

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

# REVIEW

November 2017  
NJEA.ORG



*an education and advocacy resource*

A case for  
**unionization**

A **joyful** journey  
to play in K

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At the NJREA Fall luncheon on Sept. 28, NJREA member Liza Kistler of Somerset County REA raises a question during a presentation about health care insurance.



On Oct. 14, Thomas Whitaker of the South Orange Maplewood EA and Nijah Jihad participate in an exercise concerning assumptions based on a person's name at the NJEA Teaching and Learning Symposium.



LEFT: At the Higher Education Collective Bargaining Summit on Oct. 7, Lynn Richardson of Bergen Community College takes notes while participating in a discussion about *Janus v. AFSCME* with (clockwise from Richardson) Kerry Fabrizio of Warren County College, Christopher Mueller of Passaic County College, and Marilyn Brooks-Lewis of Warren County College. A full story on the Higher Education Bargaining Summit can be found on Page 15.

The Millville Education Association presented the MEA Administrator of the Year Award for 2016-17 to Doris Hall, the cafeteria manager at Silver Run Elementary School. She is an NJEA and Millville Food Services Association member. With Hall is her food service crew and other staff at Silver Run. MEA presents this award annually.





Dana Keene, now president of the International Academy of Trenton Charter School Education Association, took the lead in organizing her school's staff into an NJEA affiliate. Read the full story, starting on Page 30.

## FEATURES



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Hundreds of members across the state pounded the pavement to meet fellow members on their doorsteps. Read the stories of three of these members.



### 22 | TEEN ARTS FESTIVAL

The N.J. State Teen Arts Festival encourages students, educators and artists to connect, communicate, and express. Read about the festival here and visit the traveling art display at the NJEA Convention this month.

BY HARRISON HANEY



### 26 | PLAY IN K

Life for kindergartners is not as simple as it used to be, but teachers in Randolph know that play is productive work. Learn how Choice Time establishes a safe, stress-reducing and academically enriching environment.

BY MOLLY ZIEGELSTEIN



### 30 | A CASE FOR UNIONIZATION

The road to unionization has been treacherous for some of NJEA's newest public charter school members and their leaders, but teacher Dana Keene and her members were up to the challenge.

BY KIMBERLY CRANE

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### ON THE COVER:

NJEA members John Gardiner, Colleen Curren and Heather Flaim, discuss NJEA PAC-endorsed candidates with Delsea EA President Soyan Unkow at her doorstep. Flaim is a locally endorsed candidate for a seat on the Franklin Township Committee, Gloucester County.

PHOTO BY  
PATRICK RUMAKER

# VOLUME 91 NUMBER 04

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

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Send address changes to:

New Jersey Education Association Review  
Attn: Membership Processing  
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# REVIEW



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# Celebrating the achievements of public education

Every month has holidays and observances, but November is special because it contains American Education Week, a time for us to reflect upon and celebrate one of America's greatest achievements: a system of public education unsurpassed in the world in its ability to level the playing field and provide children with the opportunity to achieve their potential.

American Education Week celebrates public education at every level from Pre-K to Post-12, including community colleges as well as vocational and technical schools. It recognizes the contributions of educational support professionals, and sets aside Wednesday, Nov. 15 as a day to celebrate the essential role they play in creating great public schools.

No system is perfect, and as NJEA members, we are committed to doing everything in our power to ensure that inequities in the system are identified and addressed, but we have so much of which to be proud.

In this issue, we highlight the value of arts education for teenagers in "Connect, Communicate and Express: The New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival" on Page 22. Every child, including teenagers struggling to find their place in the world and understand who they are and what they want to be, can benefit from the creative and emotional outlet that the arts provide.

Research has long upheld the practice of encouraging play in young children. In "A

Joyful Journey to Play in K" on Page 26, you'll learn more about the importance of play in the academic and social-emotional lives of children.

The story of the International Academy of Trenton Charter School Education Association (IATCSE) and how its members organized a union to help them demand and protect their legal rights is featured on Page 30. At a time when unions are under increasing attack, it's valuable to reflect on how few protections are available to educators who go it alone.

We also hear from three members about why they are taking an active role in electing pro-public education candidates to help maintain and build upon the successes of our great public schools. You can read about them on Page 20. Surely, no one can doubt the impact that elected officials have on the quality of our schools the lives of our students and members.

As always, thank you for all that you do for public education. You deserve much more than one week each year to celebrate your hard work, expertise, and achievements, but know that your union and professional association always recognizes the work that you do and the impact that you have on our students and our future.

*Marie Blistan*

NJEA President Marie Blistan and her husband Bob Blistan greet Annice Benamy, a music teacher in Elizabeth and a presenter at the NJEA Teaching and Learning Symposium.



## Officers Online

Marie Blistan  
Twitter

**@MarieBlistan: Stan Karp & author Linda Christensen. Racial and social justice at Learning Symposium. #RethinkingSchools.**

On Oct. 14, NJEA President Marie Blistan tweeted a photo of Stan Karp and Linda Christensen, who work with Rethinking Schools ([rethinkingschools.org](http://rethinkingschools.org)). Christensen, author of *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up: Teaching About Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word*, among many other titles, presented the keynote address at the NJEA Teaching and Learning Symposium that day.

Sean M. Spiller  
Twitter

**@SpillerForNJEA: Go @PhilMurphyNJ! Showing why he's what NJ needs. #NJGovdebate**

On Oct. 10, NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller was in the audience at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center to witness the first televised debate between Democrat Phil Murphy and Republican Kim Guadagno. Ambassador Phil Murphy is the NJEA PAC-endorsed candidate for governor.

Steve Beatty  
Twitter

**@SteveBeatty928: Great day getting to meet, and listen to, @JohnKerry as he lays out the case for electing @PhilMurphyNJ! #GOTV @NJEA**

On Oct. 11, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty greeted Secretary John Kerry at a VFW hall in Clifton. Beatty and Kerry were there with Ambassador Phil Murphy and Speaker Sheila Oliver to support them in their bid to become the next governor and lieutenant governor of New Jersey.

# Know. Lead. Act.

## Become an associate LAT member

Do you love politics? Are you interested in influencing the officials who make the decisions that affect your job? The NJEA Government Relations Division has the perfect program for you: the County Legislative Action Team, or LAT. And this year, the program is being expanded so that any member who wants to take part in politics can join.

Currently, every county association has an LAT, which organizes members for legislative and political action. Members of the NJEA Government Relations Committee and Congressional Contact Committee work with an NJEA lobbyist, the county association, and UniServ staff to inform LAT members about legislative, political and regulatory goals at the state and federal levels, as well as issues at the local and county association levels. LAT members bring this information back to their local associations, where members take action. This can include contacting elected or appointed officials, recruiting volunteers to work on campaigns, attending lobby days at the Legislature or the State Board of Education, and meeting with legislators.

As a result of the LAT structure, many NJEA members have developed relationships with elected officials and become involved in campaigns. LAT members have played an important role in moving the regulatory, political and legislative program of the NJEA and the NEA forward. LAT members inundate legislators with phone calls and emails when bad bills are moving; they attend State Board lobby days and write letters to the board members to influence regulatory changes; and they help

pro-public education candidates get elected by working on campaigns.

However, joining an LAT has been limited in two ways. First, LAT members are appointed by their local president. While it is important for each local to have an individual representative to the county LAT, more participants from each local would mean more people have the opportunity to develop relationships with elected and appointed officials, hear from party leaders, and meet endorsed candidates. Second, membership in LATs is limited to the county where people work. Those who live in one county and work in a different county miss the opportunity to influence officials where they vote.

Because NJEA members asked about expanding the LAT program beyond these limits, the Government Relations Division has created the Associate LAT program. This program allows all NJEA members who want to become involved in campaigns and politics to go to LAT meetings either where they work, where they live, or both. Stop by the Government Relations booth on Main Street NJEA at the NJEA Convention, or look for the postcard you'll be receiving at the end of this month to find out how to join an LAT.

Everything about your job and your day—your salary and benefits, the amount of time you work, maybe even what you can eat at lunch (if your district has a peanut-free policy)—is determined by elected officials, or the appointed officials they choose.

Shouldn't you be involved in politics?

## Clearing the record

In the October *NJEA Review*, two affiliated-group listings had errors.

In the listing for the N.J. Association of School Social Workers, listed on Page 47, one of the contact emails had an incorrect letter. The correct email address is [NATLCSW@hotmail.com](mailto:NATLCSW@hotmail.com).

The N.J. Association of Speech Language Specialists was listed in two categories: Speech/Language and Special Education. The listing under Special Education had outdated dues and contact information. The dues are \$35 or \$15 for retired and matriculated student members.

The editor of the *Review* apologizes for the misspelling of governor on the cover of the October *NJEA Review* and in a pull-quote on Page 20. The first "r" was dropped. In the article itself, and in the headline, the word is correctly spelled, but such errors are particularly embarrassing in a publication written by and for educators.

## Selfie of the month

West Orange educators Kimya Jackson (l), a second-grade teacher, and Lisa Schustak (r), an elementary school art teacher, visited Cuba for educational purposes with LaPrice Weatherington, a Newark Public Schools guidance counselor. They visited the International School and interviewed the school's director, Michael Lees.

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





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# The Law and You

## Anti-worker case before US Supreme Court threatens union members' rights

### A call to action

By Aileen O'Driscoll, Esq.

More than ever, our members must unite and protect each other. Your membership matters and the latest news from the U.S. Supreme Court shows why.

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear and decide *Janus v. AFSCME* before next summer. At issue is whether a state can allow a public-sector employer to require all members of a collective bargaining unit to pay their fair share of costs associated with the collective bargaining process. These include the negotiation and enforcement of collective bargaining agreements.

#### Fair-share fees

Fair-share fees—also referred to as agency fees—have been a fundamental part of the public-sector collective bargaining arena for decades. The Supreme Court established fair-share fees in *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, decided in 1977. In that case, the plaintiff challenged a Michigan public-sector union's imposition of full dues on an employee, alleging that charging him for the costs incurred by the union for political and lobbying activity violated his First Amendment right to free speech.

The court established that a public-sector union, such as NJEA, could not compel employees who did not agree with the union's political and lobbying activities to pay for that part of the union's work. However, the union could collect dues from nonmembers for the cost of activities related to collective bargaining and contract enforcement. The court reasoned that where a union serves as the exclusive representative, and acts in the best interest of all employees, the collection of the fair share of these costs from nonmembers was constitutional.

Since *Abood*, a public school employee in New Jersey who opts to be a nonmember of

NJEA receives the benefit of the local association's work negotiating and enforcing the district's collective bargaining agreement. The nonmember pays his or her fair share of dues, which excludes the cost of political/lobbying activity. The nonmember has no voting rights in the union, cannot participate in the association's governance and is not eligible for many of the expansive benefits made available to members, such as professional development and legal representation.

#### Challenges to Abood

The *Abood* rule is sound and has been reaffirmed in hundreds of cases since 1977, with courts nationally consistently holding that the fair-share fee is constitutional. However, in 2012, the Supreme Court began to question this principle. In a seminal 2014 case, *Harris v. Quinn*, the Supreme Court, which addressed fair-share fees for homecare workers, who are nontraditional public sector workers, made clear that it was growing more skeptical of the *Abood* standard.

Most recently, in *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments stemming from claims challenging *Abood* on First Amendment grounds. The case was argued before the Supreme Court but because of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's unexpected passing, the court, left with eight justices, issued a tied decision. The First Amendment question at issue remained unanswered. At the time that the *Friedrichs* case was argued, the U.S. government and the state of California supported the fair-share fee law, as did many other states and friends of the court, including the National Education Association.

#### New administration, full court

With a new administration in the White House, and conservative Justice Neil Gorsuch having been appointed to fill the vacancy left by Scalia, the issue is before the court again in the *Janus* case. Mark Janus, an Illinois public-sector employee, is challenging the constitutionality of the fees he pays to the majority representative. He is represented by the Right to Work Foundation, a conservative organization funded by billionaire corporate interests.

Having been defeated in federal court at the trial and appellate levels, the Right to Work Foundation filed a petition with the Supreme Court that was accepted for consideration by the court on Sept. 28. An adverse decision in *Janus* will upend the fair-share rule in New Jersey and in every other fair-share state because nonmembers will become "free riders." This means that nonmembers will no longer have to pay their fair share, but they will reap the benefits that the majority representative—your local association—negotiates and enforces. A decision is expected before the end of this school year.

NJEA's membership is one of the largest and strongest in the country. A continued strong membership will send a clear message to the anti-worker forces that NJEA will not be intimidated.

Let's keep it that way. 🙏

*Aileen O'Driscoll is the managing attorney in NJEA's legal services division. She can be reached at aodriscoll@njea.org.*

**NJEA's membership is one of the largest and strongest in the country. A continued strong membership will send a clear message to anti-worker forces that NJEA will not be intimidated.**



Brenda Brathwaite '05, '07, '11 is an eighth grade teacher at Pennsylvania Avenue School in Atlantic City and a student in the Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership Program.



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# Cool Stuff



## Enter the New Jersey Hall of Fame essay contest

Who belongs in the New Jersey Hall of Fame? The New Jersey Hall of Fame wants your students to participate in the decision-making process. New Jersey public school students are invited to participate in the New Jersey Hall of Fame essay contest. Students may nominate potential inductees—living or deceased. Nominations may include famous people as well as ordinary citizens who do extraordinary things. Students should research or interview, if possible, the person they wish to nominate and write an essay no longer than 500 words.

Essays must be typed and double-spaced. The student must include his/her name, age, grade level as of March 15, 2018, address, phone number, parent/guardian's name, school name and school district. If the essay is a school project, the student should also include the name of the teacher who assigned the activity.

Nominations must be postmarked by March 16, 2018. Send entries to NJ Hall of Fame Contest, NJEA, 180 West State Street, PO Box 1211, Trenton, NJ 08607-1211, Attn: Dawn Hiltner or email [dhiltner@njea.org](mailto:dhiltner@njea.org) with "NJHOF Essay Contest" in the subject line.

Entries will be divided into two age categories: Intermediate (Grades 4 through 8) and High School (Grades 9-12). Entries will be judged by a panel of NJEA and New Jersey Hall of Fame representatives. Winners will be notified by early April. The winning students will be invited to the New Jersey Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on May 6, 2018.

The winning students' nominations will be forwarded to the New Jersey Hall of Fame Academy for consideration in 2019. This ethnically and culturally diverse body, composed of 100 of New Jersey's most prominent organizations and media outlets, will review nominees and ultimately select Hall of Fame nominees to be put forth for the public vote in the fall. NJEA serves on the Voting Academy.

For more information about the New Jersey Hall of Fame, visit [www.njhalloffame.org](http://www.njhalloffame.org).

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- Webinars discussing global issues.
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The application deadline is Feb. 5, 2018.

Learn more and apply today at [neafoundation.org](http://neafoundation.org).

