

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

REVIEW

May 2018
NJEA.ORG



an education and advocacy resource

One Lunch Duty at a Time

Students with
Special Needs Find
Inclusion

After the Storm

Marching for
Their Lives

A Long Walk
to Water





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cancellation.



LEFT: The principal of Las Americas School in Houston greets HVEA members. Back (l-r): Jessica Babice, PE teacher; Marie Moreno, principal of Las Americas; HVEA President Danielle Arias, orchestra teacher. Front (l-r): Amanda Fertig, counselor; Barbara McCarty, media specialist, Mark Chiu, math teacher. See Page 38 for the full story.



LEFT: NEA Director Kimberly Scott updates members on federal issues at the Essex County Education Association (ECEA) Legislative Dinner. In addition to her service on the NEA Board of Directors, Scott is the president of the East Orange Maintenance Association President and 2nd vice president of ECEA.



ABOVE: NJREA member Edie Fulton, who served as president of NJEA from 2001-05 and from 1981-85, was honored at the April 11 meeting of the State Board of Education. Appointed to the State Board by Gov. Jon Corzine, Fulton served on it from 2007 to 2017. A retired Lakehurst teacher, Fulton has been serving the profession, and New Jersey's public school students, for over 50 years. From left: Acting Commissioner of Education Lamont Repollet, Fulton, and State Board President Arcelio Aponte.



LEFT: NJEA launched a round of PRIDE in Public Education ads statewide on TV and online in April. This campaign highlights the key role that school nurses play in keeping students healthy and learning. It features NJEA member Sue Scalgione, a school nurse at Park Avenue Elementary School in Freehold Borough. You can view the ad at njea.org/schoolnurses.



Two of NJEA's largest locals, the Paterson Education Association and the Jersey City Education Association stood strong to reach contract agreements with their respective school boards in a challenging round of bargaining. Following a one-day strike, JCEA reached an agreement with the Jersey City Board of Education on March 18. PEA's agreement with its board followed soon after. The two local associations' victories are evident on the shirt worn by JCEA President Ron Greco (r) as he stands proudly with PEA President John McEntee: "Together We Rise – JCEA & PEA."

A more detailed *Review* story of the agreements will follow the locals' contract ratification meetings.

Photo by Eric Jones,
President, Plainfield Education Association

FEATURES



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Paraprofessionals in Hamilton Township, Atlantic County, developed a program to fight hunger in their community. The program cuts food waste in schools and protects the health, safety, and dignity of people leaving with food insecurity.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



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We stand up for each other

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Students across the United States and here in New Jersey have organized marches to change the conversation around gun safety. Read about how one school's Social Justice Club is learning more about the issue and see photos from marches in Washington, D.C. and New Jersey.



ON THE COVER:

Eileen O'Sullivan is a paraprofessional and member of the Hamilton Township Education Association in Atlantic County. She and her colleagues run a program called No Food Left Behind that makes sure wrapped food isn't wasted. See Page 25.

PHOTO BY
KATHRYN COULIBALY

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REVIEW



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Annual membership dues are: Active professional: \$897 (full time); \$448.50 (part time) \$448.50 (on leave). Active supportive \$438 (full time) \$219 (part time) \$219 (on leave). Retired: \$84; \$985 (retired life). Retired ESP: \$59; \$610 (retired ESP life); Preservice \$32. General professional (outside N.J. public education employment): \$250. Subscribing \$250. Only those in education positions in N.J. public schools and colleges are eligible for active membership. Payment of annual dues entitles a member to receive the *Review* for one year, from January through December. Dues include \$5 for the *NJEA Review*.



When your professional life gets personal

As tens of thousands of college students graduate this month, ready to enter the workforce, they will be instructed to maintain a strict separation between their work and home lives. For the most part, that is sound advice. But the education profession is about people: young people who need instruction, guidance, and compassion, and parents and colleagues near and far who need support, reassurance, and understanding. To do this well, we must work together. In this month's *Review*, we share several stories of collaboration and caring.

In "Special Students Find Inclusion," a team of educators and students brought the Special Olympics Play Unified program to the Old Bridge School District through after-school programs and a credit-bearing Unified Generation class—the first of its kind in the state.

In "One Lunch Duty at a Time," Hamilton Township paraprofessionals share how they developed a program to fight hunger in their community using the resources and expertise available to them, combined with a lot of volunteer hours.

Following a brutal hurricane season, the members of the Hopewell Valley Educational Support Professional Association initiated a hurricane relief project that grew to include members of the Hopewell Valley Education Association, the PTO, and district administration. Beyond financial contributions, they found ways to provide meaningful short- and long-term assistance to Las Americas Middle School in Houston.

Read their story in "Hopewell Valley Puts Heart into Hurricane Relief Efforts."

Many school districts are reading *A Long Walk to Water* about the real-life experiences of Salva Dut, a refugee from what is now South Sudan who has publicized the struggle for safe drinking water in sub-Saharan Africa through his story of loss and hope. Inspired by the book, the students and staff have been fundraising for a well for the past two years. Near the end of last year, they had an opportunity to meet the man whose story inspired them to action.

Finally, in "Marching for Our Lives," we share the stories and photos of NJEA members who participated in the March 24 March for Our Lives at rallies in Washington, D.C. and New Jersey. In addition, we highlight the work of the Collingswood High School Social Justice Club and the presentation they hosted from Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well." We are fortunate in education to have so many opportunities to make a difference in the lives of our students and others. Thank you for all that you do in your personal and professional lives to make the world a better place.

Marie Blistan



Diane Tavares (l), a paraprofessional from Franklin Elementary School in Union Township, greeted NJEA President Marie Blistan at the ESP Conference in February.

Officers Online

Marie Blistan

Twitter

@MarieBlistan: Our national union unites and elevates our voice against violence!

On March 24, NJEA President Marie Blistan tweeted live video of National Education Association Secretary-Treasurer Princess Moss speaking at the NEA Educational Support Professionals Conference in Orlando, where Moss addressed the epidemic of gun violence in the nation and in and around our schools. See Page 22 for coverage of the student-led March for Our Lives.

Sean M. Spiller

Facebook

SpillerforNJEA: Started the morning with Senate Budget Committee testimony on the need to properly fund our schools and implement Chapter 78 relief.

On March 29, NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller posted photos from the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark, where he testified on the proposed state budget before the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty offered budget testimony in Trenton on March 28. See Page 16 for the full story.

Steve Beatty

Facebook

SteveBeattyNJEA: Fantastic day spent with our brothers and sisters at Haworth School. When they returned from holiday break, they had a pipe burst and subsequently lost the use of several classrooms. But in true NJEA form, they pulled together and made it work until the repairs were completed. Happy to provide them some assistance as we are all in this together!

NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty posted photos from his visit to Haworth School. He delivered a \$1,000 check from NJEA's disaster relief fund to help members there replace classroom supplies.

Know. Lead. Act.

DA to consider Bylaw change to freeze NJEA dues for two years, suspend formula

At its May 19, 2018, meeting, the NJEA Delegate Assembly (DA) will consider whether to adopt a proposed amendment to the NJEA Bylaws that would affect NJEA dues for active professional, active supportive (educational support professionals/ESP), and retired members for the next two years, and impact future dues revenues. If adopted, the amendment will require an estimated \$3.5 million in budget cuts in Association programs and services for 2018-19 and a similar estimated cut in 2019-20.

The amendment would suspend application of the established NJEA dues formula for active and retired members for two years—2018-19 and 2019-20—“freezing” the NJEA portion of active and retired dues at 2017-18 levels. The normal formula would resume for the 2020-21 fiscal year, but upon resumption would be applied to the 2017-18 levels, resulting in reducing NJEA dues from what normally would have been collected.

Since the NJEA dues level, upon resumption, will be calculated using the “frozen” dues level as a base, the Association’s anticipated revenues would be affected not only during the two-year period of the “freeze,” but each year thereafter. This would also affect NJREA revenues.

The amendment would freeze only NJEA dues, not the local association, county association, or National Education Association portions of the unified dues.

If ratified, the amendment would save active professional members \$31 a year, ESP members \$13 a year, and retired members \$1 a year in

the NJEA portion of dues. Over 10 months, that would result in a savings every two weeks of \$1.55 for active professional members and 65 cents for active supportive members, respectively.

NJEA dues are calculated separately for active professional members and active supportive members. Article I of NJEA’s Bylaws sets forth the formula for calculating dues for each of these groups, as well as for retired members.

Considerations

At press time, the NJEA Budget Committee was still constructing the proposed 2018-19 NJEA budget. However, the Association management team was already recommending a conservative budget with more than \$8.1 million in budget reductions in anticipation of an anti-union U.S. Supreme Court ruling this spring. The full fiscal impact of the anticipated court ruling is still unknown and may require additional cuts. If the proposed amendment to suspend the dues formula and “freeze” NJEA dues passes, the measure will have an additional impact on the Association’s anticipated dues revenues requiring an additional \$7 million in budget cuts over the next two years. Coupled with other reductions, the NJEA Business staff indicates that the Association’s ability to provide the current level of programs and services to members will be adversely affected.

The Association’s independent auditor has noted that NJEA has been conservative in its budgeting and in recent years modified its pro-

posed budgets to run closer to actual expenses. An independent audit of NJEA’s financial standing, as of Aug. 31, 2017, determined that NJEA’s current reserves would cover 6½ months of operating costs—less than the eight to 12 months equivalent that the auditor recommends.

NJEA’s independent auditor has stated that significant reduction of the reserves would affect the Association’s fiscal stability. The auditor has pointed out that the reserves are used to help the Association meet the core program expenses while dues are still coming in throughout the year, as well as to cover emergencies, to ensure that the Association has enough money on hand if all of its liabilities need to be paid off, to address initiatives outside the standard operating budget—such as the campaign to secure pension funding—and to make the Association more secure financially. The Association also makes investment income from the reserves, but that income can fluctuate and cannot be relied on. Introduced at the March 10 DA meeting as a new business item, the DA sent the proposed amendment to the NJEA Constitution Review Committee for review and recommendation as required by the NJEA Bylaws. The committee’s report will be submitted to the DA at its May 19 meeting.

The amendment, if approved, would take effect on Sept. 1, 2018.

The DA will meet at the Princeton Marriott at Forrestal, 100 College Rd. East, Princeton, N.J., starting at 9:30 a.m.

The proposed amendment is as follows:

That the Bylaws be amended, effective September 1, 2018, by adding the following new section to the end of Bylaw I, Dues:

“ (i) Temporary Dues Formula Suspension – Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws to the contrary, the

dues for active professional, active supportive, and retired members shall be maintained at the 2017-2018 dues level for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 fiscal years, and the dues amount for the 2020-2021 fiscal year shall be determined by applying the

normal percent increase calculated in 2019-2020 to the base dues amount in effect for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, utilizing the formulas specified in Bylaw 1 (a), (b), and (e). This paragraph shall be deleted from the Bylaws on Sept. 1, 2021.”

Changing school districts? Salary guide placement is negotiable

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

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

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

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

Where are the election results?

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

Election results will be posted on njea.org after the Elections Committee certifies the election results. The committee will meet to certify the results on April 30. The election results will also be reported in the June edition of the *NJEA Review*.

Nontenured? Know your rights and responsibilities

By May 15, all nontenured teachers must be notified of re-employment. If the school board fails to notify the nontenured teacher, he or she is entitled to continued employment for the next year.

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

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

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

Attend the Political Leadership Academy

Save the date for the NJEA Political Leadership Academy. The NJEA Political Leadership Academy is a training program for members who are thinking about running for public office. Attendees will learn the ins and outs of running, winning, and how your union can help. It is scheduled for May 12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at NJEA Headquarters in Trenton. Email Michael Giglio in NJEA Government Relations for more information and to indicate your interest in attending.

Do you want to reduce your student loan debt?

Imagine you had the chance to have your student loan debt reduced or forgiven completely? It sounds too good to be true, but as a public service employee you may be eligible for student loan forgiveness.

According to Higher Ed Not Debt, there are more than 44 million Americans with over \$1.4 trillion in outstanding educational debt. (See higherednotdebt.org.) While this debt is a burden for many members, there are options available to help you reduce or completely eliminate your student loan debt.

What are your options?

One opportunity for student loan debt forgiveness is the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program. As a public service employee, you may qualify for the PSLF program. Under the PSLF program, you may be eligible for complete forgiveness on the remaining balance of your student loan debt after 120 payments, which equates to ten years.

Under the standard repayment plan, a loan would be paid off in ten years, so to benefit from forgiveness under Public Service Loan Forgiveness, you would need to enroll in an income-driven repayment (IDR) plan.

Other options are available specifically for teachers to have portions of their loans forgiven or completely cancelled.

You may be eligible to have as much as \$17,500 forgiven through the Teacher Loan Forgiveness (TLF) program. If you've been teaching full-time in a low-income elementary or

secondary school or an educational service agency for five consecutive years, you may qualify.

Additionally, borrowers with Perkins Loans may be eligible for the Teacher Loan Cancellation program. This program allows for loan cancellation up to 100 percent after five years of teaching certain subject areas in a low-income school.

It really isn't too good to be true!

Sofia Capinha, a member from the Gateway Regional Education Association applied for and received forgiveness with the Teacher Loan Forgiveness program. After teaching in a Title 1 school for five years, Sofia applied for TLF. Although her application was sent back because of one small error, she described the process as “relatively easy.”

Where can you learn more?

NJEA hosts webinars four times a month as a part of our “Degrees Not Debt” campaign. As a part of these webinars, members can learn more about how to enroll in an Income Driven Repayment plan in order to apply for one of the above mentioned forgiveness programs.

Additionally, webinar attendees will be introduced to a new member benefits discount partner that will help you with your student loan debt questions.

To learn more and register for an upcoming webinar, visit njea.org/dndwebinars. 📺

Selfie of the month

Long before a tentative agreement was finally reached in late March, JCEA members Dawn Moss-McClam and Megeen Corcoran, joined the fight for a fair contract in Jersey City. Here they rally for a fair settlement, and pause for a selfie, at the Feb. 15 Jersey City Board of Education meeting.

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



Cool Stuff

Have you authored a book or educational materials?

Authors' Alley is an area on the NJEA Convention exhibit floor that provides preservice, active and retired NJEA members a chance to showcase materials they have published that enhance and add value to the teaching profession or can serve as useful educational resources for teachers and parents. Members interested in exhibiting in Authors' Alley must be willing to offer members advice on how to go about publishing their authored works. Submissions must meet NJEA criteria.

The 2018 NJEA Convention will take place on Thursday, Nov. 8 and Friday, Nov. 9, in Atlantic City. Member authors will be responsible to exhibit on both days of the convention—during all show hours—displaying and selling their published works and conversing with members. The cost to participate in Authors' Alley is \$50.

The application to reserve your space in Authors' Alley can be found at njeaconvention.org. Slide over "Program" and click on "Authors' Alley." The application must be printed, completed and returned with your submission(s) and check for \$50 made out to NJEA/Author's Alley. For questions, call Felicia Davis at 609-599-4561, ext. 2260.

