

REVIEW

FEBRUARY 2019

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

REVIEW

FEBRUARY
2019
njea.org



an education and advocacy resource

ESP
MENTORING
IN
PRINCETON

THE
DEBTOR
CLASS

WE ARE
WORTH IT

MEET

Florence Taliercio

THE 2019 ESP OF THE YEAR



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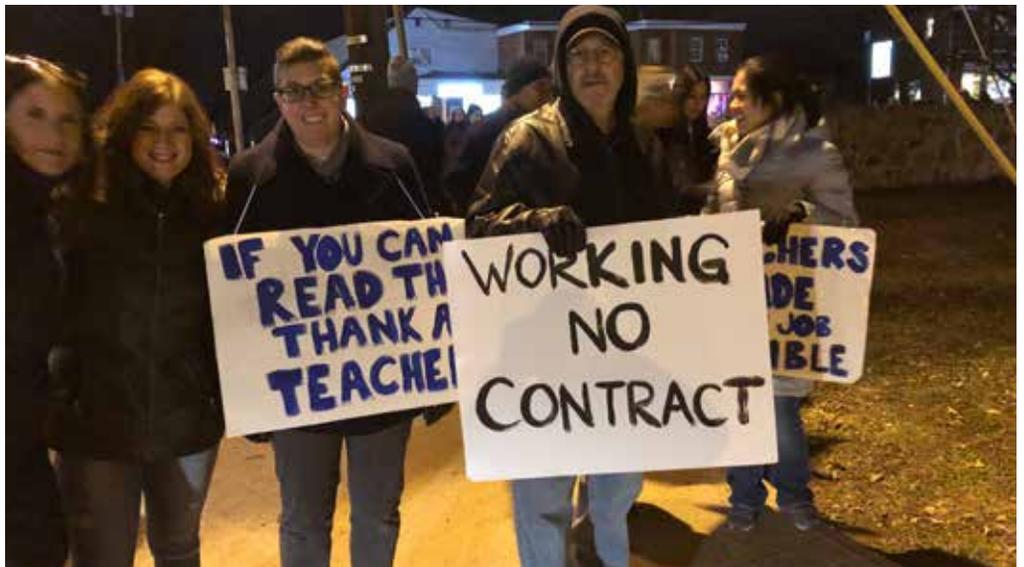


LEFT: Monmouth County EA President Denise King and Long Branch EA President Jo-Anne Montanti are among the 127 delegates from all counties and units that represent NJEA members on the Delegate Assembly, NJEA's policy-making body. See Page 10 to learn more about the meeting on Jan. 5.

BELOW: Members of the Parsippany-Troy Hills Education Association protested before the Jan. 3 meeting of the Parsippany-Troy Hills Board of Education. This followed eight months of negotiations that have failed to yield a fair settlement. More than 100 members went on to attend the meeting itself wearing their association shirts.

BELOW, LEFT: Montclair Education Association's Social Committee at the MEA's Seventh Annual Wrap and Roll on Dec. 4. A record-breaking 200 community members participated in this year's NJEA PRIDE/FAST-supported event at Charles H. Bullock Elementary School in Montclair. From left: Beth Albert, Mary Abell, Karen Tripucka, Piedad Gutierrez and Margaret Whitsett.

BELOW, RIGHT: These members from Matawan Aberdeen Regional Education Association, are among thousands of NJEA members in local associations around the state that participated in Worth-It Wednesdays each Wednesday in January to call attention to the consequences of Chapter 78 and the need for job justice for educational support professionals. See Page 30 for more.



E B E A



2019 NJEA ESP of the Year Florence Taliercio (l) with co-worker and fellow East Brunswick Education Association member Linda Starosciak (r). Read about Taliercio on Page 20.

FEATURES



20 | ESP OF THE YEAR

The 2019 NJEA ESP of the Year is an organizing powerhouse and a committed problem-solver. These are just two of the qualities that led to her statewide recognition. Learn more about what made Florence Taliercio this year's top ESP member.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



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While mentoring programs for new teachers have been an established educational practice for decades, the same consideration has not been paid to ESPs. Read how the disparity is being remedied in Princeton.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



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1 million New Jersey residents have a collective outstanding student loan debt of \$41 billion. The roots of the crisis stretch back decades, but NJEA members have opportunities to lighten their student loan debt burden.

BY KEVIN PARKER



30 | WORTH IT WEDNESDAYS

Every Wednesday, educators across the state are wearing red, entering their workplaces as a group, and taking other actions to show their solidarity as they stand up for Ch. 78 relief and job justice for ESPs. See some of the photos from the first Worth It Wednesday on Jan. 9.

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ON THE COVER:

East Brunswick EA Vice President Florence Taliercio is the 2019 NJEA ESP of the Year. Read more about her starting on Page 20.

PHOTO BY

KATHRYN COULIBALY

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NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

REVIEW



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MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership dues are: Active professional: \$928 (full time); \$464 (part time) \$464 (on leave). Active supportive \$451 (full time) \$225.50 (part time) \$225.50 (on leave). Retired: \$85; \$1,000 (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*.



MAKING THE MOST OF OUR TIME FOR OUR STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES



Despite the fact that February is the shortest month of the year, it seems like more events are packed into it than any other month. I cannot think of another month of the year that is as productive; and perhaps it is fitting that in this month, we announce the NJEA Educational Support Professional (ESP) of the Year, since our ESP colleagues pack more into a day than almost anyone I know.

This year's ESP of the Year, Florence Taliercio, absolutely embodies that claim. As a secretary in the technology department for the East Brunswick School District, she is responsible for a wide range of roles, from keeping track of staff time to monitoring warranties and service agreements to purchasing technology for the district. At the same time, she is a committed union advocate who always has time for her colleagues' concerns and is a dedicated volunteer who has worked on many association events, activities and charitable projects. Finally, she is a wife, mother and grandmother. She does more in 60 minutes than some people do all day!

But that's the magic of public education: making the most out of the minutes that you are given with your students, colleagues, parents and more.

In Hamilton Township, Atlantic County, the members of HTEA created a Care Bridge Committee to help meet the often invisible needs of its members. The staff collects money every

pay period that goes toward assisting each other through medical or financial crises. This helping hand is important and makes a real, tangible difference in members' lives. But it is the knowledge that they have the support and respect of their colleagues that provides a powerful emotional boost during a difficult time.

Few times are as stressful as starting a new job, but the Princeton Regional Education Support Staff Association (PRSSA) has found a way to make it easier on the ESPs who join their staff. They have developed a multiyear mentoring program that is unique in New Jersey. For staff and administration, the goal was clear: to make new ESP staff joining the district feel as valued and essential to students' success as certified staff members. Because the district is making mentoring a priority and providing time and opportunities to meet, ESP staff are able to engage in a much more robust exchange that benefits everyone.

Financial stress is a common theme for ESP and certified staff, and the high cost of higher education is a frequent topic across work sites. NJEA offers a "Degrees not Debt" webinar that offers resources to help members have a stronger financial future. This month, we feature a team of local associations in Camden County that took things a step further, bringing the creators of the webinar to meet with members and answer their questions in person.

During these busy February days, it can be easy to become overwhelmed with the demands of our jobs, pressing health or financial considerations, and trying to squeeze in all of our responsibilities. But it's also a time to look at how productive, efficient and effective we are when we work together toward a common goal. NJEA is an outstanding team—and we have accomplished so much thanks to the hard work of each of our members. Thank you so much for the work that you put in every day, and for making the most of every second you have with the students we serve. You are the reason New Jersey's public schools are among the best in the nation, and you are building the future one student, and one second, at a time.

Marie Blistan

ABOVE: NJEA President Marie Blistan speaking at the NJEA Equity Alliance Conference in Newark on Jan. 12. Full coverage of the event will appear in the March edition of the *NJEA Review*.

OFFICERS ONLINE

MARIE BLISTAN

Facebook

NJ was well represented [at] the official swearing in of new representatives and senators. National public labor unions voiced the needs of working families... Getting people elected is only half of our civic responsibility... holding those elected accountable for campaign promises is ALL our responsibility!

An abbreviated version of NJEA President Marie Blistan's post when she, Vice President Sean M. Spiller, and NEA Secretary-Treasurer Princess Moss joined other national labor leaders in Washington, D.C. for the first day of the 116th Congress. She posted photos from the day.

SEAN M. SPILLER

Facebook

Congratulations to 2018 Milken Awards winner Nicole Silva! Congratulations Carteret Public Schools!

Congratulations also to New Jersey Department of Education Commissioner Dr. Repollet, a Carteret grad & former administrator. Congratulations NJEA for having the best educators!

An abbreviated version of NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller's post when he traveled to Carteret to be on hand when third-grade teacher Nicole Silva was presented with a Milken Educator Award. The award recognizes excellence in education by honoring top educators around the country. See more at bit.ly/milkensilva.

STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

Brothers and sisters, the time is now. We are reaching the pinnacle of our fight for Chapter 78 relief and ESP job justice. We must, all of us, be fully committed... make sure you are informed and active! Success will depend on all of us!! Look here for more information: njea.org/justice

This is an abbreviated version of a post that NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty posted on Jan. 6, encouraging members to get personally involved in the fight for Chapter 78 relief and job justice for educational support professionals. As he noted, visit njea.org/justice to find out how to get involved.

KNOW. LEAD. ACT.

DA TO HOLD NEA DIRECTOR ELECTION

Elections for three of New Jersey's representatives on the NEA Board of Directors and for three alternates will be held at the March 30 Delegate Assembly (DA) meeting. The elected board members will serve three-year terms from Sept. 1, 2019 to Aug. 31, 2022. Elected alternates will serve one-year terms beginning Sept. 1, 2019.

The NJEA Executive Committee will be conducting nominations at its Feb. 13 meeting. Additional nominations may come from the floor at the March 30 DA meeting prior to the vote. All nominees will have an opportunity to speak for two minutes prior to balloting.

The NEA Board of Directors is responsible for setting general policies between annual NEA Representative Assembly meetings. It consists of one director from each state affiliate, at-large directors to meet representational guarantees, and representatives for students and retired members. Each state is entitled to an additional director per 20,000 active and life members.

The DA meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. at the Hilton East Brunswick, which is located at 3 Tower Center Boulevard in East Brunswick at Exit 9 of the New Jersey Turnpike.

Anyone interested in seeking a position as an NEA state director or alternate should contact a member of the DA. Interested members may request a list of names and addresses of the NJEA Executive Committee, Delegate Assembly, DA alternates, and New Jersey members of the NEA Board of Directors.

The DA list includes county association presidents.

For more information call the NJEA Executive Office at 609-599-4561, ext. 2293.

ATTENTION CURRICULUM WRITERS

HELP INTEGRATE LGBTQ CONTENT

With the passage of S-1569, New Jersey school districts will be seeking guidance and resources to add content, analysis and approaches that most consistently integrate historically accurate LGBTQ content into middle and high school social studies curricula.