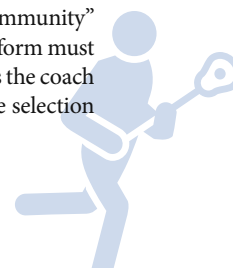
## Nominate scholar athletes

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

Thirty students will be selected based on nominations received from high schools around the state. Each week, the Scholar Athlete will be featured in a news segment on News 12 New Jersey. In June, the winners, their families, coaches and teachers will be honored at a luncheon. One student will be selected as 2017-18 Scholar Athlete of the Year and receive a \$5,000 scholarship. Four runners-up will receive \$1,000 each.

To nominate a student, visit [njea.org](http://njea.org), slide over to "Community" and click on "Partnership and Contests." The nomination form must be signed by the principal or guidance counselor, as well as the coach or athletic director. A News 12 sports panel will make the selection and notify the winners and their schools.

The application deadline is March 2, 2018. 🇺🇸



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# NJEA Report

## NJEA Convention updates, cancellations, and additions

### NJ Labor-Management Educator Collaborative session added

Since the NJEA Convention Program went to press, a new workshop titled NJEA Labor-Management Educator Collaborative has been added.

Research demonstrates that successful labor-management partnerships and the use of collaborative practices improve student performance and decrease teacher turnover in schools, especially high-poverty schools.

In this session, you will look at the research into labor-management collaborative programs and discuss an ongoing state-level initiative between NJEA, the New Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, and Rutgers University, who have partnered to work in local school districts and local associations on projects and district initiatives.

You'll also hear from NJEA leaders and members who are participating in the statewide program who will talk about their experiences and the improvements they have seen in student achievement, staff morale and member engagement and participation in local association work.

The program will take place on Thursday, Nov. 9, 1:30-3 p.m. in Room 405 in the Atlantic City Convention Center.

### Veterans honored during convention

#### Educator veterans to be honored at Resorts Casino Hotel

The New Jersey Veterans of Foreign Wars and the New Jersey Veterans Network are honoring two educators who are veterans: Michael Gehm, a social studies teacher at Secaucus High School and Edward Graf a social studies teacher at Somerset Vocational Technical High School.

Gehm and Graf will be recognized on Thursday, Nov. 9, 7-9 p.m. in the ballroom at Resorts Hotel Casino. Admission is \$20. There will be food and a DJ. All money collected at the event benefits the New Jersey Veterans Network.

Gehm, a native of Bennettsville, South Carolina, had joined the U.S. Navy when he graduated from high school. An accident on the USS Normandy left Gehm a paraplegic.

Through his own dogged determination, the support of his wife and family, and inspiration from a history teacher at Stevens Institute of Technology, Gehm entered St. Peter's University ultimately earning his teaching certification. He has taught at Secaucus High School for over 20 years.

Edward Graf is known for his work with disabled veterans and first responders. Now expanded to more high schools in Somerset County, Graf initiated "Proud to Be an American Day" at Somerset Vocational Technical High School to honor fallen veterans and to promote patriotism and unity. The event also honors area residents who are veterans or active members of the military. Formerly a teacher in Union Township, Graf headed up "Proud to Be an American Day" at Kawameeh Middle School.

### NJEA Patriots Alliance to hold special breakfast

The NJEA Patriots Alliance is hosting a breakfast for NJEA members who are veterans. The breakfast will take place on Thursday, Nov. 9, 8:30-9:30 a.m. in the Pearl Ballroom at the Sheraton Atlantic City Convention Center Hotel. To reserve your space contact Meredith Barnes at [mbarnes@njea.org](mailto:mbarnes@njea.org).

### Workshop cancellations

Since the NJEA Convention Program went to press, the following workshops have been cancelled. Page notations indicate where in the NJEA Convention Program you will find more details on these cancelled workshops so that you may make alternate plans.

- The AASL 25 Best Websites for Teaching and Learning (Page 10)
- Anxiety in the Classroom: Principles and Strategies Teachers Should Know (Page 29)
- Peace Zone: A Classroom Environment of Calm, Respect and Joy (Page 45)
- Stand-up NJ! (Page 49)

### Time correction

The workshop, "Creating Change through Social Justice and Cultural Competence," which will take place at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 9, in Room 309, concludes at 4:30 p.m. The NJEA Convention Program incorrectly listed the ending time as 4 p.m. See Page 31 of the NJEA Convention Program for details about this program.

## EWEA president honored as Shining Star

East Windsor Education Association President Ellen Ogintz was honored by East Windsor Mayor Janice S. Mironov and Hightstown Mayor Lawrence Quattrone with the Mayors' Shining Star Individual Award at a May 20 gala at the East Windsor Holiday Inn. The event marked the 50th anniversary of Better Beginnings, a nonprofit organization that serves economically disadvantaged children in East Windsor and Hightstown.

Ogintz was recognized for her 38 years of service as a teacher and for her previous achievements as a Mercer County Teacher of the Year and Gifted and Talented Teacher of the Year. As EWEA president, Ogintz was honored for leading the local association's community service activities such as bringing to East Windsor the resources of the NJEA Families and Schools Work Together for Children program and deep community involvement through the NJEA PRIDE in Public Education program.

"I am a shining star only because of the reflection of the stars around me: my family, my friends, my colleagues and my union," Ogintz said. "Together we shine." Marie Blistan, now NJEA president, Sean M. Spiller, now NJEA Vice President, and Steve Beatty, now NJEA secretary-treasurer, attended the event to honor Ogintz's long dedication to NJEA members in EWEA and across the state.



NJEA's officer team attended the Shining Star Gala to witness EWEA President Ellen Ogintz's award recognition. From left: NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty, NJEA President Marie Blistan, Ogintz, and NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller.

# NJEA higher education collective bargaining summit focuses on political action

NJEA's higher education members met to discuss the impact of county and state politics on collective bargaining for faculty and staff at the state's 19 community colleges. For the first portion of the day, NJEA Government Relations Director Ginger Gold Schnitzer, Bergen County Education Association President Sue McBride and NJEA Associate Director for Government Relations Mike Flynn discussed the intersection of collective bargaining, elections and political activity.

Schnitzer noted that each county's board of chosen freeholders appoints the board of trustees for its respective community college.

"When you bargain a contract for your members, you sit across the table from people who are appointed by people who are elected," Schnitzer said. "If you want to have power at the table, you need to engage in elections."

But Schnitzer noted that political action must continue beyond the election.

"It isn't enough to elect leaders who share your goals, you have to continue to communicate with them once they take office," Schnitzer said. "If you don't regularly communicate with the people you helped to elect and provide them with information, someone else will."

Schnitzer noted that all of the work a local association undertakes is a form of organizing whether it is to bargain a contract, to enforce a contract, to provide professional development, or to ensure good education policy—particularly through elections and lobbying.

"There is only one reason we engage in politics: it is for good policy outcomes," Schnitzer said. "Apply the skills you use in organizing in other areas of your association work to political action."

## It comes down to relationships

McBride noted that while NJEA has higher education members in every county, for the most part, county association presidents—whether teachers or educational support professionals—come from a K-12 background. She stressed the importance of higher education members developing a rapport with their county association leadership.

McBride said that she relies on the leadership teams of the local associations at Bergen County Community College to make sure she knows about and understands the important issues at stake for higher education faculty and staff. For McBride, these include Faculty Association President Toby DeMarco, Faculty Senate President Alan Kaufman and Higher Education

NJEA Executive Committee Member Peter Helff, among others.

In her position as BCEA president, McBride takes the concerns of community college members in her county to the appointed community college trustees boards and the elected county and state government leaders with whom she has regular contact.

McBride encouraged the leadership teams of the state's community college local associations to never hesitate to reach out to their respective county association presidents. She said such contacts help county association presidents understand the framework of their particular county's institution of higher education, and provide the opportunity to explain key issues, personalities, and other important factors.

"I value the interaction with my higher education members because I know what I don't know," McBride said.

Brent Costleigh, an associate professor of psychology at Brookdale Community College and an association representative there, told McBride about the sense of isolation experienced by NJEA members who teach at the higher education level. The issues that are important to higher education members should be as much a matter of course for association leadership as K-12 issues are, he said.

"This work comes down to relationships," McBride said.

She suggested that community college local associations invite county association leadership to their meetings. She also stressed the importance of higher education locals sending representatives to county meetings.

Helff highlighted the value of county associations endorsing freeholder candidates and maintaining a relationship with the freeholder board.

"Even if the county association screens freeholder candidates and asks questions about higher education, it's important that a higher ed member be at the PAC screening to be able to tell if the answers that the candidates give are good answers," Helff said.

Flynn discussed the upcoming statewide election and the importance to all members, including higher education members, in the outcome. How Chapter 78 is addressed will be a direct outcome of who wins the governorship and who leads the Senate and Assembly. Chapter 78 is the pension and benefits reform law passed in 2011 that has led to reduced take-home pay every year for PreK-12 through higher education members.

Flynn also discussed NJEA PAC-endorsed gubernatorial candidate Ambassador Phil Murphy's positions on community college funding and on tuition-free community college for New Jersey residents.

## Open space conversations

The afternoon portion of the day focused on the issues chosen by the members attending the summit. During lunch, individual members posted topics that they would like to discuss. After lunch, members gathered at tables numbered to correspond with the topic that drew their interest.

Topics for discussion included contract salary strategies to raise faculty pay for the long term, the concept of tuition-free community college, and the upcoming decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*, which will affect NJEA and its affiliate's authority to fair share dues from agency fee members.

For more information on the *Janus* case, go to Page 10.

## ICYMI

**Why is Tom Moran flacking for the Sweeney-Norcross machine?**

Published Sept. 24, 2017

**Incorporating Veterans Day into the classroom and school**

Published Oct. 2, 2017



# Understanding the SEHBP rate increase

## Protecting quality, seeking efficiency

On Jan. 1, 2018, the School Employees Health Benefits Program (SEHBP) will begin a new plan year. While there are no plan design changes or reductions in benefit levels, the SEHBP will experience a 13 percent rate increase in the medical plans and a 13.3 percent rate increase in the prescription plans for active members.

NJEA has representatives on the School Employees Health Benefits Commission (commission) as well as the School Employees Health Benefits Plan Design Committee (Design Committee). Both bodies have important roles in the functioning of the SEHBP—the commission is responsible for overseeing the administration of the plan, while the Design Committee is responsible for monitoring the plan design and making any changes, when necessary.

### Protecting quality of care, preventing cost-shifting

For 2018, the Design Committee was approached by the state to make changes to the plans. The proposed changes would have lowered premiums slightly by requiring members to pay more for their health care in the form of higher copayments, higher coinsurances, and increased deductibles. NJEA opposes cost-shifting because it hurts members and does nothing to deal with the underlying problem of skyrocketing health care costs.

Some of the modifications proposed by the state would have meant drastic changes to the benefit levels for members and would have shifted costs to the employee. Changes to the provider network and lower reimbursement rates for certain services result in higher charges for patients. The state's actuaries estimated that implementing all proposed changes to the plan would have resulted in only approximately 4.7 percent savings—ultimately turning the 13 percent increase to about an 8.3 percent increase.

In reviewing the impact of the proposed changes, the Design Committee, including and NJEA's representatives, opted to keep all current benefit levels the same, because a member switching from NJ Direct 10 to NJ Direct 15 could save approximately the same amount in their mandated Chapter 78 insurance deductions while experiencing less impact on the cost of care and access to providers. Additionally, members who wished to maintain exactly the same benefit level had the option to do so. NJEA believes such

choices about health care coverage should be made by individual employees, not mandated for everyone.

The State Health Benefits Program (SHBP), which insures state workers, has opted to make many of the proposed plan design changes that the SEHBP rejected. As a result premiums are currently somewhat lower. However, state workers are paying more at the point of care. Ultimately, we believe those efforts to reduce premiums through continual cost-shifting are unsustainable, temporary, and not an effective way to reduce the cost of care. Without making drastic changes to the way health care is delivered, premiums will continue to rise no matter how much the SHBP or SEHBP cut benefits for subscribers.

### Proactive measures to control health care costs

NJEA has led the way in recent years on efforts to reduce the cost of health care. Both the SEHBP and SHBP have implemented measures that result in cost containment without compromising care and benefit levels. In 2016, both plans put limitations on the use of compound medications that do not have a clinical benefit. The change affected less than 2 percent of subscribers, who still receive medications that are clinically necessary, and saved millions of dollars.

At the same time, both the SEHBP and SHBP adopted the Direct Primary Care Medical Home pilot program for all members enrolled in SEHBP/SHBP PPO plans. This program gives members and their dependents an enhanced primary care experience with physicians who know them and will work with them to meet their health needs and goals. There is little or no wait time in the doctor's office and enrolled members have 24/7 access to their physician via phone, secured email and the health app. This program is offered at no additional cost and there are no copays. Members can try the program risk-free with no out-of-pocket expense. Similar programs in other states have helped stabilize premiums and NJEA expects similar results as more members see the benefits of participating in that patient-centered approach.

Earlier this year, the SEHBP and the SHBP took the initiative in changing the way that the state handles bids for prescription drug coverage, implementing an electronic bidding process that

greatly reduces costs. By streamlining bidding for prescription drugs and making those bids far more transparent, the state is expected to save \$1.6 billion over the next three years.

Those three changes are all ways to reduce cost without harming the quality of care or shifting additional costs onto employees.

NJEA will continue to advocate for affordable access to high quality health care for NJEA members. NJEA will also continue to lead the way in advocating reforms that can help control the cost of health care for all New Jersey residents.

**NJEA believes such choices about health care coverage should be made by individual employees, not mandated for everyone.**

### The numbers

# 821

**The number of local associations in New Jersey affiliated with NJEA. There are more local associations than school districts in the state because some school districts have multiple local associations representing different job categories, while others are "all-inclusive," meaning one local association covers all teachers and educational support professionals in the district.**

## BCEA raises conversation on transgender student safety

The Bergen County Education Association (BCEA) hosted a luncheon for the county's superintendents and local presidents on Sept. 26 to present an introduction to ensuring safe schools for all students and staff, including those who identify as transgender. BCEA invited sixth-grade Teaneck teacher Dr. Amy Moran, Pascack Valley Superintendent Eric Gundersen, and Northern Valley Regional High School senior Jackson Evangelista to make a presentation focused on students who are transgender.

The luncheon is an annual event that is partially funded through an NJEA PRIDE in Public Education grant.

### State requires development of transgender student policies

A discussion of safer schools for transgender students is nothing new for Bergen County. In 2015, the Pascack Valley Regional High School District made national news for its development of a policy for transgender students.

Nor is a discussion of policies to protect transgender students anything new for educators throughout New Jersey. On July 21, Gov. Chris Christie signed S-3067/A4652, a law requiring the New Jersey Department of Education to "to assist schools in establishing policies and procedures that ensure a supportive and nondiscriminatory environment for transgender students."