NJEA must receive your space reservation by June 30, 2018.

Nominate your favorite NJEA member to be a VIP of the Game

NJEA and Philadelphia Soul spotlight members

NJEA and the Philadelphia Soul football team have partnered to recognize some of the many dedicated teachers and educational support professionals who make New Jersey Public Schools great for every child.

NJEA members can nominate a fellow teacher or educational support professional to be the NJEA/Soul VIP of the game. A total of eight VIPs will be honored during the season.

The eight NJEA members selected as NJEA/Soul VIPs of the Game will each win a Field Zone Table for four at a Soul game at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia. The prize package includes four tickets, parking passes, food and beverage, and post-game field passes for a "Meet and Greet" with the players and the Soulmate Dance Team. The person who nominated the winner wins four tickets in the Soul Blue section in the heat of the action; he or she will also receive food vouchers and parking passes.

To nominate a colleague as the NJEA/Soul VIP of the Game, complete the form found at njea.org/soul. Make your entries now. Winners will be selected on a rolling basis. Entries received after May 31, 2018, will not be considered.

QUICK TIP:

Three key strategies for culturally relevant classroom management

By Tracey Garrett, Ed.D.

Are you experiencing a cultural mismatch in your classroom? Demographic data indicate that our population of elementary and secondary school students continues to grow more diverse every year.

For example, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (nces.ed.gov), approximately 45 percent of school-age children are students of color, almost one in five lives in poverty, and approximately 10 percent are English language learners. In contrast, about 82 percent of the teaching force is white, middle class, and monolingual, resulting in a cultural mismatch.

A cultural mismatch is characterized as a situation where a student's home culture is in contrast with the teacher's culture. According to researchers such as Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay, cultural mismatches can unfortunately exacerbate classroom management problems because definitions and expectations of appropriate behavior are often culturally influenced. To mitigate some of these problems, teachers can implement a culturally responsive classroom management approach including the following three strategies.

Adopt the stance of a warm demander

Convey expectations clearly by speaking firmly, keeping demands short and simple, and using words that invite cooperation. Keep your tone matter of fact, but never threaten, demean, or create power struggles. According to researcher Elyse Hambacher, some cultures perceive this matter of fact, more authoritative style of communication as the way that teachers demonstrate that they care about their students, which positively influences students' classroom behavior.

Welcome participatory styles of discourse

Teacher educator and researcher, Geneva Gay, explains that some cultures are known for their active and exuberant style of conversation while others are more comfortable with the traditional white, middle class approach known as call – response. This frequently used passive style contradicts the style of communication that is fostered in some cultures' families, making it difficult for some children to constantly adjust to the more passive style. Therefore, be open to multiple styles of discourse in the classroom.

Use culturally consistent language

Adjust your speech patterns according to what is effective with each student. For example, according to researcher, Mary Manke, some cultures speech patterns use more explicit directives such as "Clean your room before dinner," while others use what are sometimes referred to as "politeness formulas" or indirect discourse strategies such as "I see hands that need washing" or "Would you like to clean up your toys before dinner?" Think about your students and consider which type of communication is more effective for each student in order to prevent behavior problems due to miscommunication.

Tracey Garrett is a professor in the Department of Teacher Education at Rider University. She can be reached at tgarrett@rider.edu.

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State Teen Arts Festival: May 30-June 1

The New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival is the statewide culminating celebration of the arts dedicated to inspiring New Jersey teen artists, educators, professional artists and arts advocates from across the state. 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.

The New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival showcases teen artists' creative efforts in the literary, performing and visual arts. The New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival also provides master class workshops for students, professional development for teachers and a college fair.

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.

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 and via postal mail.

For more information on festival registration, showcase/adjudication process or the New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival visit www.NJTeenArts.com, call 732-566-ARTS (2787) or email Harrison Haney, coordinator for New Jersey State Teen Arts, at harrison@NJTeenArts.com.



Food in Schools

To Eat or Not to Eat?

Kristy Agresta, BSN, RN,
Certified School Nurse-NJ

A controversy has been plaguing school districts near and far over food and its place in the educational system. Food has always functioned in various ways: birthday and holiday celebrations, to increase funding, student incentives and rewards, class projects, and multicultural experiences.

When a conversation around a change in food policy begins, it is often assumed that concerns over food allergies are at the core. But with childhood obesity rates increasing rapidly, food allergies are not the only factor contributing to evolving food policy.

That leaves a burning question on everyone's mind: Food no doubt has a place in schools, but what is that place?

Children spend a majority of their day in school—approximately 1,000 hours per year. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), one in six children and adolescents are affected by obesity. The education system is in a unique position to combat this nationwide health crisis.

Why is finding a healthy medium for food culture so important? Simply stated, healthy children are better learners. Research has shown that consistent healthy nutrition is linked to better overall behavioral and academic outcomes. Children who eat healthy food are less likely to develop cardiovascular conditions, obesity, diabetes or dental cavities.

Policy trends: Relax, it's just food

Some parents, educators and students believe a few parties every month and the consumption of a few “harmless indulgences” are not only part of many school's cultures, traditions and ethos, but also a rite of passage. Some go so far as to say that removing food sharing and parties from the classroom is an attack on

personal choice and civil liberties. This sentiment is expressed in the decidedly relaxed food policies of many school districts.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) implemented regulations that require school districts to update wellness policies to reflect new federal regulations and guidelines. In 2017, the USDA's Team Nutrition listed the components of the updated requirements, which include:

- Ensuring that all food and beverages sold on school property during the school day are aligned with federal regulation.
- Crafting policy for all other food-related activities that meet the individual needs of the school or district.
- Marketing only for items that meet the appropriate nutrition standards.
- Informing the public of nutritional changes.
- Including stakeholders and leaders in decision making processes from various arenas of education and the community.

Ensure the wellness policy has specific goals, evidence based strategies to achieve them, and evaluation methods.

Bettina Elias Siegel, a nationally recognized writer and commentator on issues relating to children and food policy, notes that federal regulations pertain predominately to food products sold on school property. As a result local education authorities are left to design and implement policy for all other food brought onto campus. This includes food items brought in by students and staff for celebrations or as an incentive.

Unless the local board of education specifically decides to further regulate policy regarding food brought into the classroom

by students for sharing, there is no universal federal regulation to do so. In fact, the New Jersey School Nutrition Policy states “standards only apply to items made available to students by or through the school. Items brought from home would not be bound by these standards, unless the local board of education chooses to further regulate” (see sidebar).

Districts that do not want to put additional restrictions on their students could choose not to. Additionally, exemptions to the standards allow items such as candy, cookies, cupcakes and other foods not consistent with sending a message of health and wellness.

Policy trends: Hello from the other side

Schools across the country have chosen to remove food from classroom parties entirely. This includes elimination of food for birthday and holiday parties, bake sales, and all other food related celebrations. Food is replaced with activities including, but not limited to, allowing the birthday child to be the teacher's “helper,” reading a book to the class, craft projects, extra activity time, announcing the child's name during lunch or announcements and other age appropriate activities.

One teacher suggests her students donate physical education equipment such as a jump rope. Such an act would encourage physical activity that can be replicated everyday in a social environment as well as promote lifelong healthy behavior. Sugary snacks are consumed in just a few minutes, but healthy behaviors last a lifetime.

Policy trends: An inside perspective

At W. Arthur Slocum Skewes School in Ridgefield, a hybrid approach was recently implemented.

Before this, there were minimal restrictions, allowing any food to be brought in at any time. Now, students may bring in food with nutritional labels only. Homemade food is not brought in for food celebrations. Teachers notify parents prior to each party so that parents of students with food allergies can decide if their children can consume the food brought in or they can send in different, safe snacks for their children.

A neighboring district in Bergen County has taken an innovative, novel approach to food management in school. The school district sends home notifications at the beginning of the school year outlining their policy and procedures. Three celebrations per year include food (i.e., Halloween, holiday, and end of year).

Teachers at each grade level collaborate with their class parents to set a menu or list that is both safe and healthy for their students. Permission slips are sent home to parents to confirm if their children can eat some, all, or none of the food on the list. The list includes a variety of healthy food options including: low fat yogurt, cheese, bagels, and 100 percent fruit juice ice pops.

On the last day of each month, students in grades kindergarten through three have the opportunity to celebrate their birthdays. These “once a month celebrations” do not include food.

This food policy encompasses the intention of USDA food policy: promotion and consumption of healthy and nutritious foods, while still protecting our students with food allergies and allowing students to celebrate age-appropriate milestones and holidays.

Food allergies: The numbers don't lie

While USDA policy focuses primarily on the obesity epidemic, the

It is up to us as educators to create an environment that gives students the best chance to make their own educated decisions and provide them with a safe and healthy environment.

prevalence of food allergies cannot be ignored. Data provided by CDC show a clear increase in the number of children diagnosed with food allergies. As evidence by a 2013 study, the number of children with food allergies increased 50 percent from 1997 to 2011. According to Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE), those numbers translate to approximately 6 million, or 8 percent, of school-age children having a known food allergy.

In the September 2016 edition of *New Jersey Monthly*, Joanna Buffum reported that an average of two children in every classroom have a food allergy diagnosis. Of these children with known allergies, FARE reports that 15 percent have had allergic reactions in school despite preventative measures, allergy action plans and implementation of policy. In addition to the rising prevalence of food allergies, other factors may contribute to the call for change in food policy, particularly the negative effects that consumption of homemade food may have:

Risk of cross contamination

The incidence of cross contamination cannot be controlled nor ruled out when homemade food is consumed in schools. Often, those who do not have experience with children with food allergies do not consider the consequences of completing simple tasks that can have a dramatic effect. This includes using the same knife to spread peanut butter, and to ice cupcakes for a class party.

Illness/hygiene

While homemade food is surely made with love, it cannot be said with 100 percent certainty that it is prepared with cleanliness. If just one person with an infectious illness accidentally sneezes into

the food that is being prepared for the class, or forgets to wash his or her hands, it is possible that each person consuming the snack will also become sick.

Overall safety

It is important for schools to be prepared for every situation. With food that is made at home, it would not be impossible for harmful substances such as laxatives, allergens, or even poisonous, and life threatening substances to be put into food and served at school. It would not be entirely difficult for a bully to put a harmful ingredient into another child's food or drink in order to cause serious harm.

Food will always be a part of every child's educational experience. There is no question that it is a necessary part of a child's daily life at school, however, because of many factors influencing these experiences, controversy surrounds which policy, if any, is best practice. It is up to us as educators to create an environment that gives students the best chance to make their own educated decisions and provide them with a safe and healthy environment. No matter what approach is taken, the education behind our food choices is what matters

What example do we want to set for our kids? 🍌

Kristy Agresta, is a certified school nurse at Slocum Skewes School in Ridgefield. She can be reached at kagresta@ridgefieldschools.com.

For more information

The resources below were consulted in the creation of this article and contain additional valuable information about food safety in schools

"Childhood Obesity Facts," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 11, 2017. (bit.ly/childobesitycdc)

"Food Allergy Facts and Statistics for the U.S.," (PDF) Food Allergy Research and Education. (bit.ly/farefoodallergyfacts)

"The Fragile Generation: Food Allergies On The Rise," by Joanna Buffum. *New Jersey Monthly*, September 2016. (bit.ly/fragilegeneration)

"Local School Wellness Policy," Team Nutrition, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Nov. 11, 2017. (bit.ly/teamnutritionwellness)

"New Jersey School Nutrition Policy: Questions and Answers," (PDF) New Jersey Department of Agriculture. (bit.ly/nutritionpolicynj)

"New Rules May Curb Classroom Cupcakes," by Bettina Elias Siegel. *The New York Times*, Dec. 13, 2016. (bit.ly/classroomcupcakes)

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NJEA Report

NJEA members lobby against bill that undermines collective bargaining for higher education members

Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-Gloucester) and Sen. Steven Oroho (R-Sussex) re-introduced an anti-collective bargaining bill, S-2455, that passed the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on April 5. On April 12, S-2455 it passed in the full Senate by a vote of 22-12. It was expected to pass by a much wider margin—but thanks to a strong showing of NJEA members coming to Trenton or calling and emailing their senators to oppose the bill, support for the bill was diminished.

The bill would diminish the benefits of county college employees and higher education retirees by forcing them to switch from the School Employees Health Benefits Plan (SEHBP) to the State Health Benefits Plan (SHBP).

The bill would unilaterally strip away the health care benefits bargained by county college employees and would force them into a new system where they have no representation and no voice. It would also force retired county college employees to enroll in Medicare Advantage plans, even if they prefer their current Medicare Supplement plan.

NJEA members have a stronger voice on the SEHBP Commission than they would on the SHBP. The SEHBP Commission has four representatives from the unions whose members are covered by the plans (including NJEA), three representatives from the state, and a representative from the New Jersey Schools Boards Association. By contrast, the SHBP Commission has three representatives of the state and two representatives from AFL-CIO.

An identical bill had been introduced in the lame-duck session that concluded in early January. At that time, NJEA's and NJREA's officers sent an email to all higher education members alerting them to the bill and providing contact information for key legislators. Higher education members, in turn, vigorously lobbied those legislators to oppose this attack on collective bargaining. The bill never made it out of committee.

With its reintroduction NJEA and NJREA officers and members again vigorously opposed the legislation, contending that changes in benefits are a compensation issue and should be addressed at the bargaining table, not forced through legislation.

As of press time, the Assembly version of the bill, A-2001, had not yet been scheduled for a hearing, but members were already calling their Assembly members to oppose the bill. Visit njea.org for the latest information on A-2001.

Chris Mueller, president of the Administrators Association of Passaic County Community College, spoke with legislators about the negative impact of moving his members into the SHBP.



NJREA member Alnetta Price, a retired speech language specialist in the Burlington City School District, joined her higher education colleagues as well as retirees and members from the K-12 level, to oppose this attack on collective bargaining for NJEA members at the higher education level.

Spiller, Beatty present NJEA testimony on proposed state budget

In March, NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller and Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty testified on the proposed 2019 state budget.

Speaking before the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on March 29 at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Spiller commended Gov. Phil Murphy and his administration for using the school funding formula to allocate school aid.

"Increasing direct aid to schools by \$283 million demonstrates Gov. Murphy's commitment to public education," Spiller testified. "This 3.5 percent increase means that 94 percent of schools will get an increase and no district would see a cut in aid. The governor's goal of fully funding our schools in four years is an ambitious, smart, and achievable goal if we all work together to invest in our children."

NJEA also lauded Murphy's proposed preschool expansion as a means of closing the achievement gap. And while the \$3.2 billion proposed pension payment would be the largest in New Jersey history, it falls short of the state's Chapter 78 obligation.

Beatty, testifying before the Assembly Budget Committee at the Statehouse on March 28, urged legislators to partner with Gov. Murphy to revisit policies that make it increasingly difficult for working families to thrive.

"For the sake of the education profession, we ask you to address the onerous health care contributions implemented under Chapter 78, which have led to more and more school employees taking home less money each year since the law was enacted and which eliminated the COLA for retirees," Beatty said.