If you are a New Jersey educator, curriculum writer/developer, or administrator passionate about the addition of LGBT inclusive curriculum in English, history, social studies, world languages, arts, sciences, math and health/sex education, Make it Better for Youth, the Monmouth County Consortium for LGBTQ Youth, seeks you as a volunteer. You need not live or work in Monmouth County to participate in this project, which has statewide impact.

To get started, visit bit.ly/lgbtqcurriculum and click on the sentence, "Please fill out this form to signal your interest, and we will be in touch with you."

HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 12-13

STANDING TOGETHER

The NJEA Higher Education Conference will be held on April 12-13 at the Princeton Marriott at Forrestal. The conference begins with registration at 1 p.m. on Friday followed by workshops and dinner. On Saturday, the conference continues with more workshop sessions and concludes with lunch.

WORKSHOPS TOPICS

- Academic Freedom
- Building County and County College Relationships
- Grievance Processing: Theory-Part 1; Practice-Part 2 (You must take Parts 1 and 2)
- Health Care for Active and Retired: The Plans
- Keep Calm and Prepare for Retirement: Get the Most Out of the Alternate Benefit Program (ABP)
- Political Update/Pending Legislation
- So You're a "Blue" and What It Says About You
- Social Media for Organizing Members
- New Jersey Workplace Democracy Act and Pay Equity Act
- Workplace Health and Safety
- XYZs of Retirement (PERS)

REGISTRATION

Higher education members will soon receive a registration form in the postal mail soon, or to register now, send your payment and name, address, cell/work/home phone numbers, and local association to:

NJEA HIGHER ED CONFERENCE

c/o Beneficial Bank
PO Box 13661
Philadelphia, PA 19101-3661

Registration is required by March 23.

The cost to attend is \$98-resident (per person, double occupancy); \$148-resident (per person, single occupancy); or \$68 (commuter). The conference fee includes accommodations, meals and materials. For additional information or if you have a disability-related need which may require assistance to facilitate your participation in the conference, contact the NJEA UniServ Region 29/Higher Education office at 609-689-9580 or kperry@njea.org.

2019 LEGISLATIVE DINNERS

County legislative dinners are an excellent opportunity to learn about legislative issues and how you can make a difference. It's also a great opportunity to meet and talk to your district's lawmakers.

For further details, contact your county education association office, county association president or county government relations chairperson.

Atlantic	April 10	The Carriage House, Galloway
Bergen	April 3	The Venetian, Garfield
Burlington	April 30	The Merion, Cinnaminson
Camden	March 27	Camden County Boathouse, Pennsauken
Cape May	March 28	Grand Hotel, Cape May
Cumberland	April 3	Eastlyn Golf Course, Vineland
Essex	March 13	Nanina's in the Park, Belleville
Gloucester/Salem	May 1	Auletto Catering, Deptford
Hudson	May 15	Waterside, North Bergen
Hunterdon/Somerset	April 9	Basking Ridge Country Club, Basking Ridge
Mercer	March 27	Mercer Oaks, West Windsor
Middlesex	May 15	Grand Marquis, Old Bridge
Monmouth	April 4	Doubletree Hotel, Tinton Falls
Morris	May 7	Birchwood Manor, Whippany
Ocean	May 2	Ramada Inn, Toms River
Passaic	March 5	The Brownstone, Paterson
Salem/Gloucester	May 1	Auletto Catering, Deptford
Somerset/Hunterdon	April 9	Basking Ridge Country Club, Basking Ridge
Sussex	April 30	Perona Farms, Andover Township
Union	April 3	The Westwood, Garwood
Warren	April 16	Tentative: Hawk Pointe, Washington

SELFIE OF THE MONTH

Sabrina Ellis, a technology trainer at Columbia High School and a member of the South Orange-Maplewood Education Association, snapped a selfie with her fellow members on the first Worth-It Wednesday on Jan. 9. From left: Ellis, Keysha Knight and Wahkeelah Ellis. For more about Worth-It Wednesdays, turn to Page 30.

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



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DELEGATES ADOPT NJEA AUDIT

The NJEA Delegate Assembly (DA), the association's policy-making body met on Jan. 5 at the Hyatt in New Brunswick. The DA meets five times a year, typically in September, November, January, March and May. The agenda is published in advance of the meeting for all members at njea.org/da. Minutes of the proceedings are also published there. What follows is a summary of the meeting. Detailed minutes are published in the *NJEA Review* when they become available.

OFFICER REPORTS

NJEA President Marie Blistan updated members on various statewide issues including the recent New Jersey appellate court decision striking down the use of multiple PARCC exams as graduation requirements for New Jersey high school students (see Page 14), the governor's veto of legislation that would have diminished the health benefits of higher education members (see Page 18), the impending strike of educators in the Los Angeles Unified School District, and Gov. Phil Murphy's election as vice chairman and chair-elect of the Democratic Governors Association.

Blistan also discussed the newly sworn-in U.S. Congress and lauded the number of educators running for office at all levels of government. She noted that the 2016 National Teacher of the Year, Jahana Hayes, now holds a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Hayes represents Connecticut's 5th Congressional District and is the first African-American woman to represent her state in Congress.

At the state level, Blistan brought NJEA Regional UniServ Director Patrick Manahan forward to discuss member-led campaigns to promote proposed legislation for relief from Chapter 78 and to protect the employment interests of educational support professionals (See

njea.org/justice). Blistan also asked Gloucester County Delegate Tina Dare, who chairs the NJEA Government Relations Committee, forward to discuss the current campaign to increase member contributions to the NJEA Political Action Committee.

NJEA Vice President Sean M. Spiller reported on the New Jersey Department of Education's charter school listening tour. Spiller reiterated NJEA's concerns about charter school governance—particularly the lack of transparency and lack of accountability—and the impact of charter schools on district budgets.

AUDIT PRESENTED

NJEA's audit is presented annually at the January DA meeting. The audit was conducted by certified public accountants at Novak Francella, which found NJEA's accounts to be in order.

NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty described the association's careful stewardship of its revenues and expenditures in terms of its value to NJEA members

"I am proud to tell you that despite everything we have been put through in the last several years, NJEA remains strong and fiscally stable and in a position to remain a potent force in advocacy for our members and the profession," Beatty said. "We have been able to allow our organization to continue to defend our members by finding out what they need and fighting to make it happen. I'm proud to say that our 2017-18 fiscal year demonstrated that commitment once again.

The audit is published in the April edition of the *NJEA Review*.

OTHER BUSINESS

Delegates adopted the reports of the NJEA PAC Operating Committee and the Affiliations

Committee, leading to the affiliation of the METS Charter Education Association and the Edison Township Transportation Association.

Delegates also considered four New Business Items (NBI).

NBI #1, which was proposed by Essex County Delegate Chris Cannella, directs NJEA to work in coalition with various statewide organizations to develop an action plan to implement the pending LGBTQ+/persons with disabilities curriculum inclusion law into New Jersey schools. The NBI was adopted.

NBI #2, which was proposed by Atlantic County Delegate Melissa Tomlinson, directs NJEA to send an email to local association leaders with information about how they can join the California Educators Rising Adopt-A Striking-School effort. The email would go out in advance of the impending Jan. 10 strike date set by the United Teachers of Los Angeles. The NBI was adopted.

NBI #3, which was proposed by Passaic County Delegate Carrie Odgers Lax, would have referred a bylaw amendment to the NJEA Constitution Review Committee for its review and recommendation. The amendment would have suspended the dues calculation formula established in NJEA's bylaws that would have had the effect of maintaining the 2018-19 dues level for the 2019-20 and 2020-2021 fiscal years. The NBI was not adopted.

NBI #4, which was proposed by Passaic County Delegate Steve Boudalis, directs NJEA to send an email to local association leaders and PRIDE chairs informing them of their ability to submit for approval Pride funds for 2019 Black Lives Matter at School National Week of Action (Feb. 4-8). The proposal was amended to indicate that funds allocated would not exceed \$100,000. The NBI was adopted. 🗳️

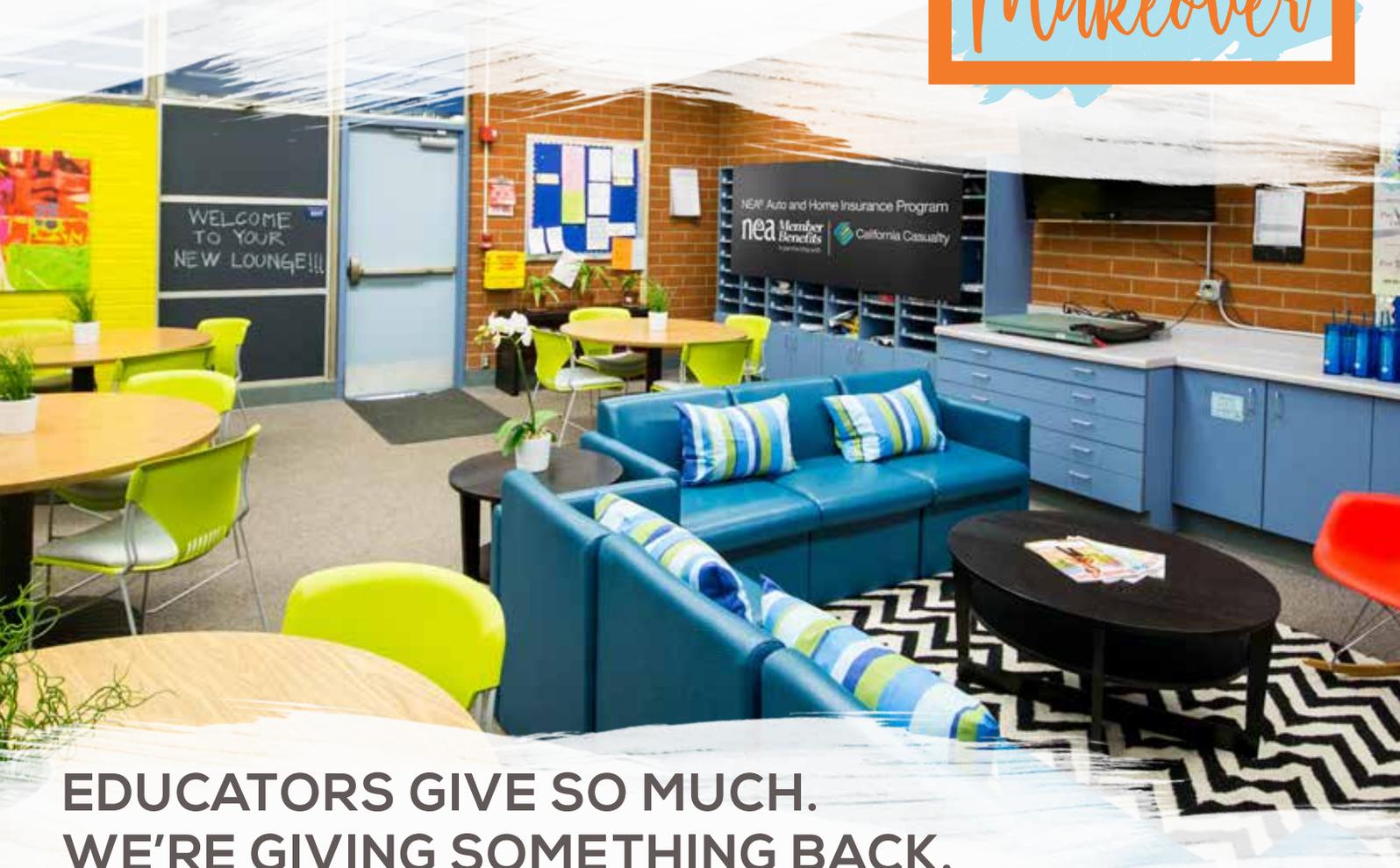


NJEA Delegate Assembly members took a moment out of their meeting on Jan. 5 to call their state senators and members of the General Assembly in support of Chapter 78 relief and job justice for educational support professionals. See Page 30 for more on this effort.