"When we were considering what topic to address at our luncheon, we were aware of the law, but we were also aware of the stories we were seeing on the news that were reducing the needs of transgender people to a one-dimensional fight over bathrooms," McBride said. "We knew how upsetting these stories had to be to our transgender students, and we worried about the impact such stories could have on how cisgender students learn misinformation about gender identity."

Cisgender is a term to describe people who are not transgender. "Cis" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side as," and is an antonym for "trans."

### Are your schools safe enough?

Moran, Gundersen, Evangelista and his adviser at Northern Valley, Marisa Januzzi, collaborated to develop a presentation for the luncheon.

They are also collaborating on a longer feature article for the December *NJEA Review* on students who are not cisgender. What follows here is only a brief overview of what they had to say.

Moran is the adviser to the SPECTRUM, the LGBTIQ+ Alliance, at Teaneck High School. She cited data from various sources, including the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, indicating that 3 to 5 percent of students do not identify as cisgender.

"That's 36-60 students in a 1,200-student high school," Moran said.

"If you think you don't have any transgender, gender nonbinary or intersex students in your schools, it's because your schools aren't safe enough for them to come out, not that there aren't any transgender, gender nonbinary, or intersex students in your schools," Moran said.

Gundersen recounted the story of how Pascack Valley developed its transgender student policy.

The policy as initially introduced had to be tabled and reworked as the board realized that its heavy focus on discussing the legal aspects of the policy crowded out the opportunities to educate the community on what it means to be transgender. The district, which received national attention as it developed its policy, was seen to be at the forefront on providing safer spaces for transgender students. But Gundersen believes that there is much more to be done.

"I continue to question whether or not we are truly a safe enough environment as a school to be welcoming to students to come to us to share what they are struggling with," Gundersen said.

Evangelista's presentation was the highlight of the luncheon.

Evangelista identifies as a transgender student who began the process of coming out to his family and friends in the summer of 2015 after his freshman year. He discussed his early struggles to resist being made to conform to a female understanding of gender and his gradual realization the pronouns "she" and "her" did not apply to him.

He tearfully recounted the story of coming out to his parents, but acknowledged their loving response.

"My mom reached for my hand and she told me, 'we love you and we are always going to be there for you,'" Jackson said. "It was very comforting to hear that from my parents. The fact that they are trying to understand me when I tell them, 'I am a boy, and I want to be your son' is the most you can ask of someone."

Demonstrating continued love and support, his parents were with him at the BCEA presentation, beaming with pride.

The December *NJEA Review* will recount Evangelista's story in his own words.

**"If you think you don't have any transgender, gender nonbinary or intersex students in your schools, it's because your schools aren't safe enough for them to come out, not that there aren't any transgender, gender nonbinary, or intersex students in your schools."**

**– Dr. Amy Moran**

Norah Peck (Interim Executive Superintendent, Bergen County); Dr. Amy Moran; Jackson's father, Bienvenido Evangelista; James Santana (Northern Valley Regional Superintendent); Jackson's mother, Evelyn Evangelista; Erik Gundersen; Jackson Evangelista; Sue McBride and Marisa Januzzi.

## Ocean City ASL teacher named New Jersey State Teacher of the Year

Amy Andersen, a high school American Sign Language (ASL) teacher at Ocean City High School in Cape May County, has been named the 2017-18 New Jersey State Teacher of the Year. Andersen's achievement was announced at the Oct. 4 meeting of the New Jersey State Board of Education.

Andersen told the State Board that she was honored to be named the state's teacher of the year and immediately praised her colleagues across the state.

"Nothing thrives in isolation, and certainly no one arrives at a momentous occasion such as this without mentors, love, and support," Andersen said. "I am not alone, because today I stand here with all of the exceptional teachers throughout New Jersey who are committed to offering the best of themselves, and inspiring our children, every single day."

Andersen was accompanied by her family, her local and county association presidents, and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty, who represented NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller, the official liaison to the state teacher of the year program.

"I have every confidence that our newest state teacher of the year will showcase the level of excellence that we have here in New Jersey and will represent our profession with grace, class and style," Beatty said.

Beatty noted that Andersen will be a featured speaker at the 2017 NJEA Convention. She will be speaking at the Celebration of Excellence on Friday, Nov. 10 at 1:30 p.m. in the Convention Center in Room 302.

### Andersen's path to ASL

Andersen grew up in Cape May County where she was named the Cape May County Teacher of the Year in the spring. She earned a bachelor's degree in flute performance from Indiana University and a master's degree in deaf education from McDaniel College. Andersen also achieved national board certification in Exceptional Needs Specialist: Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

After nine years in Boston, Massachusetts as a teacher of the deaf, she returned to her roots in 2004 to raise a family. It was then, with 42 students, that Andersen began the ASL program at Ocean City High School. Community-oriented activities, such as ASL socials at local coffee shops and evening performances, which raise scholarship funds, immerse students in deaf and hard of hearing culture, helping them to build confidence. Her popular and respected program has

galvanized her students and community, inspiring a number of students to pursue ASL-related careers.

"I'm very excited that Amy Andersen has been chosen to represent the district and the state as an example of our profession," said Ocean City Education Association President Franklin Butterick. "Amy's passion for her students and the deaf community is a great example for us all to follow."

"We have so many deserving teachers in New Jersey, but I am extremely proud that the state teacher of the year for 2018 comes from Cape May County," said Kathleen Parker, president of the Cape May County Education Association. "Amy will be an exemplary role model for teachers throughout the state and the nation as she represents our profession."

Unable to attend the announcement, Spiller conveyed his congratulations to Andersen.

"Here in New Jersey, we have exceptional educators and the candidates for Teacher of the Year show just how impressive they really are," Spiller said. "We congratulate Amy Andersen on receiving this tremendous honor this year. She has earned the accolades and we know she will serve as a wonderful example of the educational excellence serving in our New Jersey public schools. NJEA is proud to partner with the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and Educational Testing Services (ETS) on the Teacher of the Year program, highlighting these inspiring individuals."

As the New Jersey Teacher of the Year, Andersen will have a six-month sabbatical to tour the state and work with the NJDOE, courtesy of program sponsor ETS, which also provides a new laptop computer. SMART Technologies will provide the State Teacher of the Year, as well as the other six finalists, with the SMART Classroom Technology Package, which includes hardware and software.

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



Above: NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty, New Jersey State Teacher of the Year Amy Andersen, Ocean City EA President Franklin Butterick, and Cape May County EA President Kathleen Parker.

## Greadington completes term as NEA Black Caucus chair

### Melton elected as new chair

Jacqui Greadington, president of the East Orange Education Association and an accomplished vocalist and educator, recently completed her term as the chair of the NEA Black Caucus.

Greadington was elected to lead the caucus at the 2009 NEA RA.

At the time of her election, Greadington said, "My job will be to lead the Black Caucus in promoting an NEA that is inclusive. We must make sure that all voices are heard, because together we make a difference. We are strongest when we actively seek to involve all of our members."

As chair, Greadington was passionate about educating members on institutional racism and combatting it.

In addition to her other leadership roles, Greadington is also the chair of the NJEA Human and Civil Rights Committee.

### Melton elected chair

NJEA member Gary Melton Sr. has been elected to succeed Greadington as the chair of the caucus.

Melton is the vice president of the Atlantic City Education Association, the president of the Atlantic County Council of Education Associations, and an NEA Director.

"I am honored to have been elected chair of the NEA Black Caucus," Melton said. "I look forward to building on the amazing work that Jacqui has done, and I plan to bring particular attention to the school-to-prison pipeline."

Melton runs the responsible thinking class in Atlantic City's Pennsylvania Avenue School to help replace ineffective and discriminatory discipline practices. The class was recently featured on Classroom Close-up NJ. Watch it at [classroomcloseup.org/segments/responsible-thinking](http://classroomcloseup.org/segments/responsible-thinking).

To learn more about the NEA Black Caucus, visit [www.neablackcaucus.org](http://www.neablackcaucus.org). 📺



Above: Newly named New Jersey State Teacher of the Year Amy Andersen addresses the State Board of Education on Oct. 4.

Below: NJEA's officers congratulate EOEA President Jacqui Greadington for her service to the profession nationwide as chair of the NEA Black Caucus. From left: NJEA President Marie Blistan, NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller, EOEA President Jacqui Greadington and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty.



Below: Gary Melton Sr., seen here speaking at the NJEA Legislative Conference on Feb. 18, is the new chair of the NEA Black Caucus.



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# Meeting members where they live

Five questions for three members who knocked on hundreds of doors



One of NJEA's greatest strength has always been that its members live and work in every community in New Jersey. Few other unions and professional associations can claim to have members in nearly every tiny hamlet and large city in the state. That's why NJEA has made an intentional effort to help members more deeply engage with their colleagues not only at meetings but on their doorsteps.

Starting last summer, and continuing in the fall, hundreds of NJEA members throughout the state have been pounding the pavement and knocking on members' doors to talk about our endorsed gubernatorial and legislative candidates at the state level as well as candidates endorsed by local association political action committees.

The *NJEA Review* asked three members who were among the hundreds of volunteers to talk about their experiences knocking on members' doors to talk about the election. They were:

- **Toni Guerra**, a retired Hainesport kindergarten teacher and former president of the Hainesport Education Association, is the Vice President of the Burlington County Retirees Education Association.
- **Christine Kosar**, a school bus driver and president of the Washington Township School Support Service Personnel Association in Gloucester County.
- **Paul Bryant**, a business teacher at New Brunswick High School, and the legislative chair and a building rep for the New Brunswick Education Association.

## HERE'S WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY.

### Why is the 2017 election important to you?

**Toni:** We have been vilified for eight years by a governor who wanted to destroy unions. This election is important because I am looking for a governor and legislators who will restore a positive approach to public education and all education personnel. We will be able to elect a governor who respects our views and will have open discussions with us. As a retired educator, I see this as an election that will bring us new hope to have the pension fully funded, to work toward the restoration of the cost of living adjustment

(COLA) and to keep our health benefits intact.

I believe that Phil Murphy will also work for our members who are not yet retired by committing to reverse the loss in take-home pay under Chapter 78 and that he will fight for our students by working to end PARCC testing and the heavy use of standardized test scores in the evaluation of teachers. We need to make sure that we have a profession that college graduates will want to enter.

**Chrissy:** Christie, along with Sweeney and the Norcross machine, has vilified educators and decimated public education over the last eight years. As governor, Phil Murphy should bring the stability required in our schools and be the positive change that's so desperately needed.

In Legislative District 3, removing Sweeney from office by successfully electing Fran Grenier would assure legislation would reach the desk of our new governor and not be blocked by the Senate President. It would be a huge win if both were elected and are allowed to do the job they have promised. Electing Grenier would also guarantee us a seat at his table.

**Paul:** The 2017 election is important to me because it represents the hope of a new beginning with an administration that will be receptive to our needs and concerns and not dismissive of NJEA.

### Why did you become involved in political action?

**Toni:** The whole idea of being an activist started in my very early years when I read books about strong female characters. I wanted to be Susan B. Anthony, Amelia Earhart and Jo March!

When I became a teacher, it became political. Next to my wonderful students, this was my passion. I attended rallies, board meetings and marches for many public schools in the area. I believed that we had the power to do anything! I felt we needed to support each other. I didn't have tenure yet, but I felt that we needed to be there when boards and contracts weren't fair.

**Chrissy:** My political involvement increased as my advocacy for our members increased.

As Christie started his vendetta against public education more members had to stand up and fight. I couldn't stand idly by and not fight with them and for members. Christie's devastating policies have greatly reduced the take-home pay for all public employees.

**Paul:** I became involved in political action after reading cover to cover Gov. Chris Christie's Report of the New Jersey Pension and Health Benefit Study Commission, which was published in 2015. Based on the recommendations in the report, my monthly pension would be cut by one-third, and my health benefits in retirement would all but disappear. I made a personal vow at that time that I would be "all-in" in the fight to maintain our retirement pension and health benefits.

### What surprised you most as you knocked on doors and/or made phone calls to members?

**Toni:** I was most surprised by the members who answered the doors. They were happy to see us. Many of them were knowledgeable about the issues. It gave us a good feeling when they made time for us. They also wanted to share some pieces of their lives and thanked us for the work that we were doing. It was a rewarding experience. While not everyone committed to a candidate, they were very pleasant when accepting the information. Face-to-face is such a positive experience, and it brought members together.

I'm surprised at how phone-banking has changed over the years. In the beginning it appeared that people didn't want to hear about elections and candidates. As time has gone on, more members have said thank you for the work we are doing. Some even wanted to volunteer and asked how they could become involved.

**Chrissy:** I'm constantly surprised at how grateful members are for the opportunity to be heard and be educated on the issues. Members feel they are specially selected to receive a visit and in most cases that's correct. My personal experiences are that the best reactions come

from educational support professionals (ESPs). They feel validated, included and are usually the best messengers to take information back to their colleagues.

**Paul:** When I engaged members on the phone or in person when canvassing what surprised me most was how surprised members were that the NJEA was interested in their thoughts and opinions about the issues that affected them, both professionally and personally.

### Are there any stories that stand out from working with your team or from meeting members at their doorsteps?

**Toni:** I loved having canvass partners that were at varied years of experience. Whether just starting out or seasoned, we were all of one mind: work together to get the best candidates in office who share our views. We valued each other's opinions and gained new knowledge from one another.

Then, of course, we shared in the experiences of those who answered the doors or phones. When we asked one woman how her day was going, she told us about her cancer and her daughter's bridal shower in one breath. We shared in her happiness and her concern. She thanked us for caring and doing the work that we were doing.

Another man who answered the door explained that his wife was with her mother at the hospital, but he took the information and said he would be sure to share it. Then he told us that his house was the house in which he grew up and that it would continue to be a part of his legacy.

Another door revealed a bus driver who was so knowledgeable on the issues that she did most of the talking. It was wonderful because she was convincing her mother—also in the same field—to vote for the candidates we were supporting.

**Chrissy:** I was canvassing in Legislative District 3 this summer. We had literature that we were just hooking on the porch door handle when an imposing, tattooed man opened up his front door to ask what we were doing. We took a step backwards as he opened up the screen door.

We let him know we were fellow NJEA members and that we were out on a Saturday chatting with folks, asking if there was anything their union could do for them and sharing information on the endorsed candidates.

His face lit up and he had a huge smile. He was so thrilled that we had stopped at HIS house to talk to him! We spent a wonderful 20 minutes with this gentleman who was enthusiastic about sharing this experience with his colleagues.

Another experience was in East Brunswick. I

visited a teacher's home. Her reaction was also priceless: she was so excited that we had called that day. She expressed a wish to become more involved but with two small children she was unable to attend union meetings. She had already shared with me that she was an art teacher, so I asked her if she could possibly put a flier together if asked. I explained that she could do this at home, at her convenience. I shared that not everyone can make meetings, but there is something every person can contribute! She thought this was a fantastic idea and planned to contact her local association when she returned to school.

