

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

June 2018
NJEA.ORG

REVIEW

*an education and advocacy resource*

— Local associations negotiate powerful contracts

— Students cook up nutritious meals in Camden

— NJEA:
A year of progress

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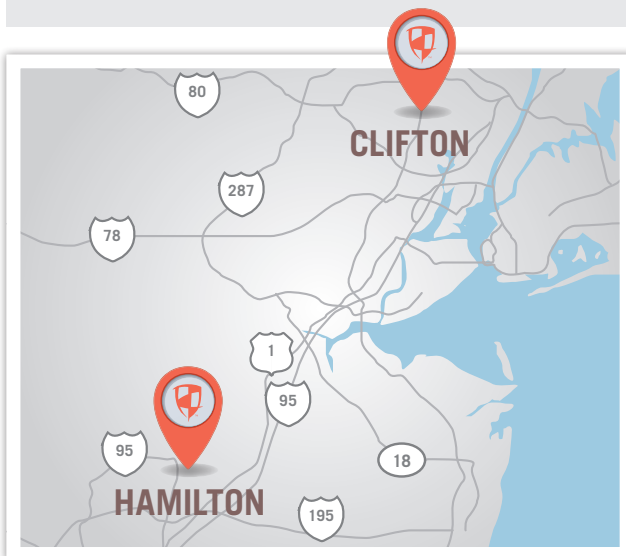
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ABOVE: Union County REA members Bob Burkardt and Donna Mertz-Burkhardt learned more about the website platform, NJEA Sites, at the NJEA Communications Tools Workshop on May 5 at NJEA headquarters on Trenton.

BELOW: Willingboro EA President Vicki Benedict stands by WEA member and Willingboro resident Jennifer Johnson as she addresses the board of education in opposition to a board plan to privatize educational support professional jobs. Johnson, a 1:1 assistant, inspired other WEA members to stand up at board meetings and speak in support of their colleagues.



The Bergen County Education Association (BCEA) held its Legislative Conference on April 30. On an evening at which members speak directly to legislators about public education, BCEA made sure to set aside some time for activities to lighten the atmosphere.

LEFT: The Essex County Education Association (ECEA) hosted a Member Benefits fair on April 26 at McCloone's Boathouse in West Orange. Members were introduced to the people behind the great savings members can achieve through memberbenefits.njea.org. From left: Christina Ramos, California Casualty; Stephanie Ross, ECEA Early Career Members; Linda Kelly-Gamble, ECEA-NJEA Membership Committee; Lauren Ragsdale, NEA Retirement Specialist; and Steve Eugene, NEA Member Benefits.



The leadership of the Gloucester County Education Association was proud to host its annual Education Celebration on April 13.

Paterson Education Association members held a large rally in March prior to a contract mediation session between PEA and the board of education. See Page 30.



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As NJEA members look back on a school year of personal and professional success, it's important to review what we have been able to accomplish together.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY

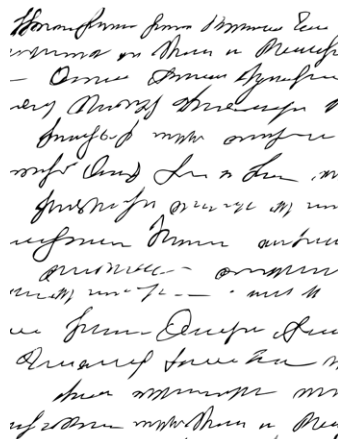
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Members of the Stafford Township EA rallied, picketed and had difficult conversations to stand up for their rights.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



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PEA members are dedicated to serving their students. They also have to feed their families and need job security. Their newly achieved contract makes sure they can do both.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



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Two of NJEA's largest local associations, the Jersey City Education Association and the Paterson Education Association, organized their members into a powerful force that they used to help each other through their mutual bargaining crises.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
MEREDITH BARNES AND THE
MEMBERS OF PEA AND JCEA



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My Daughter's Kitchen is an eight-week, after-school cooking program that introduces students to the preparation of healthy meals. See how it is being implemented in Camden.

BY MARJORIE CUTLER

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ON THE COVER:

The Jersey City Education Association went on strike on March 16 to fight for fair wages and relief from Chapter 78. See Page 30.

PHOTO BY
JENNIFER C. MARSH

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NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

REVIEW



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MEMBERSHIP

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*.



A year of transition and change

As the school year draws to a close, it's the perfect time to look back and use what we have learned to make plans for the year ahead.

In this issue, we look at what we have accomplished together as a union this year. In spite of the many challenges we have faced, this was a year we can all reflect on with pride—from our election work to our ability to fend off bad legislation that would hurt our members to assisting hundreds of local associations settle fair contracts.

We take a closer look at a few of those contracts, and the effort and expertise used to negotiate powerful agreements that advance the rights of our members while fighting for the salaries and benefits they deserve, and working toward much-needed relief from Chapter 78.

We also share the story of how NJEA's Youth Services Committee strengthened the Association's relationship with New Jersey's Boys and Girls Clubs, and how that led one member of the committee to launch a book drive that brought hundreds of books and "book nooks" to children in Gloucester County.

Advocating for our students is a huge part of what motivates NJEA members to join a union. And no one is prouder of our members' successes than their union. East

Brunswick Education Association member Marilyn Weeks Ryan, who represents Middlesex County on the NJEA Executive Committee, was so proud that the German language program in her district was named one of the best in the nation, she made sure the *NJEA Review* covered the story.

In Camden, a teacher teamed up with a former food editor and a community organization to bring in a popular after-school program that teaches the real-world application of academic subjects while providing the life skill of preparing healthy, delicious home-cooked meals.

I hope that these stories inspire you over the summer. We have worked hard to build a strong union here in New Jersey, as we advocate for strong contracts and salaries, and as we advance our fight for pre-K expansion, increased access to affordable higher education, and fair school funding.

I am proud of the work that you have done, and continue to do every day, to maintain our strong public schools and ensure that all children have what they need to succeed. Together, I know that we will continue to achieve great things for our members, our students, our profession and our state.

Marie Blistan



NJEA President Marie Blistan greets members at the NJEA Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee Conference. From left: MLR Committee member Joyce Farr, East Brunswick EA member Cheryll Willis, Blistan, and Buena Regional EA member Sandra Peart.

Officers Online

Marie Blistan

Facebook

Dover EA members continue to offer a QUALITY public education to all children in Dover. The wall of art by STUDENTS is nothing less than incredible. Thank you to President Jon Coniglio and his leadership team for their exemplary dedication to their students and the Dover community!

On March 24, NJEA President Marie Blistan visited the members of the Dover Education Association in Morris County. She shared photos of the visit, including student works of art and meetings with Dover EA members.

Sean M. Spiller

Facebook

SpillerforNJEA: The NJEA MLR Conference facilitating honest and open conversations! Thank you to all our members—committed to social, racial, and economic justice. PS. Yes, that is Jerry Rice!

NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller attended the NJEA Minority Leadership and Recruitment Conference held April 27-28. He shared some photos from the conference and met former San Francisco 49er Jerry Rice who happened to be staying at the same venue where the conference was held. See Page 16-17 for more about the conference.

Steve Beatty

Facebook

SteveBeattyNJEA: Great evening spent with members of the Mercer County Education Association at their legislative dinner. Engaged and active—good panel with Assemblyman Roy Freiman and Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds Jackson and a visit from Senator Shirley Turner. Spreading the word—going on the offense. Chapter 78 relief is up to us with S-2606!

NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty attended the Mercer County Education Association Legislative Dinner on May 21, sharing photos and information from the event. S-2606 is a recently introduced bill, sponsored by Sen. Joe Cryan, that would provide relief from exorbitant health benefit premium sharing.

Know. Lead. Act.

Delegate Assembly approves 2018-19 NJEA budget

The NJEA Delegate Assembly (DA) approved, at its May 19 meeting, an Association budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 that is \$8.1 million less than the FY 2018 budget. The budget reduction came in response to an anticipated adverse decision from the U.S. Supreme Court in *Janus v. AFSCME*, which is expected to eliminate the ability of public-sector unions, such as NJEA, to charge a representation fee to bargaining unit employees who choose not to be union members. As of press time, a decision in *Janus* had not yet been released by the court.

The approved budget contains an operating budget of \$117,533,400, a Pride in Public Education budget of \$10,853,800, a capital fund budget of \$3,034,800, and a disaster relief fund budget of \$325,000.

A budget summary is printed on pages 30-31.

The May *NJEA Review* contained the text of a proposed NJEA Bylaw amendment, proposed at the March DA, that would have suspended the dues formula, having the effect of freezing dues for active professional, active supportive, and retired members for the next two fiscal years, starting Sept. 1, 2018. If it were passed, it would have frozen only NJEA dues, not the local, county, or national portion of member dues.

The Constitution Review Committee, which is charged with reviewing and making recommendations to the DA concerning proposed amendments to the NJEA Constitution and Bylaws, presented its recommendation on the matter of suspending the dues formula. The committee met on March 24 and April 10 to examine the impact of the proposed amendment. Ultimately the committee recommended that the DA reject the proposed bylaw amendment “in light of its projected impact on NJEA’s fiscal stability, programs, and services, in addition to the anticipated negative impact of and uncertainty surrounding the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Janus v. AFSCME*.”

Following a lengthy debate, the DA voted to accept the committee’s recommendation, rejecting the proposed bylaw amendment.

Delegates elect ethnic-minority at-large representatives

NJEA’s Constitution guarantees that the NJEA Executive Committee have ethnic-minority rep-

resentation of at least the same percentage of ethnic-minority persons who are active members of the Association. If that is not the case, the DA elects ethnic-minority at-large representatives to the Executive Committee.

Delegates elected Brenda Brathwaite of Atlantic County and Robin Holcombe of Passaic County for the ethnic-minority at-large seats. Delegates also elected Danielle Clark of Camden County and James Frazier of Union County for the ethnic-minority at-large alternate positions.

Other DA business

Delegates adopted a recommendation of the NJEA Pension Policy Committee “that NJEA believes that an environment, social, and governance (ESG) scoring factor should be incorporated into the investment strategy of the state pension funds.” Environmental factors include how much waste, energy, and toxic emissions a company produces. Social factors include a company’s level of community involvement and its policies regarding the health and safety of workers. Governance factors include the level of transparency in a company’s accounting methods and pay differentials between the CEO and the average worker.

Delegates adopted a recommendation from the Membership Committee that clarifies active and inactive status of members when dues are paid through June and when dues are not paid through June.

Delegates adopted a series of recommendations from the Working Conditions Committee that seek to reduce gun violence. The committee also recommended, and delegates adopted, a recommendation calling for legislation to mandate sabbatical leaves for all public school employees and that, until mandated, such leaves should continue as a negotiable issue. Delegates also adopted a committee recommendation affirming that any public school employee reduction-in-force (RIF) be based on seniority.

The above is a summary of the actions of the May 19 DA meeting. Approved minutes of all DA meetings are published at njea.org/da and in the *NJEA Review* when they become available.

Nominate a local association for bargaining excellence

A local association that has demonstrated excellence in collective bargaining will be honored at the summit with the 2018 Jim George Collective Bargaining Award at the NJEA Jim George Collective Bargaining Summit on Oct. 26-27 at the Doubletree Somerset. All locals nominated will also be recognized at the event.

Criteria

A local qualifies for nomination by meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Bargained one or more new contractual provisions not already found in another affiliate’s contract.
- Conducted an extraordinary community-organizing effort that resulted in a settled agreement.
- Used the bargaining process to propel new members into association involvement and leadership positions.
- Achieved a particularly good settlement, in comparison to state averages, in salary increases, benefits, professional development, and/or member protection and follows best practices for salary guides.

Nomination

Local associations can be nominated by any NJEA member or NJEA staff member.

To nominate a local, visit njea.org/cbaward.

To be considered for the 2018 Jim George Collective Bargaining Award, settlements must be ratified by both parties between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018. Nominations are due Sept. 14, 2018.

NJEA election results available at njea.org

Earlier this spring, NJEA members elected state and county representatives to the NJEA Executive Committee, NJEA Delegate Assembly (and Alternates), and NEA Representative Assembly in some counties and units, as well as some county association offices. Go to njea.org/NJEAelections. Results are provided by county. A link to the results for uncontested offices is also provided.

Stay protected: Join NJREA as you retire

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 knowing there are people working on your behalf to protect it.

Current NJREA annual members will receive their 2018-19 membership renewal forms later next month. Retirees are urged to complete the renewal form and enclose a check for dues no later than 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 available for retirees

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 pre-retired lifetime members. 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 memberships 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.

State officer petitions available

Elections for NJEA state officer positions (president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer) will be held during the upcoming school year for the 2019-21 term.

All nominations for these positions may be made only by petition on forms prescribed by the NJEA Elections Committee.

Petitions for state officers must contain at least 300 signatures of NJEA active members (including active professional and ESP, as well as life members and retired members who are eligible to vote) with at least 10 such signatures from each of 11 counties. Persons who are retired are considered to be from the county in which they last held employment prior to retirement. No more than one nomination may be proposed on

any one petition.

Petitions will be available on **Sept. 4, 2018**. They may be obtained from NJEA Headquarters in Trenton, or from a county or unit representative on the NJEA Elections Committee.

All signed petitions must reach NJEA Headquarters at 180 W. State St., Trenton, or an NJEA-NEA UniServ office no later than 5 p.m. on **Oct. 15, 2018**.

These procedures and the deadlines are for state officer positions only and do not affect nominations for other NJEA positions.

Balloting for contested positions will take place in the regular 2019 NJEA spring elections.

Selfie of the month

Akia N. Roché (l), a building rep for the Plainfield Education Association and a school secretary, attended the NJEA Exceptional Children Conference, where she snapped a selfie with

Grandin. Roché says this is the first NJEA conference she has attended and she cannot wait to attend another one.

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.



Nominations open for awards to be conferred at NJEA Equity Alliance Weekend

Nominations are now open for four awards that will recognize advocacy and achievement in equity and justice. The awards will be presented at NJEA's first-ever Equity Alliance Weekend, to be held on Jan. 11-12, just prior to the holiday observing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

The Equity Alliance Weekend is an expansion and reconfiguration of three annual NJEA events: the NJEA Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human and Civil Rights Celebration, the NJEA Urban Education Symposium, and the NJEA Minority Leadership and Recruitment Conference. The weekend will feature training on social justice issues and social justice activism, recognizing the intersection of diverse identities and circumstances among NJEA members and the communities they serve.

In addition, four of NJEA's highest awards will be presented at the Human and Civil Rights Celebration, which will be a highlight of the Equity Alliance Weekend.

- **NJEA Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human and Civil Rights Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Human and Civil Rights Committee. Nominees may be individuals, groups or organizations working in the area of civil rights, and if eligible, NJEA members.
- **Judith Owens Spirit Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee. Named for Judith Owens, the first African-American president of NJEA, this award

honors a member who has been a champion of ethnic minority rights and issues and who has had a significant impact on education and the achievement of equal opportunity for those facing discrimination because of their ethnicity.

- **Equality Champion Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee. This award honors a member who has been a champion of human and civil rights, and who has had a significant impact on education and the achievement of equal opportunity for those facing discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **NJEA Elizabeth A. Allen Women in Education Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Women in Education Committee. Named for NJEA's first female president, the award honors a member or an individual living or working in New Jersey who promotes women's rights and equality for all persons, particularly in education.

Nomination forms and documentation for any of these four awards are due Dec. 1, 2018. For awards criteria and to make a nomination, go to njea.org/equitynominations.

For more information call 609-599-4561, ext. 2290. 



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Cool Stuff

QUICK TIP:

Take students on a kindness tour

Second grade students and staff at the Chester M. Stephens (CMS) Elementary School in Budd Lake participated in the 10th annual Kindness Tour on April 20. This unique field trip offers students an opportunity to work together to make a difference.

Mount Olive neighborhoods and businesses were invited to post inspirational kindness signs. Signs were posted throughout the community and beyond. One CMS alumnus in Florida posted a sign in his yard.

Because the first second-grade class to take part in the Kindness Tour is now in 11th grade, students at Mount Olive High School wanted to honor this anniversary of the day. They decorated their school with the theme "Kindness Knocks at MOHS!" Students and staff there decorated classroom doors with messages of kindness. The high school students sent photos of their decorations to the second graders.

Radio host Dave Kelber of WRNJ Radio launched the day with an interview three second-graders, encouraging kindness. The interview was played throughout the school the morning of the tour.

Finally, the second-graders commenced with their kindness tour. Before loading the buses, they recited the Kindness Pledge followed by re-

marks from Principal Kevin Moore. Students walked through a sea of cheering CMS students from Grades K-5 with parents waiting outside to root them on as well.

On the tour students sang songs at Warren Haven Nursing Home and delivered homemade flowers to the residents. At Trinity House in Hackensack students loaded the food pantry shelves with canned goods and decorated lunch bags for homeless persons in New York City. Before returning to CMS, they stopped at the post office and mailed letters of gratitude to American troops.

After a celebratory lunch, students visited with several EMT workers in training. The students made blankets that the EMT Workers can offer to their patients with the message "A warm hug from the CMS second graders."