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COOL STUFF

SEND US PHOTOS FROM YOUR RAA CELEBRATION

The *NJEA Review* will print selected photos from Read Across America celebrations around the state. To have one of your photos considered for publication, choose your favorite two or three photos from your event and send them to ProudMoments@njea.org. In the email, provide a brief caption for each photo you send.

If children are identifiable in the photos, a media release must be on file with the district or you may use the release form found at njea.org/PRIDE. You must log in with your NJEA PIN to access the page that includes the photo release form.

You may keep the signed release forms on file at your school and simply indicate that you have secured them when you send email your photos to NJEA. From all of the photos submitted prior to March 9, up to 10 will be selected for publication in the April *NJEA Review*.

Photos, regardless of whether they are selected for publication in the *NJEA Review*, will be part of an online gallery at njea.org/raa. Some photos may also be shared on NJEA's social media platforms.

\$10,000 SCHOLARSHIP FOR GRADUATING SENIORS

New Jersey seniors can apply online now for the annual Janet Logan Daily Foundation Scholarship, which recognizes college-bound students from varying academic backgrounds who have routinely demonstrated maturity and integrity within and beyond the classroom.

Applications will be accepted until April 1, 2019. Visit janetlogandailyfoundation.org to review eligibility requirements and submit an online application.

ENTER THE NEW JERSEY HALL OF FAME ESSAY CONTEST

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

Essays must be typed and double-spaced. The student must include his/her name, age, grade level as of March 16, 2019, address, phone number, parent/guardian's name, school name, and school district. If the essay is a school project, the student should also include the name of the teacher who assigned the activity.

Nominations must be postmarked by March 16, 2019. Send entries to N.J. Hall of Fame Contest, Kim Crane, NJEA, PO Box 1211, Trenton, NJ 08607-1211. Or send them via email to kcrane@njea.org with "NJHOF Essay Contest" in the subject line.

Entries will be divided into two age categories: intermediate (Grades 4-8) and high school (Grades 9-12). Entries will be judged by a panel of NJEA and New Jersey Hall of Fame representatives. Winners will be notified in early April. The winning students will be invited to the New Jersey Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony in May 2019.

The winning students' nominations will be forwarded to the New Jersey Hall of Fame Academy for consideration in 2020. This ethnically and culturally diverse body, composed of 100 of New Jersey's most prominent organizations and media outlets, will review nominees and ultimately select Hall of Fame nominees to be put forth for the public vote in the fall. NJEA serves on the Voting Academy.

For more information about the New Jersey Hall of Fame, visit www.njhalloffame.org.

THEATER AT WILLIAM PATERSON

All theater performances take place at William Paterson University, Shea Center for Performing Arts, 300 Pompton Road in Wayne. To reserve seats for your students and for additional information, contact Lavene Gass at GassL1@wpunj.edu or 973-720-3178.

"THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE"

April 11, 2019, 12:30 p.m.

Admission: Free when accompanied by teacher

RSVP by March 21

Gilbert and Sullivan's zany operetta about a young man mistakenly apprenticed to a pirate will be performed by students in the WP Voice program. Conflict ensues and madcap madness abounds, but love wins in the end.

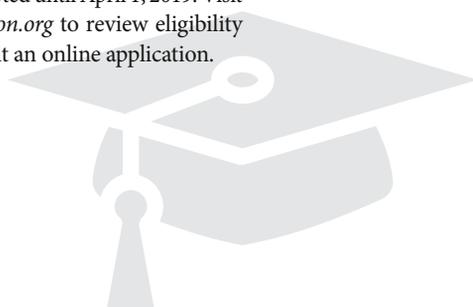
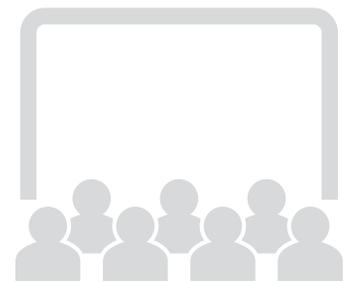
THEATER FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM: MADELINE AND THE BAD HAT

April 16, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Admission: \$10

RSVP by March 26

This colorful musical captures the blithe yet touching spirit of Ludwig Bemelmans' much loved Madeline series. This amusing tale traces the adventures of a young Parisian girl who—despite starting off on the wrong foot with a mischievous new neighbor—eventually learns that first impressions aren't everything. Told with gentle humor, and featuring a beautiful musical score, this amusing tale of enemies-become-friends will charm and entertain children and adults alike. 🎭



NJEA REPORT

CARING FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF IN HAMILTON TOWNSHIP

For many years, the members of the Hamilton Township Education Association (HTEA) in Atlantic County have been contributing to a charitable fund on every “jeans day”: either a payday or a professional development day where staff are encouraged to donate money for the right to wear jeans instead of following the dress code.

Beginning in 2017, the Hamilton Township School District decided to turn over the fundraising and disbursement of the funds to HTEA for tax reasons. HTEA invited members to join a committee, chaired by paraprofessional Lorraine Von Hess, to make decisions about how that money would be used.

“We are a prekindergarten through eighth grade district that serves more than 4,300 students,” said Von Hess. “In addition, we have approximately 450 HTEA members. We have families who are going through catastrophic illnesses and financial crises. We wanted to have a way to support the families of our students and staff through these difficult times.”

For the 2017-18 school year, HTEA honored all of the

commitments that the district made when it led the initiative. But after that, the committee discussed what the members saw as the most pressing needs.

“I think that it really helps that the committee, which has 11 members, is made up of a lot of different job categories,” Von Hess said. “You see and hear different things in the hallways, classrooms, and corridors. Our goal is to have a member from each job category on the committee so that we can be sure we don’t miss anything.”

School secretaries collect some of the funds, but the committee also has enabled payments through Venmo and PayPal. If staff members choose, they can make a lump-sum annual contribution of \$100—a one dollar discount off of each of the jeans days, which the HTEA has rebranded as HTEA Cares Days.

“Streamlining the process has made it easier to fundraise,” Von Hess said. “In addition, it takes some of the burden from the school secretaries. And with the new name, we wanted to separate what we wear from how much we care.”



ABOVE: Lorraine Von Hess chairs the HTEA Care Bridge Committee. The 11-member committee is made of members representing various job categories. Front: Meg Castellano. Middle row from left: Lorraine VonHess, Amanda Vaccaro, Devon Vanderslice, and Kelly Petrucci. Back row from left: Amy Flagg, Cindy Bahgat and Jennifer Schairer. Not pictured: Jayne Carmen, Gayle Luderitz and Denise Greenberg.

**WE HAVE FAMILIES WHO ARE
GOING THROUGH CATASTROPHIC
ILLNESSES AND FINANCIAL CRISES.
WE WANTED TO HAVE A WAY TO
SUPPORT THE FAMILIES OF OUR
STUDENTS AND STAFF THROUGH
THESE DIFFICULT TIMES.**

So far, HTEA has 70 members who have opted for the annual contribution. On every HTEA Cares Days, \$1,100 is collected from staff.

“Our committee decided that we wanted to donate 50 percent of the funds we collect to charities that benefit students, their families and the community, and 50 percent to help staff facing financial crises. While we are very careful to keep confidential the circumstances of our students and members who require assistance out of respect for them and their privacy, so far, we’ve been able to support students and staff whose families faced medical crises, assisted with transportation issues, and helped bridge the gap with short-term financial issues.”

“It can be overwhelming to

hear about how much need there is,” Von Hess said. “In addition to financial contributions through HTEA Cares, we also run a food donation program called No Food Left Behind. Our association is committed to using whatever we have to assist people in need.”

You can read about the No Food Left Behind program at njea.org/one-lunch-duty-time.

For the students, staff and their families, the financial contributions are a sign that they are valued members of a school community that is always there to support them.

COURT STRIKES DOWN PARCC-BASED GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A New Jersey appellate court struck down the use of multiple PARCC exams as a graduation requirement for New Jersey high school students on Dec. 31, saying the testing regulations violate state law. NJEA President Marie Blistan hailed the ruling as beneficial to students and said it opens the door for a new, better approach.

“This ruling provides a good opportunity to rethink our approach to assessing student learning, Blistan said. “It’s time for a new approach that recognizes the diverse ways that students learn and puts the emphasis back on teaching and learning, not high-stakes testing.”

The lawsuit was filed by the Education Law Center, the Latino Action Network, the Latino Coalition of New Jersey, the Paterson Education Fund, the NAACP New Jersey State Conference, and the Americans Civil Liberties Union-New Jersey.

NJEA has submitted testimony to the New Jersey State Board of Education urging the state to use this as an opportunity to revise how testing is used in New Jersey’s public schools.

NJDOE FILES FOR PARTIAL RECONSIDERATION

The court stayed the ruling for 30 days, to allow the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) to consider whether it would appeal the ruling to the New Jersey Supreme Court. On Jan. 10, the NJDOE filed a Motion for Partial Reconsideration. Through that motion, the NJDOE is seeking relief for all students in the Classes of 2019 or 2020 who met the applicable Graduation Assessment requirements in place as of Dec. 31.

The NJDOE also clarified how districts should move forward this year in light of the decision.

“The recent decision does not affect the administration of state assessments,” the NJDOE wrote in a memo to chief school administrators. “Districts should continue to plan for and deliver all state assessments as scheduled for Fall Block 2018 and Spring 2019. The decision has no impact on elementary and middle school assessment administration, and high schools should continue as planned, unless notified otherwise.”

Barring the promulgation of a new law, the NJDOE will have to develop new regulations that comply with the court’s decision and the current law. While the PARCC test will be administered

this year and can be used to comply with federal law requirements under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the NJDOE can no longer use PARCC end-of-course exams as a requirement for high school graduation.