These were quite different, but equally fulfilling, experiences.

**Paul:** I cannot point to any specific stories or people, but when you work with a group of people for a common purpose, it builds strength, confidence, and character among the people pursuing their goals.

### Is there anything else you'd like to share?

**Toni:** I am very passionate about political action. It is important to be a part of issues and legislation that affect our lives. Whether you are retired or still in the education field, it is important to stay involved and fight the good fight.

I was energized by being around all of the members that canvassed or made phone calls with me. No matter what district I was working in it was always the same. They welcomed me, worked with me and respected my views on things.

I was impressed with how many newer members are getting involved in this process. It continues to make me excited to know that there will be members who will be there with a strong voice to carry on this important work.

**Chrissy:** I feel that canvassing is vital to successful communication and member involvement. It's been such an inspiration to me to be able to connect with so many people and make them feel like their opinion matters and that they are part of a team. Reconnecting the disconnect between members can only make us stronger.

**Paul:** When I began this process of going "all-in" with political action, I had and still have no ambitions except to protect our pensions. The NJEA-sponsored conferences and seminars I have attended in recent years have provided me with the knowledge and training to fulfill my newly attained commitments as a building representative, my local's Legislative Action Team (LAT) chairperson, and a representative to the county LAT. 🇺🇸



Toni Guerra at the 2017 NJEA Legislative Conference.



Chrissy Kosar at the 2017 NJEA ESP Conference.



Paul Bryant preparing to meet a member at the door while canvassing.

# The role of the arts in connection, communication and expression

## The New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival

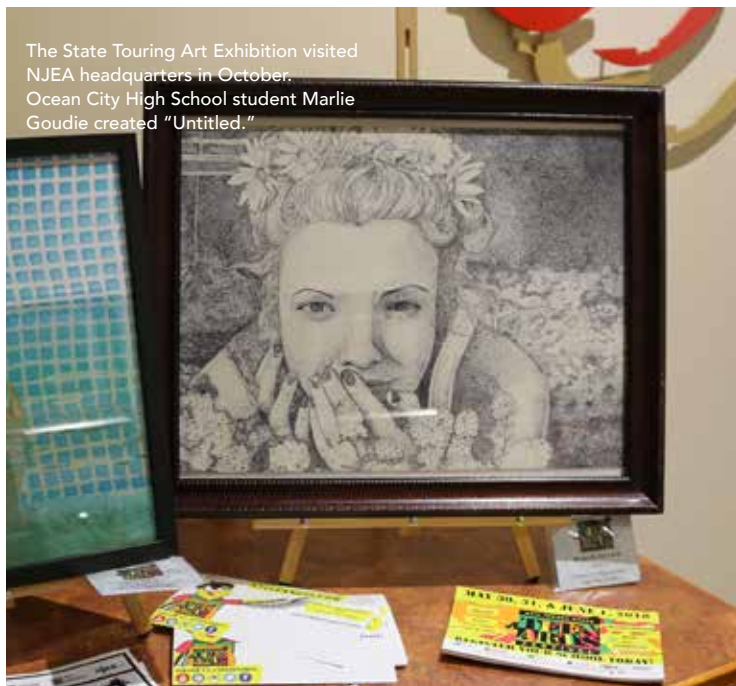
By Harrison H. Haney,  
New Jersey State Teen Arts Coordinator

The State Touring Art Exhibition visited NJEA headquarters in October. Communications High School (Monmouth County) student Sebrina Gao created "Landscape."



A performance by the Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble at the State Teen Arts Daily Ceremony.

The State Touring Art Exhibition visited NJEA headquarters in October. Ocean City High School student Marlie Goudie created "Untitled."



The New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival celebrated the second year of its revival this past spring at Ocean County College in Toms River. Thousands of students and teachers from 16 counties gathered with professional artists for the three-day statewide arts festival, to celebrate the important role the arts play in enriching all of New Jersey.

This educational and community-driven event was powered by the generous support of NJEA, the Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the New Jersey State Council of the Arts. The operation of the New Jersey State Teen Arts

journeys wherever they may take them professionally or personally. Students were also offered intensive workshops for artists specializing in puppetry, ceramics, juggling, hip-hop dance and many other art forms. These workshops offered students and teachers the chance to expand their creative imaginations.

A college fair with representatives of the top career-focused arts schools and professional development workshops for teachers accompanied the festival. Guest performances during lunch at the daily ceremony in the Larson Student Center enhanced the celebratory atmosphere.

the same alphabet, have the same culture or celebrate the same holidays.

Creating a universal language to communicate our inner expressions has an almost magical effect only the arts can have. The world cherishes the historical artifacts of the ancient Egyptian and Roman empires, among others, for a reason. For millions around the world today, the creative efforts of these great civilizations communicate the perspectives of ancient leaders.

The ancient Egyptians used art as the ultimate tool to convey the perspective of the pharaohs. Art was a symbol of power in the ancient world. The hieroglyphs,

classes in the ancient society together. It should not be seen as coincidence that the Colosseum was built in the round to focus toward a central circular stage. Rather, the circular design of this famous Roman amphitheater can be seen as political tool of the empire to create unity among the diverse citizens of ancient Rome by bringing them together as a collective group of equals in a social forum. Even today, art can make us all feel equal even for only the moment in which we share the experience of it, including the buildings we inhabit. Structures can transcend the simple purpose of shelter and gathering, and are a great



Charcoal portraits workshop with Luz Sanchez.

Festival is made possible through collaboration between the Arts and Education Center and Ocean County College.

Artists representing the literary, performing and visual arts served as adjudicators for student work at the festival. They shared their seasoned perspectives with the students to encourage, motivate and inspire them to continue their creative

### The universal language of the arts

The arts transcend nation, language and culture. An individual, whether from the United States or Japan, can be moved and inspired by the same piece of artwork. This opens doors for large communities of people to share universal understandings even though they may not recite

wall etchings, and statues strategically placed throughout Egypt were crafted so that all classes and languages of the ancient kingdom would be able to understand what was being expressed.

The Roman Empire is famous for its architecture, particularly the Colosseum, which was a hub of the empire developed to bring people of all different

example of how art is in every way a part of everyone's everyday life.

### Communication and expression

To truly connect with each other, we must communicate and express our worldview. Expression is the fuel that drives people to create art. Indeed, behind ev-

everything we do there is a desire to connect with others and communicate our expressions. Once we understand that connection and expression are muses for all of humanity, we realize that all people are artistic in their own right, whether crafting the wording in a memo for work, deciding what shirt to wear, or selecting the food to cook for dinner. Every day, people make decisions centered on their connection to something or someone. The action a person takes to make that connection is representative of what he or she wishes to express.

Thus, all people are creative even when they think they are simply writing that work memo. The intention to connect with the outside world and express a message to others effectively is an art in and of itself.

When our world becomes an ancient world for future generations, the artifacts we leave behind will embody the memories of our accomplishments as a people. A great piece of architecture or a painting speaks volumes more than a history book. Art is not a luxury but rather it is a necessary part

of the human condition and instinct.

## The 2018 New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival

The New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival has embraced this philosophy of connection and expression by bringing together students, teachers and artists from across the state during another three-day festival celebration focused around the arts. The 2018 New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival will take place May 30 through June 1 at Ocean County College in Toms River. All New Jersey students, ages 13-19, and teachers are invited to attend.

This year's festival will include many of last year's features, such as the adjudicated student showcase of visual and performing arts, professional development programs for teachers, master classes for students and the college fair.

All schools must complete and submit a school registration prior to attending the New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival. Registrations are now being accepted online at [njteenarts.com](http://njteenarts.com) and via

postal mail. Registrations will be accepted on a rolling basis up until the first day of the festival. However, many registrations are submitted early to get priority placement in the showcase, and adjudication scheduling.

Students desiring to showcase their creative talents must be nominated by their home County Teen Arts Festival in order to showcase for adjudication at the New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival. If a student's county does not have a festival, he or she can be nominated through the New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival virtual nomination process.

For more detailed information on festival registration, showcase/adjudication process or the New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival visit [www.NJTeenArts.com](http://www.NJTeenArts.com), call 732-566-ARTS (2787) or email [harrison@NJTeenArts.com](mailto:harrison@NJTeenArts.com). The New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival will also participate at the NJEA Convention on Nov. 9 and 10 with the State Touring Art Exhibition on display as well as at Booth 2304 with materials and staff to answer questions in person.

A New Jersey filled with youthful minds yearning to con-

nect with others to communicate their personal perspectives is a New Jersey that will raise youth to thrive as they grow to become the future world leaders. The little moments of connection and expression that happen at the New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival will lead to more elaborate efforts to connect and express as a statewide community.

Through this statewide celebration of the arts, we at Teen Arts hope that the smaller communities of New Jersey may gather to create a grander all inclusive community that inspires all across the entire state to be intentionally creative every day.

There may come a day when students become so inspired by the connection made when communicating with others and expressing themselves at the New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival that they are motivated to become a leaders who inspire the nation. 🌟

*Harrison H. Haney is the coordinator for New Jersey State Teen Arts. He can be reached at [harrison@njteenarts.com](mailto:harrison@njteenarts.com).*

# 2018 New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival

May 30-June 1

Ocean County College, Toms River

All schools must complete and submit a school registration prior to attending the New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival.

Learn more about the NJSTA Festival at the NJEA Convention at Booth 1134 in the Exhibit Hall.

For registration information, visit [www.NJTeenArts.com](http://www.NJTeenArts.com).





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# A joyful journey to play in K

By Molly Ziegelstein

Life for kindergartners is not as simple as it used to be. More rigorous learning standards require the five and six year olds in our community to comprehend concepts at more advanced levels than previously required. Teachers are tasked with starting kindergartners on a path to becoming 21st-century learners through the use of target assessments with defined benchmarks. The bar has been raised, as the growing demands placed on our little ones make it more challenging for them to experience a stress-free childhood.

As a kindergarten teacher at Fernbrook Elementary in the Randolph Township School District, I am fortunate to be part of a team that focuses on promoting student achievement while also supporting students in their social-emotional growth. Our district believes that there is a need to educate the whole child, with social-emotional learning at the forefront. With the support of my superintendent, principal and instructional coach, I was empowered to pilot a program that advanced student learning through the use of cooperative play.

The idea of “Play in K” originated organically through conversations with my instructional coach, Laurie Pandorf. I began teaching kindergarten in September 2015, and spent a lot of time developing best practices and cultivating my core beliefs about pedagogy with my instructional coach. We decided that it was crucial to create a student-centered learning environment that promoted developmentally appropriate instruction. I believe that this type of classroom fosters a lifelong love of learning among students, as the environment enables them to be themselves and explore content through authentic hands-on experiences. Although I was confident in my teaching abilities, I knew it would be challenging to incorporate playtime into the previously regimented academic schedule.

Luckily for me, the year I began teaching kindergarten was the same year that Randolph Township School District implemented a full-day kindergarten program. The additional time in the schedule provided me with opportunities to take risks and experiment with teaching strategies that our team felt could enhance student learning. To develop instructional methods, the team studied past research about the incorporation of playtime in the classroom. We focused on the findings of Lev Vygotsky, who is regarded as a pioneer in the field of early childhood development.

## Play is productive work

Much of our philosophy was based on Vygotsky and his zone of proximal development. In *Play and Its Role in the Mental*

*Development of the Child*, Vygotsky proposed, “In play, a child is always above his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form; in play, it is as though the child were trying to jump above the level of his normal behavior.”

Vygotsky also asserted that make-believe play has three features: children create an imaginary situation, take on and act out roles and follow a set of rules determined by those specific roles. Vygotsky concluded that human beings learn how to collaborate, assert themselves and resolve differences through play. Play is a necessity in my classroom, as I want to provide students with chances to develop life skills, discover themselves and simply be kids. This flexibility provides children with the time they need to develop their brains at an appropriate pace.

The team also studied the findings of Kristine Mraz and Christine Hertz, authors of *A Mindset for Learning*. Mraz and Hertz observed both increased signs of distress in children alongside the need for students to develop skills of risk and resilience. The premise of their study encompassed the belief that without play, children may not be able to acquire the knowledge needed to navigate 21st-century skills. Having experienced similar trends in our district, we decided play in kindergarten was something we wanted to explore in our classrooms.

In order to implement play, our team utilized the ideas from Alison Porcelli and Cheryl Tyler’s *A Quick Guide to Boosting English Acquisition in Choice Time*. While reading their book was enlightening, seeing their work come to life in Mraz’s classroom inspired our commitment to incorporate play throughout daily instruction. Only by observing Mraz’s students did we reach our most significant conclusion—play is productive work!

Children in Mraz’s class were learning to be engineers, artists and designers. They were learning to think critically, analyze various situations and collaborate with peers. Upon seeing the positive impact of play on student outcomes, we decided to rearrange our daily teaching schedule so that it included an hour of play each day. This hour would be called “Choice Time.”

## Choice Time

Laurie and I invested much of our energy into developing what Choice Time should look like in my classroom. In order to ensure that students collaborate, plan, problem-solve

and reflect within the allotted amount of playtime, we decided that Choice Time must be composed of four stages: choose, plan, play and proud share. Each piece of Choice Time is essential for developing life skills.

## Choose

While the choose process gives students a choice in what they do, they are often confronted with tough choices, such as deciding with whom they want to play and where they want to play. Giving students time to work out these differences helps them develop language and conflict resolution skills.

## Plan

After making their choice, students plan their Choice Time. This step is the most critical piece of the puzzle, as students work in groups to outline the materials they will need, the roles each member will take on, and how they will build their Choice Time center. During the planning stage, students are forced to develop their skills in organization, communication and collaboration. Then the magic happens and play begins!

## Play

During play, I walk around the classroom and spend time with each group. Sometimes I observe, coach or join in the play. Observing enables me to understand the social-emotional needs of each student. I use the observational data I collect when coaching playgroups, as this enables me to support students in learning how to take turns, speak up for themselves and share. Finally, joining in the children’s play helps me foster individual relationships with each of my students and enables me to experience how their brains are evolving.

## Proud share

The last piece of the Choice Time workshop is called proud share. This is the time when each group reflects on what they accomplished that day. First, groups are asked to discuss among themselves what they would like to present to the class. Then, the students make a presentation with the group of peers they played with during Choice Time. At the end of each presentation, other members of the class give the group feedback on their share. Groups may discuss conflicts that arose during the period, and we use these scenarios to reflect on solutions that might make their play better in the future.

## Finding solutions

Today, Choice Time is an integral part of our kindergarten curriculum at Fernbrook

Elementary. Across all classes, students engage in purposeful play and learn to apply the executive functioning skills they have developed throughout their classroom experiences and interactions with peers.