NJEA also applauded Gov. Murphy's commitment to making college more affordable and his support for the state's high-quality community college system.

Finally, NJEA expressed support for revenue-raising measures that would force corporations and the most affluent to pay their fair share to ensure the state has the resources necessary to fund vital programs.

By law, the state budget must be finalized by June 30.

Higher Ed secretary nominee advances out of Judiciary Committee

Zakiya Smith Ellis, Gov. Phil Murphy's nominee for secretary of higher education and a former White House staffer under President Barack Obama, appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee on April 5. In a 10-1 vote, the committee approved her nomination.

The secretary of higher education oversees policy development and coordination of other higher education activities for the state.

Most recently, Smith Ellis worked at the Lumina Foundation, which works to improve access to higher education.

As Secretary of Higher Education, Smith Ellis would help implement Gov. Murphy's tuition-free community college plan, if the proposed \$50 million in the 2019 budget is approved.

Smith Ellis has bachelor's degree in political science and secondary education from Vanderbilt University, a master's degree in education policy and management from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a doctorate in higher education management from the University of Pennsylvania.

As of press time, a full Senate to confirm Smith Ellis had not yet been scheduled.



NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller testifies on the proposed state budget at a hearing of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark.

ICYMI

NJ County Teachers of the Year honored at Rutgers University basketball game
Feb. 26, 2018

Members receive aid for materials damaged in the wake of winter freeze
April 3, 2018

NJEA testimony before Joint Committee commends Community Schools
April 11, 2018

Attention Yankees fans!
April 11, 2018

NJEA.org

Legislature takes action on gun safety legislation

Six-bill package passes in Assembly

In March, the Assembly passed a six-bill gun safety package. The bills are designed to keep guns away from individuals who pose a threat to themselves or others, reduce the capacity of ammunition magazines, enhance background checks, and ban armor-piercing ammunition, as well as codify regulations on justifiable need to obtain a gun carry permit.

As of press time, the bills await action in the Senate.

- A-1181 would change the law governing licensed health professionals' duty to "warn and protect" when they believe patients to be a threat to themselves or others and when they believe the patient is likely to act on the threat. The bill would add the requirement that the health professional would notify the police, who would determine if the patient possessed a firearm, which the police would seize.
- A-1217 would authorize family members or police officers to file petitions for temporary extreme risk protective orders against those who pose a significant danger. The order would prohibit the individual from having custody or control of, owning, purchasing, possessing, or receiving firearms or ammunition, until the individual's case is considered in Family Court, which decides whether a one-year protective order should be issued.
- A-2761 would ban firearm magazines that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition. Currently, magazines capable of holding up to 15 rounds are legal in New Jersey. It would also designate a semi-automatic rifle with a fixed magazine capacity exceeding 10 rounds as a prohibited assault firearm.
- A-2757 would require all sales or other transfers of a handgun, rifle or shotgun to be conducted through a retail dealer licensed under state law or a federal firearms licensee. The licensee would be required to complete a National Instant Criminal Background Check on the recipient of the handgun, rifle or shotgun. Currently, private gun sales are not subject to this rule.
- A-2758 would codify current regulations in law, defining justifiable need to carry a handgun. The Christie administration attempted to weaken the definition of justifiable need in regulations to make it easier to obtain a gun carry permit. This bill would ensure that future administrations could not change the definition in regulation.
- A-2759 would prohibit possession of ammunition capable of penetrating body armor. This bill would make possession of this armor a crime of the fourth degree, which is punishable by a fine of not more than \$10,000, imprisonment for a term of not more than 18 months, or both.

Assembly and Senate Education committees schedule joint hearings

The Assembly and Senate Education committees scheduled three joint meetings on school safety in April, to hear from members of the public, as well as school officials, to ascertain best practices and proactive ideas beyond safety drills and increased security infrastructure to keep children and educators safe in schools.

Legislation recommended by two task forces introduced

Three Republican assemblywomen, Holly Schepisi, Serena DiMaso and Nancy Muñoz, introduced a 10-bill package designed to address school safety. The proposals are based on security recommendations from the 2015 New Jersey School Security Task Force and the 2013 N.J. SAFE

Task Force Report established in the wake of the 2012 school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut.

The bill package includes:

- Requiring the attorney general and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) to share best practices on school security with school districts.
- Training for all school employees and local police on how to handle a school emergency.
- Creating a 24-hour State Police hotline for tips that must be shared with local police and school officials.
- Improving real-time communication between school security, emergency responders and law enforcement during emergencies.
- Improving procedures to notify parents during emergencies.
- Requiring all school employees and students to carry identification cards.
- Reviewing and rating of all school safety and security plans and school district emergency communications policies, conducted by the NJDOE.
- Requiring the NJDOE and the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness to develop online forum for schools to share best practices.

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NJEA praises Senate Judiciary Committee recommendation to approve Repollet as commissioner of education

NJEA also lauds approval of Muoio for state treasurer

NJEA praised the action of the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 26 as it released for full Senate confirmation the appointment of Dr. Lamont Repollet for New Jersey commissioner of education and Assemblywoman Liz Muoio as state treasurer. Repollet and Muoio have been serving in these positions in an acting capacity as they await confirmation.

Dr. Repollet, who became Asbury Park's superintendent in October 2014, was nominated by Gov. Phil Murphy on Jan. 12.

"The Senate Judiciary Committee's recommendation to approve Dr. Repollet's nomination builds on Gov. Murphy's promise to respect New Jersey's educators as the professionals that we are," said NJEA President Marie Blistan. "Having most recently served as a superintendent in Asbury Park, where he enjoyed a good relationship with teachers and educational support professionals, Dr. Repollet understands the needs of educators and students at the district and school building levels."

NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller noted that both Gov. Murphy and Acting-Commissioner Repollet have already taken steps toward a key promise in the campaign: to do away with the PARCC exams. On March 6, Dr. Repollet announced that the

New Jersey Department of Education would begin the process of transitioning away from PARCC assessments in the state's public schools.


"With Dr. Repollet, we will have a commissioner of education who takes the concerns of educators, parents and students seriously when it comes to PARCC, and who promises to involve parents and educators in the development of a new test," Spiller said. "Dr. Repollet will put the needs of students ahead of the profit margins of testing companies."

NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty hailed the Judiciary Committee's recommendation of former Assemblywoman Muoio as state treasurer, noting the key role she will play in developing budgets that help the governor keep his promises to working families and students in our public schools.

"When Assemblywoman Muoio was running for reelection last fall, the first thing she told our members was that she is committed providing students with the resources they need to prepare for employment or college," Beatty said. "With State Treasurer Muoio at the helm, we know that fair and equitable school funding and affordable access to higher education will be budget priorities."

"Assemblywoman Muoio values the important contributions that educators and all of the working

men and women of New Jersey make to this great state," Blistan added. "We look forward to working with her to ensure that the men and women who work in our state's public schools have the resources they need while working and, in their retirement, a safe, secure, well-funded pension."

On March 24, the full Senate had approved the appointment of Muoio, but did not take action on Repollet. As of press time, the full Senate had yet to take action on his nomination. 



Acting Secretary of Education Lamont Repollet at his confirmation hearing.



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Social Justice Club hosts conversation on gun safety regulations

Moms Demand Action speaks at Collingswood High School

Meghan Adamoli, the executive assistant for Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, was invited to a March 27 meeting of the Social Justice Club at Collingswood High School. Following the mass shootings in Las Vegas and Parkland, Florida, the students wanted to better understand what they could do in response to the epidemic of gun violence in the United States. Moms Demand Action, and its partner groups such as Students Demand Action and Educators Demand Action, is affiliated with Everytown for Gun Safety.

The Social Justice Club at Collingswood High School was initiated last year by preservice teacher Jake Winegrad while he was student-teaching there. He sought out history teacher Eric Fieldman to get the club started. Winegrad now teaches in Cherry Hill. Fieldman is the club's adviser. At a typical Social Justice Club meeting students discuss topics of interest, which are often current events through a social justice lens. Students also participate in social justice activities in Collingswood, Camden and Philadelphia.

"As a history teacher, my focus is on civics," Fieldman said. "Understanding how the country came to be is a tool to understanding how our system of government works. To fix something, you have to understand how it's supposed to be."

Current students from the Social Justice Club also helped organize and participated in the March for Our Lives demonstration held at Newton Lake in Audubon and Haddon Heights on March 24. An alumnus of the club, Rutgers freshman A.J. Arnold, was a lead organizer of the march.

At the March 27 meeting, Adamoli made it clear that Moms Demand Action recognizes the complex constellation of issues surrounding efforts to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

"We don't have to agree on anything except that we want to reduce gun violence while respecting the Second Amendment," Adamoli told the students. "We focus on what we can do to save lives."

Statistics paint a bleak picture, action offers hopes

Adamoli told students suicide is the number one cause of gun deaths in the

U.S., but that the gun homicide rate in the U.S. is 25 times higher than that of similar high-income countries. There is an average of 13,000 gun homicides in the nation every year. Seven children and teens are killed with guns in the U.S. on an average day, 50 women are killed by a spouse or dating partner in an average month. In addition to the average 96 Americans killed with a gun every day, two others are shot and survive.

"These statistics are scary, but the good news is that we know of some things we can do to reduce these numbers," Adamoli said. "Some of those things include strengthening our gun laws, which we can do while respecting the Second Amendment."

Adamoli noted that about 40 percent of gun transfers occur in the U.S. without a background check, and that while New Jersey has some of the strictest gun regulations in the nation some states have much more relaxed regulations. The disparity in the strength of gun safety regulations from state to state makes it easier to skirt the laws that are already on the books. Moreover, loopholes in reporting requirements can make it easier for guns to get into the wrong hands.

Moms Demand Action, Adamoli said, supports the "red flag laws" that are currently in effect in only a handful of states. These laws would permit family members or law enforcement officials to petition a judge to temporarily remove firearms from people who exhibit warning signs that indicate they may harm themselves or others.

What students can do

Adamoli suggested that students learn about the issues, form their own opinions and then take the actions that make sense to them. She suggested joining local organizations or investigating how to start student chapters of those groups, registering to vote or launching a voter registration drive, and calling lawmakers at all levels of government.

"Never think that simply because you are students you don't have a voice in this issue," Adamoli said. "Never underestimate yourselves or what you can accomplish."



ABOVE: A student speaks at the March for Our Lives rally on March 24 at The McLaughlin-Norcross Memorial Dell in Haddon Heights.

Educators Demand Action

This organization has been working across the country to keep guns out of schools and off college campuses. It is for all active and retired employees in education.

You can learn more about Educators Demand Action by visiting momsdemandaction.org/educators and texting "Educators" to 64433.

BELOW: A Collingswood High School student speaks with Meghan Adamoli of Moms Demand Action during a meeting of the Collingswood High School Social Justice Club meeting.



"We don't have to agree on anything except that we want to reduce gun violence while respecting the Second Amendment," Adamoli told the students. "We focus on what we can do to save lives."

Marching for their lives

On March 24, the student-led March for Our Lives was held in Washington, D.C. and more than 800 locations around the world to call for expanded gun control measures. The marches were organized by Never Again MSD and Everytown for Gun Safety. MSD refers to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the site of a Feb. 14 mass shooting that left 17 students and staff members dead and many others wounded.

With an estimated 1.2 million participants, the marches were the largest student-led demonstrations since the Vietnam War, and every speaker at the Washington, D.C. rally was high school age or younger. Many NJEA members participated in the march at the nation's capital or at marches in New Jersey, some participating with their children or students. Here are their photos from the day. 🇺🇸



Jersey City teacher Erica DuBois (l), NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty and Cinnaminson EA President Tamara Gross at the March for Our Live in Washington, D.C.



NJEA members joined hundreds of thousands of Americans for the March for Our Lives in Washington, D.C.



From left: Seamus Quinn Jr. and Kaitlyn Quinn of Riverton, Aidan Quinn-Wright of Cinnaminson and his mother, Freehold Regional High School PRIDE chair Kathleen Quinn.



Collingswood High School graduate A.J. Arnold was an organizer of the March for Our Lives in Audubon and Haddon Heights, N.J.



NJEA members, students, and educators from across the region came to Washington, D.C. by the busload for the March for Our Lives in Washington, D.C.



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HTEA Secretary Lorraine Von Hess,
paraprofessional at William Davies Middle
School in Hamilton Township

One lunch duty at a time

Hamilton Township
paraprofessionals fight hunger

By Kathryn Coulibaly, NJEA staff

For Lorraine Von Hess, hunger has no place in a child's life. On breakfast duty three years ago, Von Hess, a Hamilton Township (Atlantic County) paraprofessional, had an epiphany. She watched as students threw away unopened food at the end of the period—food that could go to hungry families right there in the community.

"There were unopened baggies of carrots, containers of milk, applesauce, raisins, and pre-packaged peanut butter and jelly sandwiches being thrown away," Von Hess said. "These are the kinds of healthy foods some families struggle to provide. There had to be a better way."

Many Hamilton Township students and their families struggle with food insecurity. More than half of the 3,000 students in the district qualify for free or reduced lunch. The district serves up 1,000 lunches and 200 breakfasts each day, a total of 700,000 meals each year, districtwide.

The food itself is part of a grant from the state. But in order for the state to qualify for federal subsidies, students had to take something from each of the mandated food groups. Of course, students didn't always want to eat everything on their trays.

So Von Hess collaborated with her paraprofessional colleagues at a school in-service day and brainstormed how a food donation system would work. Von Hess reached out to the food services manager, Bill Trackman, and got specific information on how they could run a safe food donation program that complied with state regulations.

No food left behind

Von Hess then contacted area food pantries and got their support. As long as the food was unopened, and, in the case of fruits such as oranges, bananas and apples, not bitten into, the pantries would be delighted to accept the donations.

Von Hess put together a proposal for district administration. But the program needed a name. Von Hess's son suggested No Food Left Behind, a play on the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind initiative, and the name stuck.

Administrators enthusiastically approved the plan and, in March 2015, the program started at Davies School as a pilot.

At the end of food service, students are directed to dispose of their food either in the trash or the No Food Left Behind bins. After students are dismissed, the paraprofessionals on duty sift through the donations to ensure everything is in compliance with food safety guidelines. Anything that is not acceptable is disposed of, while the rest is loaded into

cooler bags donated by the Hamilton Township Education Association through an NJEA PRIDE in Public Education grant.

"We wait until the students are dismissed to sort the food because we don't want to discourage students from donating," Von Hess said. "Some students even bring in their favorite foods just so they can donate them. We want to encourage that kind of generosity."

The cooler bags are refrigerated until the paraprofessional volunteers make the donation.

Expanding the program

The pilot program worked so well that Von Hess worked with the paraprofessionals and principals at the two other schools in the district to get the program running there, as well.

By the time students returned in September 2015, Davies, Shaner, and Hess schools were on board.

"Once we'd gotten it started at all three schools, I went to a board meeting and presented it," Von Hess said. "A board member made the mistake of saying, 'if there's anything you need...' and I took him up on it! To really be successful, we needed refrigerators so that we could accept donations of milk."