At the end of the day the students created inspirational bookmarks, secretly entered the library, and inserted them in a variety of books for school members to find as a surprise.

Submitted by Ann M. Scotland, second-grade teacher at Chester M. Stephens Elementary School and a member of the Education Association of Mount Olive. Scotland can be reached at amscotland@mtoliveboe.org.

Art project seeks student submissions exploring the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Central Jersey Arts Council invites you to participate in an art initiative called Art in the Right, which will raise awareness of human rights through sculpture. The 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations on Dec. 10, 1948, will be explored through a series of sculptures created by students across New Jersey in Grades 2-12. Sculptures can be made from almost anything, including, but not limited to, wire, plaster, paper, ceramic and found objects.

Student work from the project will be included in a student exhibition May 18, 2019, at the Central Jersey Arts Council.

If you are interested in participating, send an email to East Brunswick art teacher Angella Karakoglou at akarakoglou@ebnet.org.

Humane State license plate contest underway

In partnership with The Animal Welfare Fund of New Jersey, The Lesniak Institute is opening up the design of the state's newest license plate to students. New Jersey students in elementary, middle and high school are encouraged to participate. The goal of this contest is to inspire students to use their artistic talent to promote awareness of protecting animals from cruelty and saving animals from extinction.

Entries are due June 30, 2018. For details and to enter, visit thelesniakinstitute.com/license-plate-contest.

Why is New Jersey the Humane State? New Jersey enacted the first and the strongest ban in the nation on ivory and rhino horn transactions. New Jersey is one of only two states to enact a ban on imports and transportation of "trophies" of endangered species. The other state is Washington. New Jersey made dog fighting a racketeering offense to enable everyone participating in a dog fight to be charged with a crime. New Jersey banned transportation of horses to slaughter houses.


New Jersey will again consider legislation that was previously vetoed by Gov. Chris Christie banning puppy mills, gestation crates, and Nosey's Law, which bans wild animals in circuses and fairs. Pedal's Law will also be considered, which would eliminate bear hunts in New Jersey.

Nominate a young hero

The National Liberty Museum recently opened nominations for our 2018 Young Heroes Award presented by TD Bank. The annual Young Heroes Awards program seeks to recognize people 18 years of age or younger who:

- Seek to better their communities.
- Promote tolerance and diversity.
- Demonstrate leadership.
- Demonstrate civic engagement.
- Promote respectful resolutions to conflict.

One top winner will receive a \$2,000 prize. All winners will be recognized in a ceremony at the National Liberty Museum in historic Old City, Philadelphia, on Aug. 9, 2018. All winners will have their stories told in a museum exhibit at the National Liberty Museum for approximately one year.

To read about past winners, to learn more and to make a nomination, visit libertymuseum.org, slide over to Hero Awards and click on Young Heroes Awards. The deadline is June 16. 

Symposium to address mental health in schools

The Spread the Love Foundation is hosting a symposium titled Addressing Mental Health in Our Schools. The symposium will take place at Caesar's Palladium Ballroom in Atlantic City on July 11. Peter Langman, Ph.D. is the keynote speaker.

The program begins at 8 a.m. and concludes at 5 p.m. Breakfast and lunch are provided. The \$150 registration fee is due by July 1 to Megan Coburn. For more information concerning registration, email Coburn at megan.spreadthelove@gmail.com.



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NJEA Report

East Brunswick K-12 German program is among the best in the nation

The German rock video playing on the SmartBoard in Brian Lavery's second-floor classroom in East Brunswick's Hammar skjold Middle School immediately brought more than 20 students to their feet. Alongside their teacher, they lined up and expertly copied the dance moves on the screen, even as they sang along in German to the song.

Across town, Dr. Silke Wehner-Franco was leading a discussion entirely in German with juniors and seniors at East Brunswick High School on the economic fallout of World War I on the German people and how that influenced the political landscape.

At Churchill Junior High School, Sara Wilder had another class of students singing a German pop song with enthusiasm and working in teams to answer questions entirely in German.

With more than 400 students in three schools, it's easy to see why this vibrant language program was designated as a German Center of Excellence by the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG). Only 27 German programs at schools and 10 programs at colleges and universities have met the demanding criteria nationwide.

Wehner-Franco worked with her colleagues to submit the program for consideration.

"We applied because we believed that we fulfilled the criteria, and we wanted our German program to be recognized for what it offers to students from sixth grade to twelfth grade, from German I to AP German Language and Culture," Wehner-Franco said. "We are particularly proud that we are the first German program in New Jersey, at either the K-12 or college level, to be awarded this designation. It will put our schools in East Brunswick and the state of New Jersey on the map of AATG Centers of Excellence in the United States."

According to the AATG, the "designation is presented to well-established and growing German programs with demonstrated excellence in instruction and strong support from administration, professional colleagues, alumni, and students."

It helps that the three German teachers have

strong connections to German-speaking countries. Wehner-Franco is a native of Dusseldorf. Wilder, who had been inspired to become a teacher by her German teacher in Lawrence, studied abroad at the University of Konstanz and lived in Konstanz for three years after college. Lavery studied in Graz, Austria and continues to travel back to Austria to work at a summer camp. Some East Brunswick students also attend the camp to improve their language skills. He was also inspired to study German because of an influential teacher he had growing up in Scotch Plains.

The program, which begins in the sixth grade, emphasizes full immersion in the language. Native speakers frequently work with the students and the district is very proud of their annual German festival, held in early June. Working with a German-speaking journalist, the students put together a newsletter entirely in German.

With World Language Supervisor Ruth Chang and Board of Education President Todd Simmens, who speaks German, the East Brunswick program enjoys unusual, but necessary support.

EBEA member and NJEA Executive Committee member Marilyn Weeks Ryan is also a proud supporter of the program.

"I have been lucky to be able to work so closely with such dedicated, talented, and passionate professionals," Weeks Ryan said. "They invited me to host one of the German exchange teachers during a student exchange program one year and it was an amazing experience."

The three teachers complement each other's skills and allow students to become familiar with different German accents. As rigorous as the program is, it is also extremely popular.

"Our German classes are unique because most kids speak Spanish or Italian," said Amir, a sixth-grade student. "German is fun because it's not what everyone picks."

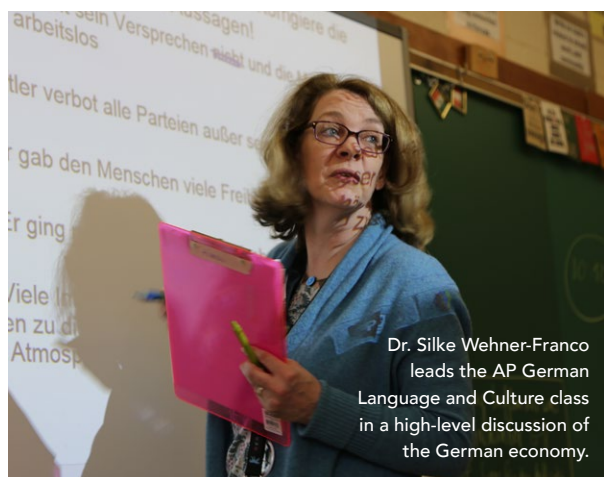
Through their example, East Brunswick's Wehner-Franco, Wilder, and Lavery are perhaps inspiring the next generation of German teachers.



Brian Lavery engages first-year German students at Hammar skjold Middle School with a rousing German song and dance.



Sara Wilder poses with students proudly displaying symbols from Germany.



Dr. Silke Wehner-Franco leads the AP German Language and Culture class in a high-level discussion of the German economy.

Lower Township Elementary EA hosts “Know Your Contract” Quizzo Night

In a crowded Fraternal Order of Police Hall in Wildwood, the Lower Township Elementary Education Association (LTEEA) hosted a “Know Your Contract” Quizzo night for 10 teams totaling approximately 60 people.

Following dinner, the teams, with names such as Breakage, Came4theFood, PARCC4Adults, and Newbies, competed to answer contract-related questions.

As the teams quickly—and hotly—debated the answers to questions about the negotiability of class size, their contractual sick leave and bereavement time, and the grievance procedures, they were also gaining a greater awareness of the language in their contract, an important goal for LTEEA President Stacey Salerno.

“Our contract expires on June 30, 2019, so this year we will be focused on working with members to identify the areas of the contract that most concern them and where they would like to see changes,” Salerno said. “In order to do that, we need to make sure they’re fully aware of what the contract already contains and what issues we can address through bargaining.”

After each question, NJEA Field Representative Stephanie Tarr discussed the right answer and provided additional information to the group.

By the end of the night, Team Breakage was the big winner. While Karen Smith, Barb Bur, Stacy Hotaling, and Shelly Voumard shared the \$100 prize, every member in attendance walked away with information and ideas to help them enforce and improve the contract – and their rights.



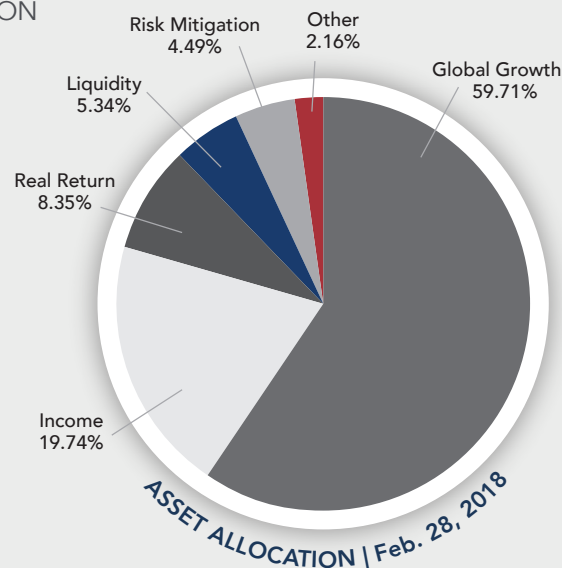
Team Breakage celebrates their winnings. From left: Karen Smith, Stacy Hotaling, Barb Bur and Shelly Voumard.

PENSION UPDATE

TOTAL PENSION FUND: \$77.85 BILLION

The totals below reflect market values as of Feb. 28, 2018, and for comparison, Dec. 31, 2017. The figures, which are rounded, may not reflect the current market values of some alternative investments through the period noted, because of lags in reporting under industry standards.

	Feb 28, 2018		Dec. 31, 2017	
	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation
Global Growth	\$46.49	59.71%	\$46.05	59.38%
Income	\$15.37	19.74%	\$15.17	19.56%
Real Return	\$6.50	8.35%	\$6.59	8.50%
Liquidity	\$4.16	5.34%	\$4.22	5.44%
Risk Mitigation/Capital Preservation	\$3.65	4.69%	\$3.71	4.79%
Other	\$1.68	2.16%	\$1.81	2.34%
Total	\$77.85	100%	\$77.55	100%



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

NJEA honors social justice advocacy

At the annual NJEA Minority Leadership and Recruitment (MLR) Conference, NJEA honored two members for outstanding advocacy in the cause of social justice. Through the NJEA Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee, the association recognized Janene Onyango, a teacher at Twin

Hills Elementary School in Willingboro. Through the NJEA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee, the association recognized Dr. Marisa Januzi, an English teacher and Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) adviser at Northern Valley High School in Demarest.



Willingboro Education Association member Janene Onyango receives the Judy Owens Spirit Award.

From left: NJEA SOGI Committee Chair Tom Tamburello, NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller, Onyango, NJEA MLR Committee Chair Charisse Parker, and NJEA President Marie Blistan.

"This work is important because our students of color are being pushed out."

Janene Onyango receives Judy Owens Spirit Award

Onyango received the NJEA Judy Owens Spirit Award. The award honors members who have been champions of ethnic-minority rights who have had a significant impact on the education and the achievement of equal opportunity for those facing discrimination because of their ethnicity. Owens was the first African-American president of NJEA.

"Janene Onyango is a teacher in Willingboro, Burlington County, and a proven leader in ethnic-minority issues," said MLR Committee Chair Charisse Parker. "She is a writer and author who promotes the inclusion of diversity and social justice education as well as restorative practices and educational equity."

Onyango is also a recipient of a Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education grant. Through that grant, Project WILD, Onyango makes it possible for her students—many who are economi-

cally disadvantaged—to have three field trips a year. Project WILD is an interdisciplinary conservation and environmental education program.

Onyango reflected on what she called the precarious times we live in, noting mass shootings in schools, cuts to education budgets, the school-to-prison pipeline and mass incarceration. She said, however, that there was a glimmer of hope.

"When we see Emma Gonzalez, Naomi Waters, David Hogg and our youth who organize and lead marches and movements standing up and having the courage to speak their truth, it moves us to speak our truths too," Onyango said.

Onyango said that her current truth is bringing restorative practices and restorative justice to her students. She credited her school's assistant principal, Barbara Coleman, for introducing her to restorative justice and for enabling Onyango to share

in Coleman's dissertation research.

"This work is important because our students of color are being pushed out," Onyango said.

She referred the audience to the work of author and researcher Monique Morris, particularly her book *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*.

"It is a discussion about the experiences of black girls across the country whose intricate lives are misunderstood: highly judged by teachers, administrators and the justice system, and degraded by the very institutions charged with helping them to flourish," Onyango said.

That book, additional research and her own experience inspired Onyango to make sure Twin Hills Elementary School used restorative practices to replace punitive measures such as suspension that push students of color out of school.

Onyango herself published "The

Power to Heal: Making the Case for Using Restorative Practices with Black and Brown Girls in Schools" in the *The Journal of School and Society*. (bit.ly/onyangopowertoheal)

Onyango also highlighted the work of Camden Education Association President Keith Eric Benson, pointing to his article in the same publication. Benson wrote, "Are We Really 'bout that Life'? Urban Educators as Activists in, and for, their Urban Schools' Community." (bit.ly/bensonurbaneducators)

She called on the educators in the room to reflect upon what matters to them.

"I encourage you to find your 'why,' even though you may feel you're beaten down," Onyango said. "We need you. Public education and collective bargaining are under attack. We need you. Our children's futures are under attack. We need you."

Dr. Marisa Januzzi receives Equality Champion Award

Januzzi was honored with the NJEA Equality Champion Award. The award is presented to a member who has been a champion in the defense of human and civil rights and who has had a significant impact on the education and achievement of equal opportunity for those facing discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Januzzi recalled that in 2002, at the request of a student, she became the first adviser of the GSA at Northern Valley Regional High School at Demarest. While Januzzi described the GSA's launch as successful, the student told her that the club was "doing a terrible job" because it wasn't doing enough to promote transgender visibility.

"In that moment I learned that if I was going to learn anything along the way, it was going to be because I was listening to my students and empowering them to tell me what we need in our schools," Januzzi said.

Fourteen years later, Northern Valley student Jackson Evangelista

made a presentation to the GSA telling his story of discovering himself to be a transgender male.

"Jackson bravely told our group that he figured out he's not a lesbian, but that he is transgender and that he had experienced depression and gender and body dysphoria, but that he survived," Januzzi said. "Like everyone else I was moved. By connecting his experiences as a trans kid to a universally recognizable struggle for self-understanding and acceptance, Jackson's story educated all of us."

Januzzi concluded her remarks by sharing three lessons she learned from Jackson's experience and her 16 years as a GSA advisor.

- **Jackson's story highlights unfinished business for educators:** Januzzi recalled that Jackson wrote in the December edition of the *NJEA Review* that he discovered himself in the summer of 2015 on Tumblr and YouTube. Januzzi called it a failing of our education system

that any public school student should have to learn the word "transgender" online at the age of 14. She found no reference to the word in district curricula. Silence in the curriculum, she said, makes it easier to avoid. Curriculum needs to be inclusive and relevant.

- **Jackson's story shows that kids can open doors that adults sometimes cannot:** Telling personal stories may be the most powerful form of argument because of their power to develop empathy, while enabling listeners, who are in a position to rectify wrongs, to make systemic change. Find your kids who can do it and get them to tell their stories to people who need to hear them, Januzzi suggested.
- **We need to honor people equitably:** Januzzi said she would not be in a position to receive the award if not for the students in her school's GSA, for the courage of Jackson and his parents,

the fierce advocacy of Teaneck sixth-grade teacher and previous Equality Champion Award winner Amy Moran, and the love of her family. The most profound change-makers are not the ones that school conventions usually guide us to identify, she said. There are secret superheroes everywhere: those whose stories of resilience and survival have more to teach us than the curriculum we've been using to teach them.

Januzzi encourages other students to develop their stories and find ways to raise their voices in advocating for LGBTQ+ persons. That work has led students in the Northern Valley-Demarest GSA to make the graduation ceremony more inclusive by moving to a tradition of a common color for caps and gowns rather than a gender-based color code, among other reforms.



Northern Valley Regional Education Association member Marisa Januzzi receives the Equality Champion Awards. From left: NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller, NJEA SOGI Committee Chair Tom Tamburello, Januzzi, NJEA President Marie Blistan, and NJEA MLR Committee Chair Charisse Parker.

"There are secret superheroes everywhere: those whose stories of resilience and survival have more to teach us than the curriculum we've been using to teach them."