In some instances, students identify a real problem in their daily lives and propose a plan and solution through dramatic play. For example, we noticed that as students in our classes embarked on their purposeful play journeys, a problem frequently presented itself. The children were having trouble organizing the “beautiful things” (items they used for imaginative play) they wanted to use at their Choice Time centers. Some of these beautiful things included recycled bottles, cardboard boxes, old toys and craft supplies. As you can imagine, these items were taking up more space in the classrooms than we actually had.

During our discussions on how to organize the beautiful things, our five-year-old problem solvers noticed there was an empty classroom down the hall that would be the perfect home for their “Beautiful Things Store.”

From there, the students used persuasive writing techniques to convince our principal to allow them to utilize this room for their new store. Now, you will find students collaborating within the store’s walls to determine which materials they need in order to make their Choice Time a success. In addition to being empowered to find a solution to their problem, these kindergartners created and managed a functioning store.

### Benefits of Choice Time

The benefits of Choice Time are limitless and stem from real-world experiences. Choice Time engages all students, as they can vary Choice Time areas in an infinite number of ways if they use their imaginations and interests to alter the areas where they play. Students have established areas to represent restaurants and rock bands, and then changed them to depict pet shops or magic shows.

One of my favorite moments was when students felt compelled to build a fire station after the school executed a routine fire drill. The students naturally assigned roles in small groups, determined which materials they needed from the Beautiful Things Store, and made their solution come to life by drawing pictures and creating signs. Play in Choice Time centers allows each child to progress at his or her own pace, explore his or her interests, and reinforce the important content knowledge obtained throughout the rest of the curriculum.

The journey to play in kindergarten was exciting, ambitious and invigorating. Life for our five year olds has become more complex. Today, I rely on play to give my students an outlet to just be kids. I believe we are able to increase academic rigor because our students have time to play, explore and investigate. While you may not be able to create a space for a Beautiful Things Store, I challenge you to create time in your day to allow students to discover themselves in a way that deviates from traditional academic work. We owe it to our students to establish a safe, stress-reducing and academically enriching environment! 🧡

*Molly Ziegelstein is a kindergarten teacher at Fernbrook Elementary School in Randolph. She can be reached at [mziegelstein@rtnj.org](mailto:mziegelstein@rtnj.org) or follow her on Twitter @mollymziggy.*

Classroom aide Dushani Wickramasinghe coaches Nolan during Play.



Conor plays with dinosaurs.



Molly Ziegelstein rings the chime to begin proud share.







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# Walking Through Fear: A Case for Unionization

By Kimberly Crane

The road to unionization has been treacherous for some of our newest public charter school members and their leaders. To walk this path requires tapping into personal reserves of strength and courage, while withstanding deplorable working conditions and threats of termination or school closure from charter officials wishing to prevent a union presence.

The love and commitment that educational professionals have for our work, students and colleagues has empowered us to achieve past and present organizing successes previously deemed impossible.

The recent establishment of the all-inclusive International Academy of Trenton Charter School Education Association (IATCSEA) is one example of public charter school educators' fortitude and perseverance in the face of uncertainty.

Led by president Dana Keene, IATCSEA's organizing story reads more like a playbook from the public educators' movement of the 1960s than 2017 America.

## Deplorable conditions

Keene's desire to teach started in high school where she felt a calling to the profession. As an International Academy of Trenton Charter School (IATCS) new hire she quickly learned that all was not well, sometimes literally, within the walls of the charter.

"Parts of the school were falling apart," Keene recalled. "There was mold in the walls and the buildings were dilapidated. My first day on the job I found a dead rodent on the floor of my classroom. There needed to be checks and balances put in place for students and staff."

Keene's first steps to organizing the local involved reaching out to the approximately 63 staff members to gather information on what they felt were the issues. She and her like-minded colleagues were interested in implementing positive changes that would improve the educational conditions for students and working conditions for staff.

"Someone suggested that if we had a union, things would be better," said Keene. "They told me that I would make a good union rep."

## Calling NJEA

The encouragement inspired her. She called the main number for NJEA on her lunch break and got a call back from NJEA Organizational Development

The funneling  
of American  
education tax  
dollars to the  
heads of foreign  
corporations,  
with no  
locally elected  
representation to  
approve or deny  
the allocation  
of funds, raises  
many concerns  
for parents,  
taxpayers and  
legislators.

Representative Marguerite Schroeder that afternoon.

"Dana's call was similar to many of the calls I receive," Schroeder recalled. "The difference is that she and her co-workers had the courage to follow through to affiliation. Charters that don't organize have problems that get worse—if the school closes, it's too late. The only thing that solves problems is a contract and legal services and the only way you get that is by unionizing."

With immediate NJEA guidance and support, from Schroeder, UniServ Representative Alex DeVicaris, Organizational Development Consultant Jaime Valente, and NJEA network attorney Keith Waldman, the IATCSEA's journey to affiliation began.

A small group of Keene's colleagues agreed to join her at NJEA headquarters for an initial meeting on how to become a local union. As quickly as it began, however, the movement was wrought with uncertainty.

Many individuals refused to attend the initial meeting with NJEA—fearing retribution from their employer. While most supervising administrators at IATCS steered clear of the fray, charter officials targeted specific groups, such as cafeteria workers and custodians, by telling them they would most certainly lose their jobs if they unionized. The officials insisted that their corporation would close the school before accepting a union.

During this process, a relative also warned Keene to be careful, saying, "Dana, just keep your mouth closed and do your job. This is how you cause problems."

Keene replied only as an advocate can: "I either succeed, or I go down trying. Either way I get to be proud of the fact that we did something."

Keene and her crew had much work to do. They continued to spread the message that change must happen, and it must begin with them. Determined colleagues gathered after school in various locations, including the parking garage next to campus, to discuss unification and sign affiliation cards. The required number of signatures were obtained and submitted to the New Jersey Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC).

Keene was elated when she got the call in September of 2016 that IATCSEA was approved. Adding to the success, co-workers who had previously felt intimidated by charter heads during the process quickly signed up after the local was firmly estab-

**“There was mold in the walls and the buildings were dilapidated. My first day on the job I found a dead rodent on the floor of my classroom.”**

lished. Keene’s remarkable spirit and determination during this movement is magnified by the fact that she was pregnant with her first child while walking into the fire, and through the fear, of organizing a corporate charter.

### **The corporate charter money trail**

SABIS, the management company that runs IATCS, has a global corporate charter network with schools in 20 countries. Originating in Choueifat, Lebanon, SABIS North American headquarters in Eden Prairie, Minnesota sends funds to entities outside of the United States.

SABIS currently operates two charter schools in New Jersey: International Academy of Atlantic City Charter School and IATCS. Both schools have some of the lowest median teacher salaries in New Jersey. Out of 647 New Jersey traditional public schools and public charter districts, IATCS median salary is nearly at the bottom: 641st at \$43,500.

The funneling of American education tax dollars to the heads of foreign corporations, with no locally elected representation to approve or deny the allocation of funds, raises many concerns for parents, taxpayers and legislators.

Communities and legislators across New Jersey and the nation are taking a harder look at charter policy. There is a growing bipartisan awareness that most charter legislation is missing key components for local control and contains other loopholes that benefit corporations, not students.

NJEA’s endorsed gubernatorial candidate Phil Murphy questions how the public charter system works in New Jersey.

“I’ve never been ‘hell no’ when it comes to charters, but I have been ‘hell no’ in the way they’ve been promulgated too often in this state,” Murphy told the *Review* in an October interview. “There are too many open questions, there are too many inequities, there are too many consequences—including some I’d say, in fairness, that are unintended.”

Charter school association leaders like Keene are fighting at the local level to address those inequities and consequences, intended or not. At the state level, NJEA policy (see sidebar, Page 32) addresses the original intent of the public school charter law and the inequitable ways in which the law is currently being applied.

And how are the conditions for staff and students in the International Academy of Trenton Charter

# **Unionized public charter schools in New Jersey**

The IATCSEA is one of 17 public charter schools with staff represented by NJEA. Over 1,000 NJEA members are charter school educators. As the NJEA public charter school membership grew, so did the demand for a group that could discuss issues and actions unique to members who work in organized charters. From that need, the NJEA Public Charter Member Workgroup (PCMWG) was born.

Local leaders from each of the NJEA organized public charter schools represent their association through the work of PCMWG. This team includes many battle-tested charter organizing veterans who won affiliation and successfully advocate for their colleagues and students every day. They are passionately pro-public education.

The mission of the PCMWG is to end the climate of isolation that exists in both NJEA affiliated and nonaffiliated public charter schools. The work group seeks to organize New Jersey’s public charters into local unions affiliated with NJEA and engage members in all aspects and services of NJEA. The group also works to thwart the corporate charter school movement and to influence needed amendments to the state’s current charter school law.

## **NJEA’s public charter school associations**

- Classical Academy Charter School of Clifton – Passaic County
- Community Charter School of Paterson – Passaic County
- Golden Door Charter School - Hudson County
- Greater Brunswick Charter School – Middlesex County
- International Academy of Trenton Charter School – Mercer County
- LEAP Academy Charter School – Camden County
- Learning Community Charter School – Hudson County
- Marion P. Thomas Charter School – Essex County
- New Horizons Charter School – Essex County
- Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology - Passaic County
- Queen City Academy Charter School - Union County
- Soaring Heights Charter School – Hudson County
- Teaneck Community Charter School – Bergen County
- Sussex Community Charter – Sussex County
- Academy for Urban Leadership – Middlesex County
- Great Futures Charter High School for the Medical Sciences – Hudson County
- International Charter of Trenton – Mercer County

**“I either succeed or I go down trying. Either way I get to be proud of the fact that we did something.”**

# NJEA and NEA policy on charter schools

NJEA has policy on charter schools dating back to their legal enactment in 1995, and as recently as the past school year.

The NJEA Delegate Assembly (DA), the association's member-elected governing body, voted on May 21, 2016, to advocate for a moratorium on the approval of all new applications for charter schools, all applications for expansion of existing charters, and all requests to expand the recruitment area for an established charter until:

1. The funding formula established under the School Funding Reform Act is fully funded for all public schools.
2. The public school district(s) affected have proposed and passed a balanced budget that did not require or include a reduction in force, for the two years prior to the application, as well as for the current year.
3. Public charter schools are required, through statute and regulation, to adhere to the same standards of accountability and transparency as traditional public schools in all matters, including, but not limited to:
  - Finance and budgeting.
  - Public disclosure of nonpublic funding amounts and length of commitments.
  - Public disclosure of student behavior codes and disciplinary policies.
  - Public reporting of student retention rates.
  - Staff hiring requirements, and public disclosure of staff qualifications and retention rates.
  - The establishment, monitoring, and enforcement of financial conflict of interest laws for charter sectors.

NJEA is actively supporting legislation and/or regulatory language that will ensure equitable funding for all public schools in the state, and that all public schools, including public charters, are held to the same standards of transparency and accountability.

At its Sept. 17, 2016 meeting, the DA voted to advocate for legislation that all

charter schools in New Jersey be mandated, by statute and regulation, to be governed by their own publicly elected boards of education that are proportionally representative of, and accountable to the communities they serve. Currently, charters schools are governed by self-selected boards of trustees.

At its May 15, 2010 meeting, the DA approved a statement that “high-quality public charter schools be supported, provided that all state laws and regulations that apply to traditional public schools also apply to public charter schools, including regulation for teacher certification, licensure, and monitoring.”

NJEA supports high-quality public charter schools as one component of an innovative, progressive system of public education. While no single school model can provide all the answers to the challenges faced by our public schools, public charter schools, along with magnet schools, vocational schools, and traditional public schools can all play an important role as laboratories for innovation and provide a broad array of choices for parents. It is critical that successful schools of all types share their successes so that other students can benefit from the best practices in all of New Jersey's public schools.

At the 2017 National Education Association Representative Assembly (NEA RA) in Boston, a new policy on charter schools was developed that boosts NEA's support of state and local efforts to limit charter growth and increase accountability. It seeks to slow the diversion of resources from neighborhood public schools to charters while allowing the NEA to continue organizing charter school educators who want to provide all students with the opportunity for a great education.

NEA President Lily Eskelsen García applauded the new NEA policy.

“Charter schools were started by educators who dreamed of schools in which they would be free to innovate, unfettered by bureaucratic obstacles,” García said. “Handing over students' education to privately managed, unaccountable charters jeopardizes student success, undermines public education and harms communities. This policy draws a clear line between charters that serve to improve public education and those that do not.”

School now that a union has been established? Keene reports that things have much improved since her group established a seat at the table. There is a good working relationship within the school community. Administrators have been interested in partnering with the association to improve the conditions for students and staff.

SABIS officials however, continue to erect road blocks to progress. They make it clear that they would prefer not to deal with the union and will do everything in their power to undermine the association.

When it comes to finding the strength and courage to step forward and advocate for their local association and other charters, Keene pledges that she and her members will continue to lead the way. 🏠

*Kimberly Crane is an NJEA Communications Consultant and the vice president of the Highland Park Education Association. She previously served as HPEA president. She can be reached at [kcrane@njea.org](mailto:kcrane@njea.org).*

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*Marguerite Schroeder can be contacted at [schroedm@njea.org](mailto:schroedm@njea.org).*



Dana Keene at a previous site of the International Academy of Trenton Charter School.

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- Dyslexia: Strategies for Secondary General Education Classrooms
- Google Apps for Special Education
- Paras—Having Greater Impact in the Classroom
- New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS): A Framework for Supporting ALL Students
- Does My Student Have an English Language Acquisition Need, a Special Education Need or Both?
- Trauma Informed Approaches to Supporting Students
- Least Restrictive Environment
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- The Way I See It: A Personal Look at Autism and Asperger's
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[khunt@njea.org](mailto:khunt@njea.org) or 609-599-4561,  
ext.2253.



# Temporary classrooms should be high-quality and truly temporary

By Pam Susi

Lack of funding for school construction and repair combined with past growth in school enrollment has resulted in an overreliance on leased or owned temporary classrooms in New Jersey, including actual buildings such as former parochial schools and re-locatable temporary classroom units (TCUs). School districts tend to purchase the least expensive, low-bid TCUs and keep them no matter how old.

Local associations should insist that the same standards be applied to temporary classrooms as to any other school facility and that TCUs be truly temporary. The law is on the side of locals because the state defines a temporary classroom as a “facility for educating students on a temporary basis while awaiting completion of a school-facilities project that will permanently hold students” and prescribes a complaint mechanism for resolving problems.

## Passaic City shows what is possible

The best way to deal with temporary classrooms and the problems that go with them is to eliminate them. For example, this summer the New Jersey School Development Authority (SDA) began the procurement process for construction of the Dayton Avenue Educational Complex in Passaic City, which will eliminate 33 temporary classrooms dating from 2001.

As the Christie administration ends, a new administration can provide a fresh opportunity for locals to take inventory of temporary classrooms and insist that districts replace them with healthier and updated alternatives.