The board member came through, as did many others. Paraprofessional Samira Broschard donated a refrigerator that is used at one of the schools, as did HTEA President Amy Gold.

"It really makes us proud to support Lorraine and her paraprofessional colleagues with something that does so much good for students and the community," Gold said.

The system works because of the paraprofessionals' teamwork and collaboration. "As our schedules change, different people take over," Von Hess said.

At Davies, the team includes Lorraine Von Hess, Terri Quidachay, Lois Townsend and Margi Siscione. At Hess, it includes Eileen O'Sullivan, Nikita Kolli, Kim Biasini, Kathy Ivie and Felicia Barber. At Shaner, it includes Karen Wiggsworth and Heather Jenigan.

The paraprofessionals have organized a rotation that gets the food into food banks—and community members' hands—as quickly and efficiently as possible. Every day of the week, they donate 35-40 bags of food at food pantries run by local churches.

The First United Methodist Church of Mays Landing donated three carts, one for each school, to make it easier for the paraprofessionals to load and unload the heavy cooler bags.

"We are so appreciative of what the paraprofessionals are doing to combat hunger in





As long as the food was unopened, and, in the case of fruits such as oranges, bananas and apples, not bitten into, the pantries would be delighted to accept the donations.

Von Hess and her colleagues encourage other districts to follow their lead with similar food donation programs.



A student makes a donation to No Food Left Behind.



Lois Townsend (l) and Terri Quidachay.

our communities,” said Linda Smith, coordinator of the food program at the First United Methodist Church. “Thanks to these donations, we are able to provide fresh milk, cheese, and applesauce to our neighbors in need. These are all items that are desperately needed, but are too often unavailable.”

“Most people probably don’t realize the need in their own communities,” Smith continued. “The time, efforts, and compassion of the paraprofessionals should be recognized and imitated by others.”

Paraprofessionals see needs and opportunities

As is the case in most communities, the paraprofessionals in Hamilton Township live and work in the district. They are dedicated to their students and their communities and play a vital role in bridging the two.

They often also see needs—and opportunities—that others might miss.

For example, kindergarten paraprofessional Heather Jennigan, a volunteer with the Funny Farm, a nonprofit animal sanctuary in nearby Mizpah, collects the bitten apples and carrots—food that cannot go to the food banks—for the animals.

“We’re doing our best to make sure that nothing goes to waste,” Von Hess said.

Von Hess and her colleagues encourage other districts to follow their lead with similar food donation programs.

“We were very interested in seeing this program develop, and we are grateful for the leadership shown by Lorraine and her colleagues,” said Hamilton Township School District Superintendent Frank Vogel. “We are extremely proud of the food donation program and believe it can and should be a model for other districts.”

“Some districts have expressed an interest and even visited to see how we run our program,” Von Hess said. “But many others won’t even consider it because they think the state won’t allow it. That is absolutely not true! But you do have to do your research and take food safety seriously; otherwise you’re not helping anyone.”

Kathryn Coulibaly is the associate editor of the NJEA Review and provides content and support to njea.org. She can be reached at kcoulibaly@njea.org.



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Old Bridge students with special needs find inclusion



From left: Sal Luppino, Kayla-Ann Kotowitz and Dennis Raygorodsky



Athletes and partners prepare for a game.

Old Bridge Play Unified was featured on NJEA's "Classroom Close-up" in February. Watch it at classroomcloseup.org/segments/play-unified.

By Karen Lewicki and Lisa Tonnisen, NJEA members

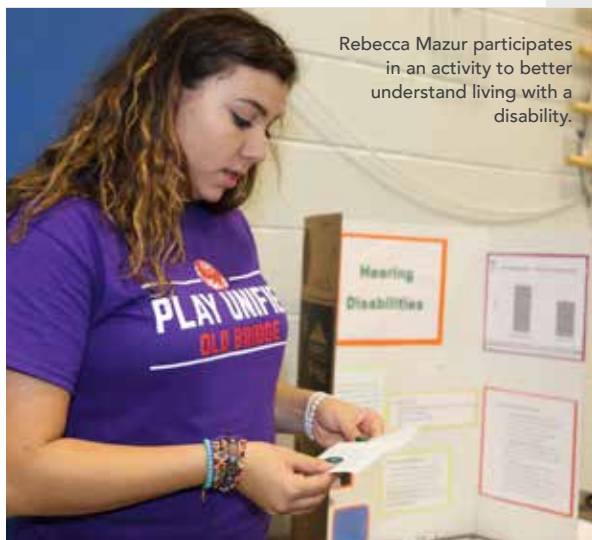
Teacher Karen Lewicki offers advice to Jarod Horvath during a game.



Old Bridge Play Unified accomplishments

- First for-credit Unified Generation Class in New Jersey
- Winner of the 2017 Special Olympics NJ Play Unify Award
- Featured on NJEA's "Classroom Close-up" in February. Watch it at classroomcloseup.org/segments/play-unified.
- Old Bridge Play Unify filmed for a documentary by ClickOn Productions that will be used to train districts around the country.
- One of our athlete/partner combinations was chosen to represent New Jersey at the Special Olympics USA Games in Seattle, Washington.
- Two of our athlete/partner combinations were chosen to represent New Jersey to a meet with elected leaders for the Special Olympics Hill Day in Washington D.C.

Rebecca Mazur participates in an activity to better understand living with a disability.



Old Bridge Public Schools staff and students beamed with pride when the district received the 2017 Special Olympics New Jersey Play Unified Award. The high school's implementation of a credit-bearing Unified Generation class was the factor that distinguished the district from the current 157 Unified Champion Schools in New Jersey and earned us the award last year.

Unified Champion Schools incorporate Special Olympics sports, leadership and related activities that empower youth to be change-makers in their communities. Every district that participates in the Special Olympics Play Unified program is doing incredible work. In September, for example, the NJEA Review featured the amazing Play Unified program in Union Township, Union County.

With the hope that even more districts will want to implement their own programs, we are showcasing here our Play Unified initiatives, providing a model others may wish to follow.

Students take the lead

In 2010, four juniors volunteered to do something positive: they wanted to interact with students enrolled in the special education program. As a teacher and paraprofessional who work with students in special education, the four juniors approached us. They realized quickly that activities during the school day would not be sufficient. With help from students in our class, they came to understand that the intellectually disabled population wanted to be like the other students in the student body and participate in after-school programs.

To create such a program, the original four juniors needed to pitch the plan to school administrators. They developed a rationale that outlined why an after-school program was needed, who could stay after school, and who would need to be involved. Administrators immediately supported the plan.

Our concern was whether parents, students and/or volunteers would even be interested. We started slowly, meeting once a month. During those first few months we met in a hallway with approximately 20 students, with and without disabilities.

Given limited space, we worked on team building, communication skills and direction following, all in the context of creating a

A day in the life of a Play Unified participant

Every Monday after school:

2:15 p.m. – Warm-ups (break into 4 groups)

2:30-2:50 p.m. – Station 1: Arts and Crafts (Ex. Gingerbread houses)

2:50 – 3:10 p.m. – Station 2: Sports Skills Practice

- We follow Special Olympic New Jersey Sport Season with sports such as flag football, basketball, relays, karate, and others.

3:10 – 3:30 p.m. – Station 3: Group Game (Ex. Kickball, basketball, relays, karate, etc.)

3:30 – 3:45 p.m. – Cool Down

3:45 – 4:00 p.m. – Talking Circles

- We talk about our day, week, weekend, club, etc.

level playing field. Not long after we got started, we learned that Special Olympics New Jersey (SONJ) had a Unified Program already in existence. Their support, guidance and training took our club from monthly to weekly meetings, where all students helped develop and implement the activities.

Becoming inclusive throughout the school

Play Unified Club members who are in general education programs are referred to as partners. Students in the special education programs are referred to as athletes. As the program progressed, we needed to think about ways to ensure that the athletes in the club were truly included as part of the student body.

Wanting to follow the Special Olympics mission to level the playing field for all students, we reached out to our varsity football coach. With the coach, we organized a recreational flag football game, inviting senior varsity players to compete against our club members. The experience was eye-opening for the varsity football team. The team discovered how well our club members handled the game. We realized our only mistake was limiting the experience to seniors. We needed students in Grades 9-11 to become members so that we could sustain the program and expand it from year to year.

Watching the inclusive interactions in the cafeteria and hallways that were a natural and apparent outgrowth of students really getting to know one another as peers—regardless of disability—gave us reason to strive for more.

Monthly planning

Play Unified is a peer-to-peer program. Adults are needed as monitors to create a space for safe and positive interactions between students, but not to force interaction. An adult presence ensures that the Play Unified Club—like any after-school club—must be a safe place for everyone to have a say and be heard.

The role of the paraprofessional is key. The athletes often spend most of the day with the paraprofessional in one-on-one and small group situations. They usually feel comfortable confiding in him or her. The paraprofessional can convey any issues to the school's Play Unified Club Board so that lessons or talks can be arranged without any individual being singled out. It is a great way to mediate issues before they get out of hand.

One to two times a month, a Play Unified Club board meeting is held. The board consists of an equal number of partners and athletes. At the meeting, club members develop a plan for the month's activities.

We follow Special Olympics lead and train our members for each athletic season. While all members aren't interested in every sport, we incorporate a physical warm up that all members are required to complete at their own ability level. Then activities such as drama, arts and crafts, and dance are incorporated weekly with student leaders.

We also run after school trips that meet diverse interests, such as New Jersey Devils' hockey games, Medieval Times, movies, and other activities.

A Unified Generation School

The Unified Generation class was added to our school curriculum for the 2017-18 school year. With the help of Old Bridge Director of Curriculum Dr. J. Scott Cascone, we wrote the first curriculum in the state for a credit-bearing Unified Generation

Play Unified Club Board Meetings

- Schedule meetings twice a month with partners and athletes (approximately 16).
- Meet to discuss past club activities.
- Reflect on positive and negative experiences to inform/plan for the next few weeks.
- While club advisers oversee the board meeting, agendas are student-led. Students will look to advisers for guidance, but remember to guide the students, not lead the meetings.

Play Unified Club Mission Statement

To create and promote an environment of respect, tolerance and unity schoolwide, while participating in sports and leisure activities.

Club description:

Regular education students (partners) will team up equally with our special needs students (athletes) in order to promote teamwork and sportsmanship, while both parties play/work alongside one another in school-based events before or during the school day.

Through these events, they will teach one another how to learn and grow from peers. We align our activities with the Special Olympics events including but not limited to soccer, basketball, track, etc. Unify work creates unique teamwork and bonds through a series of experiences. These experiences will create a culture of inclusion and foster understanding among students of all abilities.

We will practice together and learn skills needed to become good teammates and good leaders who will move forward and continuously promote the cause, and educate others on tolerance and respect as a positive role model in the community.

In their own words: partners and athletes

"It is a good feeling when I lead because it makes me feel like a leader and gives the advisers time to relax and not take control." – Partner

"For me, Unify Generation is a whole new experience where people can be friends, learn how to cooperate with each other, do fun activities, and fun challenges." – Athlete

"The individual strides and activities I have undertaken were beyond my comprehension just months ago. The class has helped me identify my problems and I have helped others confront theirs with a new -found confidence." – Partner

"As a member of the club, it has made me communicate more with different people, including my peers." – Partner

"My favorite part is when we run around the whole school. Sometimes we wish the club time was extended because time goes by so fast." – Athlete

"Play Unify is a fun activity where we meet new people. These people turn into our friends." – Partner

"I have learned not to be shy, it made me realize I love being friendly! We talk about our feelings, we learn how to support our friends in the class and learn how to work in teams. We talk about our past and how they affect our futures." – Partner

"Unify means making new friends and making others feel included. It also means to respect other people and teachers." – Partner

"I was extremely impressed with Play Unified's mission and how it was being actualized with our students. When Mrs. Lewicki and Mrs. Tonnisen came to me with the concept for the course, I believed in it right away. My resolve to support it was strengthened by the passion and belief that they brought to bear on this project." – Dr. Scott Cascone, Director of Curriculum

class that incorporates both general education and special education students.

Within the class, students are taught equally. All members of the class participate in planning and implementing lessons outlined within the curriculum. The class's focus is on leadership skills and the inclusion all students.

Play Unified, club or class—call it whatever you want—is a truly inclusive program. We encourage everyone to look within your own school. Inclusion may be all around you. With some support and training and a fostering environment it will advance. Your challenge is to allow it to happen on a level playing field as naturally as possible. 🏡

Karen Lewicki is a teacher of the disabled at Old Bridge High School, and Lisa Tonnisen is a paraprofessional working with students in special education programs there. For any information on starting a Play Unify Club or on our Unify Generation Class in your school, they can be reached at Klewicki@obps.org and Ltonnisen@obps.org.



The Play Unified program in Old Bridge is spreading to other schools in the district, including Alan B. Shepard Elementary School, which was featured with the high school on "Classroom Close-up NJ."



Karen Lewicki (l) and Lisa Tonnisen at the "Classroom Close-up NJ" Red Carpet premier of the school's Play Unified program on the show.

Panasonic Student Eco Citizenship Project



Congratulations Student Eco Citizens!

During the 2017-2018 school year over 125 classrooms took action and became active participants creating a sustainable global environment and society.

