focus on special education led her to *Co-Teach! Building and Sustaining Effective Classroom Partnerships in Inclusive Schools*. The author, Marylin Friend, provides

practical and realistic ideas for sustaining and enhancing co-teaching relationships. Helpful resources and references appear throughout the book.

CHRISSI MILES's recent read, *Visible Learning* by John Hattie, provides an in-depth look at the most comprehensive synthesis of evidence-based research ever conducted in the field of education. His work focuses on the strategies and factors that contribute to or detract from student achievement at the student, home, school, teacher, and curricular levels.

Transformative Teachers; Teacher Leadership and Learning in a Connected World by Kira J. Baker-Doyle has staff member **RICH WILSON** thinking about what happens when teachers use social media and local professional networks to build a participatory culture in which everyone learns together and advocates for social justice. Baker-Doyle examines case studies of teachers who are developing frameworks that will help other educators create their own professional spaces and change the profession.

Priority Schools Initiative co-coordinator **PAM GARWOOD** is reflecting on the book *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action* by Robert Marzano. The author describes the five levels of school effectiveness that can dramatically shift the way teaching and learning are performed in the classroom. Marzano identifies the factors affecting student achievement and offers answers that lead to positive change at the school, teacher and student level.

The Priority Schools Initiative's other co-coordinator, **AMANDA ADAMS**, has been reading *Raising Black Students' Achievement through Culturally Responsive Teaching* by Johnnie McKinley. The author shares the results of an in-depth study of a group of teachers in Grades 3-8 who radically narrowed the achievement gap between their black and white students by using a set of culturally responsive strategies in their classrooms. Included in the book are instructions for conducting classroom walk-throughs and a comprehensive guide to the author's framework for assessing the cultural responsiveness of teaching strategies in schools.

School-Home relationships have been on the mind of **JANET ROYAL** as she has been reading *Partnering with Parents to Ask the Right Questions* by Luz Santana, Dan Rothstein and Agnes Bain. The book is composed of case studies that explain how educators and parents can begin asking the right questions to bring about positive results for everyone involved. Santana offers ways to assist struggling students and bridge the gap between parents and educators.

DARRYL ENSMINGER suggests that summer is not just a time for reading, but also offers the opportunity to enhance your digital toolbox. He suggests exploring three websites with educational applications.

Kahoot is a free, game-based learning platform for any subject and any device. It is a great tool for educators looking for an engaging way to check for understanding. Find it at getkahoot.com.

EDPuzzle allows teachers to create lessons using videos. Videos can be imported from anywhere on the internet and cropped if necessary to select only relevant content. Teachers can add their own voice to the video and insert questions that students must answer before continuing. Find it at edpuzzle.com.

Flippity easily turns a Google spreadsheet into a set of online flashcards. The free app also allows you to turn a Google sheet into a trivia quiz show. Look for it at flippity.net.

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A CLOSER LOOK *monthly highlights*

watch

JUNE 11

Fourth graders from Woodmont Elementary School in Pine Brook become Brick Buddies with kindergartners. By using LEGO bricks, the older students help the younger ones learn about character traits and enhance their literacy skills.

JUNE 18

Atlantic City teacher Gary Melton runs the responsible thinking class at Pennsylvania Avenue School. The program improves how discipline problems are addressed in the school and is a response to the school-to-prison pipeline in which far too many students—particularly children of color—move for the school system to the prison system. Melton believes that students should be educated, not incarcerated.

JUNE 25 AND JULY 2

Each morning, Lindsay Frevert of Van Derveer Elementary in Somerville dances with her students to get them moving and ready for a full day of learning. The Milken Educator's dedication to her students goes far beyond the classroom, as she attends their after-school activities and walks them to school on Walking Wednesdays.

Classroom Close-up NJ completes its 23rd season but encore performances will air all summer long. On June 11, 18 and 25, the 7:30 p.m. airtimes will be pre-empted because of the NJTV pledge drive. Make sure you tune into the earlier times at 7:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. If you miss us on TV, be sure to check out classroomcloseup.org to view all the stories we've aired over the 23 seasons. The new season starts Oct. 1.



JUNE
11



JUNE
25



JUNE
18

Air times

NJEA's "Classroom Close-up NJ" has won 15 Emmy® awards. It inspires and educates the public about the great things happening in New Jersey public schools. The show airs on Sundays on NJTV at 7:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

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classroomcloseup.org

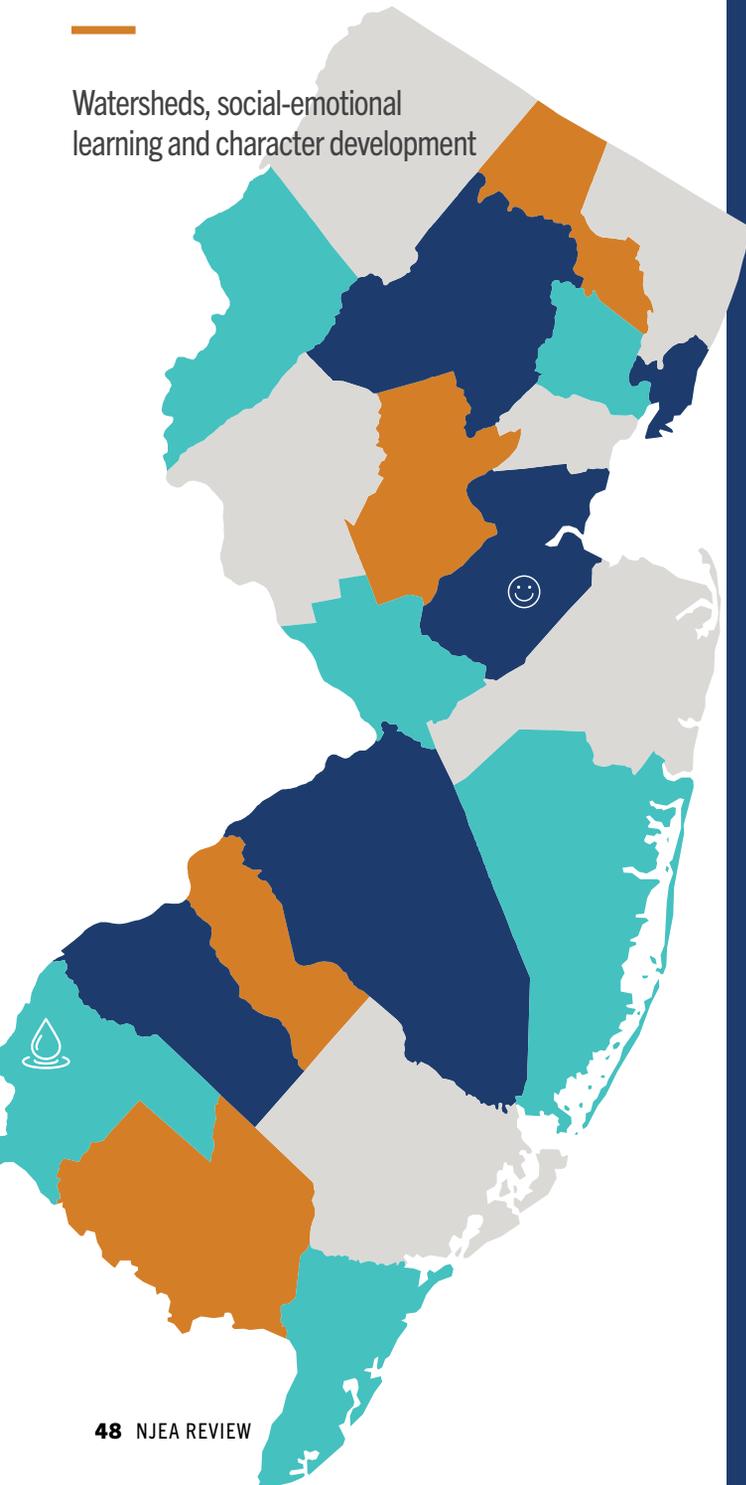
Visit classroomcloseup.org to watch individual segments, the entire show, or to see what's coming up. On Twitter, follow @CCUNJ and "like" the show at [facebook.com/crcunj](https://www.facebook.com/crcunj). The show continues to gain fans, especially since it is available online and can be downloaded or emailed to family and friends.