## The problems

A large study conducted in California found the most common problems in portable classrooms to be:

- Insufficient outdoor air supply into the classroom.
- Uncomfortable temperature and humidity levels.
- High noise levels from heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and street noise.
- High airborne formaldehyde levels from building materials and furnishings.
- Moisture and mold.
- Toxic dust residue including lead, arsenic and pesticides.
- Poor lighting.

## The solutions

Best practices are available from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and California's Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS) that provide guidelines on how to provide safe and healthful temporary classrooms. Preventing hazards requires action be taken throughout the life cycle of a temporary classroom, including commissioning, operation and maintenance, and evaluation and replacement.

### Commissioning:

- When specifying portables for lease or purchase, districts should follow the guidelines given by EPA and California's CHPS.
- Specify low VOC (volatile organic compound) emitting compound building materials be used.
- Ensure the HVAC can provide a minimum of 450 cubic feet per minute

(CFM) of outside air and that it can heat or cool this volume of air (based on 30 occupants and 15 cfm/occupant).

- Locate air intakes so that they draw from the best quality outdoor air—not underneath the unit or near automobile or other exhaust.
- Cover entries and provide waterproof entry mats to minimize tracking in dust and water.
- Design the TCU acoustically to achieve a “best practice” guideline of 45 decibels in the classroom.
- Situate the TCU away from noise sources such as highways and pollution sources such as parking areas.
- Orient the TCU to maximize the benefits of daylight coming in windows.
- Install proper grading and drainage.
- Specify operable windows.

### Operations and maintenance:

- “Flush out” the TCU using outdoor air for several days before being used.
- Outdoor air should be supplied continuously while the trailer is occupied by setting thermostat fan settings to “on” or “continuous” mode.
- HVAC filters should have a rating between 35 percent and 80 percent or minimum efficiency rating value (MERV) between 8 and 13.
- Regularly inspect roofs, ceilings, walls, floors, and carpets. Special attention should be given to evidence of water leakage or stains, mold growth or odor. Water-damaged materials should be removed and leaks promptly fixed.

### Evaluation and replacement:

- Portables and mobile units should not be used beyond the recommended life of the unit, never more than 20 years, assuming excellent maintenance.

## Local association action plan

Locals should insist that districts comply with New Jersey regulations [N.J.A.C. 6A:26-8.1(c)] on temporary school facilities for health and safety related concerns including ventilation, lighting, control of moisture, peeling paint and hazardous materials on floors, walls and ceilings. Local associations should work with their UniServ field representatives to:

- Take an inventory of the portable classrooms in the district and survey affected teachers about the conditions in them.
- Make sure maintenance and teaching staff receive written instructions on how to correctly set ventilation and thermostat controls in portables.
- Call their county superintendents of schools with complaints and follow up with an email both to the superintendent and to Caitlin Pletcher ([Caitlin.Pletcher@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:Caitlin.Pletcher@doe.state.nj.us)) at the New Jersey Department of Education program, which oversees the superintendents. A list of county superintendents is available online at [nj.gov/education/counties](http://nj.gov/education/counties). 📧

*Pam Susi holds a master of science in public health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 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. She may be reached at [pam\\_susi@comcast.net](mailto:pam_susi@comcast.net).*

## For more information:

Environmental Health  
Conditions in California's Portable  
Classrooms, 2004.

[bit.ly/portableclassroomca](http://bit.ly/portableclassroomca)

Best Practices Manual, Chapter  
VI: High Performance Relocatable  
Classrooms, Collaborative for High  
Performance Schools (CHPS), 2009  
Edition with 2016 draft update.

[bit.ly/chpsrelocatable](http://bit.ly/chpsrelocatable)

Designing and Constructing Portable  
Classrooms for a Healthy School  
Environment, U.S. Environmental  
Protection Agency (EPA) website.

[bit.ly/epaportableclassroom](http://bit.ly/epaportableclassroom)

New Jersey Administrative Code  
6A:26, Subchapter 8, Temporary  
School Facilities, pages 134 to 141.

[bit.ly/chap26njac](http://bit.ly/chap26njac)



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# A CLOSER LOOK

## monthly highlights

*If you missed any stories that aired in October, catch some encore performances that feature great things happening in public schools all over New Jersey, including Marlton, Mt. Olive, Camden, Piscataway, Northern Highlands, Sterling and Hamilton, to name a few. The show is a great way to find out what new and innovative programs educators are using throughout the state. No other state has a television show that focuses on positive stories about public schools. Through the show parents and communities see that New Jersey's schools are thriving and that NJEA members care about their children's well-being and success.*

## watch

### NOVEMBER 5

Can you identify all the types of seats used in this classroom at Mahatma Gandhi School (P.S. 23) in Jersey City? Teacher Melissa Regenthal believes that seats matter. She allows her students to select seats that work best for their learning styles. Students can choose from over 20 different options, including couches, soft chairs, bean bag chairs, yoga mats, standing desks, crate seats and stools.



NOV. 05

### NOVEMBER 19

Every year, Hoboken produces a districtwide musical showcasing the talents of students ranging from elementary school through high school. Over 120 students hit the stage while another 30 children build the sets and work behind the scenes. From auditions to daily rehearsals, the dedication of the school community results in lifelong memories.



NOV. 19

### NOVEMBER 26

The world's largest exercise class originated in Montville at Valley View Elementary school. The program, called ACES (All Children Exercise Simultaneously) was created by teacher Leonard Saunders. He has encouraged millions of children from all 50 states and over 50 countries to exercise together. The program motivates students to exercise regularly by placing a value on physical fitness.



NOV. 26

### 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.



classroomcloseup.org

Visit [classroomcloseup.org](http://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.

# The NJEA Convention:

## if you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change

By Mike Ritzius, NJEA staff

At its fundamental core, what is school? Is school a place? Is it a building or a tangible thing? This is a question that we rarely contemplate but have all experienced as students, professionals, community members and possibly as parents. I invite you to consider school from a different perspective; school is essentially an idea that we have collectively agreed to follow. In embracing this perspective, much more becomes possible.

The prevalent thinking around “school” treats it as a rigid thing where there are right and wrong ways of doing the work. “Effective” schools have teachers who get with the program and “know” what to do, the thinking goes. It is a fixed, deficit mindset that presumes excellence will come from everyone knowing the “right” way and working ever harder to achieve arbitrary goals.

This mindset shows up everywhere, including your professional development. How many times have you sat through in-services on writing mastery objectives, administrator directed professional learning communities, or 132 slides on student engagement? (This happened to me. Yes, I counted the slides.) The result is an experience that leaves everyone wanting, especially the professionals tasked with the daily business of bringing this thinking to life.

Treating “school” as an idea shifts the thinking from “How do we make educators more effective?” to “How might we design school so that it meets the needs of everyone involved?” It is a mindset that is aspirational and growth oriented. It invites all participants to play an active role in making school the greatest experience of their lives. Professional development becomes question-driven and empowers participants to find answers, rather than have them accept whatever is forced upon them. It invites educators to be curious and driven professionals striving to make their spaces ever better by learning their way through challenges. It makes professional development one of the most relevant things an educator can do.

Seeing school as an idea requires participants to grow their knowledge and the NJEA Convention creates a remarkable opportunity to do so. The convention can be a “choose your own adventure,” where you create your own experience. It provides an occasion to meet like-minded colleagues, be inspired by keynote speakers Ilyasah Shabazz and Mike Kuczala, and grow both your technical and advocacy skills in Digital Boulevard and Main Street NJEA.

You can attend a workshop, meet with members of an affiliated group who represent your discipline, examine the latest instructional materials on the exhibit floor, or explore social justice issues in the new experiential exhibit, The Awakening.

On Nov. 9 and 10, join us in Atlantic City to stretch your thinking, widen your network, and build the power to make New Jersey Schools the best they can be. It's just an idea. 

*Mike Ritzius is an associate director in the NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division. He can be reached at [mritzius@njea.org](mailto:mritzius@njea.org).*



**Treating “school” as an idea shifts  
the thinking from “How do we  
make educators more effective?”  
to “How might we design school  
so that it meets the needs of  
everyone involved?”**



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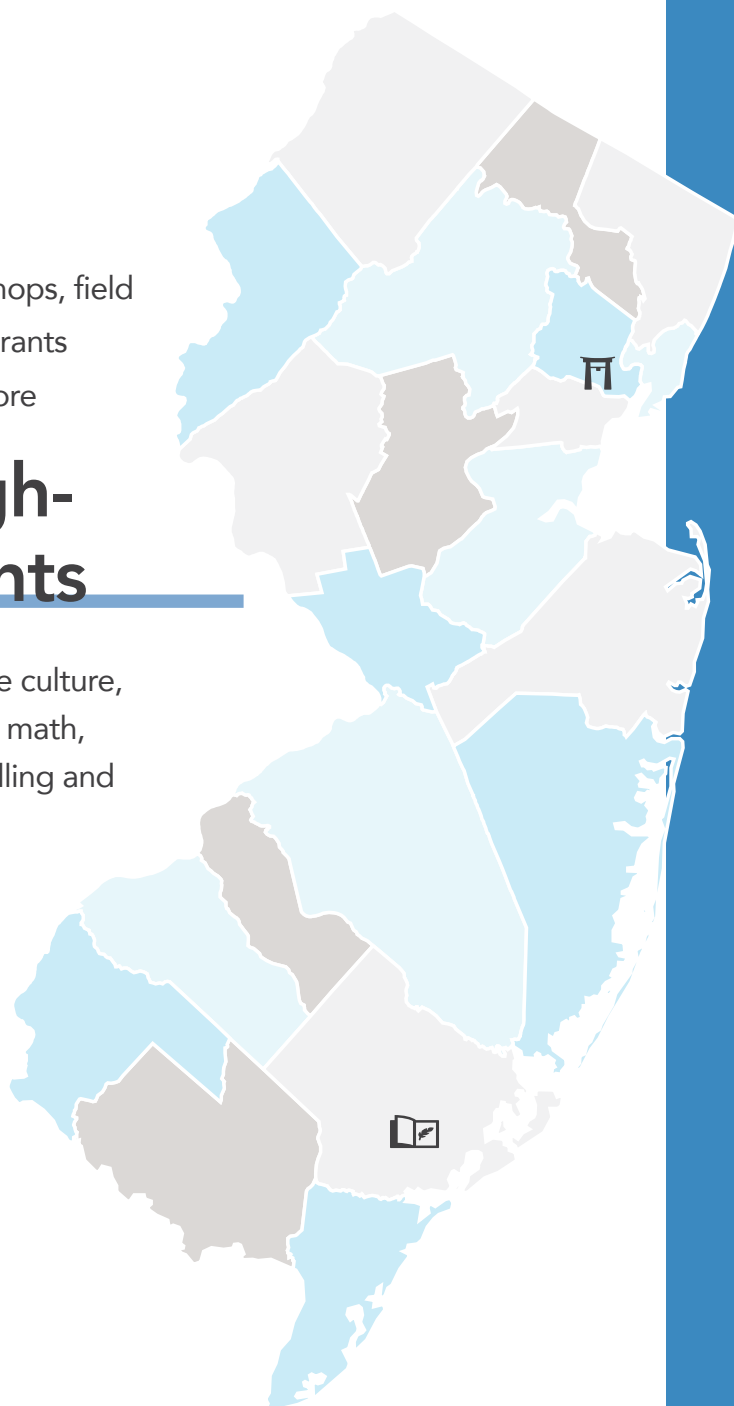
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# SUSSEX TO CAPE MAY:

Workshops, field trips, grants and more

## highlights

Chinese culture, poetry, math, storytelling and more



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

## showcase

### Enrich Your Curriculum: Wisdom and Insight from Traditional Chinese Culture

Educators of all grades are invited to attend the Shen Yun program of professional development, which includes a live performance, on May 2 in Newark. As China's prominence in the world increases, so does the need to understand the foundations of traditional and modern Chinese culture. The program will address the need for educators to understand China and its influence over time.

The day will start with a luncheon/workshop at the Best Western Plus Robert Treat Hotel. Attendees then head up the street to the New Jersey Performing Arts Center for a live show from Shen Yun Performing Arts. This 120-minute program from the world's premier classical Chinese dance and music company will walk you through significant aspects of authentic Chinese culture and its influence on the world. Five hours of professional development credit will be given.

The registration fee is \$249, which includes the workshop/luncheon and the performance. You may register online at [sy-pi.org](http://sy-pi.org), where you will also find more information. The registration deadline is April 18.

For any additional questions, contact Dr. Marilyn Torley at [mtorley@clifionschools.net](mailto:mtorley@clifionschools.net) or 201-618-2586.

### Winter Poetry and Prose Getaway

The Winter Poetry & Prose Getaway is a three-day conference where educators hone their creative writing skills and expand their teaching strategies. Held at Stockton Seaview Resort near Atlantic City, Jan. 12-15, the Winter Poetry & Prose Getaway is presented by Murphy Writing of Stockton University.

Now in its 25th year, the Getaway is known for its challenging and supportive workshops featuring small classes led by award-winning professionals. Pulitzer Prize winners Stephen Dunn and Gregory Pardlo are special guests at this year's conference.

The event was founded by NJEA member Peter Murphy in the belief that when writers leave behind the distractions of their busy lives to gather in an encouraging community, they are able to make important breakthroughs in their art.

The author of seven books and chapbooks, Murphy has received awards and fellowships from the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Yaddo and the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars.

Session topics include novel writing, freelancing, memoir, fiction, nonfiction, writing for children and poetry. Each offers craft discussion, writing prompts, writing time, feedback, motivation and inspiration.

The registration fee ranges from \$420-\$495. Districts often pay for their educators to participate. Early registration and Stockton Alumni discounts are available. Six scholarships are being offered. Registration ends Jan. 7.

For more information, contact Peter Murphy or Taylor Coyle at 609-626-3594 or [info@wintergetaway.com](mailto:info@wintergetaway.com). Visit [www.wintergetaway.com](http://www.wintergetaway.com) for registration information.

# More to learn across the state

## Math workshops offered at Rutgers

The Association of Mathematics Teachers of New Jersey (AMTNJ), with the cooperation of the Rutgers Department of Mathematics and the Center for Discrete Mathematics and Theoretical Computer Science (DIMACS), is offering math workshops for elementary, middle and high school teachers. The workshops are held on Rutgers' Busch Campus and run from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Following are workshops offered in December. Workshops in November and in January through May can be reviewed at the indicated websites.