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Alan B. Shepard Elementary School
Alfred E. Zampella School- PS 27
AMS Science
Audrey W Clark Alternative Academy
Beachwood Elementary School
Bergen Arts & Science Charter School
Berkeley Township Elementary School
Charles E. Trefurt School-PS 8
Christ the King Regional School
Dr. Maya Angelou- PS 20
Dr. Michael Conti School
Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School
E. Raymond Appleby School
East Orange STEM Academy
ECO Charter School
Edward T. Bowser Elementary School
Elenor G. Hewitt Elementary School
Eleanor Van Gelder School
Elysian Charter School
Ezra L. Nolan Middle School #40
Frank R. Conwell School-PS 3
Forest Hill Elementary School

Franklin Middle School
Freedom Prep Elementary School
Great Oaks Legacy Charter School
Greater Brunswick Charter School
Green Brook Middle School
Grover Cleveland Middle School
H.B. Wilson Family School
Henry E. Harris Community School
Highlands Elementary School
Hillside Elementary School
Hoboken Charter School
Hooper Avenue Elementary School
Horace Mann #9 Elementary School
International Academy of Trenton
Ivy Hill Elementary
James F. Murray School- PS 38
Jefferson Elementary School
Jersey City Global Charter School
John F. Kennedy Elementary School
John P. Holland Charter School
Johnnie L. Cochran Jr. Academy
Joseph H. Brensinger PS 17
Lincoln School #5
Lincroft Elementary School

Long Branch Middle School
Marion P. Thomas Charter Middle School
McKinley School
Melvin H. Kreps Middle School
Mullica Township School
Napier Academy
Neptune Middle School
Nicolaus Copernicus School- PS 25
NJ Regional Day School
North Dover Elementary School
Norwood Public School
Ocean City Intermediate School
Oliver Street School
Orange Avenue School
Pace Charter School of Hamilton
Passaic Arts and Science Charter School
Public School Number 34
Quitman Street Community School
Rafael De J. Cordiero School- PS 37
Randall Carter Elementary School
Regional Alternative School
Roosevelt Elementary School
Saint Philip and Saint James Catholic School
School 24

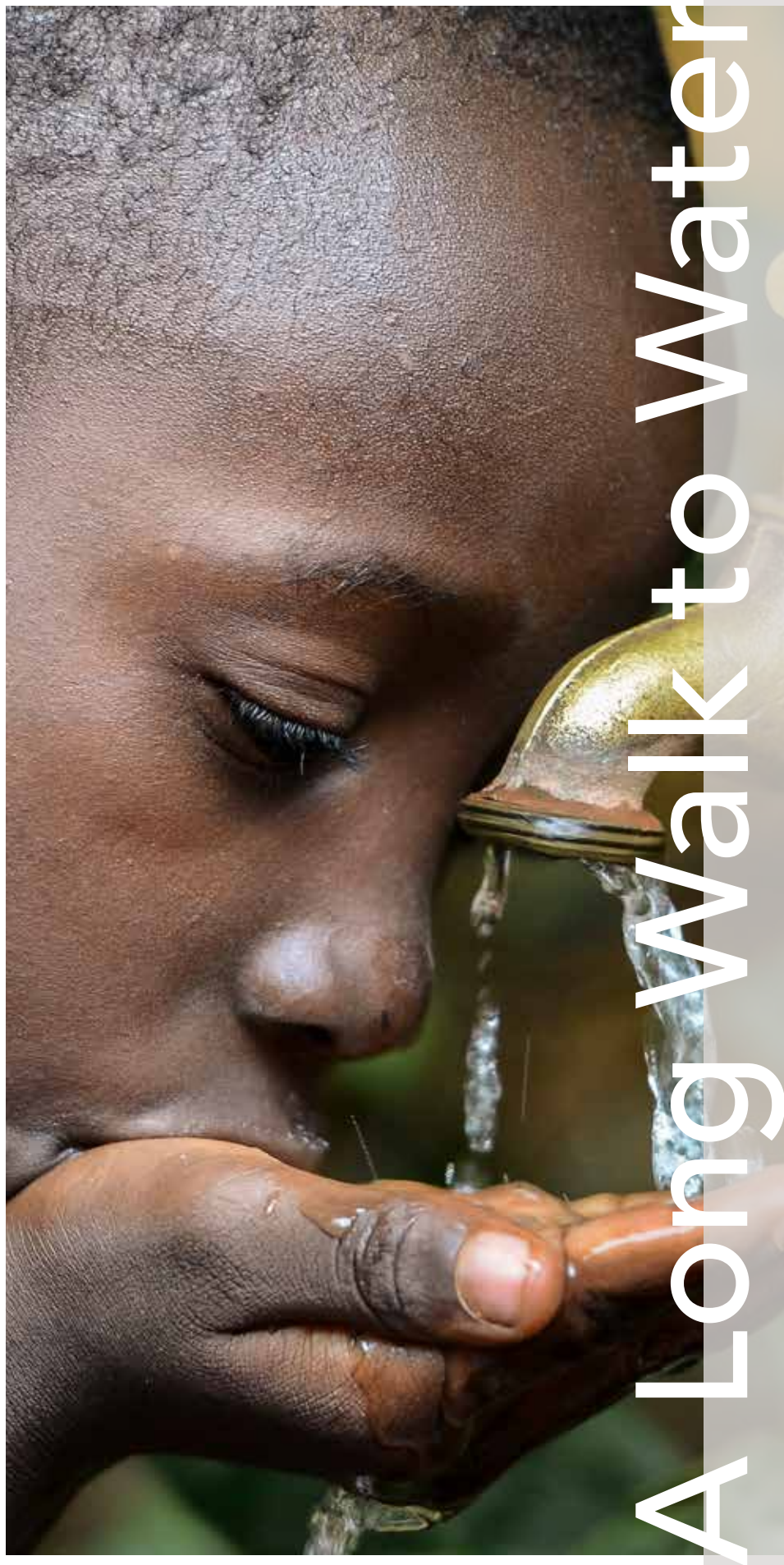
School 29
Senator Frank R. Lautenberg School
Soaring Heights Charter School
South Street School
Spencer Miller Community School
St. Anthony School
Teaneck Community Charter School
The Village Charter School
Thomas Edison EnergySmart
Charter School
Thomas Jefferson Middle School
Unity Charter School
University High School
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The Foundation for Impact on Literacy and Learning would also like to thank Panasonic for their support of this project.

To learn more about the Panasonic Student Eco Citizenship Project visit: fillprograms.org/ecocitizen

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Edgewater Park students set goal to fund South Sudan well

By Kathryn Coulibaly

Edgewater Park has a simple motto: it is “a small town with a big heart.” The students and staff at Edgewater Park’s Samuel M. Ridgway Middle School have been putting that motto into practice with their Water for South Sudan project, initiated by fifth graders in 2017.

“All fifth-grade students read *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park,” remembers mathematics teacher Candi Schwartz. “When we finished reading the book, the students were inspired by Salva Dut’s journey and wanted to raise money for the people of South Sudan. So we formed a committee of about 50 fifth graders and came up with many ideas to raise money.”

There are two stories at the heart of *A Long Walk to Water*. One is the true story of Salva Dut, a Sudanese boy who has fled the fighting from a civil war that is tearing his country apart. In the process, he becomes separated from most of his family and has to travel by foot across unforgiving terrain and through hostile territory to a succession of refugee camps. He becomes a leader and helps other children to safety.

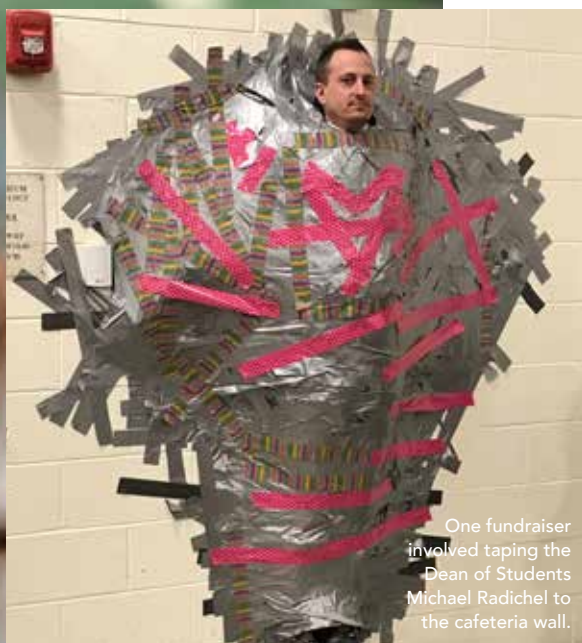
Dut is eventually brought to Rochester, New York where a family cares for him and helps to reunite him with his own family, most of whom have miraculously survived the conflict. Now a successful man, Dut develops a project, Water for Sudan, to help the people of Sudan gain access to clean drinking water.

The other story is fictional, but based on the experiences of countless women and young girls across Africa. Nya is 11 years old. She does not go to school, but spends all day, for seven months of the year, walking to a pond to fetch water for her family. One day, engineers come to her village and begin work on a well that will provide safe, fresh, clean drinking water and eliminate the need for Nya and other girls to work so hard to fetch water. The drill used to dig the well is called an “iron giraffe” by Nya.

While the process is slow, eventually the well is dug and, as a result, a school, marketplace, and clinic are also built. These developments make life easier



At Kean University in March 2017, Ridgway students met Salva Dut and received the Outstanding Human Rights Student Activists award.



One fundraiser involved taping the Dean of Students Michael Radichel to the cafeteria wall.



During the third week of fundraising, students purchase blue water droplets.

and safer for Nya and her family, and she is subsequently able to attend school.

Nya's experience with the well is thanks to Dut's Water for South Sudan project. At the end of the book, the fictional Nya and the real-life Dut meet.

The Iron Giraffe Challenge

Schwartz's students, who are approximately the same age as Nya and as Dut when he began his journey, were moved by the book. They brought their creativity and energy to the fundraising process, and came up with an ambitious goal: to raise \$15,000 to have a well drilled in South Sudan by the time they reach the eighth grade.

The students also decided that they wanted to participate in Water for South Sudan's Iron Giraffe Challenge. The organization's current drilling rig has been in operation since 2008. This very expensive tool will eventually need to be replaced. In the challenge, schools that raise \$1,000 or more are entered into a drawing to win a variety of incentives. First prize is a visit to their school from Salva Dut. Because Ridgway Middle School has been successful in raising much more each year than is required to enter the drawing, they earmark the first \$1,000 for the challenge. All other money they raise goes toward the school's \$15,000 goal.

"In reality, the students have set a goal to raise \$19,000," Schwartz said. "\$15,000 for the well, and \$1,000 every year for the Iron Giraffe Challenge.

Fundraising that first year began on March 1, 2017; by the time 10 days elapsed they had already collected \$1,300.

Students meet their hero

Unbeknownst to the students and staff when they began the project, Dut was planning a visit to speak at Kean University on March 24. Schwartz registered her students to attend the conference, but when representatives at the university heard what the students were doing, they invited them to meet Dut and take a photo with him.

"Tears filled my eyes because I knew my kids would be beside themselves when they found out they would get to take a photo with Salva," Schwartz said. "But our actual experience was even more amazing. A few students were selected to present Dut with a check for the amount that we had already raised. But then Kean University honored all of the students with the Outstanding Human Rights Student Activists award for the work they were doing."

Creative fund-raising projects

March is the designated fundraising

month, and students and staff have created a number of fun and successful fundraising pitches to entice the community to donate.

This year the students kicked off the fundraising challenge with a dance. The DJ donated his time and the committee charged 50 cents per song request. The Iron Giraffe Committee donates snacks and drinks. That one event generates about \$1,000.

The real action comes during the first full week of fundraising when the dean of students volunteers to be taped to a wall. Donations get you a length of duct tape. Only students are allowed to participate.

In addition, there is a link on the district website to a CrowdRise fundraising page.

Students also designed and sold rubber bracelets that read, "The water can't wait." Fifth-grade students created T-shirts and competed for their design to be selected as the winner. During the third week of the challenge, students can buy a paper water droplet, add their names, and tape them to an air wall in the cafeteria. Finally, during the last week of March, students can pay \$5 and spend 90 minutes out of class with other students in the cafeteria, hanging out and enjoying snacks and drinks.

Student fundraising successes are tallied, earning them bronze, silver and gold "medals" made from construction paper. The medals are displayed at the school until the end of March, after which students take them home. Students who achieve \$25 in donations earn a silver medal. At the \$50 level, students earn a gold medal and are given a shout-out in the morning's announcements. A \$10 donation earns students a bronze medal.

They have also created two videos, both with the goal of educating students who have not read *A Long Walk to Water* about the Water for South Sudan project so that they are included in the fundraising initiative. For students in the third and fourth grades, the video introduces them to a story they will read when they are fifth graders. For seventh and eighth graders who passed through fifth grade before the project began, they learn what has made the fifth and sixth graders so enthusiastic to help South Sudan.

By the end of March 2017, they had raised \$4,315. By the end of March 2018, they have raised \$11,184.52.

Schwartz is impressed with her students' confidence about reaching their goal. "They know they are going to do this in four years, before they graduate. They're calm and casual about it."

Learn more about Ridgway's project, watch the students' videos, track their progress, and donate online at ridgway.edgewaterparksd.org/water-for-south-sudan. 🌊

After the Storm

Hopewell Valley puts heart into hurricane relief effort

By Kimberly Crane

On Aug. 25, 2017 Hurricane Harvey slammed into Texas causing catastrophic flooding in the Houston metropolitan area. When the sun finally broke through the clouds, it illuminated the \$125 billion worth of damages caused by high winds and flooding.

Despite the 17,000 heroic rescues performed by first responders, 107 people tragically lost their lives in the disaster. Hundreds of thousands of homes were destroyed, resulting in the displacement of 30,000 people—many who have not been able to return to their residences. Entire school districts were wiped out just before the school year was to begin for students.

A local ESP leader takes action

“We’ve got to do something,” said Aida Valcarcel, as she watched the chaos unfold through the media.

Valcarcel is the president of the Hopewell Valley Educational Support Professional Association (HVESPA) in Pennington. She lived in Florida during Hurricane Andrew. Her heart was heavy with memories of how difficult storm recovery can be, especially for children.

Valcarcel knew firsthand that compassion and understanding are often not enough in times of crisis. She gathered a troop of colleagues and community members to take action.

Valcarcel reached out to the leaders of the Hopewell Valley Education Association (HVEA), the Hopewell Valley Parent Teacher Organization, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Thomas A. Smith, and individual school administrators.

The response she received was one of unanimous support. Everyone wanted to help. A crisis assistance plan for the recent hurricane victims evolved.

Connections lost and found

“The human connection is so important,” said Valcarcel. “We wanted to do something more personal and long lasting than writing a check.” An important goal of the organizing team was to provide meaningful, short and long-term assistance.

The group targeted areas in Texas and the Caribbean. Attempts to reach Puerto Rico however, proved unsuccessful. Due to the total destruction of the island’s infrastructure, even phone calls were difficult to complete.

The team had more luck with their Texas outreach. The superintendent of schools in Houston, Richard A. Carranza, responded quickly to an email from the Hopewell Valley team. At the time, Carranza was the lead administrator for the Houston Independent School District (HISD) which serves 215,000 students.

There was no shortage of need as the HISD community contended with flooded buildings, damaged transportation vehicles, loss of technology, and ruined textbooks and supplies. Also, the majority of students and staff had been displaced from their homes.

Fundraising for a school in need

Carranza put Hopewell Valley organizers in touch with Las Americas Middle School in Houston, Texas, a school where almost 100 percent of students are recent immigrants and/or English language learners.

When Hopewell Valley’s Timberlane Middle School was paired with Las Americas, the team immediately began raising funds. Educational support professionals (ESP) and teachers held fundraisers that included selling snacks at district concerts, a Krispy Kreme

donut sale, and a New Year’s Eve Flapjack Fundraiser at Applebee’s where students and their families were served breakfast by Timberlane staff.

HVEA PRIDE Chairperson Lisa Strigel teaches Wellness and coaches at Timberlane.

“When we learned that Las Americas was greatly affected by Hurricane Harvey, our school bonded as a community and raised over \$3,000,” said Strigel. “Then we shipped over 1,000 pounds of goods to Houston.”

Journey to the Lone Star State

To further strengthen the relationship between the two school communities, five Timberlane staff members drove to Houston in a rented van and personally delivered music and art supplies to Las Americas students.

Before flying home, they spent two days connecting with students and staff, and participated in shared professional development sessions pertaining to English language learning strategies. A series of Google Hangouts between the middle schools are also being planned to promote student to student connections.

Strigel noted that the success of this project was a group effort. Originally spearheaded by the union, it took participation from the entire school community to achieve maximum results.

“This was more than just a trip,” she said. “This is a cause that has brought us together as a school and a community.”