GRADUATION TESTING REQUIREMENTS EVOLVE

The Proficiency Standards and Assessments Act, signed in 1979, requires every New Jersey public high school to administer a test to 11th grade students to measure their proficiency in English language arts (ELA) and math. For many years, the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) was administered. In 2010, the state began to use the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests, which have been administered to all public school students in Grades 3 through 12.

Under the Christie administration, the state convened the Study Commission on The Use of Student Assessments In New Jersey. In its final report in 2016, the commission recommended that beginning in 2021, high school graduation requirements include passing end-of-course PARCC tests.

Regulations were adopted that required the 2020 graduating class to pass the ELA 10 and Algebra 1 assessments using the PARCC. A student who did not take the ELA 10 and Algebra 1 end-of-course PARCC assessment or who took them but did not pass, could meet the graduation proficiency required by either passing substitute competency tests; passing another relevant end-of-course PARCC test, including ELA 9, ELA 11, Geometry, or Algebra 2; or satisfying the portfolio criterion process.

The “substitute competency test” was defined as a third-party assessment approved by the NJDOE. This would include, for example, the SAT, PSAT, ACT, ACT-Aspire, ASVAB-AFQT, or Accuplacer assessments. Most of these tests impose a fee on the individual student in advance of taking the test. The portfolio appeals process was not specifically defined.

CHALLENGES TO NJDOE TESTING REGULATIONS

While the PARCC tests continued to be administered, challenges to the regulations proceeded on the basis that they were not consistent

with the statute and the Legislature’s intent and were unconstitutional and discriminatory.

Because the ELA 10, typically administered at the end of 10th grade does not test 11th grade proficiency, the court held that testing on students not in the 11th grade is contrary to the law and is therefore invalid. In addition, because the statute requires the state graduation proficiency test to be administered to 11th grade pupils, it clearly intended to require one high school proficiency graduation exam and not multiple end-of-course assessments.

The court did not go so far as to rule that the NJDOE cannot or should not use PARCC tests, but because the regulations are inconsistent with the statute, authorizing multiple tests to be administered—not one test in 11th grade—any methods currently used to that effect are invalid. Currently, for classes graduating through 2020, a 12th-grade student that fails to pass the graduation proficiency exam but who has satisfied all their curriculum requirements, is eligible for an alternative proficiency test, using NJDOE-approved assessments other than standardized tests.

Because the court determined that the regulations are inconsistent with the statute, it did not rule on whether the regulations were unconstitutional or discriminatory. The court held that because the regulations mandating administration of more than one graduation proficiency test other than one test in 11th grade is contrary to the law, and, because the regulations do not allow retesting with the same standardized tests to students through 2020, they were deemed to be invalid.

IT’S TIME FOR A NEW APPROACH THAT RECOGNIZES THE DIVERSE WAYS THAT STUDENTS LEARN AND PUTS THE EMPHASIS BACK ON TEACHING AND LEARNING, NOT HIGH-STAKES TESTING.

TELL YOUR LEGISLATORS TO SUSPEND NEW JERSEY'S HIGH SCHOOL EXIT TESTING REQUIREMENTS

NJEA has been invested in the fight against PARCC testing from the beginning. When the New Jersey Appellate Court ruled on Dec. 31 that the high school graduation testing requirements instituted by the Christie administration, including the PARCC test, were illegal, NJEA applauded the decision.

In the ruling, the court made it clear that current testing requirements cannot be used to determine a student's eligibility for graduation in June 2019. Since state law still mandates that students pass an 11th-grade assessment to graduate, the ruling has resulted in confusion for New Jersey students who expect to graduate in 2019.

There is not adequate time to develop an assessment that meets the requirements of the law for this year's class. This problem can easily be solved by suspending New Jersey's high school exit testing requirement.

Assemblywoman Mila Jasey (LD 27) and Sen. Nia Gill (LD 34) have introduced a bipartisan bill (A-672/S-558) that would suspend exit testing without infringing upon the federal accountability testing requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

NJEA supports this legislation for several reasons:

- The bill would ease students' and parents' confusion about graduation.
- The legislation would ensure that students in this year's graduating class can meet graduation requirements.
- The proposal would give the Department of Education time to work with stakeholders to develop an assessment that is designed for New Jersey.

Visit actioncenter.njea.org and click on "Tell your legislators to suspend NJ's High School Exit Testing Requirement!" From there you can contact your state legislators and urge them to support A-672/S-558. Tell them to uphold the appellate court's ruling on PARCC and to suspend New Jersey's high school exit testing requirement.

NEED HELP?

FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL HELP WITH PERSONAL, FAMILY AND SCHOOL-RELATED DEMANDS.

WHY HANDLE TOUGH TIMES ALONE?

AID NJEA is your 24-hour, confidential helpline. Staffed by NJEA members and professionals from Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care, the helpline offers practical advice, direction, ideas and resources from those who have walked in your shoes.



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PITMAN STUDENT EXCHANGE BRINGS FRENCH FLAIR TO SOUTH JERSEY

For two weeks this past fall, the tiny town of Pitman welcomed 20 French high school students and four of their teachers for a unique student exchange.

The program is the joint project of Erin Cunningham, the French teacher at Pitman High School, and Pierre Sirven, who teaches English at Les Bressis High School in Annency, a town close to France's border with Italy and Switzerland. Sirven initiated the connection, which began as a pen-pal exchange, because he is married to a woman who is originally from Pitman. Family trips to southern New Jersey over the summers led him to make connections that enabled his students to not only correspond with Pitman students, but also to stay in their homes while attending Pitman High School for a two-week visit.

"American culture is very popular in France," Sirven said.

"Our students know the America of films and music and that is very different from the reality. I wanted to provide them with a more realistic perspective on American life."

Although Cunningham and Sirven's classes have been exchanging letters since 2006, the first exchange did not occur until 2012. This year's trip is only the second time that students have been able to come. To prepare for the students' arrival, the two teachers and their students exchanged videos and photos of their schools and communities.

"I think this experience has really given the kids the confidence they've been lacking," Cunningham said. "My students are leading groups of French speakers around, giving tours in French. When I was in high school, I never would have had the confidence to speak to native speakers of French."

For Sirven, it's equally important for the French students.

"This exchange helps the students not be afraid of making mistakes and encourages them to focus on communicating," Sirven said. "And you can't deny the connections the students are making. I really think some of these students will continue these relationships they've built. They will travel to France; they'll stay connected on social media."

The entire school community gets involved in the exchange. One memorable contribution is from the cafeteria workers who make labels in French for the food they serve.

The French students also enjoy experiencing an American Halloween, shopping and attending many high school sporting events.

According to Sirven, the French students were very impressed by the friendliness

and politeness of the Americans they met. In addition, they were impressed by the number of sports American students can participate in; in France, athletics are not as emphasized in schools.

While in the United States, the French students and teachers also visit Philadelphia, New York, Washington, D.C., and the Jersey shore.

Because Cunningham has to find all of the host families, prepare them, and make all the other arrangements, it's not possible to run the program every year. But for those who do get to participate, the experience is life changing.

"It's a lot of work but as teachers we see our students are transformed by the experience," Cunningham said. "I'm really thankful the school district allows it."

THIS EXCHANGE HELPS THE STUDENTS NOT BE AFRAID OF MAKING MISTAKES AND ENCOURAGES THEM TO FOCUS ON COMMUNICATING.



Pitman High School French teacher Erin Cunningham with teachers from Les Bressis High School, which is in Annency, France. From left: Cunningham, Ludovic Pioli, Nathalie Redoux, Pierre Sirven and Sabine DeCrock.

MURPHY VEToes BILL THAT WOULD HAVE SUBVERTED COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Gov. Murphy issued a full veto of bills passed by the Senate and Assembly that would have unilaterally moved NJEA's Higher Education members from the School Employees Health Benefits Program (SEHBP) to the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP). NJEA vigorously opposed those bills because they represented a direct attack on collective bargaining and because they would have robbed NJEA's higher education members of a voice in decisions about their health care.

In advance of the veto, NJEA members sent over 4,000 emails to Murphy encouraging him to reject the bills. In addition, many members directly phoned the governor's office.

"Our members stood united in our effort," NJEA President Marie Blistan wrote to members. "It is proof that determined, sustained and unwavering advocacy gets results."

In his veto, Murphy outlined his reasoning. "While the savings sought by the bill are laudable, I have always believed that fairness demands that all parties involved have a voice in cost-saving decisions, which occurs during the normal collective bargaining process," Murphy wrote. "This bill does not seek to find savings within the contours of collective bargaining."

Murphy noted that through the legislative process, the SEHBP had already agreed to plan design changes for school employees and retirees that will save state and local government units hundreds of millions of dollars, while lowering premiums for members.

"As a result, much of the savings sought by this bill is already captured by the actions we have taken together," Murphy concluded.

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LGBT AND DISABILITY INCLUSION BILL PASSES SENATE AND ASSEMBLY

A bill that was passed by the Assembly on Dec. 17 requires school districts in New Jersey to provide instruction on the political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in an appropriate place in the curriculum of middle school and high school students. It had previously passed in the Senate on June 25. The law specifies that the content be included as part of each district's implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in social studies.

The bill also provides that when adopting instructional materials for use in the schools of the district, a board of education may only adopt instructional materials that accurately portray the cultural and economic diversity of society including the political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

This bill is modeled on a law adopted in California, the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful Education (FAIR) Act, which took effect in 2012. The state of California is currently engaged in developing textbooks and other instructional materials that incorporate information on the political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. Upon their completion, these materials will be available to assist school districts in New Jersey in meeting the requirements of the bill.

As of press time, the bill awaited Gov. Phil Murphy's signature.

In anticipation of his signature, Make it Better for Youth: the Monmouth County Consortium for LGBTQ Youth, is seeking volunteers to assist in providing resources to curriculum writers. See details on Page 8.

THE NUMBERS

\$41 MILLION

The amount of lost property tax revenues in the 86 New Jersey school districts that report such data.

Tax subsidies, abatements, and incentives granted to corporations and developers cost millions to school districts in lost property tax revenues. A new report from Good Jobs First finds that public schools across the country lost at least \$1.8 billion last year because of economic development tax incentives granted to corporations. The study analyzes the financial reports of 5,600 of the nation's 13,500 independent public school districts.

Good Jobs First was able to examine 294 audit reports (CAFRs) in New Jersey and found 86 school districts that reported data on tax-abatement related revenue losses. Those losses in New Jersey totaled over \$41 million.

You can search for specific district data at the Good Jobs First "Subsidy Tracker 2" at bit.ly/subsidytrackerjff. The Subsidy Tracker also includes statewide program data. In FY 2017, the New Jersey lost over \$209 million in tax revenue to tax abatement incentives.

Source: goodjobsfirst.org/newmath

GOVERNOR PLEDGES TO INCREASE PRE-K FUNDING

On Jan. 10, Gov. Phil Murphy announced plans to provide nearly \$27 million for preschool education in New Jersey's public schools, a measure that NJEA has long supported. Addressing the crowd at the Woodmere Elementary School in Eatontown, Murphy outlined a second round of state funding to create or expand preschool programs in 33 additional school districts through the state's Preschool Education Expansion Aid (PEEA), which would allow over 2,300 more children access to a high-quality preschool classroom later this fall.