Gov. Murphy signs Workplace Democracy Enhancement Act

Gov. Phil Murphy signed the Workplace Democracy Enhancement Act on May 18. The new law is intended to ensure that employee organizations that are the exclusive representatives of public employees in collective negotiations are able to carry out their statutory duties. For NJEA, this means the law requires that boards of education and other public school entities ensure that local associations, in districts where they have majority bargaining status, have access to the employees they represent and that the local association has the ability to communicate with them.

The Workplace Democracy Enhancement Act also protects the privacy rights of public employees. It affirms that home addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, birth dates, employee negotiation units and groupings, and communications between employee organizations and their members, are not government records and are exempt from the disclosure requirements of the Open Public Records Act.

NJEA President Marie Blistan applauded the new law.

"This is a real win for working people in New Jersey," Blistan said. "Gov. Murphy promised to put the needs of working families first, and he's kept that promise by signing this law. I also thank the sponsors, Senate President Sweeney and Speaker Coughlin, for their work in championing this important legislation with their fellow legislators. This law shows that New Jersey respects the value of unions and the right of employees to join together and advocate for the values that matter to them."

What does the law do?

The law includes the right of associations with majority bargaining status to meet with individual employees on the premises of the public employer, during the workday, to

investigate and discuss grievances, workplace-related complaints, and other workplace issues.

The association with majority bargaining status has the legal right to conduct worksite meetings during lunch and other non-work breaks. Before and after the workday the permits that association to meet on worksites to discuss workplace issues, collective bargaining, the administration of the collective bargaining agreements, other matters related to the duties of the organization. Internal union matters involving the governance or business of the organization may also be conducted at these meetings.

Under the law, within 30 days of the hire of new employees, the employer must set aside a minimum of 30 minutes at new employee orientations for the association that has majority bargaining status to meet with new staff. If the employer does not conduct new employee orientations, the employer must permit the association to meet with these potential new members at individual or group meetings. In either case, the employer cannot reduce the pay or leave time of the employees for these attending these meetings.

Within 10 days of hiring a new employee, the employer must provide the association with majority bargaining status with the name, job title, worksite location, date of hire, home address, work telephone number, work email address, and any personal email address and home and mobile phone numbers the employer has on file. The law requires public employers to provide updates to the employee organizations of this information every 120 calendar days.

The law grants the association with majority bargaining status the right to use the public employer email systems to communicate with their members, and government buildings to meet with their mem-

bers, regarding negotiations and administration of collective negotiations agreements, grievances and other workplace-related complaints and issues, and internal organization matters. Meetings may not be for the purposes of supporting or opposing candidates for partisan political office or distributing literature regarding partisan elections.

The law requires a public employer to negotiate, upon association request, contractual provisions to memorialize the parties' agreement to implement the provisions of the Workplace Democracy Enhancement Act. The bill sets forth procedures and a timeline regarding the resolution of any disagreement in the negotiations.

It prohibits a public employer from encouraging employees to resign, relinquish membership in an employee organization, or revoke authorization of the deduction of fees to an employee organization, or encouraging or discouraging employees from joining, forming or assisting an employee organization. Violations are regarded as an unfair practice, and, upon a finding that the violation has occurred, the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC), is directed to order the public employer to make whole the employee organization for any losses suffered by the organization as a result of the unfair practice.

The Workplace Democracy Enhancement Act modifies the procedures for an employee to withdraw authorization for payroll deduction of fees to employee organizations. The bill provides that an employee do so by providing written notice to their public employer during the 10 days following each anniversary date of the employee's employment, and the public employer is then required to inform the employee organization of the withdrawal. A withdrawal would take effect on the 30th day after the anniversary date.

\$52,690,000

**The total amount
of money New
Jersey public school
teachers spend
out of their own
pockets on classroom
supplies without
reimbursement.**

Source: "Data
Point: Public School
Teacher Spending on
Classroom Supplies,"
U.S. Department
of Education, May
2018. ([nces.ed.gov/
pubs2018/2018097.
pdf](https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018097.pdf))

Youth Leadership Committee strengthens connection between NJEA and Boys and Girls Clubs

Following a guided tour of the Boys and Girls Club in Lawrence Township that highlighted science, technology, engineering, math (STEM), culinary arts, and a bike repair program, the members of the NJEA Youth Services Committee were inspired to work more closely with their individual local and county Boys and Girls Club affiliates. NJEA committees are composed of county association member representatives.

"The goal of our tour was to deepen the connection between NJEA and the Boys and Girls Clubs and support them in the amazing work they do for the children in our communities," said Youth Services Committee Chair Mary Karriem.

Committee member and Deptford Education Association member Shannon Pizzuta initiated a meeting with Patti Withington, CEO of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Gloucester County.

"Patti told me about the three club locations in Gloucester County and the amazing projects and programs they offer," Pizzuta said. "Together, we brainstormed many ideas for future projects on which we could collaborate. I told her I would like to create 'book nooks' or 'library corners' in each club since none of the clubs currently have library spaces."

"I contacted Gloucester County Education Association (GCEA) President Sue Clark to ask for assistance communicating with other local associations, and she asked me to present the project at the next GCEA meeting," Pizzuta continued. "The response was enthusiastic and immediate! Ten associations signed up to host book drives. The drives concluded

at the end of January and we collected enough books to create library spaces at each of the clubs."

Clark also assisted Pizzuta in applying for NJEA Pride in Public Education funds to pay for the bookshelves.

In addition, the local associations volunteered to have a Teacher-Reader Night at each location the evening they delivered the books.

"This way, teachers can visit with the children, share their favorite stories, and continue to instill the love of reading in children," Pizzuta said.

NJEA has long had a strong relationship with the Boys and Girls Club, including providing funding for three clubs' after-school and summer camp youth programs.

Recently, NJEA and the Boys and Girls Clubs launched an initiative to establish a Future Educators Academy at the three clubs. The academy will host guest speakers, coordinate field trips to local colleges and schools, run service projects, and work to boost enrollment in the Urban Teachers Academies.

In addition, the academy will provide internship and employment opportunities as well as provide mentoring and college application assistance to students who want to enter college education programs.

The Boys and Girls Clubs in New Jersey serve more than 70,900 youth through membership and community outreach at 64 Club sites in 30 cities. For more information about the clubs, or to volunteer, go to bgcnj.org.



Shannon Pizzuta, Deptford EA member, reads to children in Paulsboro.



A Boys and Girls Club staff member reads to a child in Glassboro.



Michelle MacLacklin, of Deptford EA, reads to a child in Glassboro.

ICYMI



NJEA stands with Paramus
May 18, 2018

GenRenew makes \$5K contribution to NJEA Hipp Foundation
May 1, 2018

Ending the isolation

NJEA Public Charter Work Group holds 'boot camp' focused on unity

"The need to protect the rights and benefits of public school teachers in our charter schools has grown exponentially in recent years," said Cindy Matute-Brown while addressing attendees of the 3rd Annual NJEA Public Charter Boot Camp held on Apr. 13 -14 at the Princeton Marriott.

Matute-Brown is the president of the Golden Door Charter School Education Association in Jersey City. She co-chairs the NJEA Public Charter Work Group (PCWG) with former Brunswick Charter Education Association President Peter Creekmore. Both leaders stressed what unionization means in a charter school.

"It is the difference between a stable and fair working environment, and chaos," said Creekmore.

Creekmore is speaking of the rampant violation of workers' rights and deplorable conditions for students and employees that occur in a number of unaffiliated corporate-run charters where management has made fighting unionization a top priority.

"Most NJEA members whom I speak with, understand the need

for our organization to serve those seeking nondiscriminatory protection," said Matute-Brown, though she and her members also report being treated differently by individuals who hold a negative view of charter school employees.

The conflict stems from a legislative funding issue that allows charter school management companies to take per pupil funds from the traditional public school in the town where a charter is established. This financial imbalance is something that members of both charter and traditional schools hope will change as a new governor and commissioner of education review the role of charter schools in New Jersey.

Unionization benefits members

The NJEA Public Charter Boot Camp was developed to promote awareness of the facts and issues surrounding charter schools, to assist charter school members with their organizing efforts, and to help end the isolation that charter members feel when the facts and issues of their employment are

misunderstood or misrepresented.

This year, NJEA members from charter and traditional schools traveled from every corner of the state to attend workshops presented by NJEA UniServ and Organizational Development representatives and consultants. Topics such as How to Organize a Local from Scratch and Member Engagement were discussed at length and open for questions.

Ryan Moser, president of the newly affiliated Mathematics, Engineering, Technology, and Science Education Association (METSEA), drove from Jersey City to participate.

"Working conditions were terrible prior to our organizing," Moser said. "People talked about quitting all of the time."

Moser and his members are encouraged that relations between administrators and members have improved. He reports that there is evidence forming new union has reduced staff turnover as employees become more confident that their concerns will be addressed.

As with traditional public schools, affiliation will not im-

mediately solve every problem—especially if a charter's governing board refuses the local's attempt to build a relationship. Kathy Weber, president of the Classic Academy Charter Education Association in Clifton reports that the 11 members of her association are often "putting out fires." They are small in numbers but mighty in resolve. The group attributes their solidarity to regular meetings and the constant communication that they have outside of school.

The Public Charter Boot Camp is designed to assist locals and members at every stage of their affiliation and activism. It is a great place to get started or to check in with members who share common experiences and issues. Attendance at this event increases each year as the need to support charter school members escalates.

For information on how to sign up for this and other NJEA Public Charter Work Group events, contact the group through NJEA External Organizing Specialist Marguerite Schroeder at schroedm@njea.org. 📧



At the boot camp, the International Academy of Trenton Charter School Education Association received the Solidarity Award. IATSCSEA President Jody Tompsky holds the plaque.



At the boot camp, the Urban Leadership Academy Education Association received the Organizing in a Crisis Award. ULAEA President Rose Ann Berberich holds the plaque.

NJEA: A YEAR OF PROGRESS

By Kathryn Coulibaly

As NJEA members look back on a school year of personal and professional successes, it's important to review what we have been able to accomplish together as a union.

NJEA is arguably the most powerful and effective labor union in New Jersey, and certainly one of the strongest public education labor unions in the nation. That strength and expertise has contributed to a year of progress and success for NJEA members and the students and communities they serve.

This past year, NJEA devoted its resources to protecting and expanding the rights of members, ensuring support for public education, and advancing new initiatives that benefit members and New Jersey's public school students.

In particular, NJEA focused on issues related to the economic well-being of NJEA members and their families, including Ch. 78 relief, pension funding, school funding, and preventing harmful legislation.

For educational support professionals (ESP), NJEA not only successfully defeated privatization in almost every district that considered it, but also launched a new team-based strategy that brought members of every job description across municipalities to advocate for their ESP colleagues whose jobs were in danger.

Ch. 78 relief

Working closely with NJEA field representatives and Research Division staff, more than 100 local associations have bargaining language providing Ch. 78 relief for their members.

As one of the association's highest priorities, NJEA is tackling Ch. 78 from every angle. In addition to fighting for relief through contract language, NJEA is educating legislators about the economic devastation inflicted on members as a result of Ch. 78 and sharing their stories with every legislator in the state.

Sen. Joseph Cryan has just sponsored S-2606, legislation that would provide relief from exorbitant health benefit premium sharing. NJEA has spoken extensively with Gov. Murphy to ensure that once legislation passes both houses, it will be signed.

Groundbreaking contract settlements

Following a one-day strike in Jersey City, the first in the state since 2004, the Jersey City Education Association (JCEA) settled a contract that not only provided Ch. 78 relief, but also improved salaries, benefits, and working conditions for every member.

Read more in this issue about the JCEA's settlement, as well as exceptional agreements in Paterson, Pleasantville and Stafford Township. (See pages 24-33.)

At the same time, NJEA staff worked closely with local presidents and negotiating teams to ensure that the approximately 300 local associations currently bargaining had the expertise, support, training, and resources they needed to bargain the best deal possible for their members.

An anti-privatization powerhouse

Fighting against privatization is a top priority for NJEA. In addition to confronting privatization threats at the local level, NJEA has worked to re-introduce legislation that would provide additional protections to ESPs. While NJEA successfully moved the legislation through both houses during the 2012-13 legislative session, Gov. Chris Christie refused to sign the bills.

One set of bills, S-296/A-3185/A-3395, would prohibit employers from entering into a subcontracting agreement that affects the employment of those covered by that contract during the term of an existing

Members in locals across the state stood together to work toward strong salaries and Ch. 78 relief.



In New Jersey, we are fortunate to be able to build on the **successes** and strength of those who came before us, and who helped to build **NJEA** into the **powerhouse** that it is today.

collective bargaining agreement.

Another bill, A-3664, would extend to nonteaching employees of local, county or regional school districts, boards or commissions the right to submit to binding arbitration any dispute regarding whether there is just cause for a disciplinary action.

In addition, NJEA continues to fight for the rights of ESP staff at the local level by working to incorporate contract language that protects their rights.

And NJEA continues to fight for members when their individual rights are violated. In Pleasantville, NJEA network attorneys won a recent arbitration before the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) and saved the jobs of an instructional aide and a security guard.

At the local level, NJEA provided support, resources and staff to help save the jobs of custodians in Hopatcong, paraprofessionals in Green Brook and bus drivers in West Milford.

Advocating for EVERY member

NJEA heralded a major victory for members in Paterson when it won a \$7 million arbitration on their behalf after the district failed to advance employees on the salary guide.

In January, NJEA assisted a mem-

ber in Mantua Township to win back pay and service credit for her military service. She had been unaware of her rights until she joined the NJEA Patriots Alliance, a community of members within NJEA who have served in the United States armed forces or who are currently serving as JROTC instructors, in the National Guard, and in the reserves.

In November, NJEA worked with the Millville Education Association to defeat an anti-union ballot question that targeted ESP by trying to remove them from civil service protections. In court, in the community, and at the ballot box, NJEA members fought to protect their colleagues—and won.

Over the school year, NJEA provided more than 2,700 members with a one-on-one pension consultation. More than 500 members attended one of NJEA's online pension webinars.

From providing expert guidance and information to NJEA members about their pensions and updates on the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) fight, to providing resources and networking opportunities to preservice members eager to obtain their first job in education, to providing the support and professional development members need at every stage of their careers, NJEA is working to meet every member's needs.

Improving educational opportunities for our students

In addition to advocating at the state level for full funding for schools, expanded access to Pre-K, and increased funding for community colleges, NJEA won a commitment from the Murphy administration to move away from PARCC and lower the weight of student growth percentiles (SGPs) in a teacher's evaluation.

NJEA also funded 46 grants through Sustainable Jersey for Schools that supported projects such as an outdoor classroom, a healthy habits program, an enhanced recycling program and much more.

In February, the five schools who won NJEA's Mighty Fingers art project spent the day with award-winning artist Kelly Sullivan to create their own masterpieces, harness their creativity, and build self-esteem.

Over the 2017-18 school year, the NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education awarded 17 grants totaling more than \$97,000 to NJEA members across the state. Since its creation, the Foundation has awarded more than \$2 million to 378 innovative educational projects initiated by NJEA members.

NJEA also provided resources and support to assist the Freehold Borough Education Association (FBEA)

fight for fair funding for their schools. For 14 years the district has struggled with over-crowded classrooms and insufficient funding. Thanks in large part to the efforts of the FBEA, new classrooms will be opening and at least 15 new teachers will be hired in September 2018.

Election victories

Having endured nearly eight years of combative governance in the Statehouse, NJEA members celebrated the election of Ambassador Phil Murphy as the governor of New Jersey.

NJEA contributed to Gov. Murphy's successful campaign by launching an unprecedented organizing campaign through the primary and general election. Members4Murphy operated 20 phone bank locations across the state, which led to 230,000 phone calls between members urging them to support pro-public education candidates such as Murphy. In addition, door-to-door canvassing, mailings, and outreach at job sites helped encourage greater member participation in the election cycle.

At the county and local level, 61 percent of endorsed candidates were successful, including a hard-fought upset victory for NJEA member Balvir Singh and his running mate in Burlington County. Other NJEA members and endorsed candidates



Gov. Phil Murphy came to the 2017 NJEA Convention to personally thank NJEA members for their support.



NJEA Director of Government Relations Ginger Gold Schnitzer speaks in the Statehouse to protect members' interests during last summer's government shutdown.

In February, NJEA provided resources to bring the art program Mighty Fingers to five schools in New Jersey.



Kristina Fallon Tomaino, vice president of South Bound Brook EA, monitors discussion of a higher education health benefits bill in the Statehouse.

were elected in Mullica Township, Franklin Township, Emerson, Park Ridge, and Berkeley Heights.

In total, 267 NJEA members ran for offices across the state, from Board of Education to mayor and freeholder.

Fighting for our priorities

The importance of Gov. Murphy's election was highlighted in his first state budget address when he called for a four-year phase-in to full funding of the School Funding Reform Act (SFRA) while ensuring that no district will get less this year than last year. In his budget, 94 percent of districts will receive more aid than in the current year's budget.

In addition, Murphy budgeted a \$3.2 billion pension payment, a move that will help to restore the state's credit rating, which has taken a beating over the past eight years.