Efforts expand and continue

The work of HVESPA and HVEA members did not stop with providing aid to one school. The crisis team at Hopewell Valley Central High School reached out to a high school in Houston. Ad-

ministrators at the chosen school identified transportation as one of the greatest challenges they were facing in the wake of the hurricane.

“After many phone calls and much investigation, we found out that we could purchase Metro passes in \$10 increments for students,” said Valcarcel. The local’s high school team is in the process of collecting funds for the Send a Student to School for a Day initiative. Students and staff have offered any change they have to spare. The group is in the process of organizing future events to support funding of transportation expenses for high school students.

A legacy of support

Hopewell Valley ESPs and teachers are hoping to extend their efforts by connecting their elementary buildings with comparable schools in the Houston area. They are also exploring ways to assist victims of a recent earthquake in Mexico and schools affected by wildfires in California. Where there are students in need due to natural disaster, Hopewell Valley union members will be ready to help.

If you would like to join Hopewell Valley’s ongoing hurricane and natural disaster relief efforts, please contact Aida Valcarcel at avalcarcel06@gmail.com. 📧

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.



A disaster relief plan that floats

Hurricane season in the United States officially runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. The most intense storms are predicted to occur in late August and early October. This does not leave flood-ravaged communities and school districts much time to recover from last year's calamity before another round of bad weather is expected.

It was not long ago that New Jerseyans experienced the ravaging effects of Superstorm Sandy in October 2012. Five years later, a drive down the coastline provides a reminder of the super storm, with the presence of beach home skeletons intermittently dotted along the roadways.

That year, communities in New Jersey quickly learned what was needed when a natural disaster struck. It was just as important for us to learn what was not needed—such as used clothing and home goods—lest we repeat those mistakes when attempting to provide assistance to others.

Here's a 10-step plan to assist schools in need:

1. Form an organizing team.
2. Develop a mission statement and purpose.
3. Gather contacts in the affected region who can connect your team to schools with the greatest needs and relay what type of support is needed (e.g., gift cards, supplies, transportation, etc.). Be patient with communication from the affected area. They are living in a disaster zone.
4. Develop fundraising events and goals that are achievable and appropriate for your school community.
5. Develop a calendar of events and meetings.
6. Draft a press release and invite media to cover your events—keep a record of all photos and/articles.
7. Chose a delivery method for supplies or other aid and publicize the delivery.
8. Maintain communication with the schools you are assisting. Explore options such as Google Hangout or Twitter to give students the opportunity to connect and see the effects of their support.
9. Assess your efforts and build a template for success to have on hand when the next natural disaster strikes.
10. Maintain communication among team members. Consider building a Facebook page/group or email chain so team members can stay in touch.

When school is out,

construction begins

By Dorothy Wigmore

It usually happens between school years. Too often, school staff and students pay a price when it's not done properly. "It" is the construction, demolition or renovation of school facilities.

Hazards are common in any kind of construction work—renovations, additions, and electrical upgrades, among other projects. They can affect those in the school while the work is going on, and those who return in September to start a new school year. Possible hazards include:

- Dust and debris (e.g., asbestos, lead, construction materials).
- Noise (can cause hearing and heart problems and interfere with ability to hear others).
- Chemicals in the air (e.g., from paints, glues, varnishes, roofing materials, new carpets, and furniture).
- Mold and leaks revealed during construction.
- Biological hazards, (e.g., bird and bat droppings).

Getting started: Having a health and safety committee makes action easier

A health and safety committee makes it much easier to take action, whether it's to gather information, analyze it or develop solutions and strategies for problems that come up during construction. Good training helps committee members to be effective.

Structural changes to a school are an obvious project for a committee, and a good reason to organize one. Most NJEA contracts allow for standing committees; health and safety can be one. With representatives from different jobs or sites in the local, a committee provides a safe place to discuss health and safety issues, identify hazards and sort out solutions and strategies to address them. If you have a joint labor-management com-

mittee, a union-only one is a great way to prepare for those meetings.

If you don't have a committee, or the time to organize one now, ask your local president or UniServ field representative to help you prepare for upcoming construction. Consider having a group of union members share the work required.

What steps are involved to ensure a safe return after construction?

Start by asking the principal or superintendent for this information. If you don't get answers, you have a right to use the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) to request it. Your UniServ field representative can help submit a request. A model request form can be found nj.gov/grc/public/request.

Follow up after the construction is completed. Set up a system to report problems or symptoms that may show up, especially in the first few months after work is done. Educate staff about it. If something does come up, use the health and safety committee and the union to get the problems resolved.

"You might want to do a walk-through at the end of the break, so you know for a fact what people will find when they return to the building," WEC's Diana Crowder suggests. "If you do one, and see debris while the administration is saying everything's going to be okay, there's an opportunity to get it fixed before staff and students return."

It will take time, but the results are worth it—for school staff, students and learning about how to deal with job-related hazards. The resources listed below can help.

Dorothy Wigmore is a long-time health and safety specialist and activist, now based in Winnipeg, Canada. She has worked with and for US and Canadian unions, occupational health clinics, COSH groups and universities.

Resources:

- NJEA Health and Safety Facts: School Renovation and Renovation Risks bit.ly/renovationrisks
- The state environmental and indoor health site links to online resources of seven New Jersey state agencies and two federal agencies for hazards (e.g., indoor air quality, mold, hazardous substances, and construction dust and noise). bit.ly/environmentindoor
- N.J. Department of Environmental Protection School Facilities Issues provides access to government guidance for regulations about school facilities management and operations, health concerns, and indoor air quality. nj.gov/dep/school
- N.J. Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Program, Renovation & Construction in Schools Controlling Health and Safety Hazards. bit.ly/schoolrenovationnj
- EPA's Sensible Guide for Healthier School Renovations bit.ly/epahealthyschoolsguide
- Canadians for a Safe Learning Environment, Healthy Schools Design and Construction Guide bit.ly/safelearningcanada
- The Healthy Schools Network School Renovation and Construction Factsheet: What you need to know to protect child and adult environmental health. bit.ly/hsnrenovationfact

Summer is the season for construction, demolition or renovation of school facilities.

Construction checklist

The basic steps the committee or others can take around summer school construction activities are:

- As soon as possible, find out where construction, demolition or renovations are planned.
- Ask for information about the time, location, reason, procedures and other elements the project.
- Request the health and safety program of the construction contract(s) and ensure that the contracts include:
 - Contact information about the contractor's point person for questions or concerns is posted.
 - Procedures to deal with asbestos and mold before construction begins (regulations spell out the rules).
 - Assurances that exposure to hazards will be prevented by covering heating and ventilation system diffusers; controlling dust, vapors, waste and debris so they do not get loose or in the air; and covering all construction area openings to prevent dust and vapors from leaving the work area.
- Let the members know about the plans, ask about their concerns and questions, and add them to yours. If you have connections to parents' groups, do the same with them.
- Meet with the superintendent and/or principal and your UniServ field representative to present those concerns and questions, and negotiate how to deal with them.
- Follow-up to ensure issues are dealt with, including check-ins with those in the school during the work.
- When the work is done, and before school starts, do a walk-around to ensure returning staff and students won't face hazards as a result of the construction.
- Have a conversation with those involved about what worked and what could be done differently next time. 🏠



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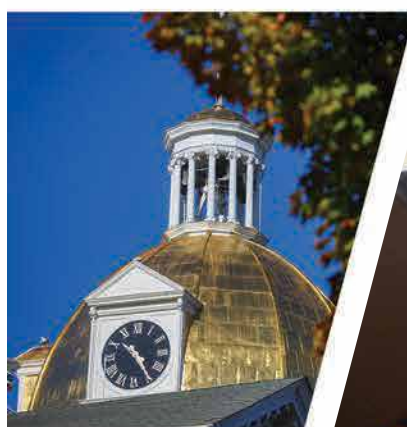
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Great applications to implement in your classroom

by Lori Lalama, Clifton Teachers Association

Have you felt overwhelmed trying to choose fun and engaging applications that will motivate your students in your class? There are so many great applications out there that can transform your assignments into dynamic, inspirational projects.

I attended the Florida Education Technology Conference, a four-day conference in January at the Orange County Convention Center. The theme of the conference was “The Future of Educational Technology” and how it related across all subjects, grade levels, and incorporated different roles within the field of education. The applications, that I will be sharing, came from that conference.

We need to transform learning through innovation, collaboration and to discover new ways to spark changes. Are you ready to go on a journey to discover new applications with me? I will break them up into different sections with an explanation for each link. So, grab a cup of your favorite beverage, sit by your computer and try the links that I will be sharing with you.

Research platforms

Flipgrid: This is where your students go to share ideas and learn together. It's video the way students use video. Short. Authentic. And fun! That's why it's the leading video discussion platform used by tens of millions of Pre-K to Ph.D. educators, students, and families in 150 countries. (info.flipgrid.com)

Scrible: This is a modern research platform for school and work. It's a powerful tool to save, manage, annotate and share on the Web. (scrible.com)

Listenwise: This is a cross-curricular listening comprehension application. You listen to real world podcasts while reading along with an interactive transcript, and then discuss the topic with your students

for deeper understanding. (listenwise.com)

Docsteach: Gives you access to thousands of primary sources—letters, photographs, speeches, posters, maps, videos, and other document types—spanning the course of American history. (docsteach.org)

Digital Public Library of America: This site has a plethora of primary sources, which are designed to help students develop critical thinking skills by exploring topics in history, literature and culture. Drawing online materials from libraries, archives and museums across the United States, it includes letters, photographs, posters, oral histories, video clips, sheet music and more. (<https://dp.la>)

Kami: This is your digital pen and paper where you and your students can learn, create and collaborate. There is a chrome extension and part of Google Classroom. It does PDF annotations. (kamihq.com)

Media sharing

Tagxedo: This turns words into a visually impressive word cloud. These words are individually sized to highlight the frequencies of occurrence within the body of text. (tagxedo.com)

Easel.ly: This is an application to create and share visual ideas. It is an infographic. You can customize the work. (<https://www.easel.ly>)

Pixton: This application empowers the world to communicate graphically with comics. Click-n-Drag Comics™, a revolutionary new patented technology that gives anyone the power to create amazing comics on the web. (pixton.com)

Digital storytelling

Flipsnack: This is an excellent digital flipbook maker. Create, share, and embed online magazines, transforming your PDFs into online flipping books. (flipsnack.com)

My Storybook: Create your own storybook! This is very easy. (mystorybook.com)

Storyboard That: Create a powerfully visual communication through a storyboard. (storyboardthat.com)

Buncee: This is a creation and presentation tool with unlimited possibilities for bringing learning to life. Transforming people of all ages into creators, storytellers, and future-ready digital citizens. (edu.buncee.com)

Manage and organize

Symbaloo: You can customize this application to create a personal learning environment that fits perfectly with your teaching style. (symbalooedu.com)

Padlet: This is a virtual bulletin board, where students and teachers can collaborate, reflect, share links and pictures, in a secure location. (padlet.com)

Sugarcane: You can make your own cross-curricular games or use the ones that are already done. This web tool lets you easily create many different learning games, as well as access ones that others have created. (sugarcane.com)

Baamboozle: You can create, search, play and learn. Only minimal preparation is required and no student accounts needed. Baamboozle provides a platform for creating and playing games that can be used as topic introductions, lesson review and assessment at all grade levels. (baamboozle.com)

Cite This For Me: You can automatically create bibliographies, citations, and works cited lists in the correct format using the APA, MLA, Chicago, Vancouver, or Harvard referencing styles. It is easy to use and incredibly convenient. Appropriate for grades 4-12, use this online tool with your next information literacy training or scavenger hunt. (citethisforme.com)

Eclectic

PDFCandy: This is a document and picture converting site. (pdfcandy.com)

Incredibox This is for beatboxing, which is the imitation of a drum machine using your voice. Incredibox can be used with beatboxing to introduce rhythm and music mechanisms to students. (incredibox.com)

Button Bass: This application can mix many different types of beats in different genres of music. (buttonbass.com)

WeVideo: This online video editor makes it easy to capture, create, view and share your movies at up to 4K resolution for stunning playback anywhere. (wevideo.com)

Do Ink: This site has two areas: Animation and Drawing, which was designed to be easy for beginners and young animators, but with powerful tools for creating advanced animations and Green Screen, which makes it easy to create incredible green screen videos and images right on your iPad or iPhone. With Green Screen by Do Ink, you can tell a story, explain an idea, and express yourself in truly creative and unique ways. (doink.com)

I want to thank you for taking this journey to discover some wonderful and engaging possibilities for you and your classroom. Remember, technology is only a tool and your teacher toolbox should have an assortment of many different tools to inspire your students every day. 🧰

Lori E. Lalama is a computer technology teacher at Christopher Columbus Middle School in Clifton. She is the Legislative chair and PRIDE chair for the Clifton Teachers' Association and represents Passaic County on the NJEA Technology Committee. She can be reached at techeducator1@gmail.com.



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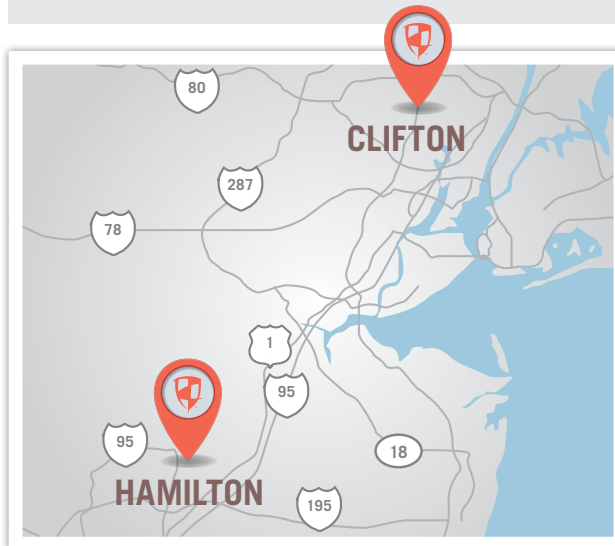
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— Pearl Guerzon, M.D., Paladina Health's Clifton doctor



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A CLOSER LOOK

monthly highlights

This May you can watch inspiring stories about programs featuring career and college preparation, the world of ROTC, and social justice issues. Tune into NJTV every Sunday, and if you miss the show, go to classroomcloseup.org where you can watch, share and download every story. On May 20, NJTV is conducting its membership drive and the 7:30 p.m. airtimes will be pre-empted. Make sure you tune in to the earlier times at 7:30 a.m. or 12:30 p.m.

watch

MAY 13

Montague preschoolers turn into bees and flowers as part of a Hipp Grant Cub's Discovery. This STEAM project includes lessons for parents and a dance performance featuring bees and flowers promoting science/math concepts.



MAY 13

MAY 20

Mighty Fingers is a program that empowers girls around the world through art. Clinton Public Schools brought this global art project to their fifth- through eighth-grade girls. The goal is to get girls who are not normally involved in the school community engaged in a meaningful project that will empower and inspire them.



MAY 20

MAY 27

Washington Township High School Teacher Marty Bouchard and his students produce a televised news magazine show called "Monthly Rewind." Last year, "Monthly Rewind" celebrated its 20th year. After winning several awards, including 11 regional student Emmy awards, the program has also gone on to graduate several students who are now successful in the television industry.