"Expanding early childhood education is among the smartest investments we can make for the future of our state," Murphy said. "Providing children with access to high-quality education is a vital component of building a stronger and fairer New Jersey where children and families can thrive."

New Jersey's current school funding system expands preschool offerings to all students who are at risk in districts across the state. In 2008, under Gov. Jon Corzine, state law provided pre-K programs in 35 school districts, but promised to expand pre-K to more communities. The first funding for that promise occurred nearly a decade later—in mid-2017 for the 2017-18 school year.

Significant funding for pre-k expansion was included for the 2018-19 school year as part of the first budget under the Murphy administration. Although more than 100 New Jersey communities now have pre-K, under the law, the number should be in the hundreds, leaving tens of thousands of 3- and 4-year-olds still waiting for access to pre-K.

NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty attended the announcement.

"NJEA is proud to advocate for

expanded access to high-quality pre-kindergarten," Beatty said. "It is one of the most effective steps in ensuring that every child has the support and resources he or she needs to succeed. We are pleased that Gov. Murphy also recognizes its value and is committed to secure funding to make it a reality here in New Jersey."

NJEA believes that all children should be afforded access to safe, high quality early childhood education. This education should include a developmentally appropriate curriculum, knowledgeable and well-trained staff and educators, comprehensive services to support health, nutrition, and social welfare, and a program that respects and supports diversity.

The demand for early childhood education programs has continued to increase in response to the growing recognition of the critical importance of educational experiences during the early years. High-quality developmen-

tally appropriate early childhood programs produce both short- and long-term positive effects on a child's cognitive and social development.

Earlier this school year, Murphy announced the initial round of PEEA funding, allocating \$20.6 million to expand existing preschool programs for more than 2,000 children in another 31 school districts. This latest announcement brings the total funding to nearly \$50 million and brings the state closer to its goal of making access to preschool a reality for as many children as possible. 🇺🇸

NJEA IS PROUD TO ADVOCATE FOR EXPANDED ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY PRE-KINDERGARTEN.



NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty attended the governor's announcement with local, district and legislative leaders in Eatontown. From left: NJEA Field Representative Chris Johnson, Eatontown Schools Superintendent Scott McCue, Eatontown EA President Nichole Brockriede, Assemblywoman Joann Downey, Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling, and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Steve Beatty.



Florence Taliercio
THE 2019 ESP OF THE YEAR

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY

FLORENCE TALIERCIO is an organizational powerhouse. Ask anyone in the information technology department in the East Brunswick School District. Or any of the nearly 1,300 members of the East Brunswick Education Association (EBEA). Or any of the volunteers at the many charitable projects she supports. Or anyone in her family.

Taliercio throws herself into every endeavor with enthusiasm, energy, skill and a smile. When she became the Director of Support Staff for EBEA, which represents 464 educational support professionals (ESP) across East Brunswick Public School District, Taliercio got to the schools before 6 a.m. to introduce herself to the staff. She sacrificed her lunch to visit all eight elementary schools, so ESP would know who she was and how to get in contact with her.

Taliercio is a committed problem-solver. She developed a survey for all ESP staff to help identify areas that needed attention, and then worked with the district's human resources staff and the head of curriculum to develop workshops the ESP staff requested. Some of those workshops include ESP Health and Wellness workshops for maintenance, grounds, custodial, child nutrition and transportation staff.

According to EBEA President Dr. Dana Zimbicki, "Flo has made a profound difference in the culture of our association. Her passion for doing what is right for the association, our community and our students is contagious!"

Taliercio has worked with the East Brunswick Vocational-Technical School and Lunch Break, an organization that provides food, clothing, life skills and fellowship in the region, to organize winter coat drives. She helped to lead a community service event where ESP members volunteered on weekends to clean

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.

**"I'M PROUD
TO BE A
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UNION THAT
IS STRONG,
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THE UNION IS
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ONE PERSON
CAN'T DO IT
ALONE."**

and beautify Butterfly Park. She organized a "day of thanks" and a local chiropractor gave ESP massages. She has volunteered hours of her time at the Bear Necessities Den, a second-hand clothing store for families in need established by EBEA and the East Brunswick Education Foundation.

AN ADVOCATE FOR MEMBERS

Taliercio is a tireless advocate for her members. She has seen the power that unions have to improve economic opportunities for working people, and she makes it a priority to get involved in her local association and volunteer her time so that it stays strong.

"I'm proud to be a member of a union that is strong, united, and looking out for our best interests," Taliercio said. "I like being part of a team; anything you do with the union is teamwork. One person can't do it alone."

Taliercio has served on the EBEA Negotiation Team since 2015. She has been chief building representative since 2006. She currently serves as a member of the ESP Council, ESP Evaluation System Committee, Contract Writing Committee, Pension Action Committee, Public Relations Committee and on the EBEA Alliance. In addition, she is a PRIDE Committee Captain and a Together for Success Captain.

At the county level, Taliercio has been a delegate to the Middlesex County Education Association (MCEA) and has served on the MCEA Collective Bargaining Council since 2015.

At the district level, Taliercio is a member of the district calendar committee.

In 2015, Taliercio won the East Brunswick Support Staff of the Year award. In 2018, she was named Middlesex County Educational Support Professional of the Year. And now, she is the 2019 New Jersey Educational Support Professional of the Year.

"I LOVE MY JOB!"

Taliercio is amazed by the accolades, especially when she considers how she got to East

Brunswick in the first place.

"My husband and I lived in Brooklyn, and he was commuting into New Jersey every day for work. One day, he'd had enough. He came home and announced, 'Flo, we're moving to Jersey!' and I said, 'Joe, what the heck am I going to do in New Jersey? I don't know anyone!'"

The Taliercios chose East Brunswick for the school system. In addition to caring for their two children, Robert and Jennifer, Taliercio sold Avon, Tupperware, and started a home-based business selling jeans.

When she heard that Chittick Elementary School in East Brunswick was looking for lunch aides in 1989, she applied for the two-hour a day position. She then added an hour in the office making copies for teachers and helping the school nurse. Taliercio's energy is vast; she later added another job as a bus aide assisting special needs students for two hours in the afternoons.

"The schedule worked for me," Taliercio said. "I was home when my children were home. In the summer, I subbed as a clerk when the district needed additional help."

After nine years, Taliercio's co-workers recommended that she work full-time with the district. Her children were older by then, so the idea appealed to her, but she still found herself combining jobs. The technology department was looking for someone to organize deliveries and work with custodians to get them to the schools, so she accepted that position and one with the Educational Technology Training Center. Eventually, East Brunswick realized they needed a full-time person in the technology department, and Taliercio went full-time, but she found herself coming full-circle.

"My window in the technology department faces the playground at Chittick Elementary School," Taliercio said. "I can still see the children playing outside, and the lunch aides watching over them."

As a secretary in the technology department, Taliercio is respon-

sible for a variety of tasks. She keeps attendance for the department, maintains the technology calendar, does the purchasing for the technology equipment in the district, renews maintenance contracts and licenses for software, helps teachers with grants, supervises the inventory of equipment, sends broken equipment out for services and monitors all service agreements, gathers all the quotes and pricing, provides budgeting support for the 22 people in the department, and works with the Chief Information Officer to meet the technology needs for the district's eight elementary schools, one middle school, one junior high school, and one high school.

"I love my job," Taliercio said. "I walk in every morning and my department is like my family. We are respectful, we help each other,

and we're friends."

Working in the technology department has other benefits, Taliercio has found.

"When I came into the technology department, I had a Commodore 64. We bought it for my son. I would look at it and never touch it!"

Taliercio's colleagues in the technology department trained her and helped her feel more comfortable with technology.

"Every year, my job is different," Taliercio said. "There are new products, new ideas, and new inventory. I love the challenge of mastering these new areas."

ELEVATING ALL ESP MEMBERS

The challenge of serving as the state ESP of the Year is not lost on Taliercio, who shuns the spotlight.

Yet, she is honored by the opportunity to elevate her platform advocating for ESPs.

"It means the world to me to advocate for ESPs," Taliercio said. "I try to be a positive voice speaking on behalf of ESP. I try to focus on fairness; what's fair for one is fair for another. When an ESP is being treated unfairly and they're afraid to speak up, I have to speak up.

"I am so appreciative of this honor, and I want to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart," Taliercio added. "I really believe that I am receiving this award on behalf of all ESPs and I am going to accept it for all of us."

Taliercio's family is proud of all her achievements, and happy to see her receive the honors and recognitions she deserves. Taliercio's husband, Joseph, is recently retired working in communications with

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 456. Her son, Robert, is an electrician with IBEW Local 456 and lives in Hamilton Township, Mercer County. Jennifer, a registered dental hygienist, works in Long Valley, Morris County and lives in Clinton Township. Taliercio is the proud grandmother of Joseph, 7, Brayden, 3, and Gabriella, 8 months.

As the 2019 ESP of the Year, Taliercio has already been nominated by NJEA for the NEA ESP of the Year award. She will attend the NEA ESP Conference in Orlando, Florida, funded by NJEA, and will receive a weeklong Disney vacation. To commemorate the experience, NJEA will present her with an ESP of the Year ring, and she will be a special guest at the 2019 NJEA Convention. 🏠

"FLO HAS MADE A **PROFOUND** DIFFERENCE IN THE CULTURE OF OUR ASSOCIATION. HER **PASSION** FOR DOING WHAT IS RIGHT FOR THE ASSOCIATION, OUR **COMMUNITY** AND OUR STUDENTS IS CONTAGIOUS!"



The colleagues of 2019 NJEA ESP of the Year Florence Taliercio gathered to congratulate her. From left: Yanina Vesely, Nick LaTronica, Jen Johnson, Matt Orlando, Taliercio, Linda Starosciak, Doreen Puliafico, and Denise Girgenti.

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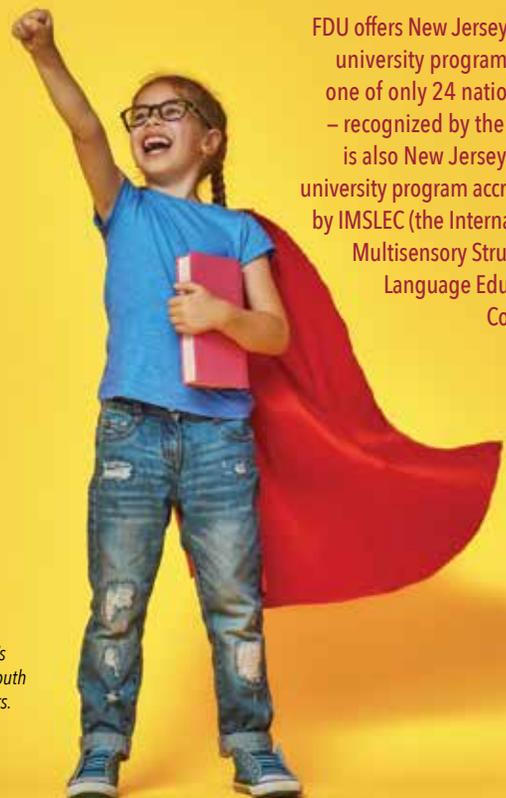
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From left: PRESSA President Olive Giles, ESP mentors Trey Delaney and Christine DeDomenico, and mentee Mia Musachio.