### High school workshops

- Dec. 14: Nothing but Desmos, Grades 8-12
- Dec. 15: Is That Your Final Answer? Developing Mathematical Thinking with Questions, Grades 6-12

Registration and information: [dimacs.rutgers.edu/grades-9-12-workshops](http://dimacs.rutgers.edu/grades-9-12-workshops)

### Middle school workshops

- Dec. 14: Nothing but Desmos, Grades 8-12
- Dec. 15: Is That Your Final Answer? Developing Mathematical Thinking with Questions, Grades 6-12

Registration and information: [dimacs.rutgers.edu/grades-6-8-workshops](http://dimacs.rutgers.edu/grades-6-8-workshops)

### Elementary school workshops

- Dec. 8: Developing Number Concept and Number Sense, Grades K-2
- Dec. 13: Visualizing Problem Solving through Proportional and Spatial Reasoning in Grades 3-5

Registration and information: [dimacs.rutgers.edu/grades-K-5-workshops](http://dimacs.rutgers.edu/grades-K-5-workshops)

## TELLABRATION: a storytelling workshop and concert

TELLABRATION at Hamilton, a benefit storytelling event for educators, will celebrate its 21st anniversary on Sunday, Nov. 19, from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Hamilton Township Library (Mercer County). Four professional development hours will be awarded to New Jersey educators who attend both the storytelling Living History presentation and storytelling concert. Proceeds will be donated to the Patrick S. Biddulph Foundation for Leukemia Research and the Hamilton Township Library Trust Fund. This event is presented by the Garden State

Storytellers League (GSSL), an affiliate of the National Storytellers League (founded in 1903), in association with the National Storytelling Network, which is based in Tennessee.

### Workshop – Telling Their Stories: Amazing Women History Forgot

Carol Simon Levin, storyteller and Living History presenter/re-enactor, will present “Telling Their Stories: Amazing Women History Forgot.” Levin will demonstrate that re-enactments come to life through research and storytelling strategies. “Amazing” women featured will include Emily Warren Roebling, who helped her husband Washington Roebling complete the building of the Brooklyn Bridge; Abigail Adams, former first lady of the United States; Jeanette Rankin, first female member of Congress; and Ann Baumgartner Carl, World War II Women Airforce Service Pilot.

Levin, a Youth Services librarian in the Somerset County Library System and author of *Remembering the Ladies: From Patriots in Petticoats to Presidential Candidates*, an informational coloring book for all ages, has presented programs for all ages at schools, libraries, museums, historical societies, women's clubs, senior centers, camps, and festivals. This program is for preschool through college educators across the curriculum, counselors, social workers, school and public librarians, administrators, and anyone interested in storytelling. The program addresses STEAM curricula and demonstrates the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) in content areas across the curriculum.

### Storytelling concert

Charlie Zahm, folk musician/songwriter/historic interpreter, will be featured at the storytelling concert. Zahm, a master of the guitar and Bodhran Celtic drum, is a singer of Celtic, Maritime, Early American, and Civil War music and has performed at Civil War re-enactments and concerts as well as Colonial and Early American-themed events. Zahm, performing his original songs that honor American military soldiers, entertained U.S. troops at Al Udeid Airbase in Qatar on Memorial Day in 2014. Also featured at the storytelling concert are two GSSL storytellers. Madge Powis, clown and balloon artist and Story Time Express Lady at the Black River and Western Railroad, will tell “15 Minutes of Fame,” a personal story. Gwendolyn Jones, professor *emerita* of The

College of NJ and Founder of the Garden State Storytellers League, will tell “The Zulu Twins,” a South African folktale.

### Registration

For more information and to register contact Carol Satz at 609-890-3378 or [englearnr@aol.com](mailto:englearnr@aol.com) or call Gwendolyn Jones at 609-499-0107.

The registration fee for the Storytelling and Living History Presentation is \$20 (includes both the “Amazing Women” presentation and the storytelling concert). The day runs from 1 to 5 p.m.

Admission for the Storytelling Concert alone is \$10. The concert begins at 3 p.m.

## Camden County College offers mini-courses and free lectures

The Camden County College Center for Civic Leadership and Responsibility is offering five-week mini-courses starting in November its locations in Blackwood and Cherry Hill. The fee is \$25 per course or \$50 for unlimited courses through August 2017. In addition, the center is offering a free lecture series.

For more information, visit [www.camdencc.edu/civiccenter](http://www.camdencc.edu/civiccenter) or call 856-227-7200, ext. 4333.

### Evening courses at Blackwood campus

- Nov. 7-Dec. 5 – The Iraq War in Context
- Nov. 2-Dec. 14 – Jefferson v. Hamilton: More than Just a Cabinet Battle
- Nov. 7-Dec. 5 – Rasputin and the Fall of the Russian Monarchy

### Evening courses at the Rohrer Center: Cherry Hill

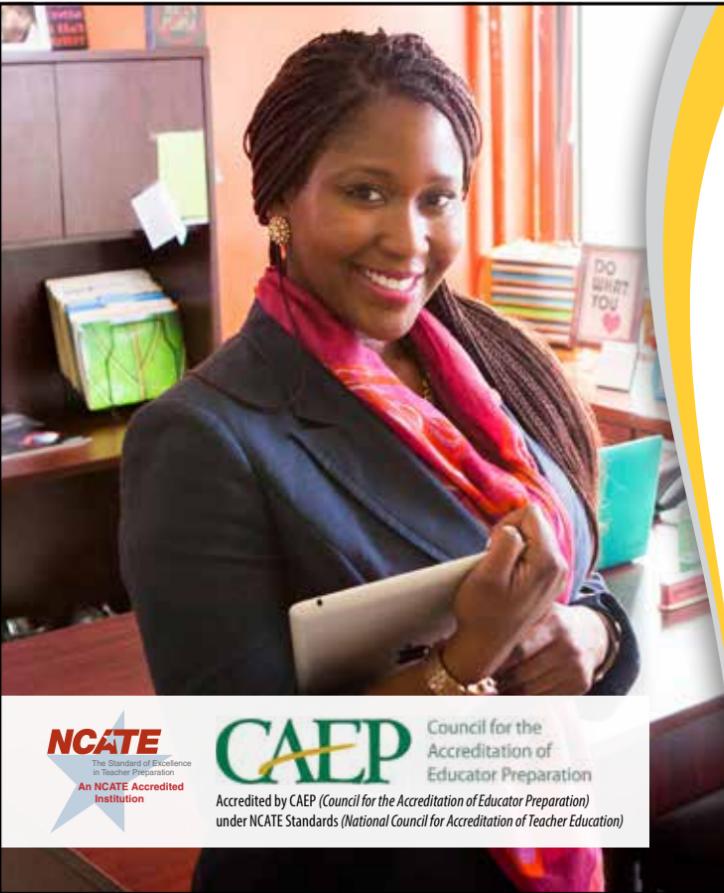
- Nov. 6-Dec. 4 – The Campaign and Battle of Gettysburg
- Nov. 9-Dec. 14 – Expedition to the Ancient Mediterranean
- Nov. 8-Dec. 13 – Intro to Feminism
- Nov. 9-Dec. 14 – Women's Health Issues

### Ongoing free lecture series:

#### The Roaring Twenties

#### Blackwood campus

- Nov. 8 – Popular Culture in the Roaring Twenties: The Age of Excess
- Nov. 15 – Was the 1920 Women's Suffrage Amendment a Triumph for Women or an End to Feminism? 📖



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## Phil Murphy supports preservice educators By Marlene Cooper, NJEA Preservice member

Ambassador Phil Murphy was endorsed by the NJEA PAC as the Democratic candidate for the gubernatorial primary and again for the general election. He shares the values and priorities of NJEA and its members and he has committed to working with NJEA. He is the product of a public education and the brother of a retired Boston public school teacher. He understands the value of the public education system.

### **He has a strong commitment to higher education.**

#### **Ambassador Murphy will fight for:**

- Increased state funding to public colleges and universities.
- Lowered tuition costs and fees.
- Increased vocational and technical training programs.
- Loan forgiveness for STEM grads working in STEM jobs.
- Student loan relief from private-sector employers as an employee benefit.

These proposals would represent a large step in stabilizing the finances of all our colleges by making them affordable to New Jersey students and their families. This would make New Jersey colleges more affordable for our preservice members.

Under the current administration, the public colleges and universities in New Jersey have been severely underfunded. Because of this, NJEA preservice members and other New Jersey college students are facing some of the highest college costs in the country. Ambassador Murphy is committed to better funding for New Jersey's colleges and universities to relieve the financial burden that many of preservice members face.

Ambassador Murphy will also advocate for the creation of incentives for private sector employers to provide student loan relief as a core employee benefit. He will fight for state-based refinancing of student loan debt at lower rates to help those struggling with high interest loans.

Ambassador Murphy supports full funding of the pension system and supports a constitutional amendment requiring the state to make quarterly payments into the pension fund.

Ambassador Murphy and his running mate Sheila Oliver believe that health care benefits should be a part of the collective bargaining process, recognizing the problems that many of NJEA members have faced because of Chapter 78.

In addition, Ambassador Murphy supports ending the PARCC exams and eliminating the exit test graduation requirement. He has been a vocal opponent of the PAARC exam and is against high stakes standardized testing of students.

We must get back to the simple premise of letting teachers use classroom time to teach to their students' needs, and not to a test," Ambassador Murphy has told members.

The Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor, Sheila Oliver, also has a strong stance in supporting educators. Not only is she an advocate for all of Murphy's positions, such as PARCC testing and pension funding, but she has also been a staunch supporter of equal pay for women and family leave. Ambassador Murphy will be great advocate for teachers, educational support professionals, students and their families. He is committed to make education his top priority and to continue to work with NJEA. To quote Ambassador Murphy, "It means a lot to me to be on the same team as NJEA." 🏡

*Marlene Cooper is an NJEA Preservice member currently attending Rutgers University, New Brunswick.*



Ambassador Phil Murphy with  
NJEA Preservice Vice President  
Anthony Elia, a student at The  
College of New Jersey, during the  
NJEA Legislative Conference in  
February 2017.

# NJREA

Past, present and future

## Lunch, laughs, and lots of info

If you were looking for the latest in pension and benefits information, NJREA's annual fall meeting was the place to be in September. Over 220 retired leaders and members packed the Nottingham Ballroom in Hamilton to learn more about important issues affecting public education employees.

NJREA's Immediate Past President Pat Provnick kicked off the meeting by welcoming attendees and then invited former NJEA President Edithe Fulton, current member of the New Jersey State Board of Education (BOE) to the podium to formally install the new NJREA officers.

"By electing these officers, you have asked them to give unusual time and effort to serve you and your association. You, in turn, owe them your loyalty and support," Fulton declared. "As members you must heed their communications, answer their calls for help, and serve as full and enthusiastic partners to meet the challenges ahead."

NJREA President Judy Perkins then took the podium to conduct the Delegate Council meeting. The first order of business was to elect a new Minority Concerns representative to serve on the NJREA Executive Committee. T. Charles Taylor, an Essex County member who previously served as an NJREA representative to the NJEA Delegate Assembly, was nominated and unanimously elected.

Perkins commended the NJREA Editorial Committee for receiving two first place awards this past year, one from NEA-Retired for "Best Established State Retired Newsletter" and the other from the State Education Association Communicators for "Best Constituent Newsletter."

### Optum Rx switch explained

Perkins introduced Kevin Kelleher, NJEA's director of Research, who discussed the reasons for the School Employees' Health Benefits Commission's (SEHBP) decision to switch retirees' prescription coverage to Optum Rx. He reminded attendees that SEHBP members are, in essence, self-insured. SEHBP has a plan design and oversight committee, and through them, determines what to cover and has final say on all benefits decisions.

Kelleher spoke at length about the rumors surrounding the switch, assuring all that there is no increase in the copays and other costs rumored to be associated with Optum Rx.

"There are no changes in retirees' medical and dental, nor are there any changes that move you into Medicare Advantage," Kelleher stated. "While this may seem like an inconvenience, it is actually an opportunity to save the state \$1.6 billion over the next three years and cement our stance that reduction in health care costs without reduction in coverage is possible."

Kelleher stated that he is working on a retiree-focused Q & A with Optum Rx that will clearly explain the next steps and provide NJREA members with accurate information about their prescription coverage. This document will be first available at the annual NJREA Convention and will be found on the NJREA webpage.

NJREA officers gave their reports, including a membership update from Walt Krichling, NJREA first vice president, who spoke of the 2017-18 NJREA membership drive efforts.

"While we have slightly fewer members enrolled than last year at this time, I am confident that we are on track to break records," said Krichling. "We are working with NJEA to update our membership handbook and are constantly looking for innovative ways to urge retirees to join NJREA to build our ranks and keep us strong."

In her report, Second Vice President Joan Wright thanked the Program Planning Committee members for their hard work and encouraged attendees to take advantage of all the opportunities the annual NJREA Convention, held again this year at the Resorts Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City, has to offer NJREA members.

### Pensions and politics

Beth Schroeder Buonsante, associate director of Government Relations, spoke on political issues and provided an update on the pension funding progress.

"At this point, the state is funding the pension at approximately five-tenths of the required amount, obviously less than the five-sevenths required by law," Buonsante said. "However,

we are keeping a close eye on the effect that the lottery proceeds will have on the fund."

Buonsante reminded attendees that the value of the \$13 billion lottery asset will be applied to the state's unfunded liabilities, which currently stand at \$49 billion in state pension obligations. Annual revenues of about \$1 billion will be directly deposited into our pension fund, and, if this effort is successful, then it will bring the overall funding level for all seven retirement systems from 45 to 59 percent.

She then recapped NJEA/NJREA's efforts in the upcoming general election, most notably the gubernatorial race and the organization's push to unseat Senate President Steve Sweeney.

"In this election, we have the opportunity to find, support, and elect a governor and legislators who share our values and stand with us on our top priorities," Buonsante declared. "The bottom line: it's time for a change."

NJREA Government Relations Committee chairs Sue Maurer and Carol Friedrich followed Buonsante's presentation and urged attendees to find ways to get involved in electing NJEA PAC-endorsed candidates throughout the state.

### Opportunities for activism

After lunch, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty—who also serves as the NJEA liaison to NJREA—spoke on how union advocacy has been an integral part of his life since he was a child. Beatty then reminded the retirees that the NJEA/NJREA is one of the most powerful organizations in the state. He said that the more we come together, the greater our power to effect change.

"I know that you understand that in order for our children to be successful, they need all members of their educational 'family,' both past and present, looking out for them," Beatty declared. "I also know that retirees' power is legendary, so I have no doubt that we will do great things together."

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

**CAPE MAY COUNTY REA** will hold its winter meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, Dec. 13 at the Avalon Links Restaurant in Swainton. The cost is \$10. To attend, call Diane Church at 609-884-7800.

**GLOUCESTER COUNTY REA** welcomes you to its annual Holiday Social on Thursday, Dec. 7. The cost is \$25, and the event will be held at Nicolosi Catering in Woodbury. To attend, call Candy Zachowski at 856-228-6854.

**HUDSON COUNTY REA** will host its Annual Holiday Party on Wednesday Dec. 6 at the Chandelier Restaurant in Bayonne. To attend, call Maureen O'Neill at 201-795-1645.