MAY 27

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

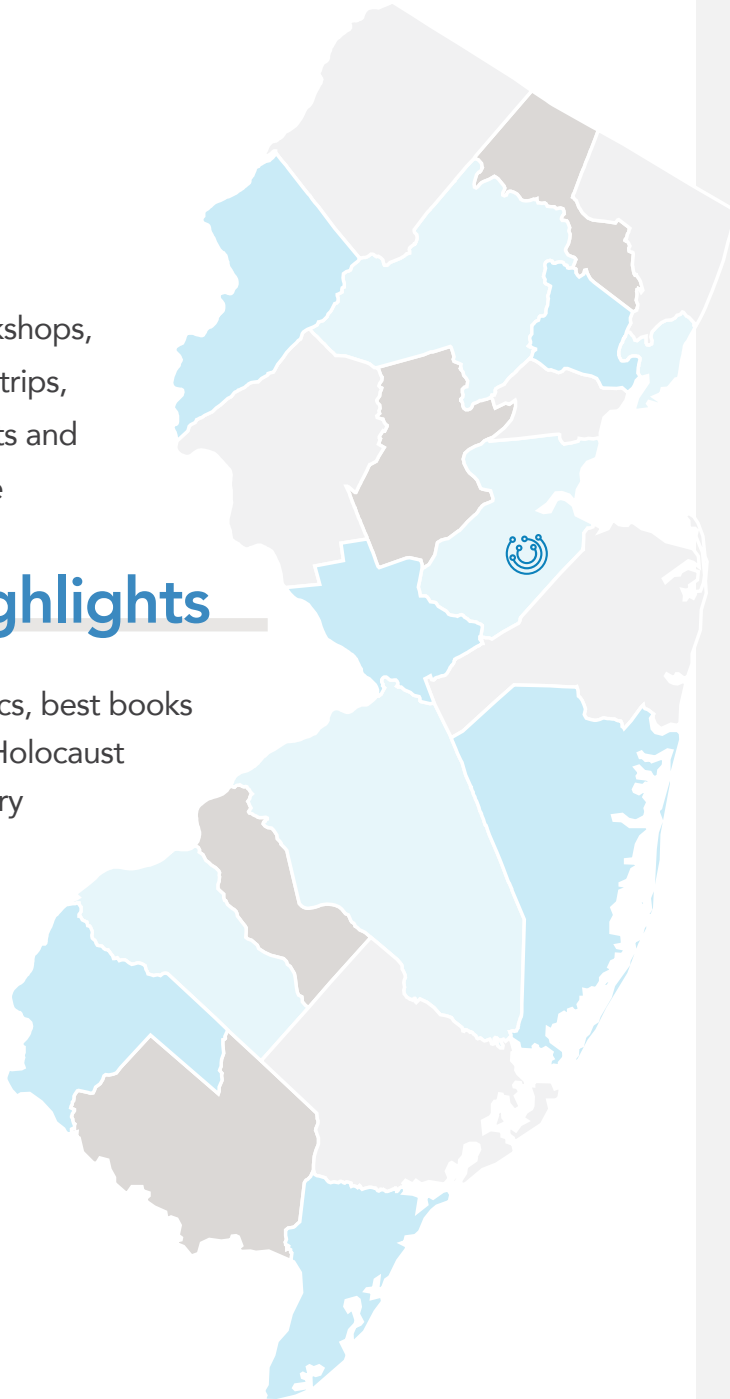
Visit classroomcloseup.org to watch individual segments, the entire show, or to see what's coming up. On Twitter, follow @CCUNJ and "like" the show at [facebook.com/crcunj](https://www.facebook.com/crcunj). The show continues to gain fans, especially since it is available online and can be downloaded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

SUSSEX TO CAPE MAY:

Workshops,
field trips,
grants and
more

highlights

Physics, best books
and Holocaust
History



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

showcase

Physics educators summer training at Rutgers

Physics educators of high school and honors/university-level students who are looking to expand and deepen their understanding of the physics concepts inherent in the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are invited to attend the Rutgers University Physics Education Summer Training. The program also welcomes physics instructors at community colleges, vocation or technical schools, or others who may be instructing in university-level physics.

Classes begin July 10 and end Aug. 4. The day begins at 8 a.m. and concludes at 2 p.m. with an hour lunch from 11 a.m. to noon. Participants will spend six hours in class Monday through Thursday each week of the course, and will work independently on Fridays. Classes take place at the Physics and Astronomy Building, on 136 Frelinghuysen Road in Piscataway.

Designed in collaboration between the Department of Physics and Astronomy and the Graduate School of Arts and sciences, the program focuses on the three strands of knowledge:

1. Disciplinary Core Ideas
2. Science and Engineering Practices
3. Crosscutting Concepts

The curriculum of the course is scheduled around Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCLs):

1. Week 1: Motion and Forces
2. Week 2: Momentum and Energy
3. Week 3: Electromagnetism and Circuits
4. Week 4: Waves and Optics

Participants will learn the DCLs by designing experiments, collecting and analyzing data, construction and testing models and explanations, and representing and communicating knowledge and findings. Experimental work (labs) will be integrated in the collaborative learning process. Attendees will be provided with dozens of New Jersey Student Learning Standards and Advanced Placement-aligned lab ideas, along with accompanying lesson plans and student worksheets.

The cost is \$350. Registration ends June 30. For additional information, contact Amanda Ackerman at 848-932-6460 or amandaack@sas.rutgers.edu. You may also visit physics.rutgers.edu/HSphysics.

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More to **learn** across the state

Free summer weeklong mini-course on Holocaust history and memory

Rutgers University will offer a free, mini-course on Holocaust history and memory for middle and high school teachers the week of July 9-13. The course, History of the Holocaust, offers a comprehensive chronological history, including the legacy of anti-Semitism in Germany; the emergence of Nazism; victim groups; resistance efforts; and American policy on immigration in the 1930s and 1940s. Testimonies, film, and primary sources will also be used in the classroom. Teachers who are new to this topic are encouraged to apply.

The course will be taught by Dr. Jane Denny, a historian of the Holocaust and modern Europe, and Colleen Tambuscio, pedagogical consultant to the program who has been involved in Holocaust and genocide education for more than 20 years. The mini-course offers participants the tools necessary to approach teaching this complex subject matter as well as a vibrant network of peer teachers. Educational materials and lunch are also provided free of charge.

Advance registration is required. For an application or more information, visit BildnerCenter.rutgers.edu, or contact Sarah Portilla at sarah.portilla@rutgers.edu or 848-932-4165.

The mini-course is sponsored by the Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center of Rutgers' Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life. It is funded by a grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany.

Winners! Workshop: A Closer Look at the Year's Best Books for Children

Judy Freeman's 34th Annual Winners! Workshop: A Closer Look At The Year's Best Books For Children, Grades Prek-6 is an interactive, book-packed wow of a day with lively, concise, honest evaluations of 100 new and exemplary children's books—a wide ranging treasure trove of picture books, easy readers, fiction, nonfiction, biographies, and poetry books of 2017—chosen by well-known children's literature consultant, Judy Freeman, major professional journals, and awards committees as the year's "best."


Find all the details and registration at www.JudyReadsBooks.com, and share the site with your colleagues and friends. It's a day to laugh, connect, share, and celebrate the latest literature titles and trends with leading teachers, public and school librarians, reading specialists, art teachers, and other children's book hounds. You can read Judy's latest news and fun at "Judy Freeman's Workshops, LLC" on Facebook.

Choose from three dates and venues:
Days run from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

- Central Jersey: May 15, The Imperia, 1714 Easton Ave., Somerset
- South Jersey: May 17, The Mansion on Main Street, 3000 Main St., Voorhees
- North Jersey: May 18, Birchwood Manor, 111 North Jefferson Road, Whippany

(Note: These dates were listed incorrectly in the April edition of the *NJEA Review*.)

The \$209 registration fee includes breakfast, lunch, and the brand new, comprehensive The WINNERS! Handbook, with a thoroughly annotated and indexed list of the year's best children's books, plus a huge array of ideas, lesson plans, teacher's guides, stories, songs, and a valuable list of exemplary websites.

Go to www.JudyReadsBooks.com for details and a registration form. 



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NJEA Preservice

Leadership matters

How NJEA Preservice helped me become an advocate

by Daniela Ceballos, NJEA Preservice Secretary, Rutgers Graduate School of Education

I am an immigrant and the current political climate of the country has scared me as it has scared other members of the immigrant community. As an immigrant, I felt it was important that I get involved and do something to help, but I didn't know what I could do.

Last May, I received an invitation to join the Bridges Group, a coalition of teachers that look to build bridges and not walls. Within this group, I was given the opportunity to receive training about the rights of undocumented immigrants in the New Jersey. This "Train the Trainer" session opened my eyes to what knowledge could do to empower people.

After my training, I started to hear stories about children missing school because they were frightened by stories of the U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) Agency, coming into people's homes. The stories, the reactions, and the feelings were overwhelming. I knew I had to do something, but I didn't know what an NJEA Preservice member could possibly do.

At the NJEA Summer Leadership Conference I took a workshop on public speaking. For my practice speech, I spoke about why teachers should receive the immigration "Train the Trainer" trainings and organize "Know Your Rights" workshops in their communities. A few months after the workshop, I was contacted by a teacher from Freehold Township who wanted me to come to her school and give a Know Your Rights workshop to the members of the school community. We did the workshop, and it was a success. Although we didn't have a big crowd, we had parents who appreciated all of the information that we gave them and how we helped them to overcome their fears.

Now we are about to do our second Know Your Rights workshop in Freehold, and I'm in contact with more teachers from other districts to try to do more of these workshops.

I never thought I could make a difference, but like Nelson Mandela said in his 2003 speech at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." I believe that by sharing my knowledge with members of the community, I am giving them the tools to empower themselves and fight fear with facts. I invite you to consider how you are having an impact on your community, because no matter how small your gesture, you are working for a better world. 🌍

I invite you to **consider** how you are having an impact on your **community**, because no matter how small your gesture, you are working for a better world.



At the NJEA Preservice Conference on March 10, students learn about the important role of the paraprofessional in the classroom during the workshop First Year FAQ.



Montclair State University students Ashley Walker and Jonathan Feig during the General Session at the NJEA Preservice Conference on March 10.

NJREA

Past, present and future

Spring PAC drive

Last fall, you played a big role in electing Gov. Phil Murphy, as well as 77 percent of other NJEA-endorsed candidates. In addition to making phone calls and telling your friends and family members about these candidates, many of you also generously contributed to the NJEA Political Action Committee (PAC). NJEA PAC provides the resources to help elect supporters of public education who, like Gov. Murphy, share our values and will listen to our concerns. Furthermore, NJEA PAC makes our union a more effective advocate on your behalf on many issues, including your pension and post-retirement medical benefits.

A big part of advocating for our members is to elect pro-education, pro-labor candidates on the federal level as well. This November, NJREA/NJEA members will have a chance to vote for a U.S. Senator and 12 members to the U.S. House of Representatives. This provides an opportunity to send representatives to Washington who will resist an agenda—pushed by Secretary Betsy DeVos—that seeks to deprive our traditional public schools and students of the resources, staff, and innovative programs they need to succeed. Additionally, voters will be casting ballots in many other important local freeholder, municipal and school board elections. It is imperative that NJEA and NJREA members have a voice in all these races.

NJEA PAC's political contributions to its endorsed candidates come from active and retired members who understand the importance of contributing to

PAC. It is a member-supported, member-led effort. The NJEA PAC Operating Committee has 125 members representing all segments of our association, including retired members. These members meet with candidates, ask tough questions, and decide which candidates' positions and values earn them the support of NJEA's 200,000 active and retired members. Endorsed candidates enjoy the benefit of our votes, boots on the ground, and financial assistance from NJEA PAC.

NJEA PAC depends upon the voluntary contributions of all of our members. It cannot be sustained by a few caring and committed individuals. Everyone must recognize that giving to PAC is a small price to pay to ensure the right leaders are elected to protect the long-term availability of pensions and post-retirement medical benefits.

This spring, NJREA will be asking for your help in protecting your retirement. Please help support your retirement, your community, and the future of public education. Support NJEA PAC by making a contribution during the annual PAC drive.

You should have received a NJEA PAC form in the mail with instructions on how to make your contribution. You will also find a form at njea.org/njrea. Log on and scroll down to the right hand column to "coupons" to download and print the form.

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

BURLINGTON COUNTY REA will hold its next meeting/luncheon on Thursday, May 10 at Marco's at the Indian Spring Country Club in Marlton. An NJEA Member Benefits fair will be held. The cost is \$10. To attend, call Doriann Swern at 856-722-8952.

ESSEX COUNTY REA welcomes you to its annual spring meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, May 16 at the Hanover Manor in East Hanover. The cost is \$27. To attend, call Beverly Johnson-Showers at 862-955-4133.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY REA's spring meeting/luncheon will be held on Thursday, May 10 at Nicolosi Catering in Woodbury. The cost is \$25. To attend, call Candy Zachowski at 856-228-6854.

HUDSON COUNTY REA will hold its annual cocktail party on Friday, June 8 at LaReggia Restaurant in Secaucus. To reserve, call Jackie Tuzzio at 201-348-0862.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY REA welcomes you to its upcoming meeting/luncheon on Thursday, June 7 at the Grand Marquis in

Old Bridge. The annual MCREA scholarship will be awarded, and MCREA officers will be installed. The cost is \$30. To attend, call Anne Chomko at 732-675-1734.

MONMOUTH COUNTY REA will hold its next meeting/luncheon on Tuesday, June 5 at Spring Lake Manor in Spring Lake. New MCREA officers will be installed, and a philanthropic award will be presented. The cost is \$30. To attend, call Sue Shrott at 732-995-7754.

MORRIS COUNTY REA welcomes you to its annual scholarship awards luncheon on Wednesday, June 13 at The Mansion at Mountain Lakes in Mountain Lakes, where 2018 MCREA scholarships will be awarded. The cost is \$30 for members and \$35 for nonmembers. To attend, call Cheryl Doltz at 973-818-1353.

OCEAN COUNTY REA invites you to its upcoming meeting/luncheon on Thursday, May 10 at Jack Baker's Lobster Shanty in Point Pleasant. The cost is \$28. To attend, call Janice Sovinee at 732-477-1711.

PASSAIC COUNTY REA's next meeting/luncheon will be held on Wednesday, June 6 at The Brownstone in Paterson. The cost is \$33. To attend, call Kitty Sausa at 201-445-7577.

Join **SALEM COUNTY REA** for its spring meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, May 16 at St. John's Episcopal Church in Salem. Representatives from different senior organizations will be present. The cost is \$16. To attend, call Peggy Kavanaugh at 856-935-0075.

UNION COUNTY REA's spring meeting/luncheon will be held on Tuesday, May 15 at The Westwood in Garwood. The cost is \$25. To attend, call Donna Mertz-Burkhardt at 908-686-2390.