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highlights

Watersheds, social-emotional learning and character development



showcase

These experiences have been endorsed by NJEA's Professional Development Institute and are also posted on njea.org. Providers seeking endorsement should call NJEA's Professional Development Division at 609-599-4561.

21st annual Delaware Estuary Watershed workshops

Educators of all grade levels are invited to attend the 21st annual Delaware Estuary Teacher Workshops July 17-20. Join scientists and professionals as they make their way down the estuary from Schuylkill County to Philadelphia to southern New Jersey to central Delaware, exploring natural resources, diverse communities and unique, hands-on ways to engage students.

Workshops offered:

Storm Water in the Suburbs – July 17, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

In Chester County, explore different ways that storm water is managed with green infrastructure and how to teach your students about their watershed and where the water goes when it storms. Learn how to create a storm drain-marking project with your students.

Mussels, Water and Art in the City – July 18, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Starting at the Fairmount Water Works, learn the history of water in the city of Philadelphia and visit the Mighty Mussel exhibit with real mussel scientists! Then visit Bartram's Garden to learn about its programs and how to incorporate art into classroom activities about water and mussels.

What's in the Water? – July 19, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Along the Brandywine Creek in Delaware, you will get your feet wet and see what is in the water. You will conduct a mussel survey and find freshwater mussels, search for macro-invertebrates, and test water quality. All of these activities can be repeated with your students in your local waterways. Prepare to get wet!

Climate Change in the Classroom – July 20, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Start the day at the PSEG Energy and Environmental Resource Center in Salem, New Jersey to explore "What's the Scoop on Climate Change?" and visit the center's 6,000 sq. ft. museum about energy. After lunch, you will be south by bus to explore a living shoreline with Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE) scientists and learn what is being done to combat climate change along the shores of the Delaware Bay.

The cost is \$25 per workshop and \$80 for all four. Lunch is included. Earn four to six professional development hours per workshop upon completion. The registration deadline is July 18.

For more information, contact Michelle Knoll at 302-655-4990 ext. 112, or mknoll@delawareestuary.org. You may visit the website at www.delawareestuary.org.

Certificate in Social Emotional Learning and Character Development

Rutgers and the College of Saint Elizabeth have collaborated to develop a certificate in Social-Emotional Learning and Character Development in Schools and After-School Programs. This program is noncredit and offers all educational staff, school mental health professionals, and those working in after-school programs, the opportunity to enhance their professional development skills in the field of Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD).

Online only, the general track program is three courses, each

addressing a different level of participation and delivery perspective of SECD competencies. The accelerated track program is for those who have five or more years of experience in the field implementing SECD in their setting. It is a two-course program, which will result in creating a portfolio documenting this journey.

To register for this online program, go to psych.rutgers.edu/sel. The cost is \$240. For additional information, please contact Amanda Ackerman at 848-932-6460 or amandaac@sas.rutgers.edu.

More to learn across the state

#TechSplash 2017: The NJAET Summer Conference

The New Jersey Association for Educational Technology (NJAET) will hold its sixth Summer Conference, #TechSplash 2017 on Tuesday, Aug. 1. The program will offer a variety of workshops that span the curriculum from STEM to Google Classroom and focus on tools that inspire ideas, innovation and imagination. This is a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) day so everyone can have a hands-on experience.

Early registration is \$25. Make the check or purchase order payable to NJAET. Your day will include a continental breakfast, four 70-minute sessions and a Lunch and Learn. Registration and breakfast will open at 8:15 a.m.

Registration after July 25 or on-site is \$35. Professional development certificates for 5.5 hours will be provided.

Cancellations will be accepted via email up to 72 hours prior to the event. Have questions? Email NJAET at conference@njaet.org.

For details on the workshops, visit www.njaet.org.

Camden County College offers mini-courses

The Camden County College Center for Civic Leadership and Responsibility (CCLR) is offering five-week mini-courses starting this month. Each course costs \$25 or you may become a member of the CCLR for \$50 and take unlimited min-courses courses through Aug. 31. In addition, the CCLR is offering several sets of free lectures.

To more information, visit www.camdencc.edu/civiccen or call 856-227-7200, ext. 4333 for details.

Daytime: Blackwood

June 13-July 18: Torn from the Headlines: The Newspaper Movie

Evening: Blackwood

June 12-July 24 – Baseball in All 50 States
June 13-July 18 – Women's Health Issues
June 15-July 20 – From China to China: The History of Paleontology

Daytime: Rohrer Center: Cherry Hill

June 12-July 17 – Earth Exploration Adventures in Geography, Science and History
June 12-July 17 – Road to Ruin: From the Rise of Jackson to the Rise of Lincoln
June 13-July 18 – The Play's the Thing: Exploring American Playwrights of the 20th Century

Evening: Rohrer Center: Cherry Hill

June 15-July 20 – The Most Southern Place 🏠



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“I want to be that person who is willing to see the whole picture of a student’s life, because students come into our classroom with different experiences, baggage and levels of learning. I want to be the person who will light their fire so they can reach their full potential.”

My inspiration to be a teacher By Daniela Ceballos, incoming NJSEA secretary, Rutgers Graduate School of Education

Sometimes we don’t realize how large an impact our words have on people around us, especially when it comes to children. We think that children don’t hear us or pay attention to our comments about them, but they do.

Teachers know there is always a student in the classroom who constantly chats and distracts other students. There will always be that student who seems to drive a teacher a little crazy. I should know: I was that student starting in first grade. My mom would get a phone call every week to discuss the trouble I was causing, but even when I heard the negative comments about my behavior, I still didn’t understand why I was getting in trouble. What was so bad about talking?

Everything changed when I got to third grade, and my math teacher saw the real problem. It wasn’t me. It was the schoolwork. Her name was Maria Eugenia—and she used to call her Mariu—and she is the

reason I decided to become a teacher.

Mariu saw my true potential as a student. Instead of labeling me as a disruptive student, she realized I was just bored and needed something to do after finishing my work. Mariu decided that the best job for me was to become the “math monitor.” It became my responsibility to help my friends understand the work we had to do in class. Mariu gave me a reason to believe that I wasn’t a bad child, which was a positive response to my outburst.

Although teaching wasn’t my first choice, I now know it is what I want to do with my life. I will remember my third-grade math teacher as a model and use her methods in my career. Like Mariu, I want to be that person who is willing to see the whole picture of a student’s life, because students come into our classroom with different experiences, baggage and levels of learning. I want to be the person who will light their fire so they can reach their full potential.

A teacher is more than just a teacher. We spend a substantial amount of time with our students in our classrooms, and we become a role model, a friendly face and a supportive figure in their lives.

Diversity has always been inspiring to me, and I want to show my students that being different is remarkable. A society full of different individuals who accept one another is the best society the world can hope for.

Every day I wake up with the goal in my mind to be a teacher, friend, mentor and role model for my students. Teaching fills my heart and makes me happy, and I want my future students to feel the same with any path they choose to follow in their lives. I want to be a teacher so I can show our future doctors, engineers, architects, nurses, lawyers, chefs, teachers and fashion designers that no matter who you are, where you came from, or how much you have, you can be your best version of yourself. 🌟



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Turner discussed decisions that directly affected the students, such as funding decisions that can determine whether libraries stay open or policy decisions that address lead in drinking water.

STARS to the Statehouse

Joyce Kilmer Middle School is one of 22 schools that are in the NJEA Priority Schools Initiative (PSI). The PSI Implementation Team at Kilmer developed a program named Students Taking an Active Role in School (STARS) after participating in workshops hosted by PSI featuring Steve Barkley.