Murphy also budgeted funding to expand Pre-K education, which research shows to be one of the most effective ways to boost student achievement for a lifetime of learning.

In keeping with another of his campaign promises, Gov. Murphy's first budget includes significant increases for higher education, including \$50 million for tuition-free community college for families earning less than \$45,000 per year. In addition, it increases the Tuition Aid Grant (TAG) by \$7.5 million and the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) by \$1.5 million. Improving access to our excellent community colleges is one of the goals of NJEA's

Higher Education Committee, and our higher education members, in particular, have been strong advocates for Gov. Murphy's budget.

NJEA members have been vocal in the Statehouse, in legislative offices, and on their job sites, educating people about the importance of funding these public education priorities and how they not only benefit the individuals who receive an excellent education in our public schools from pre-K through college, but also economically benefit every person in the state.

NJEA promoted the Workplace Democracy Enhancement Act, a bill designed to keep unions strong and effective on behalf of members, by ensuring that employee organizations such as NJEA are able to carry out their statutory duties. It provides the right for unions to have access to and to be able to communicate with the employees they represent. It also protects public employees' privacy by specifying that personal information, such as home addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and birth dates are not government records and are exempt from disclosure requirements.

Defeating harmful proposals

NJEA successfully lobbied against school funding proposals put forth by Gov. Christie and Senate President Steve Sweeney that would have shortchanged many districts without addressing the state's failure to fund

the school funding formula. New Jersey's school funding formula has been held up as a national model for fair and equitable funding. NJEA members' advocacy on its behalf ensures that school funding is not used as a political slush fund.

Last summer, NJEA safeguarded members' interests during a historic shut-down when the budget bill was not enacted before the June 30 deadline.

NJEA protected members from higher health care costs by halting Gov. Christie's plan to raid \$300 million from the reserve trust of Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield. NJEA successfully prevented a bill from moving in the Legislature that would have eliminated health benefit waivers and coordination of benefits for married couples where both spouses are public employees.

NJEA also is actively engaged in fighting an anti-collective bargaining bill that would diminish the benefits of county college employees and retirees by forcing them to switch from the School Employees Health Benefits Plan (SEHBP) to the State Health Benefits Plan (SHBP). As of press time, the bill had passed the Senate, so NJEA members have focused their efforts on the Assembly. NJEA had previously defeated the bill during the 2017 lame duck session.

Never taking our successes for granted

This school year has seen educators across the country stand up, speak up, and walk out of their school buildings and job sites to express their frustration and call attention to the deplorable working conditions, economic packages, and lack of funding for schools that are rampant in many parts of the country.

This has happened in North Carolina, Arizona, Oklahoma, Colorado, Kentucky and West Virginia, and many of the issues driving educators to take action have been festering over the past decade or more. Issues such as inadequate funding for schools, insufficient compensation packages for educators, and shortchanging their pensions drove educators to walk out.

Their frustration—and the conditions they have had to endure—underline the critical importance of strong unions and active, engaged members. In New Jersey, we are fortunate to be able to build on the successes and strength of those who came before us, and who helped to build NJEA into the powerhouse that it is today.

It is our responsibility to maintain our strong union for the benefit of every member and the students we serve into the future. 📢

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.

Stafford Township EA stands strong to settle fair contract

By Kathryn Coulibaly

"It's been a long, tiring road. But we were ultimately successful because we were clear on what our members wanted..."

Most negotiations are a marathon, not a sprint, but the more than 400 members of the Stafford Township Education Association (STEA) probably felt they were on a never-ending journey as they struggled to settle a successor agreement to their contract that expired on June 30, 2016.

STEA formed a negotiations team in September 2015 with 17 members. After three face-to-face meetings, the board, on the advice of the board attorney, filed for impasse without informing the association, and despite the fact that there was a fourth meeting scheduled.

STEA held its first negotiations rally the night of the first mediation in July 2016.

"No one thought that the negotiations would drag on for so long," said STEA President Nancy Altman. "We had never had negotiations like this before. We had been to mediation, but we had always been able to work things out with the superintendent with the help of our NJEA field representative."

The communications issues between the board's team and STEA's team were so deep that it was not until mediation that they were able to sign off on a scattergram. A scattergram is used to identify the number of staff members on each step of the salary guide, so that the total cost of payroll can be determined from one year to the next. It ensures that both teams are working from the same numbers. It was the board attorney who had blocked progress in agreeing upon an accurate scattergram.

First tentative agreement falls apart

After three mediation sessions, the two sides signed a memorandum of agreement on Oct. 11, 2016. Eight hours later, the association received a memo from the business administrator announcing that the district was moving employees from the Horizon Direct Access plan to the School Employees Health Benefits Plan (SEHBP).

"While the team understood that the district had the right to change the carrier, the timing was horrendous," STEA Negotiations Chair Nadine Burgess said. "We had just left the bargaining table without any mention of this. We saw it as bad faith bargaining."

In addition, STEA had language in the contract for a 50 percent waiver, which was now eliminated because the SEHBP precludes waivers. The association also wanted an opportunity to examine the plan to ensure that it was equal to, or better than, what they had.

Ultimately, STEA filed an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP), the first in its history. NJEA UniServ Field Representative Jennifer Raike and NJEA Network Attorney Rich Friedman assisted with the filing.

At the same time, the association had filed grievances on behalf of four teachers who had received written reprimands after questioning the district's decision to move to a new English language arts program. The teachers questioned the professional development trainer the district had brought in and pointed out inconsistencies between the best practices the instructor was teaching them and what the district was directing them to do.

STEA also filed a ULP on behalf of teachers who had been directed to do emergency class coverage and submitted vouchers for compensation, according to contract language and practice. The superintendent initially denied the vouchers, then approved them following STEA's grievance. Then he denied the vouchers all over again, leading to the ULP. STEA argued that the superintendent had overturned the decision arbitrarily and capriciously. Raike and NJEA Network Attorney Steve Hunter assisted with the filing.

By February 2017, the board still had not approved salary guides proposed by the association for bus attendants, custodians, and teachers.

For the next six months, the two sides

argued over the outstanding salary guides. Eventually, the board conceded to the association's guides for bus attendants and custodians but refused to budge on the teacher's salary guide.

In May 2017, at the end of a year that had seen unprecedented labor issues, 50 STEA members were involuntarily transferred.

After conferring with Hunter and NJEA Field Representative Wendy Sistarenik, the association was advised that the link between discipline and the transfers was not strong enough to pursue. Nonetheless, the actions led to a climate of frustration and fear.

Previous Ocean County Teacher of the Year Michael Dunlea, who had been a member of the STEA's negotiations team, chose to leave the district, as did many other excellent staff.

More than a year after the MOA was signed, the association finally got a chance to vote to ratify the contract. Not surprisingly, 295 members voted no and the contract failed.

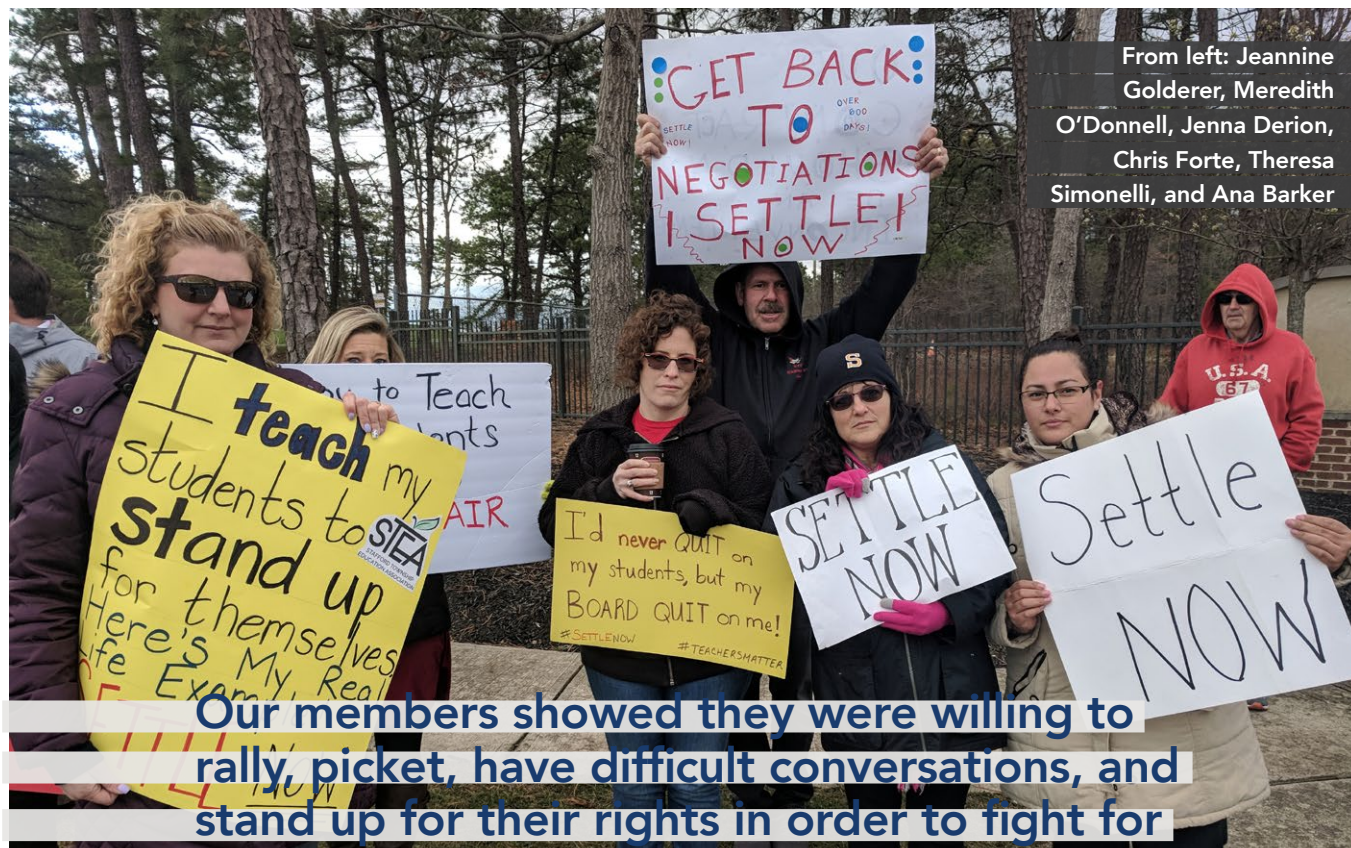
When the mediator, who had retained jurisdiction over the negotiations, heard the results of the exceptionally long-delayed vote, she elected to send the two sides to the next step in contract dispute resolution: fact-finding.

STEA intensifies pressure on board

While the association had an MOA, but before the ratification vote, STEA had refrained from job actions. But following the decision to move negotiations to fact-finding, STEA organized an ambitious organizing campaign to educate parents and the community about the bargaining crisis and to help the association settle the best contract possible.

STEA members rallied at every subsequent board meeting and many members addressed the board to discuss the impact the bargaining crisis and Ch. 78 were having on their economic situations. Mem-

...Ch. 78 relief and salaries that were in line with the county average."



From left: Jeannine Golderer, Meredith O'Donnell, Jenna Derion, Chris Forte, Theresa Simonelli, and Ana Barker

Our members showed they were willing to rally, picket, have difficult conversations, and stand up for their rights in order to fight for their economic interests.

bers also rallied at the car line in the pre-K to sixth-grade district. STEA organized a schedule so that the elementary staff could rally at the intermediate school in the morning and the intermediate staff could rally at the elementary buildings in the afternoon.

As with most local associations, Ch. 78 relief was the STEA's highest priority. At that time in Ocean County, 10 out of 29 districts had Ch. 78 relief in their contracts. Since then, the number of local associations that have bargained Ch. 78 relief has risen to 14.

"We were not tied to what, exactly, that relief would look like," Burgess said. "We know that we need to be creative in order to achieve our goals. At the same time, we were not willing to sacrifice salaries. The trend in Ocean County has been to get relief as well as competitive salaries because the salaries in this county are typically lower than in other counties."

The proposals the STEA team was getting from the board did not offer the Ch. 78 relief and salary packages they knew they needed in order to ratify the contract. With members still dealing with the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy on their families and on their students, the team was committed to presenting a contact that seriously addressed members'

economic needs.

"The STEA team is knowledgeable," Sistarenik said. "They come to our bargaining trainings. They attend events and share information with other associations. And they know we have a new governor. They are aware that, while Ch. 78 relief is not going to happen tomorrow, there is no way they would lock members into a three-year contract that provides them with no relief."

Prior to the second fact-finding meeting, three members of the STEA negotiating team, the superintendent, business administrator and the two members of the board who were on the negotiating team met to discuss the issues. While progress was made, when the board attorney arrived for the meeting, the deal disappeared.

Following the second fact-finding meeting, the board attorney resigned. This, coupled with one of the board member's six-week vacation, slowed down the already-glacial process.

Another fact-finding session was scheduled for May 7, and a formal fact-finding hearing was set for May 23, but in the meantime, the association and the board expressed a commitment to meet through April.

At the April 19 board meeting, STEA

members and their supporters wore their red shirts as a sign of unity.

Creative microphone strategy

Seeing the crowd, the board voted immediately to go into closed session. But the STEA did not get discouraged. Knowing that the board meetings are live-streamed, Region 7 UniServ Consultant Colleen Neil, who was working with Sistarenik, suggested a strategy to get the attention of the community outside the walls of the board office. The 175 members who attended the meeting lined up at the public-comment microphone to say their names, how long they'd been employed in the district, and how they were willing to wait all night to tell the board the impact of the bargaining crisis on themselves and their families.

Sixty percent of the certificated staff live and work in the district. Among ESP, 75 percent live and work in Stafford Township.

When the board realized that the meeting was still being live-streamed, and that the association controlled the microphone, they returned and opened the meeting up to public comment.

Every member of the STEA Executive Board and more than 50 STEA members

spoke at the meeting. One member shared that she had received her notice of foreclosure on her home the day before. Another member said he and his wife moved in with his parents and that he was now commuting two hours a day to work. Other members talked about how their part-time jobs had become second full-time jobs. One person had gone 40 days in a row without a day off, just to offset the impact Ch. 78 and the bargaining crisis had had on the member's salary.

"The board members sat and listened to every STEA member," said Altman. "They were attentive and made eye contact with every member."

A second tentative agreement reached and ratified

The two sides agreed to meet on April 23 at 6:30 p.m. By 2 a.m. the following day, STEA and the board once again had an MOA, but this was one the association was confident would be acceptable to members.

They agreed to a one-year retroactive contract and a three-year contract moving

forward. In the first year, the salary settlement is 2.5 percent with \$1,000 at the top of the salary guide.

For the three-year agreement, they achieved a 3 percent increase in each year, which is the county average.

The district would keep Direct 10 as its base health insurance plan, but members would receive a 20 percent quarterly stipend of the member health benefits contribution.

STEA won full seniority for teachers' assistants, an improvement over previous contract language.

STEA also negotiated an increase in trip pay for bus drivers from \$16 to \$20, retroactive to July 1, 2017.

The agreement changed the grievance language to school days, across the board, elongating their grievance timeline.

The association also won language, which, if legislation passes that remediates the effects of Ch. 78, and if that relief supersedes the relief in the contract, members would give members the option to choose which works better for them, the legislation or the contract language.

In addition, the association and the board were able to resolve the letters of reprimand arbitration and the health benefits ULP. There would be a one-time payment to members in the 2016-17 school year for the health benefits waiver. The association retained the waiver language in case the district returns to a private plan in the future.

"It's been a long, tiring road," Altman said. "But we were ultimately successful because we were clear on what our members wanted: Ch. 78 relief and salaries that were in line with the county average. Our members showed they were willing to rally, picket, have difficult conversations, and stand up for their rights in order to fight for their economic interests. This is a stronger contract and a stronger association for all that we have been through." 🙌

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.



From left: Jaime Staub, Janeen Wegryn, Kerry Eck'art, Leo Staub, Sue Stillwell, Jen Aljoe, Jessica Perry, Jen Martin, and son Leo Staub in front.



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After two years with no contract, Pleasantville EA wins big

By Kathryn Coulibaly

For months, the members of the Pleasantville Education Association (PEA) packed board of education meetings and carried picket signs outside their job sites. In April, the bargaining crisis, which began when the contract expired on June 30, 2016, was at the fact-finding stage, and members were out of patience.

“Our members are working tirelessly to meet the needs of our students,” said PEA President Tim Newkirk. “It should never have taken this long to settle a fair contract, but we were dealing with an unusual situation.”

The 600 members of the PEA face many professional challenges. In some schools in the district, more than 90 percent of the students come from economically disadvantaged families. In others, more than one in five students are English language learners.

At the same time, PEA members are engaged in partnerships with area colleges and universities to enhance students’ learning and offering enrichment and extra-curricular activities such as swimming, chess club, gardening, and oratory, among others. Leeds Avenue School is an NJEA Priority School and is working closely with NJEA staff to strengthen literacy skills.

But the members of the PEA were not receiving the respect they

deserved, and it motivated them to increase their outreach to parents and the community and to attend board of education meetings.