Princeton ESP mentoring program unique in the state

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY

While mentoring programs for new teachers have been an established educational practice for decades, the same consideration has not been paid to educational support professionals (ESPs) working in New Jersey public schools. Programs that did exist failed to thrive, and today, there is only one known, district-supported mentoring program for ESPs in the state of New Jersey, and only two others nationwide.

But that trajectory could change, thanks to the commitment of Princeton Regional Education Support Staff Association (PRESSA) President Olive Giles and Lewis Goldstein, assistant superintendent in Princeton Public Schools and the head of human resources.

Beginning in 2016, Giles and Goldstein began collaborating on the Princeton Public Schools Support Staff Mentoring Program.

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.

Giles, a secretary with the Child Study Team and Guidance departments at Princeton High School, believed an ESP mentoring program would be beneficial for her members, as well as the students they served.

“When I started in education 25 years ago, I felt like a kindergarten getting on the big bus,” Giles recalls. “I was overwhelmed with the scope of the job, the unique needs of the staff I was supporting, as well as the students we interacted with. I would have enjoyed the job more, and been more successful right from the beginning, if I’d had someone to help me understand the way schools work. Schools are a completely different entity from most job sites; they are not a corporate environment.”

Giles, as well as the other staff, received informal mentoring from their colleagues, but without a formal program, the mentoring opportunities had to be squeezed into already packed schedules; or worse, after there had already been an issue, which was demoralizing to the new staff.

Goldstein was also motivated

to meet ESP staff needs. The success of Princeton’s teacher mentoring program encouraged him to attempt something similar for ESP.

Teachers in Princeton undergo a seven-year induction program that is unique in the nation. Goldstein believed a similar program for ESP would be very successful, not only in boosting new ESP’s confidence, building strong working relationships among staff, and improving outcomes for students, but also in demonstrating the value administration and the board of education placed on the work ESP do every day.

“This program helps to put ESPs on equal footing with teachers and certificated staff,” Goldstein said. “It shows that we take their professional growth as seriously as we do teachers’. The work that ESP do is critical to the success of the district, and we are always looking to implement programs that show how valued ESPs are in Princeton Public Schools.”

The first ESP mentor class occurred during the 2017-18 school year with 32 participants,

including 16 new hires.

In 2018-19, the program doubled; there are 33 new hires and 66 total ESP staff participating in the program.

DEVELOPING STRONGER BONDS AMONG STAFF

At least one mentor-mentee pair has developed a bond that transcends the work day. Christine DeDomenico is now a secretary in the counseling department at Princeton High School. She started in the district in 2013 and had to learn her first job the hard way. Without an official mentor program, she initially struggled, but ultimately succeeded. The challenges she faced motivated her to provide the mentoring she would have liked to her replacement, Mia Musachio, who now holds DeDomenico’s position as a secretary and substitute nurse coordinator.

“When I was first hired, it was just ‘figure it out,’” DeDomenico said. “Everyone was very friendly and helpful, but you don’t want to bother people. If I could go back, knowing what I know now, I would have done things differ-

ently and asked people for help.”

Musachio continues to rely on DeDomenico for advice and support, and proudly shares the tips, advice, and detailed notes that DeDomenico provided her, helping her to be successful in her role from day one.

“Poor Chris was thrown into this job with no help,” Musachio said. “She left me such detailed notes. There are notes that she left me that I refer to on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Some of these tasks are done so infrequently that it’s easy to forget; I know that she is only a phone call away if I need her.”

DeDomenico is also open to Musachio trying new strategies.

“When you come into a job, sometimes you see things differently and you want to try a new approach to a task,” DeDomenico said. “People say, ‘this is how we do it.’ I try to be more flexible with Mia. Just because that’s the way we’ve always done something doesn’t mean that’s the only way or even the best way. I’ve learned a lot from her, as well.”

The two don’t just share a strong working relationship; their bond has developed into a friendship that includes birthday lunches and a lot of laughter.

“I would highly recommend creating an ESP mentoring program to other districts,” Musachio said. “These relationships you build help facilitate the work and keeps people in the district.”

“This isn’t just a relationship for a year,” DeDomenico said. “This is for life.”

GETTING THE BASICS AND DISCOVERING HIDDEN TALENTS

For Trey Delaney, an instructional aide in the Bridges to the Future program, the decision to

volunteer as a mentor was easy.

“No one had to sell me on this program,” Delaney said. “I think mentoring is something we should do more of.”

When Delaney began in the district, he actively sought out mentoring from the school psychologist and classroom teachers.

“Everyone was very receptive and helpful, but the onus was on you and you don’t know what you don’t know,” Delaney said.

“Basic things like where you get your keys on the first day of school would be so much easier having a formal mentor. And that’s what I’ve tried to do for Mireya.”

Delaney mentors Mireya Montone, an instructional aide. Getting to know her allowed him to see that she had underutilized skills that could be beneficial to the district. He encouraged her to become certified as a district translator, a role she now holds in addition to her work in the Bridges to the Future program.

HOW MENTORING WORKS

While the district’s new hire orientation covers a multitude of issues, new staff have an opportunity, with their mentors, to go into greater detail about topics such as curricula, sexual harassment, working with bilingual and special needs students, the use of social media as a district employee, classroom and behavior management skills, customer service and responsiveness to external and internal constituents, and preventative maintenance training.

Working with a mentor who really knows and understands the specific work the new hire does enables a level of specificity that a districtwide training on any one topic is unable to provide.

The mentoring program

provides for a minimum of 10 hours of meetings during the school year. Participants submit a log, signed by the mentor and mentee, of the dates and times of their meetings at the end of the school year.

During their first year in the district, new support staff also meet informally with the appropriate administrator to ascertain their progress prior to the formal, end-of-year evaluation.

The new ESP staff are also entitled to a minimum of one professional development opportunity or workshop during the year that is relevant to their work assignments. If the district pays for the workshop, the staff member is required to write a minimum of a one-page summary of the opportunity.

At the end of the school year, each support staff member submits a one-page reflection to their immediate supervisor and Goldstein that shares what the staff member learned, how they improved over the school year, their goals for next year, what they observed to be the benefits of the mentor-mentee relationship, and the number of hours the mentor and mentee spent together, as well as the topics discussed.

UNION AND ADMINISTRATION COLLABORATION

While the value of the program is evident, it could have only happened with a strong, collaborative relationship between the union and administration.

Giles and Goldstein point to their longstanding and mutually respectful working relationship as a key factor in the success of the ESP mentoring program.

“In Lew, we have a partner who understands the role that the union can and does

play,” Giles said. “It is mutually beneficial for the union and administration to work together to bridge the gap that can exist, not because we’re not all working towards the same goal, but because we have different roles to play in achieving that goal. At times in the past, there had been a disconnect between ESP and administration. This program has helped each understand the role that the other plays.

“Olive and I go back for many years,” Goldstein said. “We respect each other, and we have worked together on many projects. In order to lead as an administrator, you have to be equal partners with the union presidents. There are disagreements, just like a family, but at the end of the day, every one of us is here for the right reasons: to educate the students we serve in a safe, respectful environment.”

“I believe this investment will reap great benefits in the long run,” Goldstein said. “To implement this program in New Jersey is a remarkable accomplishment that benefits staff and students.”

Giles and Goldstein are eager to share their program and what they have learned with other districts. They enthusiastically endorse the idea that other districts might adopt similar ESP mentoring programs.

The PRESSA represents more than 210 members, including bus aides, lunch aides, secretaries, clerical staff, instructional aides, and maintenance and custodial staff.

For more information about starting an ESP mentoring program, email Kathryn Coulibaly at kcoulibaly@njea.org. 

PRINCETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUPPORT STAFF MENTORING PROGRAM

**“This
program
helps to
put ESPs
on equal
footing
with
teachers
and
certificated
staff.”**

INTRODUCTION

The Princeton Public Schools mentoring program provides opportunities for collegial support for all newly hired support staff. New hires develop partnerships with experienced staff members selected to serve as coaches, role models and guides, helping each new support staff member to be successful in our district.

VISION STATEMENT

The long-term vision of the mentoring program is to retain quality support staff and to improve the quality of classroom assistance, delivery of district services and the maintenance of school grounds and school buildings. It is important that support staff new to the school district receive the support, advice and direction necessary to make their first year experience a successful and meaningful as possible.

MISSION STATEMENT

Princeton Public Schools understands that support for incoming support staff members within the school district is critical. It will determine not only how well they perform their duties but their longevity within our system. Mentoring, a unique function within the education environment, allows the support staff member to obtain the support and professional expertise necessary for a successful experience.

PROGRAM GOALS/OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives in the mentoring program are specific, achievable, relevant and tactically sound. They include:

1. Assign a mentor with experience relevant to the mentee's assignment to each new support staff member to facilitate communication.
2. Train and guide incoming support staff members to facilitate their success in their roles.
3. Familiarize new hires with district and school policies and procedure.
4. Create opportunities for mentors to assist new hires.
5. Provide a nonthreatening environment for incoming support staff members.
6. Provide ongoing support, encouragement and networking.
7. Reflect on, evaluate and update the support staff mentor program annually.

Mentors serve as trusted friends and counselors to the first-year new hires. Mentors possess the skills and abilities that are invaluable to their mentees that, when shared, makes their path to success easier. Mentors recognize the need for transitional support to the new hires and work to make the transition as smooth as possible during the support staff member's first year in Princeton.

RIGHT: PRESSA President Olive Giles and Princeton Asst. Superintendent Lewis Goldstein.



FAR RIGHT: PRESSA member Mia Musachio poses in front of her office bulletin board with the indispensable notes and information she received from her mentor and friend, Christine DeDomenico.



THE DEBTOR CLASS

STUDENT LOAN DEBT DEBACLE WAS DECADES IN THE MAKING

BY KEVIN PARKER

In a 2015 report, the Center for Responsible Lending asserted that “although post-secondary education has never been more important, it has also never been more expensive.” In fact, student loans were second only to mortgages in consumer debt, topping \$1 trillion in 2012 (the latest year cited in the report). The report found that while the total number of students enrolled in college increased, which accounts in part for the increase in overall student loan debt, the percentage of individual college students taking on student loan debt, and the amount of that debt, increased as well.