**HUNTERDON COUNTY REA** invites you to its winter meeting/holiday brunch on Tuesday, Dec. 5. The meeting will be held at the Flemington-Raritan Diner in Flemington. To attend, or for more information, call Joyce Kucyn at 908-479-6656.

The **MIDDLESEX COUNTY REA's** winter luncheon/meeting will be held on Thursday, Dec. 7. The cost is \$30, and the event will be held at the Grand Marquis in Old Bridge. To attend, call Ann Chomko at 732-675-1734.

**MONMOUTH COUNTY REA** will hold its next meeting/luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 12 at the Shadowbrook in Shrewsbury. The cost is \$30. To attend, call Sue Shrott at 732-995-7754.

**MORRIS COUNTY REA's** annual holiday luncheon will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 13 at the Hanover Manor in East Hanover. The cost is \$26. To attend, call Cheryl Doltz at 973-818-1353.

**OCEAN COUNTY REA** will host its holiday luncheon on Thursday, Dec. 7 at the Clarion Hotel in Toms River. The cost is \$28. To make a reservation, call Janice Sovinee at 732-477-1711.

**PASSAIC COUNTY REA's** winter luncheon/meeting will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 6 at the Brownstone House in Paterson. To attend, call Kitty Sausa at 201-445-7577.

Join **SALEM COUNTY REA** for its holiday luncheon on Wednesday, Dec. 6 at the Woodstown Diner in Woodstown. The cost is \$16. To attend, call Peggy Kavanaugh at 856-935-0075.

**SCREA** will also host its annual Christmas Tea on Thursday, Dec. 14 at the Woodstown Diner in Woodstown. Cost is \$18. To attend this event, call Pam McNamee at 856-293-1808.

**SOMERSET COUNTY REA** will hold its next meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, Dec. 6 at The Landing in Hillsborough. The cost is \$25. For more information or to attend, call Diane Lebbling at 908-359-2870.

**WARREN COUNTY REA** invites you to its upcoming meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, Dec. 6 at the Hawk Pointe Country Club. For more information, visit [www.wcrea-njea.org](http://www.wcrea-njea.org). To attend, call Vicki Rhinehart at 908-319-1995.

**NJRE- CENTRAL FLORIDA** welcomes you to its next meeting on Wednesday, November 8 at Chesapeake Bay Grille in Leesburg. A discussion of events in New Jersey affecting NJEA/NJREA members will be the focus. To attend, call Steve Mockus at 352-638-2609. 📍

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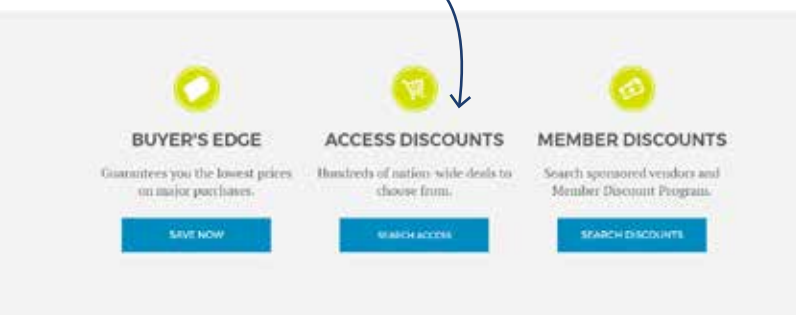
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## Previous winner

Sara Koslowski of Chester EA won a Member Appreciation Event for his/her school from California Casualty\*\* – the provider of NEA Auto & Home Insurance. In appreciation of membership, a local California Casualty representative will coordinate a celebration at the member's school with valuable member benefit information and refreshments valued up to \$150.

# Staff News



NJEA welcomes **STEPHANIE TARR**, who joined NJEA staff on Sept. 18 as a UniServ field representative in the Region 1 office in Vineland. Since 2003, Tarr has been a social studies teacher at Cedar Creek High School. Prior to joining NJEA staff, she was the president of the Greater Egg Harbor Regional Education Association. As a member of the South Jersey Early Career Staff Task Force, she worked to build connections among NJEA's early-career members in Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties.

Tarr served as a part-time NJEA professional development consultant from 2014 to 2016 and, starting in 2016, as a UniServ consultant assigned to Region 6 in Galloway.

Tarr holds a master's degree in Instructional Technology from National University and a bachelor's degree in History and Secondary Education from the College of New Jersey.

Tarr lives in Tuckerton with her husband, Ben. 🏠

## Employment Opportunities at NJEA

Visit [njea.org/jobs](http://njea.org/jobs) regularly for the latest postings.



Questions? Call the NJEA Human Resources office at 609-599-4561.

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



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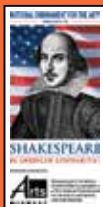
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# November & beyond

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Tuesday

Election day

**11/8**

Wednesday

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County Presidents'  
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**11/8-9**

Wed. & Thurs.

NJREA  
Convention

**11/9-10**

Thurs. & Fri.

NJEA Convention

**11/11**

Saturday

NJEA Delegate  
Assembly

**11/13-17**

Mon. - Fri.

American  
Education Week

**11/15**

Wednesday

Educational  
Support  
Professionals Day

**12/11**

Monday

NJEA Executive  
Committee

**1/5-6**

Sat. & Sun.

Winter  
Leadership –  
Central

**1/13**

Saturday

NJEA Human  
and Civil Rights  
Celebration

## deadlines

**11/27**

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human and  
Civil Rights Celebration

Event date: Jan. 13

**11/20**

Winter Leadership Conference-Central

Event date: Jan. 5-6

**12/4**

Winter Leadership Conference-South

Event date: Jan. 26-27

**1/12**

Educational Support Professionals Conference

Event date: Feb. 2-4

**1/22**

Winter Leadership Conference-North

Event date: March 2-3

## Save the Date

NJEA  
Educational  
Support  
Professionals  
Conference

**February 2-4**

Saturday & Sunday  
2018

Registration deadline:  
January 12, 2018

**njea**

**esp**  
Educational Support Professionals

# You have a union. Keep it strong!

AS citizens in each of the 50 states elect a certain number of representatives to Congress based upon population, NJEA members from each county elect a certain number of delegates to the DA based on county membership. Here, DA alternate Esther Fletcher addresses delegates.



## How do I contact my county's representatives on the DA?

Log on to [njea.org](http://njea.org), slide over to "MyNJEA" and click on "Committees."

Click on "Delegate Assembly."

Each DA member's email address is his or her first initial and last name followed by [@njea.org](mailto:@njea.org). (For example, if there were a delegate named Doremus Jessup, his email address would be [djessup@njea.org](mailto:djessup@njea.org).)

"You have a republic, if you can keep it!"

Attributed to Benjamin Franklin, that quote reminds us that our democratic system of government requires citizen participation to survive. When we vote, when we communicate with the representatives we have elected, when we support them in advocating for our issues, and when we step up ourselves to lead, we are keeping our republic.

The same can be said of NJEA, which is structured as a representative democracy. Like our nation, our union's strength depends on your engagement and participation.

The Delegate Assembly (DA), NJEA's highest policy-making body, is in many ways modeled after the U.S. House of Representatives. As citizens in each of the 50 states elect a certain number of representatives to Congress based upon population, NJEA members from each county elect a certain number of delegates to the DA based on county membership. In

addition to counties, four other constituencies have representation on the DA: higher education, NJREA, NJEA Preservice and administrative members who are not otherwise represented. Delegates serve two-year terms. Every April, elections are held to elect approximately half of the delegates. Your county association accepts nominations for its open DA seats in February.

Just as members of Congress are elected to represent you in Washington, DA members are elected to represent you and your interests as NJEA members.

Where Congress publishes the *Congressional Record* to report the official proceedings of the House and the Senate, NJEA publishes the book of *Reports to the Delegate Assembly* at [njea.org/DA](http://njea.org/DA). Following their transcription, the minutes of each meeting are published in the *NJEA Review* and at [njea.org](http://njea.org).

Where members of Congress are expected to be accessible in their home

districts, members of the DA are accessible to the members in their respective counties. They deliver reports concerning DA actions to their county representative councils. They also receive feedback and ideas to bring back to the DA. DA members have a dedicated NJEA email address (see sidebar), and they want to hear from you.

Of course, the DA is not the only structure within NJEA where members are elected by their fellow members to carry out the work of our union. NJEA's Executive Committee, which includes the president, vice president and secretary-treasurer, as well as 27 other members representing counties and other constituent groups, is charged with executing the policies approved by the DA.

Additionally, more than 50 statewide committees, with charges covering a wide range of issues, meet throughout the year. You can also find them and their members at [njea.org](http://njea.org). You may find that speaking with a committee member will help you think through an

idea that you have. Committee members do not necessarily have an email address on NJEA's server, however, you can reach the committee through the listed NJEA staff contact.

Finally, similar structures exist at the county and local levels, ensuring that every NJEA member has many colleagues representing her or his interests throughout our large and democratic organization.

Remember, when you vote for your representatives to the DA and other association offices, when you communicate with the representatives you have elected, when you support them in advocating for issues that matter to you, when you engage in that advocacy work yourself, and when you step up to run for positions in your local, county, or state association, you are not just keeping our union; you are making it even stronger. 🌱

# Breakfast After the Bell has graduated to the next level.

The first generation of Breakfast After the Bell students have navigated from kindergarten through 12th grade... and the benefits are piling up!

Look at these facts:



**46%**  
increase in  
attentiveness

**33%**  
reduction in  
tardiness

**87%**  
participating  
principals  
recommend  
the program

**17.5%**  
higher  
math test  
scores

**1.5**  
fewer  
absences per  
student

**20%**  
increase in  
graduation  
rates



*His future looks bright!*  
[breakfasteveryday.org](http://breakfasteveryday.org)



# Vote on Nov. 7

## Ambassador Phil Murphy for Governor Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver for Lieutenant Governor

- **LD 1** Jeff Van Drew (D) for Senate, Robert Andrzejczak (D) and R. Bruce Land (D) for Assembly
- **LD 2** Chris Brown (R) for Senate and Vince Mazzeo (D) for Assembly. Your choice for John Armato (D), Vince Sera (R) and Brenda Taube (R)
- **LD 3** Fran Grenier (R) for Senate, No endorsement for Assembly
- **LD 4** Fred Madden (D) for Senate, Paul D. Moriarty (D) and Gabriela M. Mosquera (D) for Assembly
- **LD 5** Nilsa Cruz-Perez (D) for Senate, Patricia Egan Jones (D) and Arthur Barclay (D) for Assembly
- **LD 6** James Beach (D) for Senate and Louis D. Greenwald (D) and Pamela R. Lampitt (D) for Assembly
- **LD 7** Troy Singleton (D) for Senate, Herb Conaway (D) and Carol Murphy (D) for Assembly
- **LD 8** George Youngkin (D) for Senate and No endorsement for Assembly
- **LD 9** Christopher Connors (R) for Senate and Jill Dobrowansky (D) and Brian E. Rumpf (R) for Assembly
- **LD 10** Your choice between Emma L. Mammano (D) and Jim Holzapfel (R) for Senate, David W. Wolfe (R) and Gregory P. McGuckin (R) for Assembly
- **LD 11** Vin Gopal (D) for Senate, Eric Houghtaling (D) and Joann Downey (D) for Assembly
- **LD 12** David H. Lande (D) for Senate, Ronald S. Dancer (R) for Assembly and Your choice for Gene Davis (D) and Robert D. Clifton (R)
- **LD 13** Sean Byrnes (D) for Senate, Tom Giaimo (D) and Serena DiMaso (R) for Assembly
- **LD 14** Linda Greenstein (D) for Senate and Daniel Benson (D) for Assembly
- **LD 15** Shirley K. Turner (D) for Senate, Reed Gusciora (D) and Elizabeth Maher Muoio (D) for Assembly
- **LD 16** No endorsement for Senate, Andrew Zwicker (D) and Roy Freiman (D) for Assembly
- **LD 18** Patrick Diegnan, Jr. (D) for Senate, Nancy J. Pinkin (D) and Robert Karabinchak (D) for Assembly
- **LD 19** Joseph F. Vitale (D) for Senate, Craig J. Coughlin (D) and Yvonne Lopez (D) for Assembly
- **LD 20** Joseph P. Cryan (D) for Senate, Annette Quijano (D) and Jamel C. Holley (D) for Assembly
- **LD 21** No endorsement for Senate, Bruce Bergen (D) and Lacey Rzeszowski (D) for Assembly
- **LD 22** Nicholas P. Scutari (D) for Senate, Gerald Green (D) and James J. Kennedy (D) for Assembly
- **LD 23** Christine Lui Chen (D) for Senate, Laura Shaw (D) and Charles Boddy (D) for Assembly
- **LD 24** Jennifer Hamilton (D) for Senate, Kate Matteson (D) and Gina Trish (D) for Assembly
- **LD 25** Lisa Bhimani (D) for Senate, Thomas Moran (D) and Richard Corcoran (D) for Assembly
- **LD 27** Richard Codey (D) for Senate, Mila M. Jasey (D) and John F. McKeon (D) for Assembly
- **LD 28** Ron Rice (D) for Senate, Cleopatra G. Tucker (D) and Ralph R. Caputo (D) for Assembly
- **LD 30** No endorsement for Senate, Sean T. Kean (R) and Eliot Arlo Colon (D) for Assembly
- **LD 31** Sandra B. Cunningham (D) for Senate, Nicholas Chiaravalloti (D) for Assembly
- **LD 32** Nicholas J. Sacco (D) for Senate, Vincent Prieto (D) and Angelica M. Jimenez (D) for Assembly
- **LD 33** No endorsement for Senate, Raj Mukherji (D) and Annette Chaparro (D) for Assembly
- **LD 34** Nia H. Gill (D) for Senate, Sheila Oliver (D) and Thomas P. Giblin (D) for Assembly
- **LD 35** Nelida "Nellie" Pou (D) for Senate, Shavonda Sumter (D) and Benjie Wimberly (D) for Assembly
- **LD 36** Paul A. Sarlo (D) for Senate, Gary Schaer (D) and Marlene Caride (D) for Assembly
- **LD 37** Loretta Weinberg (D) for Senate, Gordon M. Johnson (D) and Valerie Vainieri Huttie (D) for Assembly
- **LD 38** Bob Gordon (D) for Senate, Timothy Eustace (D) and Joseph A. Lagana (D) for Assembly
- **LD 39** Linda H. Schwager (D) for Senate, Jannie Chung (D) and Annie Hausman (D) for Assembly
- **LD 40** Kristin M. Corrado (R) for Senate, Paul Vagianos (D) and Christine Ordway (D) for Assembly

There were no endorsements in LDs 17, 26, and 29. Candidates are screened on their record and on their agreement with NJEA's goals and positions. To be considered for an endorsement, candidates must participate in the screening process. A "your choice" endorsement—where more candidates are listed than there are positions up for election—indicates that each of the candidates listed meet NJEA's standards for endorsement.