Barkley stresses that students can progress to higher levels of achievement by setting their own goals and providing engaging activities designed to meet those goals. The STARS have weekly meetings facilitated by staff mentors. Students have taken responsibility for their own learning, behaviors and leadership roles at Kilmer. As a result, STARS attendance has improved, behavioral infractions have diminished, and academic achievement has risen.

On March 23, the STARS visited the New Jersey Statehouse to learn about how the state's government, which is hosted by the students' hometown, operates. My Eternal Family, a nonprofit organization based in Trenton, helped make the trip to the Statehouse possible. Twice a month, the organization's leaders meet with the STARS at Kilmer School to work on critical thinking, address life skills and offer community support.

As the STARS approached the Statehouse steps, they were greeted by demonstrators carrying signs about health care. They hadn't realized while they prepared for their field trip that they would see activists exercising their First Amendment rights in the midst of the national debate over the Affordable Care Act and the Republican proposal to repeal and replace it.

The STARS were given a tour of the Statehouse while learning about its history, how the government operates and the significance of the elaborate art work that adorns the building with its stained glass windows, murals and oil paintings.

The STARS met several members of the state Legislative Black Caucus. Sen. Shirley Turner, whose legislative district encompasses Trenton, greeted the group. Turner discussed decisions that directly affected the students, such as funding decisions that can determine

whether libraries stay open or policy decisions that address lead in drinking water.

Students quizzed Turner regarding other issues on their minds.

"Do you have anything to do with the PARCC test?" student J'Houle Ellis asked her.

Turner responded that she understands the loss of classroom learning that is resulting from current policies for state-required standardized tests. She said that some members of the New Jersey Legislature would like to change such rules.

Through these issues she impressed upon the STARS the importance of getting involved, volunteering and voting.

"Work as hard as you can so you can take my place," Turner said.

The STARS met other members of the legislature including Assemblywomen Elizabeth Muio, Annette Chaparro, Angela McKnight and Assemblymen Jamel C. Holley and Troy Singleton. All of them spoke to the STARS and reiterated the message of getting involved by having a voice, asking questions, voting and shaping the legislative process.

The STARS also met with Dr. Joseph Youngblood II, Vice Provost and Dean of the John S. Watson School of Public Service from Thomas Edison State University. Youngblood reinforced the importance of voting, as well as shaping and influencing policies. The group was treated to lunch through a grant provided by Thomas Edison State University. 🍷

Shanda Scott is a sixth grade social studies teacher and facilitator of the Priority Schools Initiative Implementation Team.

Erin Kondash is an eighth grade language arts teacher and Priority Schools Initiative Implementation Team member.

Patricia Lieberman-Sharp is the NJEA Priority Schools Initiative Consultant to Joyce Kilmer Middle School.



On March 23, the STARS visited the New Jersey Statehouse to learn about how the state's government, which is hosted by the students' hometown, operates.

Turn over a new leaf and advocate!

Are you looking to make the most of your NJREA membership? Want to find out how you can help elect a new, pro-labor, pro-education governor? Then mark your calendars and join NJREA for its annual Fall Meeting on Thursday, Sept. 28.

This popular member event will again be held at the Nottingham Ballroom in Hamilton. Please be advised that this luncheon will not be advertised in the September *NJREA Newsletter*. Any members wishing to attend this event must use the coupon found in the June issue of the *NJREA Newsletter* or NJREA webpage and send their reservations in before the Sept. 18 deadline.

The day's activities will begin at 10 a.m. with the Delegate Council meeting, where officers and representatives attend to the business of the organization. Any member wishing to bring forward business to the Delegate Council should indicate his or her intention in the speaker's book upon arrival.

At the "Member Information Session" you'll hear important updates on pensions, health benefits and the latest news affecting our union and its members. There is also time

provided for questions and answers.

Reserve your spot now

The cost of the fall luncheon remains at \$30 per person, which includes breakfast and all taxes and gratuities. Members still have the option to come for breakfast only, for a cost of just \$5. Reminder: As per long-standing NJREA policy, any individuals who are eligible for NJREA membership and have elected not to join are not permitted to attend as guests.

Please remember that attendees will no longer be allowed to reserve tables upon arrival. Any member wishing to sit with his or her county should indicate this intention on the coupon form. Reserved seating requests will be honored only if received on or before the registration deadline.

To register, send the coupon found in the June *NJREA Newsletter* along with your check (payable to NJREA) to NJREA Second Vice President Joan Wright by Sept. 18. Be sure to include your meal choice of chicken française, pasta primavera, or garden salad with shrimp accompanied by a side of soup.

Around the counties

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

MONMOUTH COUNTY REA welcomes you to its upcoming two events. The MCREA's next meeting/luncheon will be held on Friday, June 13 at the Spring Lake Manor in Spring Lake.

MCREA'S Family Fun Day will be held on Tuesday, June 27 at the Oak Tree Lodge in Neptune. Cost for members is \$5. To attend either event, call Sue Shrott at 732-995-7754.

Join **MORRIS COUNTY REA** on Wednesday, Sept. 13, for its fall meeting/luncheon at the Birchwood Manor in Whippany. Guest speaker William Chermerka will talk about "Famous and Not So Famous New Jerseyans." The cost is \$26. To attend, call Nancy Condit at 973-335-0990.

WARREN COUNTY REA will be having its fall meeting/luncheon on Monday, Sept. 6 at the Hawk Pointe Country Club in Washington. For more information, visit www.wcrea-njea.org. To attend, call Vicki Rhinehart at 908-319-1995. ♠

Professor Julie Norflus-Good, director of the Master of Arts in Special Education program, works with Ramapo College MASE students.



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memberbenefits.njea.org

Get the most for your money! NJEA Member Benefits seeks to enrich the lives of all members and their families by offering programs designed to save you money and increase your buying power. Whether you are looking for insurance, big-ticket items, or special deals on hundreds of everyday purchases, you will find valuable consumer offers.

Exploring Member Benefits on the new *njea.org*

The screenshot shows the njea.org Member Benefits website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with categories: Entertainment, Health & Wellness, Home & Auto, Money, Travel, Insurance, Services, and Search Discounts. Below the navigation, there are several featured offers:

- NJEA Web Giveaway:** A hand holding a wrapped gift box.
- Morey's Piers in Wildwood:** A view of a pier structure over water.
- A Doll's House, Part 2:** A portrait of a woman.
- Win a Ford Focus:** A blue Ford Focus car.
- NEA Retirement Program:** A hand holding a small green plant.
- BankMobile:** A hand holding a smartphone.
- NEA Complimentary Life Insurance:** A pair of glasses.

Below these offers, there are three main benefit categories:

- BUYER'S EDGE:** Guarantees you the lowest prices on major purchases. Button: SAVE NOW.
- ACCESS DISCOUNTS:** Hundreds of nation-wide deals to choose from. Button: SEARCH ACCESS.
- MEMBER DISCOUNTS:** Search sponsored vendors and Member Discount Program. Button: SEARCH DISCOUNTS.

At the bottom, there's a section for **Sponsored Vendors** with logos for:

- FARMERS INSURANCE
- California Casualty
- Bravo Tours NJEA Reservations
- EIS
- nea Member Benefits

NJEA cannot be responsible for the quality or performance of these products and services which ultimately is the responsibility of the vendor.

Getting there:

1. Log on to *njea.org*.
2. Sign in with your PIN and Password.+
3. Slide over to "Membership."
4. Click on Member Benefits.

+Your pin is the six characters found on your membership card or the email address through which NJEA sends you email. Your password is the last four digits of your Social Security number unless you have changed your password.