One of the barriers to settling the contract was the makeup of the board. Conflicts of interest meant that only two members of the board could participate on the negotiating team and vote on the contract.

In addition, the Pleasantville School District is under the authority of a state monitor. Conflicts among the administration, board of education and state monitor exacerbated the situation. But after the board passed a resolution allowing members with a conflict of interest to take part, the board voted 6-0 to approve a five-year contract that significantly improved members’ salaries, benefits, and working conditions.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the members and NJEA staff, including Field Representative Vince Perna and Research staff Bob Bobick and Greg Yordy, the contract contains a 15 percent reduction in Ch. 78 health care contributions, one of the association’s top priorities.

The contract also contains language that will prevent the district from privatizing any educational support professional (ESP) positions for the duration of the contract—job security that every ESP in the state should enjoy.

“Our members are dedicated to Pleasantville’s students, yet they also have to feed their families and they need job security.”

In addition to the normal increase of steps on the salary guide, certified staff will see salary increases of 2.5 percent in the first year and 2.0 percent in each of the remaining four years. By year five, the starting salaries for teachers will be over \$60,000.

With increment costs factored in, support staff salary increases will be equal to the certified staff with increment. In addition, the coaches’ salary guide and stipends will also be improved.

In return, the association agreed to increase health insurance co-payments to \$15, but giving members the option of paying up to maintain the \$10 co-pay plan.

“Our members are dedicated to Pleasantville’s students, yet they also have to feed their families and they need job security,” Newkirk said. “We were united in our efforts to educate the community about the value of the work that we do, and we were confident that with the expertise of the NJEA staff working with us, we would settle a contract that meets our members’ needs.” 🏡

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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JCEA and PEA: *together they rise*



PEA President John McEntee (l) and JCEA President Ronnie Greco.

At the conclusion of the strike in Jersey City and following the agreement reached in Paterson, Plainfield Education Association President Eric Jones marveled at the mutual support the Jersey City Education Association and the Paterson Education Association provided to each other in their campaigns to achieve fair and equitable contracts for their members. JCEA members attended rallies in Paterson, and PEA members attended rallies in Jersey City, among other demonstrations of strength and solidarity.

What he witnessed inspired him to write to the *Review* about the two local presidents who inspired their members to make sacrifices to support each other.

It was a pleasure for me to watch the fellowship of Paterson Education Association President John McEntee and Jersey City Education Association President Ronnie Greco, leaders of two of the largest local associations in New Jersey.

Combined, these men—and their leadership teams—bear the burdens of over 7,000 educators and their families.

What an awesome responsibility—but one they have embraced with humility!

As a local leader of a smaller local—Plainfield has roughly 1,100 members—I can only imagine how heavy the load can be. I am up answering calls and texts from the crack of dawn until late in the

evening, and I don't have half of the membership that is in Jersey City or Paterson. One can only imagine the load these leaders currently bear.

We should take a moment to celebrate leaders who are representing our members with passion, purpose and persistence.

Being an association president is no easy task. Personally, I've never worked so hard in my life!

I commend John and Ronnie for their outstanding service to our colleagues, their selfless commitment to each other's locals, and their example to other leaders across the state.

Contributed by Eric Jones, president of the Plainfield Education Association.



JCEA members rally at the Jersey City Board of Education office.

JCEA strike is first in 15 years

By Meredith Barnes, NJEA staff

In the early morning hours of March 16, as thousands of public school employees across the state were preparing to go to work, the nearly 4,000 members of the Jersey City Education Association were picking up their picket signs, wrapping scarves tighter, pulling on gloves, and stepping onto the picket line. The first strike since 2003 was over a year in the making.

In the tradition of the blue-collar workforce that built Jersey City, JCEA leaders fortified their association by focusing on the hallmarks of a strong union: member organizing, community outreach and leadership development.

The strike made its mark as part of the wave of teacher and educational support staff strikes across the nation, as educators fight state legislatures for fair wages and affordable health benefits. The demands in Jersey City were no different. Whether the members were rallying before a negotiations session or marching on city hall, JCEA members were protesting the unreasonable and detrimental impact that Ch. 78 has had on their take-home salaries. Ch. 78 is the pension and benefits law passed in 2011 that has caused public school employees in Jersey City, and across the state, to pay more every year for health care because of escalating premium-sharing costs.

"Our members wanted to take the board at their word that they wanted to settle a fair contract at the table," said JCEA President Ronnie Greco. "We wanted nothing more than to get back to work under a contract that respected the expertise of our members and the need for affordable health care."

Before the strike, JCEA and the Jersey City Board of Education met more than 20 times. Each time the board of education came to the table with nothing to address the association members' need for affordable health care. After months of informational picketing at the over 40 worksites before the start of school, the

union had the support and encouragement of parents and community members to fight for a fair contract.

Knowing that the decision to strike would not just affect their membership but also their students, JCEA organized food drives and other support to make sure students had a healthy breakfast and lunch and that their students' families were not lacking much needed resources.

One of the true marks of the success of their negotiations was member engagement. The organizing efforts consisted of shoring up their association representative (AR) system with multiple tests throughout the year, making sure that every member was accounted for in their system. Information was key to the organizing, and members were engaged in the negotiations process.

The leadership of the JCEA knew that member unity would see them through whatever came next. By the end of the weekend of the strike, JCEA and the school board finally reached a settlement, and the strike ended before Monday morning.

The strength of union membership was evident in partnerships with other public sector unions throughout the city, which further paved the way to success. As JCEA members closed down major thoroughfares, the Jersey City police followed the mass of members directing traffic along the way. NJEA members from other local associations, such as the Paterson Education Association, joined in solidarity with their JCEA brothers and sisters at board of education meetings and marches on city hall, increasing the pressure felt by the board of education to settle.

Meredith Barnes is an associate director in the NJEA Communications Division. She can be reached at mbarnes@njea.org.

Christopher Kaczka is a math teacher at Ronald McNair High School in Jersey City. He decided to volunteer as a strike captain to ensure membership unity and community support.

What was your experience like preparing the members in your worksite for sustained job actions and ultimately a strike?

We started in December with a morning protest. Since morale in our building was at an all-time low and anger had been festering since the last contract, it was easy to generate support.

What did you do to maintain morale and unity over the four months of job actions?

We did not speculate and tell stories to our staff. We stuck to the facts and kept unfounded tips to ourselves until we received confirmation from our leadership. People never seemed to get too frustrated with our requests and appreciated our honesty. We held regular meetings with our members and we sent frequent email blasts. We implemented these practices very early so that everyone was in the loop and no one felt neglected.

What did you learn about the membership of the unions from this experience?

I learned a lot from the Paterson Education Association. They supported us with nothing to gain, and when we reciprocated to support them, I felt very good. I learned that we all work better when we are on the same team. I also learned that talking down to people causes unrest. We never talked down to our members here. We tried to make everyone feel important and valued. We learned their names. We tried to empower the union and were quite successful.

What was your favorite moment?

Standing out there in December and getting recognition for our building's members from [JCEA President] Ronnie Greco on that cold December morning. His visit recharged them.

What would you tell leaders of a local thinking about going on strike based on this experience?

Do not do it unless you have to. It is a last resort. I believe after the last board meeting we had no choice.



Paterson EA member unity and action leads to contract agreement



After 10 months of working under an expired contract, the Paterson Education Association (PEA) and the Paterson Board of Education reached a tentative agreement following a 22-hour bargaining session on March 28-29, one of several marathon sessions in recent months.

At press time, PEA was preparing to take a ratification vote.

Negotiations stretched over the terms of two state-appointed superintendents and a school board that could act only in an advisory capacity because the Paterson School District has been under state control since 1991. At its May meeting, the New Jersey State Board of Education voted to return full local control to the Paterson School District, including governance, a process that may take about two years.

Members of PEA worked hard to achieve a fair and equitable contract. They were organized effectively by the firm leadership of President John McEntee Jr, a strong action team, the support of their colleagues around the state, and informed and engaged members. In addition, the association developed a special bond with the Jersey City Education Association (JCEA). The two large, urban local associations attended each other's rallies and cheered each other on during their mutual bargaining crises through social

media and other methods of communication.

Three PEA members, a teacher, an educational support professional (ESP), and an early-career member shared their perspective on this round of negotiations process. PEA Vice President Lakresha Hodge, a teacher at Paterson's Napier Academy, headed up the PEA Action team. Nikki Baker, an instructional assistant at Dale Avenue School, served on the PEA Negotiations Team. Early-Career member Jacob Skees, serves as a building delegate at the Academy of Earth and Space Science.

Action team builds on strong membership commitment

Hodge was optimistic from the start of this most recent round of bargaining that the PEA was ready for a resurgence of member activism. In the prior round at the negotiations table, PEA went four years without a contract. Because she enjoys organizing members to take a stand, Hodge readily volunteered to head the Action Team.

"Our goal as an action team was to garner as much participation possible, but with over 3,000 members we knew it wouldn't happen overnight," Hodge said. "We decided to focus on incremental actions that would build as we

progressed through contract negotiations and measure member involvement."

The Action Team first asked for members to engage in actions such as wearing the color black on certain days, and donning "Respect" buttons that an Action Team member designed. To build solidarity, these actions included members posting their participation on the PEA Facebook page and their own social media platforms.

"I believe the use of social media was a game changer," Hodge said. "It was a great tool to involve our members and to communicate with each other."

Next, the Action Team initiated a "We Deserve a Better Payday" postcard campaign. Over 1,200 members sent handwritten postcards to the district superintendent, telling her of the many personal hardships that educators face when they are working without a contract. The Action Team hand-delivered the postcards while PEA members posted pictures on social media with a Payday candy bar and the postcard. Almost every one of the 48 schools in the district participated.

A rough winter leads to a virtual rally

To encourage participation in their first rally outside of board offices, the Action Team sent

**I loved
my union
before,
and I
certainly
love it
more
now.**

out save-the-date postcards that featured PEA members at previous actions on the front. When the weather did not permit an outdoor rally, the Action Team organized a virtual rally with just two days' notice.

"We asked our members to rally outside of their buildings at the end of the day and post pictures and videos on social media in support of the negotiations team, who had a scheduled mediation session that day," Hodge recalled. "The rally posts ended with our first Facebook Live event introducing the team, and including a message from PEA President John McEntee."

The next action was a 15-minute informational rally outside of each school before Report Card Night. The district has three separate Report Card nights for the elementary, middle and high schools. Staff from the levels not working on Report Card night held information rallies at the schools holding conferences. Ninety-eight percent of the schools participated in the rallies.

Keeping members informed

During negotiations, Facebook Live was used as a membership engagement tool.

"We used it to encourage member participation of our actions, give updates on negotiations and answered member questions during the broadcast," Hodge said. "Our members were able to ask questions from wherever they were and, if they missed the broadcast, they were able to watch it back later."

Final mediation session

The biggest action took place in March when we PEA and the board had their final mediation session. PEA asked its members to wear T-shirts designed by a member that read: "Respect Starts With Our Contract."

The day of the event, PEA members drove a digital mobile ad truck by every worksite in Paterson with a message from McEntee demanding that the contract be settled. The truck's final stop was the rally location outside of the board of education office.

"Members were asked to bring anything that made noise," Hodge said. "We estimated that over 1,500 people attended the rally. They cheered, played music, rang cow bells, blew whistles and even brought drums and other instruments."

Support came from many other local and county associations, throughout the New Jersey, most notably the Jersey City Education Association.

"Not only did our NJEA brothers and sisters show up but Walmart workers attended as well," Hodge said.

After several union leaders, members and local politicians spoke, McEntee declared that

PEA wouldn't leave the mediation session without a contract. Twenty hours later, a tentative agreement was struck.

"That's because there was strength in numbers," Hodge said.

Representing educational support professionals

Instructional assistant Nikki Baker became involved in this round of negotiations because she wanted to make sure that ESPs have a voice in the direction of their association.

"Support personnel are usually the first to be privatized," Baker observed. "Privatization is never the right answer when it comes to students and what's best for their learning outcomes. When districts cut corners by entertaining privatization, it really means that they do not understand the value of educational support professionals to the students they support and their value to the district and community as whole in making our education system a success."

Baker noted that McEntee made certain that there was a representative for each job category including representation for secretaries, security officers, and instructional assistants. Over the course of negotiations some team members withdrew from the team making Baker's voice all the more important in seeing that ESP members' needs were met.

"There were times that I wanted to throw in the towel, but if I wasn't there who would represent us? Who could give that unique perspective?" Baker said.

It was her first time at the bargaining table.

"I learned that there are various nuances to watch for when coming to the table," Baker observed. "And we spent many long hours and countless days, and endured numerous frustrations and disappointments before the victory of reaching an agreement."

Baker said the experience of serving on the team has made her stronger and solidified her resolve in supporting her union.

"I saw firsthand how strong PEA leadership and members are when we come together in unity," Baker said. "I became a voice for a group of members who often are underrepresented and undervalued. I see the benefits of being involved. We can make a difference."

There is power in the union

Motivated by his study of past workers' movements and labor struggles in the U.S. and elsewhere, 26-year-old Jacob Skees ran for a position as a building delegate at Paterson's Academy of Earth and Space Science.

"A veteran delegate from our building encouraged me to join several committees,"

Skees recalled.

"I chose the Action Committee. Joining the Action Committee gave me the ability to be a part of something bigger than myself. Another motivation was my obvious desire for a new contract."

Skees feels his largest contribution—one he says was not on his own—was helping to organize the March 8 rally prior to a mediation session.


"My role involved passing out signs to members as they arrived and serving as the action captain for my building," Skees said. "It was my responsibility to organize my co-workers and get them to the rally."

Prior to coming to Paterson, Skees had worked in a smaller school district. He marveled at the tenacity of PEA and its officers. He said that he also learned something about his own leadership capabilities.

"Having to organize my building, I was suddenly partially responsible for the livelihoods of everyone I worked with," Skees said. "Showing up in force at the rally would help secure us a contract and therefore a future for our families. It was a big job, and there was a lot riding on its success. In the end, we had a great turnout from my colleagues, better than I had even expected."

The experience has left Skees energized to do more with PEA, even though—in addition to his teaching duties—he is a graduate student and a Special Olympic coach in West Milford. He plans to continue as a building delegate next year as well as join other committees.

But the power of unions is irresistible to him. He is proud of PEA and its solidarity with the union members involved in recent strikes in Jersey City, West Virginia, Colorado, Arizona and Oklahoma.

"I loved my union before, and I certainly love it more now," Skees said. "Unions are the core of the working class in this country and we have much to be thankful for in terms of their past contributions to our society. I am proud to be a member, and I am proud to have worked with our brothers and sisters to settle this contract." 

Cooking and the real world application of learning

by Marjorie Cutler, Teacher, Alfred Cramer Preparatory Lab School, Camden

My Daughter's Kitchen is an eight-week, after-school cooking program that introduces students to cooking healthy meals in a cost effective way. The program was started in 2011 by Maureen Fitzgerald, the former food editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer. The program is also sponsored by the Vetri Community Partnership.

Alfred Cramer Preparatory Lab School in Camden is just one of the 35 sites for the program, which is run throughout the Philadelphia and southern New Jersey region. The program is in its second year at Cramer Elementary School, a participant in the NJEA Priority Schools Initiative.

The students look forward to the weekly sessions of preparing nutritious and inexpensive meals. Each week, students work with a budget of \$20 per meal and are asked to prepare a meal that would serve six people.

The cooking class usually includes only six students in the fifth and sixth grades so that students receive individualized attention. The class is very popular. With two volunteers available this spring, Maureen and I were able to provide eight wonderful, energetic fourth and fifth-graders the opportunity to participate in the program. As the students prepared to take on the task of learning how to cook, we found they were just as eager to learn about the numerous spices, vegetables, and the impact and importance of eating a home-cooked meal.

Because of parents' busy work schedules, cooking at home is often a rare event. Unfortunately, this often forces parents to select take-out food as a means to ensure that they are providing a meal for the family. Fast food is too often the choice for many family dinners. The students in this program were exposed to the basics of meal preparation, food safety, working cooperatively with others and real-world applications in mathematics.



ABOVE: Students look forward to the weekly sessions of preparing nutritious and inexpensive meals.



ABOVE: Students are taught how to read a recipe, measure out the correct amount of necessary ingredients, and follow the instructions to prepare a complete meal.

Photos by Maureen Fitzgerald

This eight week program demonstrates that cooking at home can be fun and that home-cooked meals can be healthy, tasty and affordable.

During the first week of class, each student is provided with a cookbook and a journal to use to reflect on what they have learned as well as reflect upon their cooking experiences. By week three, students had realized the important role of reading, writing, math, social skills and problem solving as applied in real-life situations. Students are taught how to read a recipe, measure out the correct amount of necessary ingredients, and follow the instructions to prepare a complete meal.

This spring, recipes included breakfast burritos, baked cornflake chicken with braised greens, spicy roasted broccoli pasta, Italian wedding soup, salmon cakes with sweet potato wedges, chicken tikka masala, Greek turkey burgers with tzatziki, banana, zucchini and oatmeal muffins.