This is an issue that acutely affects New Jersey. According to an October 2018 policy brief, also from the Center for Responsible Lending, 1 million New Jersey residents have a collective outstanding student loan debt of \$41 billion. New Jersey’s colleges and universities had the fourth-highest tuition and fees, and the Class of 2017 graduated with the sixth-highest student loan debt in the nation.

While this may appear to be an issue particular to newer members, it is a crisis with a long prelude. The roots of the crisis, in fact, stretch back decades; so far, that nearly all members—early-, mid- or late-career—have lived with the consequences. While student debt has garnered immense media attention recently, the crisis began in the early 1980s.

ROOTS OF A CRISIS

Since 1981, college tuition and fees, once adjusted for inflation, increased 368 percent and 277 percent at four- and two-year public institutions, respectively. While there is no clear, direct cause for this increase, recent research notes several factors.

In *Tuition Rising: Why College Costs So Much*, Ronald G. Ehrenberg argues that costs would inevitably rise both because it is impossible for professors to easily increase “productivity” and because, unlike a private company, universities are looking to maximize education, not profit. This explanation does, in part, answer the question, but it should be noted that Ehrenberg only considers elite private institutions in his study

Kevin Parker is a part-time NJEA Communications Consultant and an English teacher at Washington Township High School in Gloucester County. He can be reached at kparker@njea.org.

and frames his argument quite narrowly.

Conversely, in *The Price of Admission*, Thomas J. Kane finds multiple sources: increased demand for college degrees, cuts in state subsidies and inadequate funding from the federal government. Both of those works are from the early 2000s, but there has been little reason to consider their theses outdated. In fact, since the publication of those studies, government spending on higher education has continued to decline: a 2011 study from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, for example, found that, in the wake of the 2007 Financial Crisis, 43 states made cuts to higher education funding.

Exacerbating this has been a steady decline in graduates’ ability to pay; just as increases in tuition and fees is decades old, so is the stagnation of wages. A 2018 report from the Economic Policy Institute titled “America’s Slow-Motion Wage Crisis” found that from 1979 to 2017, “a middle-wage worker earned just 16.8 percent more...[corresponding] to an annual [wage] growth rate of just 0.4 percent per year.” The report goes on to note that this nominal increase is distorted by the fact the American workforce is generally older now than it was in 1979 and that most of the growth in wages came in a single window from 1996 to the early 2000s. Even with this overall flattening of worker wages, public-sector wages, for those who retained their positions, have fallen farther behind the private sector, as the EPI discovered in research from 2014.

Comparing the low, double-digit increase in wages to the triple-digit increase in tuition and fees throws the problem into stark relief for NJEA members. According to the latest data available, the age of the average member during the 2016-2017 school year was 44, so the exorbitant increases were well underway by the time an average member graduated in 1995. A rapidly rising student debt load coupled with a stagnating capacity to repay it, creates a bleak financial outlook.

PERSONAL AND POLITICAL ACTION

Despite being susceptible to these trends, NJEA members have opportunities to lighten their student loan debt burden. First, members

SEE FOR YOURSELF

The following resources were consulted in the drafting of this article.

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NJEA MEMBERS HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO LIGHTEN THEIR STUDENT LOAN DEBT BURDEN.

CAMDEN COUNTY LOCALS HOST STUDENT LOAN DEBT WORKSHOP

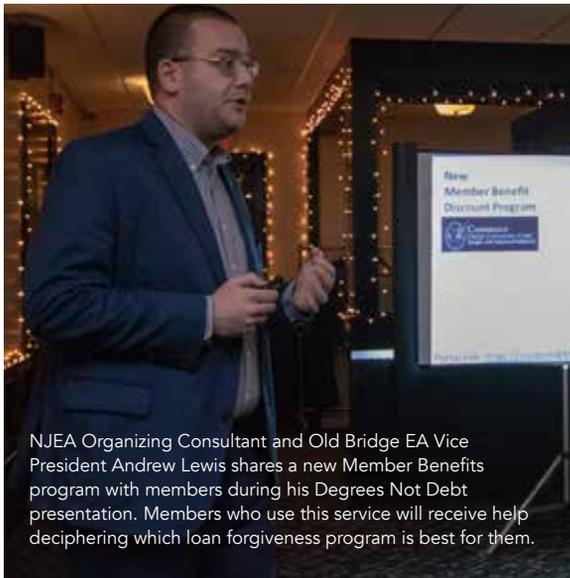
have options for how they wish to repay their student loans. Secondly, for their public service, members may be offered several forms of loan forgiveness. NJEA offers both a webinar and a live presentation on these options. See the sidebar story and visit njea.org/studentloandebt for more information.

The loan forgiveness program, however, has become an opaque, time-consuming and frustrating process, so much so that most applicants have been denied. As reported in *The New York Times* in October 2018, the Department of Education disclosed that of 28,207 applicants, only 3,000 were still under consideration. This should not deter members from applying if they were eligible, but they should be prepared for a protracted experience.

Restructuring student loan payments or seeking forgiveness of debt, however, is not the end of it. These increases were not inevitable, but rather the consequence—intended or not—of deliberate political choices. Only political action, therefore, can countermand it. Already, there are calls for greater levels of student loan forgiveness and public financing of public universities—witness Bernie Sanders' 2016 campaign, Cynthia Nixon's 2017 campaign, and a host of new members in the 116th United States Congress. 🏠



Mount Ephraim EA members Kristen Snow and Andrew Tsahakis review the application for Public Service Loan Forgiveness during NJEA's Degrees Not Debt workshop.



NJEA Organizing Consultant and Old Bridge EA Vice President Andrew Lewis shares a new Member Benefits program with members during his Degrees Not Debt presentation. Members who use this service will receive help deciphering which loan forgiveness program is best for them.

Members of the Woodlynne, Oaklyn, Mount Ephraim and Collingswood education associations gathered in Haddon Township on Dec. 5 for the first-ever live presentation of NJEA's popular "Degrees Not Debt" webinar. Andrew Lewis, a teacher in Old Bridge and consultant in the NJEA Organizational Development Division, spoke to members about payment, consolidation and forgiveness of student loan debt and answered their questions.

During his introduction, Region 3 UniServ Field Representative Jim Boice credited Lewis with creating the webinar.

"We offer the XYZs of Retirement workshop for our veteran members, but Andrew came up with the idea of doing something specifically for our early career ones," Boice said.

The concept of a live presentation rather than a webinar came from Rick Pentz, the president of the Collingswood Education Association (CEA).

"In the wake of the Janus decision, we were looking for ways to engage members and show the value of our association, especially to the new members," Pentz explained.

CEA had already been making the case for member benefits in terms of services and product savings, Pentz noted, "but this was an issue we were hearing a lot about, so we started asking around."

The response from CEA members was immediate.

"Even today I was getting asked questions, Pentz said. "I probably came here with 10 new ones."

A national issue, student loan debt acutely affects New Jersey. According to an October 2018 policy brief from the Center for Responsible Lending, 1 million New Jersey residents have a collective outstanding student loan debt of \$41 billion. New Jersey's

colleges and universities had the fourth-highest tuition and fees, and the Class of 2017 graduated with the sixth-highest student loan debt in the nation. While this clearly affects new members, it is also a concern for midcareer members, as the rise of college tuition and fees is a decades-old trend.

Jeff Suwak, a 10-year veteran of the Woodlynne School District, came to the workshop because he was nearing the 10 years of service required for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program. Kristen Snow and Jenna Carrell of the Mt. Ephraim Education Association came because a co-worker had recently had her student loans forgiven under the PSLF program, and they wanted to learn how to do it for themselves.

In his presentation, Lewis surveyed the statistics on student loan debt, reviewed the positives and negatives of debt consolidation, the options for repayment, as well as the three possibilities for loan forgiveness. When asked for the most common mistake members make with student loan debt, Lewis said they are often enrolled in the wrong repayment plan and would likely benefit from one of the other options. Typically, recent graduates enroll in a default repayment plan, unaware of the possibilities available to them.

For more information, check out the "Degrees Not Debt" Webinar at njea.org/dndwebinars. If you would like NJEA to bring this presentation to your local association, contact your UniServ field representative.

SINCE 1981, COLLEGE TUITION AND FEES, ONCE ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION INCREASED 368 PERCENT AND 277 PERCENT AT FOUR- AND TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, RESPECTIVELY.

WE ARE WORTH IT

Standing together across district and county lines, NJEA members participated in escalating collective actions as the campaign to pass the Chapter 78 relief and Job Justice ESPs bills intensifies. The member-led organizing activity has earned each of the three bills more than 20 sponsors in the Assembly. Public school employees are eager to see these bills move the bills to Gov. Murphy's desk.

Capitalizing on the legislative momentum, NJEA members in local associations around the state participated in Worth-It Wednesdays each Wednesday in January. Worth-It Wednesday consisted of NJEA members participating in collective actions designed to engage more members in the campaign.

The members who participated tapped into the national #RedForEd movement, by wearing red as a symbol of their solidarity with their fellow union members as they fight for the passage of the three bills.

Each local association that participated in the Worth-It Wednesdays did so with their own actions. From walk-ins to creating signs to writing postcards to legislators, each local planned their own actions that fit the needs of their association. Many who participated in the collective action shared their action on social media using #FixTheUnfairness. 🏠

Jersey City Education Association



Jersey City Education Association



Plainfield Education Association



Plainfield Education Association



Union Township Education Association



Linden Education Association

CH. 78 RELIEF

S-2606/A-4352

WHAT WOULD IT DO?

S-2606/ A-4352 would provide relief to Chapter 78 by tying public employees' premium share for health benefits to a percentage of salary instead of a percentage of premium cost. This bill would reduce the amount most NJEA members pay toward their health insurance and return fairness to the bargaining table.

JOB JUSTICE

S-296/A-3185/A-3395

WHAT WOULD IT DO?

S-296/A-3185/A-3395 would prohibit employers from entering into subcontracting agreements during the term of an existing collective bargaining agreement. Once a collective bargaining agreement expires, an employer would be permitted to enter into a subcontracting agreement only if the employer provides written notice and the employer offers the majority representative the opportunity to meet and discuss the decision to subcontract and negotiate over its impact. The bill would also mandate that each employee replaced or displaced because of a subcontracting agreement would retain all previously acquired seniority and would have recall rights if the subcontracting terminates.

S-3089/A-3664

WHAT WOULD IT DO?

S-3089A-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.

HOW TO WRITE FOR THE NJEA REVIEW

WHAT CAN I SUBMIT FOR PUBLICATION?

FEATURE ARTICLE—The *Review* feature articles address areas of interest to NJEA members. This is an opportunity to help your colleagues improve their skills by describing a successful approach or strategy. A feature article should range between 1,400 and 2,000 words. Remember to use subheads to break up sections; consider listing resources or tips as a separate sidebar.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR—Respond to content that has appeared in the *Review* by submitting a letter to the editor, maximum 250 words. A letter/email must be received by the 10th of the month in order for it to appear in the subsequent issue (that is, Sept. 10 for the October *Review*).