Exploring:

- Check out the offers and featured programs.
- Scroll down and click on ACCESS Discounts. You will find places to save money around the country and the world. Take a look at My Deals mobile app and My Deals Travel.
- On the tabs at the top of the page, click on "Search Discounts" and enter "Plum Benefits." You'll find a site that provides discounts on national and local events.
- More fun discounts can be found under the tabs marked Entertainment and Travel.
- Keep on exploring to find more!

June web giveaway

One winner will receive these prizes:

Two tickets to any SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment* park, excluding Discovery Cove, valid through Dec. 31, 2017. NJEA members can purchase discounted tickets for these, and additional, parks at the Access Discounts site.

\$100 Visa Gift Card and a complimentary one-hour massage from Paramus Medical and Sports Rehabilitation.* NJEA members may contact Paramus Medical and Sports Rehabilitation at 201-225-1511 or marketing@paramusmedicalandsports.com for a complimentary nutritional consult for general nutrition advice or weight loss.

April winner

Mareen Dangler of Chatham EA won a Bose SoundLink Bluetooth Speaker from Buyer's Edge, Inc.**

Be sure to register online each month for the web giveaways!

*Member Discount Program and Access: Products and services listed in the NJEA Member Discount Program and Access are provided as a service to NJEA members and do not constitute an endorsement by NJEA or a representation regarding the products' quality or characteristics. NJEA makes no warranties expressed or implied, including the warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose regarding any products or services listed in the NJEA Member Discount Program and Access.

**Sponsored Vendors: Products and services that are sponsored by NJEA Member Benefits are believed to have broad-based appeal and provide superior quality and value. To the best of NJEA's understanding, these products and services are worthy of sponsorship. However, NJEA cannot be responsible for the quality or performance of these products and services, which ultimately are the responsibility of the vendor.

SPEAK
OUT!

SPEAK OUT!

SPEAK
OUT!

SPEAK OU

SPEAK OUT!

IT'S TIME FOR NJ'S ACTING EDUCATION COMMISSIONER TO ENSURE SCHOOLS ARE SAFE HAVENS

BY JESSICA LEVIN, ESQ., EDUCATION LAW CENTER

To be clear, we are not asking for new laws, only that existing legal protections be enforced by the NJDOE. These include the right of undocumented students to public education, bans on requiring information about immigration status in the enrollment process, and prohibitions against bullying and discrimination in schools.

Our public schools have never been insulated from political events. But the national election has unfortunately coincided with increased incidents of intolerance in schools and fear among many New Jersey students and families. Recent announcements of expanded deportation activities by the federal government have brought uncertainty, fear and disruption to our school communities.

Spurred by reports of school-based bullying and harassment, and fear among immigrant and undocumented families about whether it's safe to send their children to school, Education Law Center (ELC), the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey (ACLU-NJ), and the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice (NJAIJ) have asked Acting Commissioner of Education Kimberley Harrington to take action. In two letters to the Acting Commissioner, our groups have highlighted the troubling effects of intolerance and fear of deportation on school communities. We have also proposed specific measures to promote safe and welcoming schools for all.

The first letter called on Acting Commissioner Harrington to take several concrete steps to "reaffirm New Jersey's strong public policy against discrimination and to ensure safe and welcoming school environments," chief among them a declaration of New Jersey schools as safe havens. Specifically, the letter asked the Acting Commissioner to:

- Direct that all N.J. public schools operate as safe havens, providing the example of a similar action by California's State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Reaffirm the state's strong public policy against discrimination.
- Protect students' and families' personally identifiable information to the fullest extent possible under law.
- Provide example letters and Q&A sheets for

local districts to communicate these efforts to parents and answer common questions.

- Offer professional development for staff and administrators on measures to ensure schools are safe havens for students.

Both Acting Commissioner Harrington and Craig Sashihara, director of the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights, responded to this letter, reaffirming their commitment to enforce New Jersey's anti-discrimination and anti-bullying laws.

But their responses did not address our request that Acting Commissioner Harrington advise our public schools that they must operate as safe havens, nor did they mention immigrant and undocumented students and families. With increased deportation activities escalating fear among students and parents, and the resulting interference with school attendance and learning, the Acting Commissioner must directly address these issues and empower schools to do so as well.

ELC, ACLU-NJ and NJAIJ are keeping the pressure on. In early April, we wrote a second letter, urging Acting Commissioner Harrington to take prompt action on this issue in light of continued fear and concerns throughout the education community. The letter noted that states and school districts around the country—including some New Jersey districts—have declared schools to be safe havens, but New Jersey students need comprehensive action and leadership from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE).

To be clear, we are not asking for new laws, only that existing legal protections be enforced by the NJDOE. These include the right of undocumented students to public education, bans on requiring information about immigration status in the enrollment process, and prohibitions against bullying and discrimination in

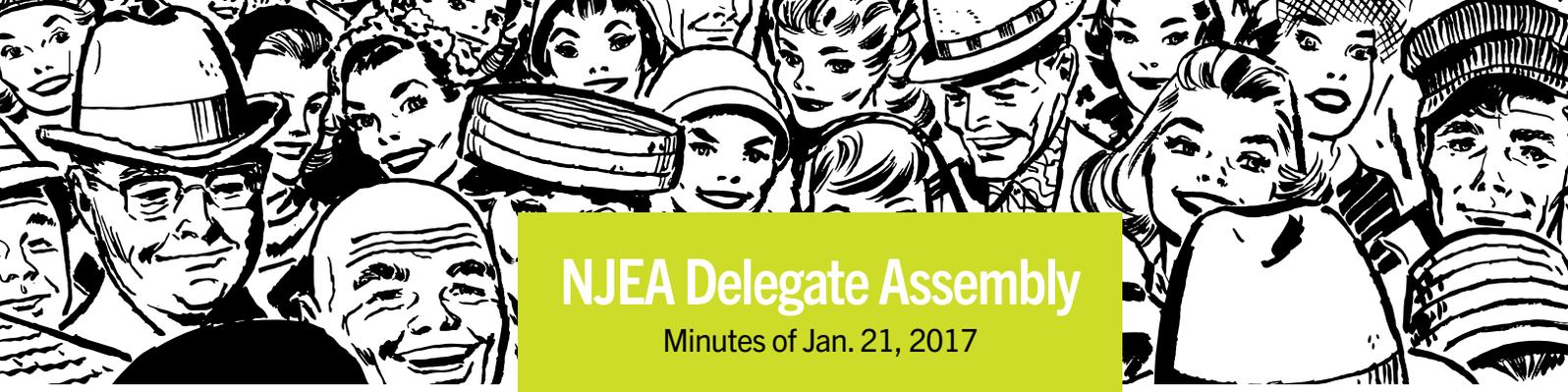
schools. Crucially, existing state and federal laws also restrict the disclosure of personally identifiable student information to law enforcement absent specific circumstances, such as the existence of a court order or lawful subpoena or a health emergency.

We have asked NJDOE to remind local districts of these requirements and guarantee that personally identifiable information is protected to the fullest extent possible under law "by ensuring that officials in every school and district are aware of these legal obligations and the DOE's expectation of local education agencies' full compliance with them." Providing comprehensive information and setting clear and uniform expectations will help everyone in our school communities handle difficult situations and foster safe environments where students can concentrate on learning.

Our latest letter also emphasized that districts must have "concrete, specific tools" to assure immigrant and undocumented students and families that our public schools remain safe and welcoming. Provision of letters and Q&A documents to communicate with families and professional development opportunities to support teachers and staff are important tools that the NJDOE is well situated to provide, and we have encouraged the department to do so.

As we await NJDOE's response, we recognize and appreciate the daily efforts of thousands of teachers and staff members to make our schools welcoming environments for all students and families. 🙏

Jessica Levin is a staff attorney at Education Law Center. Her practice includes impact litigation and direct representation to protect students' rights, with a focus on English language learners. Levin can be reached at jlevin@edlawcenter.org.