Academic and social skills brought to life

The connection to academic subjects is genuine. One student was delighted when he realized that while he hadn't measured out the correct amount for an ingredient, he could use his mathematical acumen to adjust the recipe. He independently calculated the necessary corrections. The educator in me pointed out that he had just discovered and solved a problem.

"That's what we do in mathematics!" the student exclaimed.

The realization that mathematics is used outside of the classroom was not only evident to this student but to the other students as well. The value of knowing fractions and measurement outside of school hit home.

Students worked together and followed the established routine of preheating the oven, slicing and dicing, setting the table, washing the dishes, and cleaning the kitchen. During the meal, we discussed how the meal tasted, proper table etiquette, and what makes for appropriate dinner table conversation. Students are encouraged to use descriptive words when talking about the various tastes they experience.

We emphasized that while it is OK not to like a particular meal, all students should at least sample a portion of the meal. Students were often pleasantly surprised at how good the meals actually tasted. Water, flavored with fruit or vegetables, was served with the meal to entice students to drink more water. Cilantro, greens and bell peppers were a few of the students' favorite additives.

"I never thought about putting fruit in water," commented one of the students. "It tastes great!"

Taking lessons home

Parents often ask how they can help their children with mathematics at home. One way is to set aside a time to cook with their children a few times each week. They may have them measure and make reference to the parts-to-whole concept of putting a recipe together. Parents are also helping to improve their child's verbal and social skills as they discuss and gather the necessary ingredients for a meal. Younger children may also count how many ingredients will be needed to make a particular recipe.


When shopping with the family for the ingredients, students may be asked to add up the total cost of the items needed for the recipe. These are just a few of the activities that parents may do to help their children realize the real-life applications of academics at home.

An end-of-course celebration

In the final week of the program, students select their favorite meals from the cookbook and invite their parents, friends, and teachers to share in the meal that they have prepared. The students beam with pride and accomplishment as they prepare to demonstrate their new-found skills.

I have witnessed an impressive amount of growth in students over the course of the eight-week program. These students have become more confident, improved their social skills, and become more focused on improving their reading, writing, mathematics and problem-solving skills.

The Vetri Community Partnership goal of eating, educating and empowering was fulfilled this spring by the My Daughter's Kitchen cooking class at Cramer Elementary School. Making connections to real-world applications is a valuable component of the NJEA Priority Schools Initiative and the Camden School District curriculum. We look forward to providing this opportunity to students in the future.

You can find all the recipes at philly.com/philly/blogs/mydaughter. 

Marjorie Cutler is a teacher at Alfred Cramer Elementary School in Camden. She can be reached at marjorie.tolbert@gmail.com.

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NJEA BUDGET SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR
ENDING AUGUST 31

PROPOSED INCOME AND EXPENDITURES (EXCLUSIVE OF PRIDE)

	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2019 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
INCOME				
NJEA Membership Dues	\$113,827,500	\$116,580,030	\$108,448,860	-6.97%
NEA Funds	6,663,442	7,191,700	6,561,500	-8.76%
General Funds	6,151,450	2,030,700	2,298,040	13.16%
Publications	262,257	250,000	225,000	-10.00%
TOTAL INCOME	126,904,649	126,052,430	117,533,400	-6.76%
EXPENDITURES				
PROGRAM SERVICES				
Governance	6,883,851	6,358,400	6,131,300	-3.57%
Legal Services	14,080,757	14,374,100	13,389,300	-6.85%
Organizational Projects	5,281,734	8,305,000	3,227,400	-61.14%
Communications	5,857,479	5,757,800	5,327,200	-7.48%
Government Relations	3,906,337	3,953,700	3,447,700	-12.80%
Uniserv Regional Offices	20,573,429	21,321,900	20,240,800	-5.07%
Uniserv Field Office	6,560,036	6,686,000	6,337,900	-5.21%
Exec Organizational Development	8,614,833	7,837,600	6,352,000	-18.95%
Prof Development	4,557,296	4,962,600	4,231,300	-14.74%
Research & Economic Services	5,171,183	5,634,500	5,235,400	-7.08%
Conventions	3,324,725	3,238,500	2,952,000	-8.85%
Organizational Mgmt	7,394,811	7,099,800	6,831,600	-3.78%
ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL				
Executive Office	4,353,601	4,121,500	3,737,800	-9.31%
Business and Finance	11,792,069	11,798,900	11,732,000	-0.57%
TOTAL PROGRAM, ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL EXPENDITURES	108,352,140	111,450,300	99,173,700	-11.02%
NET INCOME (EXPENSE) BEFORE USE OF FUNDS	18,552,508	14,602,130	18,359,700	25.73%
USE OF FUNDS				
Current Postretirement	358,574	500,000	946,000	89.20%
Contribution - VEBA	4,987,449	5,000,000	5,000,000	0.00%
Pension - Cash Funding Adj	8,783,789	10,700,000	12,413,700	16.02%
	14,129,812	16,200,000	18,359,700	13.33%
NET INCOME (EXP) CASH BUDGET	4,422,696	(1,597,870)	-	-100.00%
ADJ BACK TO ACCR'L REPORTING				
Accrued Postretirement	16,694,305	10,000,000	10,000,000	0.00%
Contribution - VEBA	(4,987,449)	(5,000,000)	(5,000,000)	0.00%
Pension - Cash Funding Adj	(8,783,789)	(10,700,000)	(12,413,700)	16.02%
	2,923,067	(5,700,000)	(7,413,700)	30.06%
NET INCOME (EXP) ACCR'L BASIS	<u>1,499,629</u>	<u>4,102,130</u>	<u>7,413,700</u>	<u>80.73%</u>

PRIDE DUES

	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2019 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
REVENUE				
Dues	\$11,308,187	\$11,655,800	\$10,853,800	-6.88%
Other Pride Income	-	45,000	-	-100.00%
TOTAL REVENUE	11,308,187	11,700,800	10,853,800	-7.24%
EXPENDITURES				
TV Advertising 3635	4,879,482	3,864,000	3,500,000	-9.42%
Radio Advertising 3636	169,640	430,000	430,000	0.00%
Web Advertising 3637	1,842,758	2,933,000	3,297,000	12.41%
TV Magazine Program 3639	668,484	720,000	150,000	-79.17%
Polls/Focus Groups 3641	151,919	153,000	100,000	-34.64%
Special Projects 3644	816,906	862,000	284,000	-67.05%
Organizing 3907	2,991,413	2,738,800	3,092,800	12.93%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	11,520,602	11,700,800	10,853,800	-7.24%
INCR/(DECR) IN NET ASSETS	<u>(212,415)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.00%</u>

COMPARATIVE INCOME

	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2019 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
DUES INCOME				
Active Professional	\$97,329,635	\$99,796,400	\$92,872,600	-6.94%
Active Supportive	15,730,202	16,040,000	14,868,000	-7.31%
Retired Members	748,171	727,205	692,085	-4.83%
General Members	3,250	2,500	2,500	0.00%
Subscribing Members	500	750	500	-33.33%
Preservice Members	15,742	13,175	13,175	0.00%
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP DUES	113,827,500	116,580,030	108,448,860	-6.97%
NEA FUNDS				
Uniserv Grant	2,744,363	2,708,500	2,511,600	-7.27%
Uniserv Option Program	375,229	404,300	374,900	-7.27%
Legal Defense (DuShane)	3,386,135	3,500,000	3,500,000	0.00%
Legal Fee Reimbursements	85,129	100,000	100,000	0.00%
Member Benefits Grant	67,101	75,000	75,000	0.00%
Cooperative Projects	2,800	403,900	0	-100.00%
Preservice Reimbursement	2,685	0	0	0.00%
TOTAL NEA FUNDS	6,663,442	7,191,700	6,561,500	-8.76%
GENERAL INCOME				
Convention Exhibits & Fees	592,096	582,000	530,000	-8.93%
Interest & Investments	4,549,877	500,000	1,000,000	100.00%
Conference & Workshop Fees	891,642	863,700	698,040	-19.18%
Member Benefits Income	102,524	85,000	70,000	-17.65%
Miscellaneous	15,311	0	0	0.00%
TOTAL GENERAL INCOME	6,151,450	2,030,700	2,298,040	13.16%
PUBLICATIONS INCOME	262,257	250,000	225,000	-10.00%
TOTAL INCOME PROJECTION	<u>126,904,649</u>	<u>126,052,430</u>	<u>117,533,400</u>	<u>-6.76%</u>

DISASTER RELIEF FUND

	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2019 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
REVENUE				
Contributions	\$ -	\$370,000	\$325,000	-12.16%
Contrib from Member Benef	2,000	0	0	0.00%
TOTAL REVENUE	2,000	370,000	325,000	-12.16%
EXPENDITURES				
Relief Fund Expenditures	15,390	370,000	325,000	-12.16%
Direct Financial Assistance	(1,000)			0.00%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	14,390	370,000	325,000	-12.16%
INCR/(DECR) IN NET ASSETS	<u>(12,390)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.00%</u>

CAPITAL ASSETS

	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2019 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
REVENUE				
Investment Income	\$5,613,548	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	0.00%
TOTAL REVENUE	5,613,548	1,100,000	1,100,000	0.00%
EXPENDITURES				
Capital Assets	1,857,473	6,052,200	3,034,800	-49.86%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,857,473	6,052,200	3,034,800	-49.86%
INCR/(DECR) IN NET ASSETS	<u>3,756,075</u>	<u>(4,952,200)</u>	<u>(1,934,800)</u>	<u>-60.93%</u>

PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2019 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
GOVERNANCE				
Executive Committee 0400	\$3,122,570	\$3,019,600	\$2,777,600	-8.01%
Delegate Assembly 0410	234,720	213,500	198,500	-7.03%
Elections 0430	298,849	272,000	277,000	1.84%
Officers 0440	2,085,226	1,436,400	1,484,300	3.33%
Organizational Activities 0470	722,158	1,003,000	1,040,000	3.69%
Committees 1400	420,326	413,900	353,900	-14.50%
TOTAL	6,883,851	6,358,400	6,131,300	-3.57%
LEGAL SERVICES PROG 0465				
	14,080,757	14,374,100	13,389,300	-6.85%
ORGANIZATIONAL PROJ 0471				
	7,394,811	7,099,800	6,831,600	-3.78%
COMMUNICATIONS				
Communications Office 0600	3,667,188	3,780,700	3,644,700	-3.60%
Other Services 0605	12,837	16,400	22,800	39.02%
A/V Programs 0610	67,817	80,500	10,000	-87.58%
Consultants 0615	119,370	113,500	145,000	27.75%
Media Relations 0620	437,669	170,400	167,200	-1.88%
Public Relations 0630	119,045	93,500	40,000	-57.22%
Website Promotion 0645	22,559	20,000	8,000	-60.00%
Local Leader Comm 0650	8,493	16,500	500	-96.97%
Review 0660	1,286,710	1,337,800	1,243,500	-7.05%
Convention Program 0670	115,791	128,500	45,500	-64.59%
TOTAL	5,857,479	5,757,800	5,327,200	-7.48%
EXEC ORGANIZATIONAL DEVEL				
Exec Org Dev Office 0900	3,402,715	3,639,800	2,722,200	-25.21%
Exec Org Program 0905	530,295	398,300	381,000	-4.34%
Active Supportive 0910	328,682	354,500	316,500	-10.72%
FAST Program 0915	55,912	132,700	75,000	-43.48%
Conference Expenses 0920	470,924	482,100	397,700	-17.51%
Min Ldrshp & Recruit 0925	5,744	10,800	8,900	-17.59%
ESP & Inclusive Org 0930	7,092	13,700	12,000	-12.41%
Strategic Organizing 0935	2,109,790	958,200	937,500	-2.16%
Consultants 0940	2,836			0.00%
NJEA Preservice Program 0945	96,579	100,000	90,000	-10.00%
Summer Leadership Conf 0955	1,020,111	1,051,800	867,700	-17.50%
Leadership Operations 0965	45,178	30,000	27,000	-10.00%
Fall Focus Meetings 0970	158,014	214,000		-100.00%
New Member Orientation 0975	101,202	138,000	118,000	-14.49%
Membership Recruitment 0977	39,392	45,000	145,000	222.22%
Membership Promo 0980	240,367	268,700	253,500	-5.66%
TOTAL	8,614,833	7,837,600	6,352,000	-18.95%
UNISERV PROGRAM REGIONAL OFFICES				
Regional Offices 0899	18,256,892	18,980,500	18,151,000	-4.37%
01 Vineland 0800	108,557	125,300		-100.00%
02 Woodbury 0805	105,431	109,300	112,000	2.47%
03 Voorhees 0810	210,154	132,500	137,100	3.47%
05 Morrestown 0815	63,152	64,800	60,700	-6.33%
06 Galloway Twp 0817	103,064	120,000	135,700	13.08%
07 Toms River 0820	118,560	122,800	124,000	0.98%
08 Lawrenceville 0823	119,388	121,000	41,400	-65.79%
09 W. Long Branch 0825	156,661	163,700	160,000	-2.26%
11 Edison 0830	225,039	196,000	197,400	0.71%
13 Flemington 0835	112,418	118,500	113,900	-3.88%
15 Cranford 0840	83,265	75,000	76,100	1.47%
17 Parsippany 0845	58,783	67,200	65,400	-2.68%
19 W. New York 0850	82,718	86,400	84,800	-1.85%
20 Jersey City 0852	143,535	141,600	143,900	1.62%
21 Livingston 0855	127,967	172,000	142,300	-17.27%
23 Emerson 0860	66,482	71,200	70,700	-0.70%
25 Hasbrouk Hgts 0865	110,644	116,400	118,400	1.72%
27 Wayne 0870	103,567	107,800	117,100	8.63%
28 Stanhope 0873	121,459	128,600	124,800	-2.95%
29 Higher Ed 0875	95,692	101,300	64,100	-36.72%
TOTAL	20,573,429	21,321,900	20,240,800	-5.07%

	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2019 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
UNISERV FIELD				
Uniserv Field Directors 1200	\$2,156,868	\$2,121,000	\$2,094,400	-1.25%
Uniserv - South 1201	2,529	2,700	3,300	22.22%
Uniserv - Central 1202	2,275	3,000	3,000	0.00%
Uniserv - Northwest 1203	3,626	4,900	4,800	-2.04%
Uniserv - Northeast 1204	3,928	3,100	4,200	35.48%
Uniserv Field Program 1205	366,794	379,100	352,700	-6.96%
Field Conferences 1220	233,831	273,100	131,100	-52.00%
Field Consultants 1240	2,094,444	1,934,200	1,957,000	1.18%
Strengthening Locals 1250	429,249	718,000	645,000	-10.17%
Higher Education 1260	99,125	106,900	102,400	-4.21%
Leadership Operations 1265	1,167,365	1,140,000	1,040,000	-8.77%
TOTAL	6,560,036	6,686,000	6,337,900	-5.21%

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT				
Prof Develop Office 1000	2,966,704	3,022,600	2,606,300	-13.77%
PD Learning 1005	350,427	392,000	290,000	-26.02%
PD Capacity Bldg 1010	88,059	155,000	80,000	-48.39%
Training Consultants 1075	782,743	948,000	850,000	-10.34%
Priority Schools 1080	274,209	255,000	225,000	-11.76%
Best Practices Conf 1097	95,153	190,000	180,000	-5.26%
TOTAL	4,557,296	4,962,600	4,231,300	-14.74%

RESEARCH & ECONOMIC SERVICES				
Research Office 1100	4,554,758	4,724,000	4,436,900	-6.08%
Research Services 1105	303,606	328,000	310,000	-5.49%
Member Benefits 1110	303,882	564,000	471,000	-16.49%
Research Library 1120	8,936	18,500	17,500	-5.41%
TOTAL	5,171,183	5,634,500	5,235,400	-7.08%

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS				
Gov Relations Office 0700	2,868,331	2,983,700	2,804,700	-6.00%
Legislative Conference 0710	60,899	66,000		-100.00%
Legislative Field Proj 0720	943,947	862,000	607,000	-29.58%
Legislative Publications 0730	33,160	42,000	36,000	-14.29%
TOTAL	3,906,337	3,953,700	3,447,700	-12.80%

CONVENTIONS				
NJEA 1095	2,048,035	1,920,000	1,800,000	-6.25%
NEA 0475	1,276,690	1,318,500	1,152,000	-12.63%
TOTAL	3,324,725	3,238,500	2,952,000	-8.85%

ORGANIZATIONAL MGMT 0565	7,394,811	7,099,800	6,831,600	-3.78%
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ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL				
Executive Office 0435	2,371,935	2,425,500	2,221,800	-8.40%
Conference Expenses 0455	201,099	210,000	189,000	-10.00%
Administration 0460	1,601,228	1,310,500	1,174,500	-10.38%
Personnel 0480	179,339	175,500	152,500	-13.11%
TOTAL	4,353,601	4,121,500	3,737,800	-9.31%

BUSINESS & FINANCE				
Business Office 0500	5,993,356	6,383,100	6,006,800	-5.90%
Accounting 0510	6,112	8,000	6,500	-18.75%
Contract Obligations 0515	1,130,730	900,000	1,362,000	51.33%
Computer Center 0520	1,851,594	1,621,500	1,589,000	-2.00%
Membership Processing 0530	342,397	368,800	309,800	-16.00%
Headquarters Operation 0540	1,841,272	1,827,500	1,869,000	2.27%
Mail Room & Production 0550	144,121	235,000	150,000	-36.17%
Conference Facility 0575	54,893	55,000	28,900	-47.45%
Financial Admin Fees 0580	151,506	145,000	155,000	6.90%
Insurances 0585	276,089	255,000	255,000	0.00%
TOTAL	11,792,069	11,798,900	11,732,000	-0.57%

POSTRETIREMENT COSTS				
Current Postretirement	358,574	500,000	946,000	89.20%
Accrued Postretirement	16,694,305	10,000,000	10,000,000	0.00%
TOTAL	17,052,879	10,500,000	10,946,000	4.25%

CONTRIBUTION - VEBA	4,987,449	5,000,000	5,000,000	0.00%
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Districts **love** laptops but **ignore** their ergonomics

By Eileen Senn

Districts are buying laptops by the cartful but doing little to ensure that staff and students are using them ergonomically. The design of laptops violates a basic ergonomic requirement for a computer, namely that the keyboard and screen should be separated so they can each be located in the right place.