WARREN COUNTY REA will hold its next meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, June 6 at the Hawk Pointe Country Club in Washington. The cost is \$30. To attend, call Vicki Rhinehart at 908-319-1995. For more information, visit www.wcrea-njea.org.

Stay protected: Renew your NJREA membership today

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

Current NJREA annual members will receive their 2018-19 membership renewal form later next month. Retirees are urged to complete the renewal form and enclose a check for dues by Aug. 1 to ensure the benefits of NJREA membership continue uninterrupted. Your annual dues payment covers membership in NJREA, NJEA, NEA-R, and your county retired education association (CREA).

NJREA members may also pay their dues online at njea.org by selecting the automatic renewal option beginning with the 2018-19 fiscal year. Those who avail themselves of this opportunity will be informed in advance of the dues rate for the following membership year and will be automatically charged to avoid a lapse in their membership. Go green, and consider automatic renewal today.

Lifetime membership for retirees available

The NJREA membership renewal form also list dues for those who want to become lifetime members. If you are a recent retiree, you might want to consider lifetime membership and avoid the annual renewal process. Lifetime membership for retired members may be paid in five installments. Interested retirees may contact the NJEA Membership division at 609-599-4564, ext. 4123, to set up a payment schedule.

Pre-retirement lifetime membership for actives

Current active professional and support staff who intend to retire in the near future could also consider joining NJREA as a pre-retired lifetime member. Lifetime dues would be calculated at the 2018-19 rate and then paid in ten installments, beginning in September 2018. Interested in this option? Contact the NJEA Membership division at the number listed above to get started.

Membership mailings

The September issues of the *NJREA Newsletter* and the *NJEA Review* will be bundled together and mailed in early September to NJREA members who have renewed their membership by the Aug. 1 deadline. Membership cards will be mailed shortly thereafter.

Be certain your membership profile is up to date in order to receive important emails about legislative issues that may affect you, as well as information about the upcoming U.S. Congressional and Senate elections in November.

Any current or future retiree with questions regarding membership may email njrea@njea.org.



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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for insurance, big-ticket items, or special deals on hundreds of everyday purchases, you will find valuable consumer offers.

SAVE ON TRAVEL

Search for these travel benefits at memberbenefits.njea.org/travel. You'll find links to all of the offers listed on this page there.

Hotels and Car Rentals for Education Personnel – Offers discounts on hotels and car rentals.

Buyer's Edge, Inc. – Offers travel services through Dream Vacations.

NEA Member Benefits – Offers you a world of travel discounts.

- **NEA Click & Save:** Get exclusive NEA member savings on hotels, flights, cruises and more.
- **Trafalgar Guided Vacations:** Enjoy exclusive member savings on over 230 worldwide itineraries across Europe, North and South America, Asia, Australia and New Zealand.
- **G Adventures:** From African safaris to Antarctica adventures, you'll find a small-group trip made for making memories. You'll never look at the planet the same way again.
- **Red Roof Inn:** Red Roof Inn offers a 20 percent nationwide discount to NEA members at over 520 locations nationwide. Get free WiFi, free phone calls, and free parking.

ACCESS Discounts – Offers a wide range of hotel and travel services—including airline tickets—that are searchable online at njea.accessdevelopment.com.

Orlando Vacations – You'll find exclusive pricing on hotels and vacation homes in or nearby Disney World and Universal Studios Orlando as well as discounts on tickets for all Orlando area theme parks and attractions.

Airport Parking

- **The Parking Spot** – Print a discount coupon for The Parking Spot at all New York City, New Jersey, Philadelphia, and Baltimore airports. Note that the discounted rates are printed on the coupon.
- **EZ Way Parking** – Located 901 Spring St. in Elizabeth, EZ Way Parking offers NJEA family members discounted pricing of \$6.50 per day. Shuttle service to Newark Liberty Airport is free. Visit www.ezwayparking.com and use promo code NJEDU for the special pricing. School or NJEA identification is required upon check-out.

Be sure to visit the Member Benefits section at memberbenefits.NJEA.org.

May Web Giveaway

One winner will receive: **\$100 voucher toward vision services/eyewear at Optical Academy***— NJEA members can schedule Optical Academy full-day visits to schools by calling 800-530-2730. NJEA members may also visit one of Optical Academy's locations for vision services/eyewear:

- Clifton, N.J. at 1430 Main Avenue
- Fairview, N.J. at 222 Bergen Blvd.
- Jackson Heights, N.Y. at 75-37 31st Avenue

Recent winner:

Elizabeth Barone of Bridgewater-Raritan EA won a Member Appreciation Event for 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.

Be sure to **register online** each month for the web giveaway!

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

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Proud Moments



The **ESSEX COUNTY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION** held its 23rd annual PRIDE in Public Education Expo at Livingston Mall. The mall was lined with beautiful artwork and fabulous projects done by the students of Essex County Public Schools. The PRIDE Committee also held a K-12, countywide essay contest. Thirty-nine winners in first through third place were invited to read their winning essays, and received an award from ECEA. Pictured with the ECEA PRIDE Committee are ECEA President Anthony Rosamilia, ECEA Executive Director Sandy Linton, and ECEA PRIDE Committee Chair Lauren Greenfield.

The **TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN SUPPORT ASSOCIATION** and the **TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION** (Gloucester) are proud of members, staff and students at Main Road Elementary school for their contributions to a book drive for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Gloucester County. The students of Main Road collected a total of 678 books. The outcome of their drive and that of schools across Gloucester County, will featured in the June edition of the *NJEA Review*.



The **BURLINGTON COUNTY SPECIAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION** is proud of a PRIDE in Public Education activity that showed appreciation for the military. Special education students made 285 cards for veterans and active duty service members. While BCSSA Treasurer Kimberly Niehaus Scheetz describes the event, her son, five-year-old Tyler proudly displays photos from the event, with help from member Helen Scherer.



The **MERCER COUNTY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION** is proud to have screened "Backpack Full of Cash," a documentary that explores the real cost of privatizing America's public schools. The screening was supported with NJEA PRIDE in Public Education Funds and acquired through support from the National Education Association and the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS). Learn more about the film at backpackfullofcash.com. From left: MCEA President Christine Clark, MCEA 1st Vice President Grace Rarich, Hopewell Valley Support Professionals PRIDE Committee member Maureen Welsh, MCEA Pride Chair Shirley Hicks, PRIDE Committee member Ron Fell, Mercer County Retired member Nancy Greener, and West Windsor Plainsboro EA member Lisa Rizzello.



Submit your best local association PRIDE photo to proudmoments@NJEA.org. 📧



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5/5

Saturday

**Communications
Tools
Workshop**

5/15

Tuesday

**Voter Registration
Deadline for
Primary Election**

5/18

Friday

**Executive
Committee
Meeting**

5/19

Saturday

**Delegate
Assembly
Meeting**

6/1

Friday

**Executive
Committee
meeting**

6/2

Saturday

**NEA RA
Statewide Caucus
meeting**

6/5

Tuesday

**N.J. Primary
Election Day**

6/30-7/5

Sat. - Thurs.

**NEA
Representative
Assembly**

7/11

Wednesday

**NJEA Summer
Professional
Learning Institute
(SPLI)**

7/25

Wednesday

TechStock

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deadlines

6/1

NJEA Summer
Leadership Conference
Event date: Aug. 4-10

6/22

TechStock Conference
Event date: July 25

6/27

NJEA Summer
Professional Learning Institute (SPLI)
Event date: July 11

njea

**ARE YOU A PART
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With NJEA, we stand up for each other

Decisions in health care should be between a patient, a patient's family, and a health care professional. Those decisions should not be in the hands of a corporate bureaucrat.

It's easy to get lost in the numbers and confused by the lingo when comparing health insurance plans or when trying to figure out why NJEA fights so hard to protect the options available for members and retirees under the School Employees' Health Benefits Program (SEHBP). That's when the real-life experience of a member can illustrate why joining NJEA—or as a retiree, joining NJREA—makes all the difference.

An NJREA member called NJEA headquarters in Trenton wondering if what she had learned about her father's health insurance plan was true. Her father was not a retiree from New Jersey's public schools and thus not an NJEA or NJREA member. He did not have the advantage his daughter had: a powerful advocate who could make sure his interests were represented when important health care decisions were made.

After a brief hospitalization following a serious fall, she said her father found himself in a skilled nursing facility for rehabilitation. He could no longer walk, dress himself, wash himself or use the toilet independently. He needed physical and occupational therapy. For 20 days he received that therapy.

The therapy ended on the 21st day—not because he had regained any significant physical independence, but because a corporate bureaucrat who had never met him decided he was no longer eligible for rehabilitation coverage. The member had 48 hours to decide where her father would live.

This was his fate under a plan in which neither he nor an advocate who had his best

interests at heart had a voice.

Decisions for health care plan design should never be left solely in the hands of those who worry more about dollars than patients. Decisions in health care should be between a patient, a patient's family, and a health care professional. But patients and families can only make decisions when they have a menu of viable options. That's where the advocacy of NJEA and its members is critical.

Standing up for all members

This has renewed relevance as the state Legislature seeks to move active and retired community college faculty and staff out of SEHBP and into the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP). On April 12, the Senate passed S-2455, which would do just that. As of press time, the Assembly version of the bill, A-2001, had not yet been heard in committee, and its fate was uncertain. (See Page 15.)

There's a reason this may sound familiar. When this bill was introduced in the lame-duck session of the state Legislature that ended on Jan. 8, NJEA and NJREA members stood strong to oppose it. They insisted that changes to health insurance coverage should be negotiated, not determined by the state's unilateral action. Their advocacy paid off when the legislative session ended before the bill could move forward.

While S-2455 made it through the Senate in this legislative session, the presence of NJEA and NJREA members in committee hearings and in the gallery of the Senate chamber had an impact. Support for the bill had diminished, and it passed by a narrower margin

than expected. Such an outcome lends momentum to the campaign to oppose A-2001 in the Assembly.

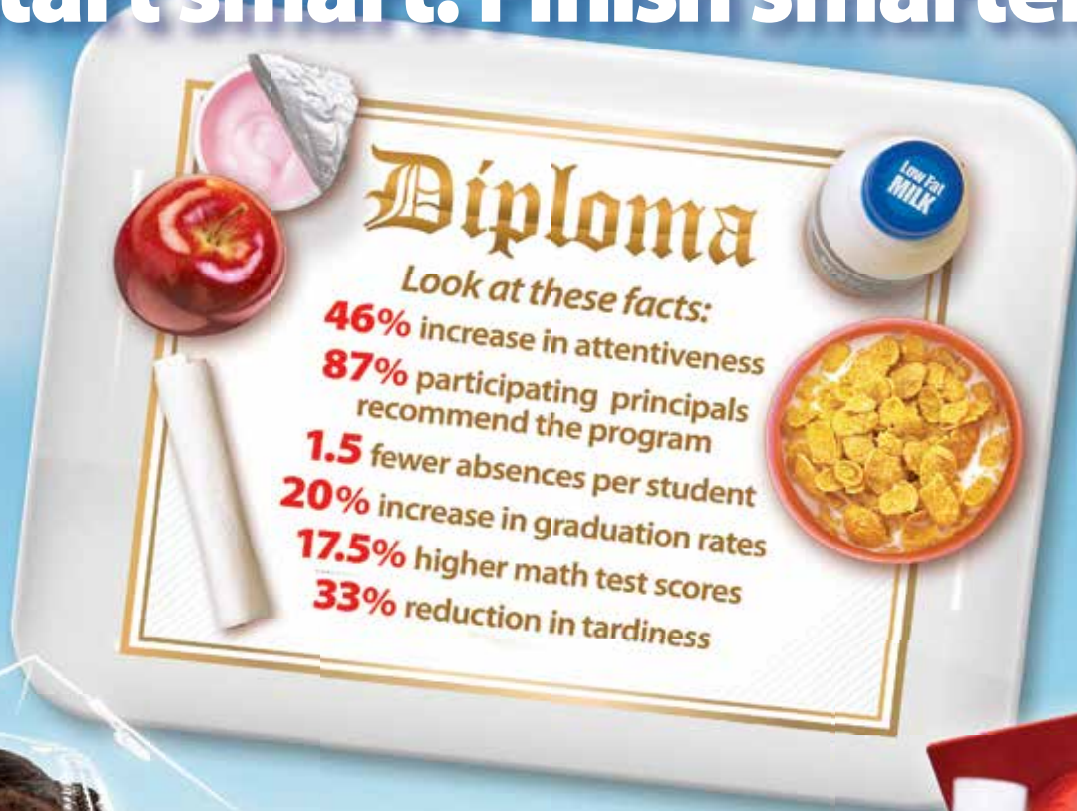
NJEA members who work in, or are retired from, community colleges were not alone in this fight. They were joined by NJEA members who work in, or are retired from, K-12 districts. Those K-12 members could have concluded that because this measure did not directly affect them, they did not need to take action. Instead, they stood shoulder-to-shoulder with their fellow members. They know an attack on one member's rights is an attack on all members.

The power of standing together as a union and advocating for one another's concerns is what being an NJEA member is all about—both for our concerns as professionals and for our concerns as public employees. The ability to negotiate the terms and conditions of employment—including health benefits—ensures that the voices and experiences of members are brought to the bargaining table.

No student's future should be determined by a standardized test, no teacher's evaluation should depend upon the student's performance on that test, no educational support professional should have to wonder every spring if his or her job will be outsourced, and no one—retired or actively employed—should have his or her health care decisions made by a distant and disinterested corporate bureaucrat. It is our commitment as NJEA members to stand together—even when we aren't directly affected by the outcome of the matter at hand—that ensures we all rise together. 🌱

The ability to negotiate the terms and conditions of employment—including health benefits—ensures that the voices and experiences of members are brought to the bargaining table.

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2018 NJEA CONVENTION

NOV. 8-9

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Want to reserve a room in Atlantic City for the NJEA Convention at a great rate? Go to njea.org/hotelblocks. You'll need to log in as a member to continue. Use your member PIN (found on your membership card) or the email address you've previously given NJEA and your password (the last four digits of your Social Security number, unless you've changed it). Guaranteed shuttle service will be available to these hotels only.

Hotel	Wed-Thurs.	Fri.	Deadline	Group Code
Bally's	\$98	\$160	Oct. 8	SB11AB8
Borgata	\$125	\$125	Oct. 8	GBNJE18
Caesars	\$105	N/A	Oct. 5	SC11FBM
Golden Nugget	\$61	\$161	Oct. 23	AED1118
Harrahs	\$74	\$164	Oct. 8	SH11AB8
Tropicana	\$84	\$174	Oct. 19	HNEA18
Resorts	\$65	\$105	Oct. 15	VNJE18

Rules and restrictions:

Membership verification required—one room reservation per member. A credit card will be required to hold your reservation. All room rates subject to 7 percent N.J. sales tax, \$3 Atlantic City occupancy tax, and up to \$13 resort fee per room, per night. Room type (double/single) subject to availability at check-in. Additional fees for third and fourth occupants of room may be applicable. No changes or cancellations after the registration deadline. For questions, email hotelblocks@njea.org.

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