NJEA Delegate Assembly

Minutes of Jan. 21, 2017

The NJEA Delegate Assembly (DA) met on Jan. 21, 2017, at the Hyatt Regency Princeton. NJEA President Wendell Steinhauer presided.

There were 126 of 127 delegates present. Alternates were seated as follows: Montague for Tarr (Atlantic); Pontier for Carroll and Walker for Wulster (Bergen); Rizzo for Martin-Lee (Burlington); L. Zahn for A. Zahn (Camden); Rock for Innis, and Stewart for McCormick (Essex); Crane for Wilden (Middlesex); Marino for Yostpille (Monmouth); Westberg for Schorno (Morris) Tomaszewski for Odgers Lax (Passaic); Yanko for Sawey (Sussex). D'Angelo (Mercer) was absent.

Steinhauer opened the meeting with an inspirational message from Fred Frangiosa (Bergen).

John Zurka (Union) followed with the report of the Rules Committee noting that recommendations from delegates resulted in changes in the rules. Among these is the availability of lunch for nonvoting members who attend the Delegate meeting, as well as, the availability of the Delegate Assembly book at the NJEA website, and a special microphone strategically positioned for members who wished to address the body at the open microphone at 11:00 agenda item.

In his report, Steinhauer spoke about activities and actions related to partnering with likeminded groups to fight attempts to roll back the Affordable Care Act, the appointment of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education, new Charter School Regulations, and the State Board of Education appointment process. Steinhauer noted that in each case, NJEA, with the help of numerous other partners, is working on legislators to hold back an onslaught of bad decisions. He noted that Gov. Christie's school funding proposal appears dead-on-arrival thanks to the hard work of our members. Legislators on both sides of the aisle are indicating that

they cannot support his plan.

NJEA Vice President Marie Blistan provided a firsthand update on the members gathered at NJEA to demonstrate in an attempt to have the Senate override the governor's veto on the equal pay for women bill.

NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Sean M. Spiller provided the overview report that accompanied the audit report by providing an analysis of the fiscal strength as not only being in dollars and cents, but in effectiveness, efficiency of projects, programs and trainings. Budget development is based on strategic goals as established by the chief priorities of the organization, not the least of which is the possible judicial attack on the association's very existence. He noted that while we may have dodged a bullet last year with the Friedrich vs. California Teachers Association, there are numerous similar cases working their way through the courts. With that in mind, the budget is crafted to help NJEA maintain a strong advocacy position.

Steve Mazur and Kristen Butler of the accounting firm, Novak Francella presented the Audit Report for the last fiscal year. It was noted that having completed the independent audit of all financial revenue statements covering assets, liabilities, and net assets, an audit statement has been presented as delineated in the documents presented to the body in both a PowerPoint presentation and by hard copy in the Delegate Assembly book. Following questions from the floor, the audit report was properly moved, seconded and approved.

Prior to the 11 a.m. open microphone, members of the body made inquiries regarding the process for endorsement of candidates in local and school board elections.

John Coniglio (Dover) spoke to his concern that members of NJEA are disconnected from the association leadership. He shared the results of a survey conducted in his lo-

cal that demonstrated the lack of member knowledge about who the NJEA officers were, what the pressing issues of the association were, or even how Ch. 78 was affecting them. He asked that NJEA explore new technologies to better communicate with the membership.

Lori Lalama (Clifton) spoke about the apathy of membership. She also lamented that many members do not understand what Chapter 78 is, how it affects them, or why. They feel like the leaders of NJEA are disconnected with their plight.

Ronald Greco (Jersey City) spoke to the impact of Chapter 78 on the rank and file. He expressed concern at the number of educators who are leaving the profession simply because of the negative impact on take home pay. He also expressed concern about the negative tone of the NJEA officer election campaign and the need for leaders to act appropriately.

Ed Richardson began the Executive Director's report by addressing the concerns noted by members at the 11 a.m. open microphone session. He outlined the effort to bargain back the negative impact of Chapter 78 as well as an aggressive legislative agenda that has been developed to amend the current law based in part on research from the Economic Policy Institute.

Ginger Gold Schnitzer provided an overview of the PAC endorsement process that led to the endorsement in the primary of Phil Murphy, Democrat for Governor, as well as the process to be used in a possible Republican primary endorsement.

Assistant Director, Steve Swetsky asked Ellen Ogintz (Mercer) to provide an update on the NJEA UniServ Committee regarding an NBI to address the current UniServ Guidelines. She explained that there are no specific guidelines regarding the number of UniServ Reps in a given region, or even the number

of regions in the state. The committee does use the biannual leader's survey to determine needs as well as recommendations of governance, and management.

Swetsky addressed a concern about the utilization of Summer Fellows for work that may be viewed as staff work. He noted that the approach was different from previous endeavors and that some local leaders may have felt disrespected by the manner in which members were engaged without input from governance. He noted that the people who were engaged in this effort, would most likely not have been the individuals that would normally have been approached. The use of these new members created a vast network of new leaders who were utilized in different ways. The Fellows program was developed to advance organizing around the constitutional amendment. When that initiative faltered, the fellows' efforts were refocused to other issues important to the rank and file membership.

Steinhauer presented committee reports without recommendations from the Executive Committee, Leadership Committee, as well as the NJEA PAC Report, PAC Auditors Report, Secretary/Treasurer's Report and the Consolidated Financial Statements.

Christopher Cannella (Essex) questioned the manner in which the dues formula and officer salaries are calculated. It was explained that the escalator was established in 2001. The formula had been reviewed annually by the appropriate committees.

Amal Hussein (Morris) chair of the NJEA/NEA Activities Committee moved a report with two recommendations. The first recommendation was to change the funding formula from a set stipend amount from which all rooming costs were included, to a direct bill of all rooms for all delegates. The result of which is that the stipend for local delegates will increase by the cost of the room based on six nights, double occupancy rate in addition to the final day stipend for all delegates of \$500.00. State Delegates will receive an additional stipend check for travel and meal expenses at the June State Caucus Meeting. This rate is to be determined by the express costs of each convention city. Following questions and explanation, the motion was properly moved, seconded and approved.

The second recommendation was to revamp the manner by which NJEA determines the number of ethnic-minority concerns delegates based on the county or unit ethnic minority membership rather than the total membership of the county. The formula is in keeping with the NEA recommended distribution of state and minority concerns delegates. Following questions and explanation, the motion was properly moved, seconded and approved.

Ferdinand Frangiosa (Bergen) chair of the Affiliation Committee presented a recommendation of two new affiliates, as delineated in the accompany documents of the report recommending the affiliation of the International Academy of Trenton Charter School (Mercer), and the Greater Future Charter School (Sussex) as new NJEA/NEA Affiliates. The motion was properly moved, seconded and approved.

Chrystal Parr Allen (Union) moved that the report of the Certification, Evaluation and Tenure Committee presented containing five recommendations be moved as a block as delineated in the accompanying documents. The motion was properly moved, seconded and approved.

Susan Butterfield (Passaic) moved that the report of the Editorial Committee presented containing three recommendations to be moved as a block as delineated in the accompanying documents. The motion was properly moved, seconded and approved.

Geraldine Lane (Cumberland) moved the report of the Human and Civil Rights Committee containing two separate recommendations as delineated in the accompanying documents.

Jacqui Greadington (Essex) chair of the Human and Civil Rights Committee, presented the first recommendation for the Association to support legislation that provides for any death as a result of police intervention be handled by the state Attorney General's Office rather than the local prosecutor. In keeping with existing policy the committee recommended support of A-1115. The motion was properly moved, seconded and approved.

Recommendation #2 of the Human and Civil Rights is to support an association initiative to address issues of social, racial

justice and institutional racism in partnership with NEA. The motion was properly moved, seconded and approved.

Barbara Rheault (Atlantic), chair of the Working Conditions Committee, moved four recommendations as a block as delineated in the accompanying documents. The four recommendations addressed were basic updates, reconfiguration of policy language to better reflect the current political, economic, and social climate. The motion was properly moved, seconded and approved.