Using a laptop forces either poor neck/head posture from the screen being too low or poor hand/wrist position from the keyboard being too high. An epidemic of computer-related health problems is brewing as a result, including headaches, eye strain, blurred vision, tingling, and numbness. Pain from repetitive strain injury (RSI) to the muscles, nerves and connective tissue of the neck, back, shoulder, elbow, wrist and hand also occur. Children under 18, whose bodies are still developing, are more susceptible to computer-related health problems and have more years ahead of them to suffer pain and damage.

The embrace of laptops has happened so rapidly that most staff and students are using them with whatever tables and chairs are available. Most have no access to an ergonomic laptop computer workstation with an adjustable chair, external keyboard and mouse, and height-adjustable stand to raise the laptop screen to eye level. Some classroom teachers are improvising to try and fill the gap for students

with upholstered chairs, lap desks, standing desks, pillows for floor seating and more.

School furniture manufacturers offer such ergonomics solutions such as stools that change height and direction easily, chairs that rock and flex and air-filled seat cushions. Unfortunately, most districts have not investigated or purchased them.

Ergonomics aims to optimize the interaction between people and technology. When school furniture is not adjustable, the potential for adopting awkward postures is great. For those using laptops many hours a day, the screen must be at eye level and a separate keyboard and mouse used instead of the attached keyboard and touch pad. For more occasional users, access to a variety of different size tables and chairs and adjustable ones are essential to accommodate bodies of diverse heights, weights and proportions.

Insist the district implement an ergonomics program

Local associations should work with their UniServ field representatives to negotiate solutions that are in the control of district administrators such as providing staff training on ergonomics and providing ergonomic furniture. The local should insist that administration involve local association

members and parents in bringing in furniture vendors to demonstrate their ergonomic wares and selecting appropriate furniture for staff and students. Periodic training should be provided so staff members know how to take steps within their control, such as the computer pain solutions listed in the box.

Written documentation of problems should be submitted to make administrators officially aware. Photographs of non-ergonomic computer usage make compelling evidence to submit to administration, along with a description of what is wrong and what is needed to correct the problems. Staff should report their computer-related work injuries to administration. Otherwise the administration is not motivated to deal with the problem and there is no documentation on file should symptoms worsen.

Eileen Senn holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Duquesne University and a Master of Science in Occupational Health from Temple University. She is an industrial hygiene consultant with the New Jersey Work Environment Council, a frequent partner with NJEA on school health and safety concerns.

Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) can develop slowly

- **Pre-RSI** – “Funny” feeling in neck, back, shoulder, elbow, wrist, or hand.
- **Beginning RSI** – Pain or tingling during computer work. Symptoms are relatively mild and disappear during periods of rest.
- **Full-Blown RSI** – Symptoms occur frequently and do not disappear completely during periods of rest. Weak and clumsy movements of affected parts.
- **Chronic Pain** – Constant pain unrelieved by rest. Sleep is disturbed by pain. Symptoms are made worse by any activity. The pain, limited movement, loss of sensation, and muscle weakness can make performing any job tasks impossible.

Using a **laptop** forces either poor neck/head **posture** from the screen being too low or poor hand/wrist position from the keyboard being too high.

For more information

Five Tips for Using A Laptop Computer,
Alan Hedge, Cornell University
bit.ly/culaptoptips

10 Best Laptop Setups
bit.ly/laptopsetups

Rethinking the School Desk,
Linda Perlstein, Slate
<http://bit.ly/rethinkschooldesk>

Chromebook Accessibility Features
bit.ly/chromebookaccessibility

NEA Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Handbook
www.nea.org/home/29829.htm

OSHA Computer Ergonomics eTool
bit.ly/workstationsosha

Computer pain solutions

Repetitive strain injuries

- Use voice control/speech recognition.
- Use ergonomic alternatives to traditional mice and keyboards.
- Use as many fingers as possible when typing.

Neck, shoulder and back pain

- Ensure an ergonomic workstation.
- Sit-stand workstations.
- Support the forearms.
- Avoid bending the head down or jutting it forward.
- Take frequent short breaks from the device.
- Ensure good posture and change positions frequently.
- Stand and do stretching exercises.

Eye pain, blurred vision and headaches

- Use sufficient but not excessive lighting.
- Use assistive technology built into Google, Apple and Windows devices.
- Enlarge and darken the cursor and pointer.
- Enlarge the font; magnify the text.
- Use text-to-speech instead of reading.
- Use special computer glasses.
- Relax the eyes on a mini-break. 🏠

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Go Gaga For Google

By the members of the
NJEA Technology Committee

Google Keep

With Google Keep, you can create, share and collaborate with people on notes and lists. Keep synchronizes across all your devices, so your notes and lists go with you. Google Keep lets you quickly take and save those notes, photos, voice memos, and checklists to Google Drive. It can help organize a busy school employee's life. (keep.google.com)

Google+

Google+ is Google's foray into the social networking world. While there are many applications for Google's social network, one of the best reasons why an educator should be on Google+ is to network with other educators. There are several fantastic educator communities that share resources on Google+. You can keep up with the latest trends in education and participate in lively discussions with fellow educators. (plus.google.com)

Google Arts and Culture

Educators can explore cultural treasures in extraordinary detail and easily share them with students and other colleagues. You will discover wonderful artists and their work, historical events and places, various thematic approaches and art and cultural experiments. This is an important tool for cross-curricular studies. (artsandculture.google.com)

Google Cultural Institute

The Google Cultural Institute is an online museum where you can explore works of art from many different periods. You can deconstruct civil rights photography, admire famous paintings and discover new ones. Use this tool to introduce cultural awareness through art. (artsandculture.google.com)

Google Sites

Google Sites is a user-friendly website building powerhouse. You and your students can create student-driven wiki pages, after-school club pages, portfolios, projects, and more to showcase learning. Google Sites is appropriate for nearly every age level and has applications in nearly every subject area. Teachers can use Google Sites in conjunction with many other Google tools to create a multimedia learning site. (sites.google.com)

Google Docs

Google Docs is a word processing program. It also provides a few accommodations that facilitate greater student inclusion:

- Speech to Text – Click Tools and Voice Typing
- Text to Speech – Click Add-Ons and then add Reader
- Translate – Click Tools and then Translate Document
- Zoom In and Out – Hold the control key and + or - at the same time

(docs.google.com)

Google Forms: Check student learning, collect parent information

Google Forms allows you to organize information to inform instruction in your classroom. You can use it to gauge student interest, collect parent information, check student understanding, and grade Level 1 and Level 2 Depth of Knowledge questions. (forms.google.com)

Google Classroom:

Google Classroom facilitates paperless assignments and boosts collaboration. One useful tool, The Share to Classroom Chrome Extension, allows you to push web pages to any of your Google Classroom classes, so they open on your students' computers. (classroom.google.com)

EdPuzzle

EdPuzzle is a third party resource that connects directly to your Google account and Google Classroom. It allows teachers to upload videos or import content from sites such as YouTube and Vimeo. You can crop the videos to show only relevant content, add audio overlays, and insert questions that students must answer before moving on. Completion and grading is saved and can be exported as well. (edpuzzle.com)

GoogleEDU tools can make lessons more dynamic and projects more organized. The above tools, and many others, can help you meet your needs and contribute to the success of your school, your students, and you. 🍎

The NJEA Technology Committee

The NJEA Technology Committee is one of over 50 NJEA committees made up of NJEA members. It is charged with the following responsibilities:

- Study the impact of technology on educational programs.
- Review technology curricula proposals and initiatives for educational appropriateness.
- Review state-supported funding proposals and makes recommendations for funding improvements to provide the equipment, personnel, programs, and training necessary to institute all aspects of technology education.
- Educate NJEA members, legislators, and policymakers about the varied components of technology education.
- Recommend the types of programs needed in every school district to ensure students become technologically literate.
- Develop and initiate training opportunities for school personnel.

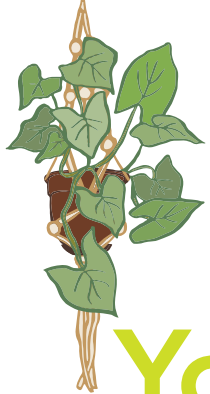
Committee members:

Committee Chair:

Karen Schwing, Ocean County

Jane Armellino, Hunterdon County
Stephen Bouchard, Atlantic County (retired)
Christopher Bowman, Burlington County
Gerard Carroll, Bergen County
Brad Cohen, Union County
Sabina Ellis, Essex County
Olive Giles, Mercer County
Christina Gras, Atlantic County
Bethany Hannah, Salem County
Jessica Hoertel, Morris County
Melissa Krupp, Ocean County
Lori Lalama, Passaic County
Ann Moyle, Monmouth County
Arden Niessner, Camden County
Aaron Righter, Cumberland County
Jasmine Slowik, Warren County
Julie Stratton, Cape May County
Stephen Whitehead, Gloucester County

The NJEA staff contact to the committee is **Darryl Enslinger**, associate director, Professional Development and Instructional Issues. **Theresa Mura** is the associate staff contact.



The PDII Book Club:

Your summer reading list

Summer is almost upon us. A time to move away from the demands of weekly lesson plans and piles of papers to grade. A time to take a deep breath and get centered from the mad rush of the school year. And, after taking that breath, a time to pick up a good book or download to your favorite device, and reflect some on your world as an educator.

Once again, the staff of the NJEA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL ISSUES DIVISION has been going through their own professional reading and preparing some recommendations for New Jersey educators. Here are some of the readings that have caught their attention over the last year.

The division's director, **MICHAEL COHAN**, suggests *Professional Capital* by Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan. The authors posit that the realization of education professionals, and the "capital" they have to expend on their best work, can be viewed as the amalgam of human capital, social capital and decisional capital. Professional Capital assumes that good teaching is technically sophisticated and difficult, requires high levels of education and long training, is perfected through continuous improvement, involves wise judgment informed by evidence and experience, and is a collective effort and responsibility.

The ideas in *Professional Capital* offer a guide to educators who want to lead their profession into a more positive future.

Leadership is also on the mind of **MIKE RITZIUS**, who recommends *Becoming a Resonant Leader* by Annie McKee, Richard Bovatziz and Fran Johnson. The authors explain how being an effective leader begins with leading oneself. This book is an exploration of one's own leadership style and helps develop leadership skills through that exploration.

Leadership implies being part of a team, which is the focus of *Ten Faces of Innovation*, by Tom

Kelly, the recommendation of **CHRISSI MILES**. Chrissi found this to be a great read for those interested in design thinking, collaboration, and understanding how they interact with teams. Multiple "faces" are present in all of us, knowing which face to bring to the table and when, helps to push projects forward.

For many of us, an important "team" is composed of the students we work with every day. **RICH WILSON's** pick, *Culturally Responsive Design for English Learners: The UDL Approach* by Patti Ralabate and Loui Lord Nelson is about creating the best space for that team. This practice

Whether you prefer your
learning on a device or by
turning pages in a book,
these are just a few of the
many opportunities available
to explore some new ideas.

cal book by experts in both Universal Design and Culturally Responsive Teaching makes the case for creating learning spaces that are accessible to each learner, and then takes teachers through a step-by-step lesson planning process, blending both processes to create classrooms based on equity for all.

Building for success for all students is also on the mind of **JANET ROYAL**, with her choice of *Meeting Students Where They Live—Motivation in Urban Schools* by Richard L. Curwin. This book guides teachers and administrators in urban schools on how to put strict rules, uniformity, and the need for absolute control on the back burner, while moving toward ways to incorporate more understanding, humanity and kindness that

produce a safer and more productive environment for everyone.

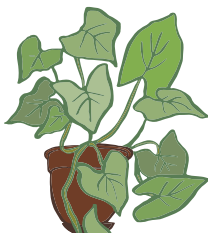
AMANDA ADAMS is also giving thought to how to create *Hope and Healing in Urban Education* in her recommendation by Shawn Ginwright. Highlighting ethnographic case studies from around the country, this book chronicles how teacher activists employ healing strategies in stressed schools and community organizations. The book details their work to reverse negative impacts on academic achievement and civic engagement, supporting their students to become powerful civic actors.

CAMY KOBYLINSKI found inspiration from the keynote at NJEA Exceptional Children Conference and reread Dr. Temple Grandin's revised and updated *The Way I See It: A Personal Look at Autism and Asperger's*, which takes the reader on a journey through life with Autism Spectrum Disorder through the eyes of someone who is living that experience.

DARRYL ENSMINGER makes the case that the summer is also a good time to explore some computer applications that any educator might find useful in the classroom.

- **Educreations** (educreations.com) is a free app at the basic level. It is an interactive whiteboard that allows teachers to create instructional videos for viewing in and out of class. You can annotate, animate, and narrate content and share it instantly with students.
- **Quizlet** (quizlet.com) allows you to create or use one of hundreds of preloaded flashcards and diagrams to make interactive activities that take the rote out of learning vocabulary and terms.

Whether you prefer your learning on a device or by turning pages in a book, these are just a few of the many opportunities available to explore some new ideas. 🌱





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A CLOSER LOOK

monthly highlights

The season finale of "Classroom Close-up NJ" will air June 24, and encore performances will air throughout the summer. 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 June 17 and 24, 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. Set your DVRs to Sept. 16 when "Classroom Close-up NJ" starts its 25th and final season.

watch

JUNE 10

The Cinnaminson Middle School Unity Club teaches young people the importance of serving their community. Students run an annual "Soup-er Supper" where seniors bring nonperishables as their admission and in turn receive delicious soup, salad and dessert donated by the club students, parents and school staff. This year's theme is "The Power of Me... The Power of We."

JUNE 17

The Junior ROTC program at Irvington High School turns students into strong, powerful and disciplined young adults. The cadets demonstrate ceremonial marches.

JUNE 24

Triangle Elementary School in Hillsborough celebrates Read Across America by emphasizing reading and writing among the 380 kindergarten through fourth-grade students. From a schoolwide assembly featuring the Cat in the Hat to guest readers and small group lessons, the school community inspires a love for literature.



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

Summer Institutes,
Holocaust education
and more



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

Lewes Advanced Placement Summer Institute

Lewes, Delaware is the setting for The Lewes Advanced Placement Summer Institute, a College Board endorsed, intensive four-day program. Designed for new and experienced AP teachers to maximize their pedagogical practices, information focused on strategies, methodology, creativity, technology, resources and best-practice lesson planning is provided by master instructors.

The following courses will be offered:

- Session 1: July 17-20 – Calculus BC, Computer Science Principles, European History, French Language and Culture, Spanish Language and Culture, Statistics, U.S. Government and Politics, U.S. History, and World History.
- Session 2: July 24-27 – Biology, Calculus AB, Chemistry, Economics, English Language, English Literature, Physics 1, Psychology and Studio Art.

The institute is held at Cape Henlopen High School. Participants are responsible for housing. The institute website suggests several hotels within a short drive of the high school. Because Lewes and Rehoboth Beach are extremely popular resort areas, early registration is encouraged.

The registration fee is \$1,200, which includes payment for 30 hours of instruction; a College Board endorsed professional development certificate, course materials, lab fees, textbooks, College Board booklets, and a catered lunch at a waterfront restaurant.

For more information contact Dr. Wilson Frampton at 302-644-0277 or lewesapsi@gmail.com. To register go to www.lewesap.com.

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.

More to learn across the state

☀ Knowles Academy Summer Learning

The Knowles Academy is offering state-of-the-art professional development experiences for teachers in June, July and August. All academy courses are designed and facilitated by experienced teachers who understand the complexities of teaching in today's world. Through these courses, mathematics and science teachers will work in small, collaborative groups as they learn to increase the cognitive demand of their lessons and provide more opportunities for students to talk about math and science, tactics that lead to an increase in student engagement.

Courses range in price from a rate of \$50 for pilot programs to \$1,000 for established yearlong programs.

Visit njea.org/pd for course descriptions.

Designing Instructional Tasks to Increase Student Engagement and Learning in Science (Pilot Program)

June 26-28, 2018 – Moorestown, N.J.