Jennifer Clemen (Bergen) moved New Business Item # 1: ...that any employment or paid position offered through NJEA or any NJEA-created organization or company must be negotiated with the appropriate bargaining unit. After discussion and a recommendation, it was noted to add the statement: This does not include reimbursement for expenses. The motion was properly moved, seconded and approved as amended for referral to the Executive Committee.

Susan Dziob (Bergen) moved New Business Item # 2: ...that the appropriate committee in conjunction with NJEA staff, will establish a mechanism for the electronic recording of attendance and votes on motions by members present at DA meetings, (provided that only the total vote shall be recorded electronically on normal votes and that individual member votes only be recorded upon the request of a roll call vote.) The committee would report back on that mechanism by the March DA meeting and that electronic voting and attendance would be implemented no later than September 2017. After extensive debate, amendments, and concerns regarding cost, it was moved and properly seconded to refer the motion to committee for examination for appropriate parliamentary compliance, cost and/or application of the rules of the NJEA DA. The motion to refer to committee was approved.

The meeting adjourned a 2:38 pm. 🏠

NJEA BUDGET SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR ENDING
AUGUST 31

PROPOSED INCOME AND EXPENDITURES (EXCLUSIVE OF PRIDE)

	2016 Actual	2017 Budget	2018 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
INCOME				
NJEA Membership Dues	\$110,249,651	\$113,005,585	\$116,580,030	3.16%
NEA Funds	7,771,170	6,738,600	6,787,800	0.73%
General Funds	5,285,848	2,016,500	2,030,700	0.70%
Publications	313,493	332,700	250,000	-24.86%
TOTAL INCOME	123,620,162	122,093,385	125,648,530	2.91%
EXPENDITURES				
PROGRAM SERVICES				
Governance	6,449,656	7,396,800	6,395,400	-13.54%
Legal Services	12,490,204	13,654,100	14,374,100	5.27%
Organizational Projects	3,732,751	10,000,000	6,970,000	-30.30%
Communications	5,757,463	6,028,400	5,743,800	-4.72%
Government Relations	3,910,140	3,934,500	3,953,700	0.49%
UniServ Regional Offices	20,777,074	21,382,800	21,321,900	-0.28%
UniServ Field Offices	6,490,912	6,607,400	6,586,000	-0.32%
Exec Organizational Development	7,997,839	7,515,100	7,230,700	-3.78%
Prof Development	4,549,349	5,141,400	4,977,600	-3.19%
Research & Economic Serv	5,157,654	5,698,900	5,634,500	-1.13%
Conventions	2,745,215	3,193,500	3,238,500	1.41%
Organizational Mgmt	7,127,114	7,327,800	7,099,800	-3.11%
ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL				
Executive Office	4,682,274	4,087,500	4,121,500	0.83%
Business and Finance	12,018,679	12,338,800	11,798,900	-4.38%
TOTAL PROGRAM, ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL EXPENDITURES	103,886,325	114,307,000	109,446,400	-4.25%
NET INCOME (EXPENSE) BEFORE USE OF FUNDS	19,733,837	7,786,385	16,202,130	108.08%
USE OF FUNDS				
Current Postretirement	1,428,854	500,000	500,000	0.00%
Contribution - VEBA	3,926,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	0.00%
Pension - Cash Funding Adj	7,790,663	9,600,000	10,700,000	11.46%
	13,145,517	15,100,000	16,200,000	7.28%
NET INCOME (EXP) CASH BUDGET	6,588,320	(7,313,615)	2,130	-100.03%
ADJ BACK TO ACCR'L REPORTING				
Accrued Postretirement	13,418,648	10,000,000	10,000,000	0.00%
Contribution - VEBA	(3,926,000)	(5,000,000)	(5,000,000)	0.00%
Pension - Cash Funding Adj	(7,790,663)	(9,600,000)	(10,700,000)	11.46%
	1,701,985	(4,600,000)	(5,700,000)	23.91%
NET INCOME (EXP) ACCR'L BASIS	4,886,335	(2,713,615)	5,702,130	-310.13%

PRIDE DUES

	2016 Actual	2017 Budget	2018 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
REVENUE				
Dues	\$11,000,039	\$11,230,000	\$11,655,800	3.79%
TOTAL REVENUE	11,000,039	11,230,000	11,655,800	3.79%
EXPENDITURES				
TV Advertising 3635	4,433,038	5,503,000	3,864,000	-29.78%
Radio Advertising 3636	13,500	343,000	430,000	25.36%
Web/Billboard Adv 3637	2,230,833	1,055,000	2,933,000	178.01%
TV Magazine Program 3639	704,173	720,000	720,000	0.00%
Polls/Focus Groups 3641	147,233	153,000	153,000	0.00%
Special Projects 3644	841,972	817,000	817,000	0.00%
Organizing 3907	3,069,760	2,639,000	2,738,800	3.78%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	11,440,508	11,230,000	11,655,800	3.79%
INCR/(DECR) IN NET ASSETS	(440,469)	0	0	0.00%

COMPARATIVE INCOME

	2016 Actual	2017 Budget	2018 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
DUES INCOME				
Active Professional	\$94,358,366	\$96,713,600	\$99,796,400	3.19%
Active Supportive	15,133,271	15,551,000	16,040,000	3.14%
Retired Members	734,182	724,560	727,205	0.37%
General Members	5,250	2,500	2,500	0.00%
Subscribing Members	500	750	750	0.00%
Preservice Members	18,081	13,175	13,175	0.00%
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP DUES	110,249,651	113,005,585	116,580,030	3.16%
NEA FUNDS				
UniServ Grant	2,667,775	2,674,300	2,708,500	1.28%
UniServ Option Program	372,518	389,300	404,300	3.85%
Legal Defense (DuShane)	4,519,731	3,500,000	3,500,000	0.00%
Legal Fee Reimbursements	38,599	100,000	100,000	0.00%
Member Benefits Grant	78,056	75,000	75,000	0.00%
Cooperative Projects	86,103	0	0	0.00%
Travel Expense Reimb	5,401	0	0	0.00%
Preservice Reimbursement	2,988	0	0	0.00%
TOTAL NEA FUNDS	7,771,170	6,738,600	6,787,800	0.73%
GENERAL INCOME				
Convention Exhibits & Fees	611,533	582,000	582,000	0.00%
Interest & Investments	3,696,314	500,000	500,000	0.00%
Conference & Workshop Fees	850,731	849,500	863,700	1.67%
Member Benefits Income	88,810	85,000	85,000	0.00%
Miscellaneous	38,459	0	0	0.00%
TOTAL GENERAL INCOME	5,285,848	2,016,500	2,030,700	0.70%
PUBLICATIONS INCOME	313,493	332,700	250,000	-24.86%
TOTAL INCOME PROJECTION	123,620,162	122,093,385	125,648,530	2.91%

DISASTER RELIEF FUND

	2016 Actual	2017 Budget	2018 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
REVENUE				
Contributions	\$1,000	\$390,000	\$370,000	-5.13%
Contrib from Member Benef	4,000	0	0	0.00%
TOTAL REVENUE	5,000	390,000	370,000	-5.13%
EXPENDITURES				
Relief Fund Expenditures	15,390	390,000	370,000	-5.13%
Direct Financial Assistance	4,000	0	0	0.00%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	19,390	390,000	370,000	-5.13%
INCR/(DECR) IN NET ASSETS	(14,390)	0	0	0.00%

CAPITAL ASSETS

	2016 Actual	2017 Budget	2018 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
REVENUE				
Investment Income	\$2,759,022	\$2,200,000	\$1,100,000	-50.00%
TOTAL REVENUE	2,759,022	2,200,000	1,100,000	-50.00%
EXPENDITURES				
Capital Assets	1,814,240	3,246,600	6,052,200	86.42%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,814,240	3,246,600	6,052,200	86.42%
INCR/(DECR) IN NET ASSETS	944,782	(1,046,600)	(4,952,200)	373.17%

PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

	2016 Actual	2017 Budget	2018 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
GOVERNANCE				
Executive Committee 0400	\$3,664,760	\$3,533,600	\$3,019,600	-14.55%
Delegate Assembly 0410	206,451	238,500	213,500	-10.48%
Elections 0430	331,186	252,000	272,000	7.94%
Officers 0440	1,412,772	1,419,700	1,436,400	1.18%
Organizational Activities 0470	452,487	1,540,000	1,040,000	-32.47%
Committees 1400	382,001	413,000	413,900	0.22%
TOTAL	6,449,656	7,396,800	6,395,400	-13.54%
LEGAL SERVICES PROG 0465	3,732,751	10,000,000	6,970,000	-30.30%
ORGANIZATIONAL PROJ 0471	12,490,204	13,654,100	14,374,100	5.27%
COMMUNICATIONS				
Communications Office 0600	3,623,206	3,714,000	3,780,700	1.80%
Other Services 0605	12,356	13,400	16,400	22.39%
A/V Programs 0610	70,111	83,000	80,500	-3.01%
Consultants 0615	106,708	116,500	113,500	-2.58%
Media Relations 0620	393,433	436,400	170,400	-60.95%
Public Relations 0630	102,861	137,500	79,500	-42.18%
Website Promotion 0645	16,172	25,000	20,000	-20.00%
Local Leader Comm 0650	16,233	14,500	16,500	13.79%
Review 0660	1,299,321	1,359,300	1,337,800	-1.58%
Convention Program 0670	117,062	128,800	128,500	-0.23%
TOTAL	5,757,463	6,028,400	5,743,800	-4.72%
EXEC ORGANIZATIONAL DEVEL				
Exec Org Dev Office 0900	3,374,189	3,699,700	3,639,800	-1.62%
Exec Org Program 0905	376,781	428,300	398,300	-7.00%
Active Supportive 0910	287,463	396,000	354,500	-10.48%
FAST Program 0915	94,193	100,000	95,000	-5.00%
Conference Expenses 0920	454,991	492,800	482,100	-2.17%
Min Ldrshp & Recruit 0925	6,859	13,500	10,800	-20.00%
ESP & Inclusive Org 0930	10,201	14,500	13,700	-5.52%
Strategic Org 0935	1,380,187	415,000	389,000	-6.27%
Consultants 0940	98,804	0	0	0.00%
NJEA Preservice 0945	117,191	104,900	100,000	-4.67%
Summer Leadership Conf 0955	1,028,586	1,092,500	1,051,800	-3.73%
Leadership Operations 0965	24,802	47,500	30,000	-36.84%
Fall Focus Mtgs 0970	191,474	227,100	214,000	-5.77%
New Member Orient 0975	242,604	143,700	138,000	-3.97%
Cty New Member Wkshp 0977	50,504	50,000	45,000	-10.00%
Membership Promo 0980	259,011	289,600	268,700	-7.22%
TOTAL	7,997,839	7,515,100	7,230,700	-3.78%
UNISERV PROGRAM REGIONAL OFFICES				
Regional Offices 0899	18,517,402	19,010,000	18,980,500	-0.16%
1 Vineland 0800	109,246	117,900	125,300	6.28%
2 Woodbury 0805	108,001	116,300	109,300	-6.02%
3 Voorhees 0810	109,874	148,100	132,500	-10.53%
4 Camden City 0812	93,083	0	0	0.00%
5 Moorestown 0815	58,094	66,700	64,800	-2.85%
6 Galloway Twp 0817	103,639	112,500	120,000	6.67%
7 Toms River 0820	116,933	123,700	122,800	-0.73%
8 Lawrenceville 0823	118,998	121,700	121,000	-0.58%
9 W. Long Branch 0825	145,625	169,000	163,700	-3.14%
11 Edison 0830	127,795	220,200	196,000	-10.99%
12 Cranbury 0833	105,934	0	0	0.00%
13 Flemington 0835	98,088	118,700	118,500	-0.17%
15 Cranford 0840	69,691	77,900	75,000	-3.72%
17 Parsippany 0845	59,331	70,300	67,200	-4.41%
19 W. New York 0850	81,611	91,100	86,400	-5.16%
20 Jersey City 0852	143,465	140,100	141,600	1.07%
21 Livingston 0855	118,298	134,400	172,000	27.98%
23 Emerson 0860	62,175	78,000	71,200	-8.72%
25 Hasbrouck Hgts 0865	111,731	117,600	116,400	-1.02%
27 Wayne 0870	104,271	115,700	107,800	-6.83%
28 Stanhope 0873	120,023	130,100	128,600	-1.15%
29 Higher Educ 0875	93,767	102,800	101,300	-1.46%
TOTAL	20,777,074	21,382,800	21,321,900	-0.28%

	2016 Actual	2017 Budget	2018 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
UNISERV FIELD				
UniServ Field Dir 1200	\$1,255,812	\$2,040,700	\$2,121,000	3.93%
UniServ - South 1201	2,595	2,900	2,700	-6.90%
UniServ - Central 1202	2,886	3,100	3,000	-3.23%
UniServ - Northwest 1203	5,239	5,100	4,900	-3.92%
UniServ - Northeast 1204	893,342	3,700	3,100	-16.22%
UniServ Field Program 1205	365,223	406,000	379,100	-6.63%
Field Conferences 1220	228,919	238,000	221,100	-7.10%
Field Consultants 1240	1,863,548	2,021,000	1,934,200	-4.29%
Strengthening Locals 1250	588,662	700,000	670,000	-4.29%
Higher Ed 1260	75,664	111,900	106,900	-4.47%
Leadership Operations 1265	1,209,022	1,075,000	1,140,000	6.05%
TOTAL	6,490,912	6,607,400	6,586,000	-0.32%
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT				
Prof Development Off 1000	2,702,937	3,024,900	3,022,600	-0.08%
PD Learning 1005	359,602	439,000	392,000	-10.71%
PD Capacity Bldg 1010	180,957	310,000	170,000	-45.16%
Training Consultants 1075	946,349	1,000,000	948,000	-5.20%
Priority Schools 1080	200,464	280,500	255,000	-9.09%
Best Practices Conf 1097	159,039	87,000	190,000	118.39%
TOTAL	4,549,349	5,141,400	4,977,600	-3.19%
RESEARCH & ECONOMIC SERVICES				
Research Office 1100	\$4,460,831	\$4,737,400	\$4,724,000	-0.28%
Research Services 1105	268,511	315,000	328,000	4.13%
Member Benefits 1110	415,654	628,000	564,000	-10.19%
Research Library 1120	12,659	18,500	18,500	0.00%
TOTAL	5,157,654	5,698,900	5,634,500	-1.13%
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS				
G/R Office 0700	\$2,917,966	\$2,994,500	\$2,983,700	-0.36%
Legislative Conference 0710	58,184	60,000	66,000	10.00%
Legislative Fld Proj 0720	890,823	835,000	862,000	3.23%
Legislative Publications 0730	43,167	45,000	42,000	-6.67%
TOTAL	3,910,140	3,934,500	3,953,700	0.49%
CONVENTIONS				
NJEA 1095	1,780,273	1,990,000	1,920,000	-3.52%
NEA 0475	964,942	1,203,500	1,318,500	9.56%
TOTAL	2,745,215	3,193,500	3,238,500	1.41%
ORGANIZATIONAL MGMT 0565	7,127,114	7,327,800	7,099,800	-3.11%
ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL				
Executive Office 0435	2,369,665	2,387,500	2,425,500	1.59%
Conference Expenses 0455	213,961	210,000	210,000	0.00%
Administration 0460	1,787,529	1,306,500	1,310,500	0.31%
Personnel 0480	311,118	183,500	175,500	-4.36%
TOTAL	4,682,274	4,087,500	4,121,500	0.83%
BUSINESS & FINANCE				
Business Office 0500	6,604,639	6,732,300	6,383,100	-5.19%
Accounting 0510	7,335	8,000	8,000	0.00%
Contract Obligations 0515	828,576	800,000	900,000	12.50%
Computer Center 0520	1,727,279	1,823,500	1,621,500	-11.08%
Membership Processing 0530	449,968	407,500	368,800	-9.50%
Headquarters Operation 0540	1,774,909	1,777,500	1,827,500	2.81%
Mail Room & Production 0550	191,817	290,000	235,000	-18.97%
Conference Facility 0575	51,676	60,000	55,000	-8.33%
Financial Admin Fees 0580	136,013	185,000	145,000	-21.62%
Insurances 0585	246,466	255,000	255,000	0.00%
TOTAL	12,018,679	12,338,800	11,798,900	-4.38%
POSTRETIREMENT COSTS				
Current Postretirement	1,428,854	500,000	500,000	0.00%
Accrued Postretirement	13,418,648	10,000,000	10,000,000	0.00%
TOTAL	14,847,502	10,500,000	10,500,000	0.00%
CONTRIBUTION - VEBA	3,926,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	0.00%