The cost is \$50 (an \$800 value offered at the \$50 pilot rate).

Engaging Math and Science Students in Engineering Design

July 20-24, 2018 – Philadelphia, Pa.

The cost is \$1,000.

Establishing an Equitable Classroom Culture: An Introduction to Complex Instruction for Science Teachers (Pilot Program)

July 23-25, 2018 – Moorestown, N.J.

The cost is \$50 (an \$800 value offered at the \$50 pilot rate).

Physics for the Next Generation: The Patterns Approach

July 30-Aug. 2, 2018 – Moorestown, N.J.

The cost is \$1,000.

Designing Instructional Tasks to Increase Student Engagement and Learning in Math

Aug. 1-3, 2018 – Moorestown, N.J.

The cost is \$800.

Knowledge Generation for the Teaching Profession: An Introduction to Practitioner Inquiry (Pilot Program)

August 14-15, 2018 – Moorestown, N.J.

The cost is \$50 (an \$800 value offered at the \$50 pilot rate).

The Knowles Teacher Initiative is a nonprofit organization that supports a national network of mathematics and science teachers who are collaborative, innovative leaders improving education for all students in the United States. The initiative strives to create an educational system that is led by teachers who are equipped to solve difficult problems and respond to local challenges in order to serve all of our nation's students.

For information on all of the above summer opportunities, contact Katey Shirey at katey.shirey@knowlesteachers.org, or 856-608-0001. You may also visit www.knowlesteachers.org.

New Jersey Council for Social Studies Annual Conference slated for Oct. 22

Focused on the theme, "The Times They Are a-Changin'!" the New Jersey Council for the Social Studies annual conference is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 22, 2018. Held at the Busch Student Center at Rutgers University in Piscataway, it begins at 7:30 a.m. and concludes at 1 p.m.

The program includes these keynote speakers:

- Dr. Michael Adas of Rutgers University – Vietnam and America's 20th Century Conflicts (History)
- Dr. Gary Lewandowski Jr. of Monmouth University – Intimate Relationships (Psychology)
- Dr. Anne Morrison Piehl of Rutgers University – Inequality of our Criminal Justice System (Economics)
- Mr. Michael Hattem of the New School – Life and Times of Ben Franklin (Social Studies)

The day also includes theme-based workshops for K-6 teachers and psychology and economics/financial literacy educators in addition to sessions relating to world history, U.S. history, geography, and civics.

Early-bird registration is \$80 before Oct. 10 and includes a one-year membership Sept. 1, 2018-Aug. 31, 2019. Early bird preservice teacher registration is \$25.

For online registration, visit bit.ly/njcss2018conference.

To download a mail-in registration form, or for more information, visit njcss.org or email Hank Bitten at hb288@sasmail.rutgers.edu.

Amistad Commission to hold Summer Curriculum Institute

Civil Rights and the Schoolhouse: A Historiography of American Educational Policy Implications on Students and Teachers

The New Jersey Amistad Commission is proud to present its annual four-day regional Summer Curriculum Institute in the northern and southern regions of the state.

- Southern region:
Rowan University in Glassboro, July 23-26.
- Northern region:
Kean University in Union, July 30-Aug 2.

This year's curriculum institute will be a four-day residential program that gives educators access to prominent historians and scholars. The aim of the program is to teach additional methodological and pedagogical techniques, while looking at special topics in history in order to fulfill the

mandate of the statute that created the Amistad Commission to infuse African-American history into the K-12 social studies curriculum.


Educators may earn professional-development credit, as well as be given an opportunity to design curriculum materials. The institute is designed to provide educators with the opportunity to use the Amistad online resource to examine the prevailing and diverse descriptions of the events through first-person narratives, historians, educators, and community leaders to analyze contemporary primary sources and opposition texts, and using informational-texts methods and strategies that were created specifically for educators to use in their classrooms and required by the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS). Each participant is trained to use the Amistad web-based curriculum, a multimedia resource for educators in New Jersey.

This summer the Amistad Commission institute, titled "Civil Rights and the Schoolhouse: A Historiography of American Educational Policy Implications on Students and Teachers," will look at the American schoolhouse at the apex of America's civil rights struggle, as well as examine America's legal battles in the education arena throughout the 19th and 20th century.

The Amistad Institute will help educators contextualize the formation of public education and the shifts in educational philosophies and reform movements as it relates to civil rights attainments in this nation; with particular focus on the intersection of ethnicity, race, and class. In the American schoolhouse, civic engagement, community engagement, civil rights policy and praxis, as well as curriculum development have been a modality of community development and political agency past and present.

Two-step application process

The application is a two-step process. The first step is an online registration. The second step is to submit to the Amistad Commission a detailed application that includes a resume and an essay.

Visit njea.org/amistad for the full description of the program and application process. The application deadline is July 6. 



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NJEA Preservice

Leadership matters

Student-teaching abroad

By Mariah Belber, The College of New Jersey

The hallways at Udine International School in Italy look like those in any school in New Jersey where I'd ever been placed as a preservice educator. Cubbies for storage line the halls, student work papers the walls, and posters and fliers announce upcoming events. Smiling staff members welcome students to another day at school.

But there are many differences as well, beginning with the sound of conversations among students and staff. They, of course, speak Italian, not English in this school that holds Grades 1 through 8.

The most significant difference is in how the school delivers its curricula. Of course I knew the school's curriculum would not be based on the Common Core State Standards that I'd grown familiar with stateside. What I did not expect, was the lack

of textbooks. The challenge of creating a fourth-grade unit on Ancient Greece from scratch was one that I was not expecting, but it was a great experience. It permitted me to focus on what the students were interested in learning, and what I could do with each of the standards I was given. It allowed me to do a deeper dive into the Olympics—the students loved winter sports—and we could have our own Ancient Greek Olympiad!

I was surprised by the lack of emphasis on cellphones and social media in fourth grade at the school. When I presented my first lesson with the students, I included a "show me your selfie" activity. Many students were baffled. They didn't know what a selfie was.

It was refreshing to see kids getting the chance to be kids, without the stress that comes from social

media. The students loved watching YouTube, and knew how to dab (a dance with the head bowed into the elbow to show confidence and pride), but none of them used Snapchat or Instagram. Only one student had a phone, which was never brought to school. The lack of focus on technology kept these students focused and excited on lessons, and meant they were very excited when they got the chance to use technology.

While multilingualism is a key component of the school's mission and vision, the students and many staff members speak Italian as their first language. This offered me insights into how English language learners may feel in my classes back home. During a required safety training at the school, I was completely lost because the presenter only spoke Italian. Fortunately, another teacher

in the school translated.

The language differences did offer some joyful moments. The students had initially assumed that I, like most of their teachers, understood Italian. They soon discovered otherwise and we turned it into a game called "How do you say ____?" A student would say a word to me in Italian and ask how to say it in English. We used Google Translate and had some laughs when the grammar was tremendously incorrect. This experience will help me empathize with students who have language barriers.

In the end, the students were just like any other fourth graders I have known, and they needed the same things any other student needs from a teacher: support, love and compassion. 🇮🇹

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*Must enroll by June 15th

NJREA

Past, present and future

NJREA fall luncheon set for Sept. 27

Are you looking to make the most of your NJREA membership? Want to hear the latest on pensions and benefits news? Then mark your calendar and join NJREA for its annual Fall Meeting on Thursday, Sept. 27.

This popular member event will be held at the Nottingham Ballroom in Hamilton. Please be advised that this luncheon will not be advertised in the September 2018 *NJREA Newsletter*. Any members wishing to attend this event must complete and return the coupon found in the June 2018 *NJREA Newsletter* by Sept. 20. The coupon can also be found at njea.org/njrea.

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

Attendees are also welcome to arrive in time for the Member Information Session beginning at 11 a.m. Members are urged to attend this session to hear important updates and the latest news affecting our union and its members. Time is also provided for questions and answers.

The cost of the fall luncheon is \$33 per person, which includes breakfast and all taxes and gratuities. Members have the option to come for breakfast only, for a cost of just \$5. Reminder: As per NJREA policy, any individuals who are eligible for NJREA membership and have elected not to join are not permitted to attend as guests. Only NJREA members and NJREA-invited guests may attend luncheons, business meetings and workshops throughout the year.

Attendees are not permitted to reserve tables upon arrival. Any member wishing to sit with his or her county should indicate this intention on the coupon form. Reserved seating requests will be honored only if received on or before the registration deadline.

To register, look for the coupon found in the June issue of the *NJREA Newsletter* or on the NJREA webpage at njea.org/njrea and send it along with your check (payable to NJREA) to Joan Wright, NJREA second vice president, by Sept. 20. Be sure to include your meal choice of Chicken Marsala, Salmon or Pasta Primavera.



Linda Kitzler, a retiree from the Bridgewater-Raritan EA, asks a question during the Member Information Session.



At last year's luncheon, Atlantic County's Linda Smith displays one of the T-shirts on sale to fundraise for various issues.

Around the counties

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

MORRIS COUNTY REA welcomes you to its annual scholarship awards luncheon on Wednesday, June 13 at The Mansion at Mountain Lakes, where 2018 MCREA scholarships will be awarded.

MCREA's fall meeting/luncheon will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 12 at the Birchwood Manor in Whippany. The guest speaker will be photographer Jim DelGuidice, who will discuss his work on state of emergency disasters that shaped New Jersey's history.

The cost for each event is \$30 for members and \$35 for nonmembers. To attend either event, call Cheryl Doltz at 973-818-1353.

WARREN COUNTY REA will hold its next meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, Sept. 5 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 wcrea-njea.org. 📍

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HELPING MEMBERS IN THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES

Residential Home Funding Corporation (RHFC) is no stranger to the NJEA. Having been endorsed by Buyer's Edge, Inc** as its exclusive home financing provider, and as an exhibitor at the NJEA Convention for the past 10 years, RHFC is a trustworthy and reputable mortgage lender.

RHFC proudly offers the Mortgages for Champions program as a thank you to heroes in the community. The Mortgages for Champions program offers no lender closing costs to law enforcement, firefighters, educators, EMS, military (active and retired), nurses, doctors and government workers. NJEA members may

call 800-971-7721 to request assistance in obtaining a mortgage.

RHFC created the RHF Foundation in 2007. The mission of the RHF Foundation is to provide funding to help children with acute medical conditions. Its goal is to fund programs that make hospital stays less frightening and more enriching for a child, as well as fund organizations that aid in the prevention of teen bullying and substance abuse.

The RHF Foundation has had a successful decade. Most recently, the RHF Foundation was chosen by the NFL Alumni Association to work together on a charity event on June

13 at MetLife Stadium.

"Our company is fully involved in providing support to the RHF Foundation," says RHFC President Tom Marinaro. "Every single dollar raised is given to the families and organizations we help, and our valued and dedicated employees volunteer their time for free."

For event tickets and sponsorship opportunities, go to www.rhffoundation.com.

For more information on RHFC visit www.rhfunding.com or call 800-971-7721.

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

Summer Web Giveaways

For June, July, and August, one winner each month 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:

Ellen G. McConnell of Middlesex Co. Ret. EA won A BOSE Sound Link Color Bluetooth Speaker II (choice of Aquatic Blue, Coral Red or Black) from Buyer's Edge, Inc.**

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

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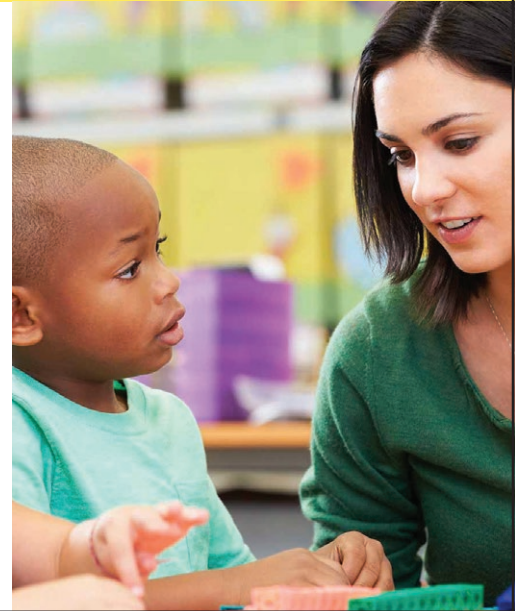
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June & beyond

for more information go to NJEA.org

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

8/4

Saturday

**Executive
Committee
Meeting**

8/4

Saturday

**NJEA PAC
Operating
Committee
Meeting**

8/4-10

Sat. - Mon.

**Summer
Leadership
Conference**

Save the date

—

**NJEA Jim George
Collective
Bargaining
Summit**

—

**October 26-27
DoubleTree in Somerset**

—

deadlines

6/22

TechStock Conference
Event date: July 25

6/27

Professional Development
Summer Institute
Event Date: July 11

njea

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It's been a four-year experiment that started failing before it ever began. PARCC tests have done little more than cause headaches and undue stress for parents, students and educators. Before the tests even entered classrooms, parents, students and educators resisted the notion that more testing would increase student achievement.

With the election of Gov. Phil Murphy, it's clear: New Jersey is moving on from PARCC.

During his campaign, Gov. Murphy de-

take the tests, leaving teachers to slow down instruction for those left behind.

The tests are not developmentally appropriate for children. They never have been and they never will be because the tests are written by "test experts" who know more about test questions than teaching kids.

Making matters worse, PARCC requires school districts to prioritize their resources toward technologies that facilitate testing rather than toward tools and practices that

test scores. Our school leaders have always known this, and it's time they be permitted to act on it.

The state should scale back its obsession with data-driven assessment systems. New Jersey remains one of only 12 states that still requires a high school exit exam. Adding to the obsession, PARCC requires high school students take at least three standardized tests during high school. This doesn't include tests such as the SAT, ACT, ASVAB, or AP tests.

PARCC needs

The transition to a new test isn't only about getting away from PARCC.

more than a

It's about returning respect to educators, parents and students.

name change

Transitioning away from PARCC means reclaiming schools.

clared he would "end PARCC day one." While the likelihood of bringing in a new statewide assessment system for New Jersey's public schools in a few short months is unrealistic, the transition has already started. It's equally unrealistic to expect that changing the name of the test and little else—as the New Jersey Department of Education did with the Common Core State Standards only two years ago—will help students.

PARCC's problems run far deeper than its name. Its problems are structural, systemic and built into its philosophical underpinnings. As educators, we know tests don't teach, and PARCC's failure in New Jersey is a clear affirmation of this simple truth that we've always known.

PARCC's power to interrupt learning is particularly notable.

PARCC tests disrupt learning for weeks at a time. They require unprecedented levels of test preparation after which they require children to prove their comprehension of complex skills on a computer, even if those children spend most of their class time using paper and pencils. At the high school level, weeks of instructional time are lost as groups of students are pulled from classes to

facilitate learning. Educators who work outside of tested areas, especially in the fine and performing arts, find their budgets slashed to purchase and update testing technology.

New Jersey's public schools are consistently ranked among the best in the nation, but we've fallen behind when it comes to the most effective ways of assessing student learning. Our inability to lead on performance-driven, curriculum embedded standardized assessments is unacceptable. Only six states remain of the original 26 in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium. Only five states will remain when New Jersey's exit becomes official. That exit can't come soon enough.

But the transition to a new test isn't only about getting away from PARCC. It's about returning respect to educators, parents and students. Transitioning away from PARCC means reclaiming schools.

PARCC has been the number one contributor to the toxic culture of achievement-at-all-costs brought on by the adoption of high-stakes standardized tests infecting our schools. Students can achieve academic excellence without their schools obsessing over

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) does not require students take standardized tests each year, but PARCC does. ESSA does not require students take standardized tests online, but PARCC does. The NJDOE has the room to scale back the role tests play in schools, and the time to do so is now.

The state must listen to the experts, the educators in the classroom, not the test writers in the cubicle farm.

The NJDOE new leadership has demonstrated its commitment to involve all stakeholders in the process to replace PARCC. Educators must be involved in the decision-making process. Parents must speak up for their young children who haven't yet found the words to articulate their frustrations. Students must be loud and clear about tests that meet their needs.

In only four years, hundreds of thousands of students have opted-out or refused to take PARCC. The test's removal from our schools means those actions have been heard, but it doesn't mean our actions are done. 🏠

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Jacqueline Woodson is the 2014 National Book Award Winner for her New York Times bestselling memoir *Brown Girl Dreaming*, which was also a recipient of the Coretta Scott King Award, a Newbery Honor

Award, the NAACP Image Award, and the Sibert Honor Award. She is also the author of New York Times bestselling novel *Another Brooklyn* (Harper/Amistad), which was a 2016 National Book Award Finalist and Woodson's first adult novel in 20 years. In 2015, Woodson was named Young People's Poet Laureate by the Poetry Foundation. She is the author of more than two dozen award-winning books for young adults, middle-graders, and children; among her many accolades, she is a four-time Newbery Honor winner, a three-time National Book Award finalist, and a two-time Coretta Scott King Award winner. Most recently, she was named the 2018 Ambassador for Young People's Literature by the Library of Congress.



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Hotel	Wed-Thurs.	Fri.	Deadline	Group Code
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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

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