PROUD MOMENTS **PRIDE IN OUR GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



The **EWING TOWNSHIP EDUCATION ASSOCIATION** (Mercer) is proud to have donated \$5,000 toward the Ewing Township High School Post-Prom event. Pictured here, ETEA President Steven Lynn presents the donation to parent volunteers.

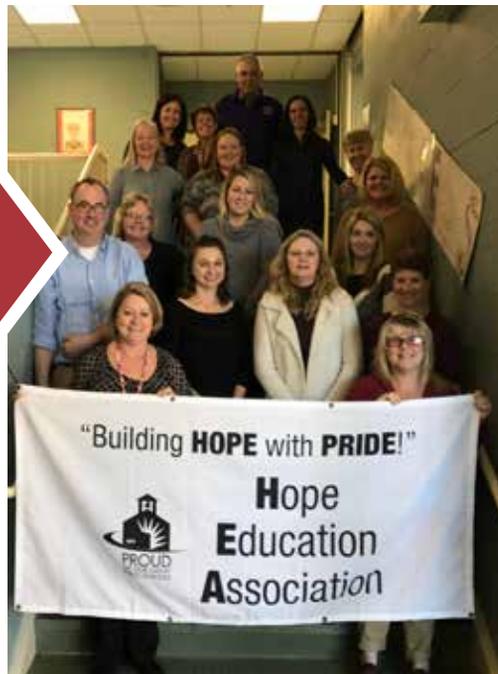


The **IRVINGTON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION** (Essex) is proud to support the district's Special Olympics program every year. This year, IEA PRIDE distributed over 300 shirts to Irvington residents. All ages came out for this great event. High school athletes volunteered alongside members of the JROTC.



The **PEQUANNOCK EDUCATION ASSOCIATION** (Morris) is proud to have worked with Community Partners for Hope as part of a community drug awareness program. Chris Herren, former NBA basketball player, gave an inspiring presentation to over 400 community members about his descent into addiction, eventual recovery, and his new life mission: to share his story with others. Project Purple, which empowers youth to stand up against substance abuse, is an initiative of The Herren Project.

The **HOPE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION** (Warren) is proud to have sponsored a walkathon on March 2 to benefit the Hope School Library and the American Heart Association. Staff, students, and parents walked up to three miles and raised \$600. Everyone who participated received a water bottle with the Hope Education Association logo bearing the slogan, "Building HOPE with PRIDE!"



The **RUTHERFORD EDUCATION ASSOCIATION** (Bergen) is proud to have held the April Food and Fun Day on April 1. Planned to benefit the Rutherford Food Pantry, at least 400 people attended the event, which showcased several student projects. Activities included arts and crafts, jewelry making, carnival games, face painting and other fun activities. As a result of this event, three cars full of items were delivered to the Rutherford Food Pantry.

Submit your best local association PRIDE photo to ProudMoments@njea.org.



JUNE & BEYOND *for more information go to njea.org*

6/2
Friday

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

6/3
Saturday

NEA RA STATEWIDE CAUCUS MEETING

6/6
Tuesday

PRIMARY ELECTION DAY

6/30-7/5
Sat-Mon

NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

7/12
Wednesday

NJEA SUMMER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING INSTITUTE (SPLI)

7/19
Wednesday

NJEA TECHSTOCK

8/5
Saturday

NJEA PAC OPERATING COMMITTEE MEETING

8/5
Saturday

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

8/5-11
Sat-Mon

SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



deadlines

6/2 | **NJEA SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**
Event date: Aug. 5-11

6/16 | **TECHSTOCK CONFERENCE**
Event date: July 19

6/26 | **NJEA SUMMER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING INSTITUTE (SPLI)**
Event date: July 12

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Will lottery proposal fix pension problems? Don't bet on it.

When Gov. Chris Christie campaigned in 2009 to become governor, he made a lot of promises. For NJEA members his most well-known broken promise was “Nothing about your pension is going to change when I am governor.” Of course, few, if any NJEA members believed that promise, which was why NJEA strongly opposed his runs for the Statehouse in 2009 and 2013.

Christie also promised he would not rely on gimmicks to balance the state budget, a promise that certainly should also apply to funding the pension systems.

During his February budget address to the Legislature, Christie proposed contributing the revenues of the state lottery into eligible pension funds. Whether this qualifies as a gimmick is a matter of interpretation, but at first glance the proposal sounds enticing. The lottery generates nearly \$1 billion a year—that’s not an amount that even comes close to full funding of the pension systems, but neither is it a paltry sum.

But before anyone suggests that transferring the lottery enterprise into the pension fund is a gamble worth taking, know that it comes with strings attached. State Treasurer Ford Scudder told a reporter that “we’ll certainly be looking for further reforms on the pension side.”

NJEA remains adamant that there will be no discussion or negotiation of benefit cuts for public school employees, regardless of any position we take on the lottery proposal. Teachers, educational support professionals, indeed all public employees, have already had deep cuts imposed on them by the Christie administration, which then refused to live up to its pension funding obligations.

NJEA will not make concessions in exchange for a proposal that does little more than attempt to get the state to

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meet obligations the administration committed itself to when Christie signed Chapter 78 into law in 2011.

Setting aside any discussion of concessions, NJEA’s own actuaries are already carefully studying the lottery proposal. We’re skeptical that the transfer will improve the state’s bond rating, which over the last eight years has been downgraded 11 times. The state treasurer also believes that the lottery transfer will lower the net pension liability, which stands near \$50 billion. NJEA remains skeptical of any rosy projections there as well.

It’s impossible to separate the proposal from the governor who is making it. Throughout his nearly eight years in office, to say that he has not shown himself to be worthy of our trust would be an understatement.

Even now, as evidenced by his call for more pension concessions, he refuses to take responsibility for his own failures. Had the governor followed the funding requirements of Chapter 78, his previous pension funding ‘solution,’ a full actuarially required payment would be included in the upcoming state budget. That full funding is not in the proposed budget. The lottery proposal has no mechanism to guarantee any better result.

The revenue allegedly guaranteed under the lottery proposal falls far short of the full required funding and is not, alone, enough to maintain the solvency of the system. It is not a solution but only, at best, potentially one step toward greater fiscal responsibility on the part of the state.

We’re not the only ones who are skeptical.

Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto says of the proposal, “I continue to have questions about whether this is an effective plan or a gimmick, but will review the proposal and give it proper consideration.”

We will do the same. 🗳️



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REGISTRATION

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After May 25: \$35

NJSEA members: \$25

Registration ends on June 16.

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njea.org/techstock

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