SELFIE OF THE MONTH—Attending a local, county or state association event? Snap a quick selfie with your colleagues at a meeting, training, rally, conference, etc. and submit it to njeareview@njea.org. One selfie will be featured in “The Advocate” column each month. Be sure to include the names of the members who appear in the photo and a brief description of the event where it was taken.

QUICK TIP—Do you have a great idea regarding classroom management? A better way to complete a mundane task? A favorite website? An app you and your students can’t live without? The *Review*’s “Bulletin Board” column includes quick tips from experts like you. Submissions should be 250 words or less.

SPEAK OUT—This occasional column lets members opine about a hot topic in education. If you have strong feelings about a current issue that would be of interest to other members, speak out in an essay of 500 words or less.

PROUD MOMENTS—Has your local association used PRIDE funds to promote our great public schools? Send a brief description and your best photo to ProudMoments@njea.org.

TOOLBOX—If you have a great way to incorporate technology to boost student learning, consider writing about it in the “Toolbox” column. Share your expertise in 1,000 words or less.

HOW DO I SUBMIT FOR PUBLICATION?

NOTE: The NJEA Review follows the Associated Press Stylebook.

For more information, visit www.apstylebook.com.

If children are pictured—even in a public setting—you must provide proof that you have parent/guardian permission for NJEA to publish the photo.

If you do not already have media release forms on file for pictured students, use the release form found under “Documents” at njea.org/RAA.

SUBMITTING CONTENT

Email submissions to njeareview@njea.org. Be sure to include your name and contact information, the name of your district and what you do there, the name of your local association, as well as the name and contact information of your local association president. Submissions for the Proud Moments page can be sent to proudmoments@njea.org.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your submission, but the review process can take several weeks. Please be patient; the editor will get back to you and let you know if we will use your submission. You may be asked to revise the piece, but will be given specific suggestions on what needs to be changed.

If your submission is not accepted for publication in the *Review*, don’t be discouraged! While your article may not be right for the *Review*, it may be appropriate for another publication. All submissions, even letters to the editor, may be edited for length, style and content.

SUBMITTING PHOTOGRAPHS

The *Review* prints high-quality, high resolution photographs. If you have photographs that fit this description (300 dpi or usually above 1MB in size), please do not send them until your submission has been accepted for publication. At that time, you will be instructed on the best way to send your photos.

If your photos feature students, you will need to provide the appropriate district parental release forms. If those forms are not available, you will be asked to have parents sign an NJEA photo release form.

A FEW WORDS OF ADVICE

If you plan to submit a feature article or something for Toolbox or Speak Out, contact the editor before you start to write. This will ensure that your topic is appropriate and/or hasn’t been recently covered in the magazine.

Remember your audience—write for NJEA members, not parents, students or the general public. Readability, soundness of content and the ability to arouse reader interest are the keys to a successful submission. 📧



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

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GOT MOLD IN YOUR SCHOOL?

WHO CLEANS IT UP? HOW?

BY DOROTHY WIGMORE

There's been a flood in the school or a drain backed up. Water leaked through the ceiling. Humidity levels were high.

Mold may be next, developing on anything from walls and ceilings to musical instruments and books. When it appears, students and staff—especially if they have allergies or respiratory problems—can get sick from live or dead mold. It requires proper action within at least 48 hours. (For more about preventing mold, see “Why my school?” in the January Review.)

But what's the right way to “clean and dry”? Who should do it? What can other school staff do?

RULES AND GUIDANCE COVER REMEDIATION. WHO DOES IT?

New Jersey's public sector indoor air quality (IAQ) standard [NJAC 12:100-13.1 (2007)] requires employers have a trained “designated person” responsible for prevention and problem-solving. Mandated mold-related remediation includes dealing with wet materials within 48 hours after discovery of its presence.

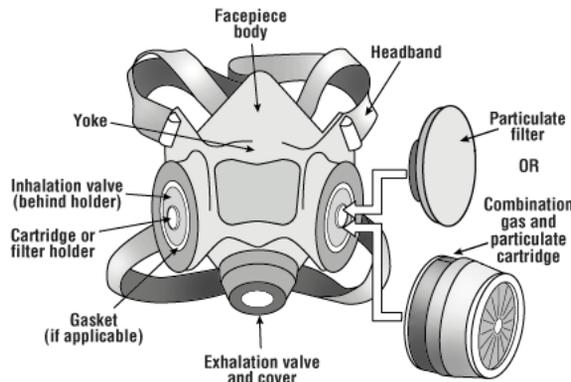
In practice, custodians usually clean up moldy areas. New Jersey's Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health and federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines say those staff can clean up small- and mid-sized moldy areas, with proper training about the hazards and methods, and the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE). Training should be part of the mandatory hazard communication program (NJAC 12:100-7) for these workers. This training is required

Dorothy Wigmore is a long-time health and safety specialist, trained in occupational hygiene, ergonomics, work organization/stress and education. A former journalist, the Canadian has worked in the U.S. and Mozambique and been involved in efforts to prevent violence on the job since 1989.

when someone starts a job or new hazards are present. As of 2017, refresher training is required every other year. It must cover the hazards, clean-up methods and PPE required.

That PPE includes respirators. If the employer doesn't offer a respirator, workers can request it. Either way, PEOSH's Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134) applies. Employers must ensure users are medically approved to wear one, fit tested for the device and trained about how to use it.

Single-use N-95s often are recommended for mold remediation. Recent work indicates



The basic parts of a typical half-facepiece respirator are shown. Two common options are illustrated on the right. Both sides of the respirator would take the same type of filter or cartridge.

that workers likely are better protected with reusable “elastomeric” (silicone or rubber) half-face respirators fitted with P100 filters. (See above graphic.)

WHAT'S THE RIGHT WAY TO CLEAN UP MOLD?

Procedures depend on the size of the moldy area and the surface affected. Everyone in the building is protected if custodians and maintenance workers are protected, the work is done properly and thoroughly, and the mold is not allowed to spread.

SIZE OF CONTAMINATED AREA AFFECTS PROCEDURES

When the affected area exceeds 30 square

feet, it's time for professional help. Additional help is also needed if remediation workers or people nearby may have had significant exposure to mold spores. These situations require special training and PPE, with full “containment” (i.e., the area—including its ventilation system—is closed off with plastic and duct tape, under negative pressure).

For small contaminated spots, less than 10 square feet:

- Clean-up staff needs effective and fitted PPE (respirator, gloves, and goggles).
- No one else should be in the work area and people in nearby spaces—especially the immune-suppressed or those with asthma or allergies—should be moved away.
- Workers should mist or otherwise dampen the area before working on it.
- The area must be treated (using a material-specific method), or removed in a sealed, impermeable plastic bag.
- The treated area, and where remediation workers came and went, must be wiped down with a damp cloth/mop and detergent, and dried.

For medium areas, the PPE required depends on how likely those doing the work are to inhale the mold or get it in their eyes. Besides the procedures for small spots, workers:

- Need to cover things in the affected area with secured plastic to prevent further contamination and contain dust/debris.
- After the job is done, use a HEPA vacuum on the work area and spaces they went through, followed by cleaning with a damp cloth/mop and detergent.
- Clean and dry the vacuum tanks, hoses and attachments.

Neither chlorine bleach (it can cause or aggravate asthma) or other biocides (they are toxic) should be used. The area is not being sterilized. The goal is to get rid of the “extra” spores from the leak, flood, etc.; although there will always be some in the air, naturally.

MATERIALS MATTER

Some materials or surfaces should be removed and replaced, including:

- Books and papers, if they're not valuable.
- Carpet and backing that's not dried within 24 - 48 hours.
- Ceiling tiles.
- Cellulose or fiberglass insulation.
- In some instances, upholstered furniture.
- Wet drywall or gypsum board with obvious swelling and separated seams.

For other things, there are cleaning guidelines such as:

- Freeze valuable books (in a frost-free device).
- Water extraction vacuums, dehumidifiers, and/or fans can dry out carpet, carpet backing, concrete or cinder block surfaces, and most flooring (remember sub-flooring).
- Damp wiping with water and mild detergent cleans hard and porous flooring, plastics, metals, and treated/finished woods (they

must be dried afterwards).

- Other wood needs gentle heat, dehumidifiers and fans.

When in doubt, specialists can help. The district indoor air quality (IAQ) "designated person" or NJEA can point members to these individuals.

There soon may be more "rules" about mold remediation. A-1433 (<http://bit.ly/nja1433>) would require the State Department of Community Affairs to establish mold inspection and "abatement" procedures for schools and residential buildings. It also would have to set up a program to train inspectors and certify those doing remediation. Only people with that training or certification could inspect for, or clean up, mold.

WHAT CAN OTHER STAFF DO?

School staff doing mold remediation may need support to ensure they're protected, trained properly and able to protect others in the school. Other staff and union leaders can learn what's needed and check with custodians and maintenance workers to ensure that it is happening.

"It's not our job to clean up," says Mike Manion, an NJEA UniServ consultant and Central Regional Education Association president. "NJEA members should report mold quickly. Make sure that you're reporting it to both union leaders and administration. Don't sit on it, because if you wait from Monday, when you spot it, till Thursday, it could be much worse." 🚫

RESOURCES**EPA**

Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings Guide, bit.ly/schoolmoldepa

NJEA

Organizing for Better Indoor Air Quality, njea.org/download/1787/

PEOSH: Mold in the Workplace Prevention and Control, 2006. bit.ly/workplacemold

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OPENING CLASSROOM DOORS SHIFTS POWER DYNAMICS IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

BY AMANDA ADAMS
AND DR. STEFANI HITE

Those of us in education know that systemic change requires collaboration. But too often the rhetoric of change indicates that it is being done to teachers, not with them. The differences in quality between and within school systems produce huge educational inequalities that disproportionately affect students of color and those from poor families.

Traditionally, decisions about school improvement are made from the top down. In struggling schools, very little growth is made because changes are made in isolation by one or a very few individuals. When teachers open their classroom doors to share ideas, and collaborate in greater numbers, they are more likely to shift the norms about the way they think about

Amanda Adams is an associate director in the NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division and coordinator of the NJEA Priority Schools Initiative. She can be reached at aadams@njea.org.

Dr. Stefani Hite is a professional learning education consultant who specializes in supporting systemic education change initiatives in schools, districts, learning associations and state departments. Her work is primarily focused on building teacher and administrator instructional capacity, standards-based grading practices, curriculum development, and strategic assessment strategies. Hite can be reached at stef@tigris.solutions.

their work. When teachers have conversations about their students' learning behaviors, visiting each other's classrooms, they feel empowered to solve problems together, they believe they can have an impact student achievement. This is collective teacher efficacy.

In reviewing John Hattie's research on more than 100 influences on student achievement, teacher collective efficacy is at the top of the list—it is the number one positive impact on student achievement as he reported in 2017. When those same educators believe they can have an impact on student success by working together to address common problems of practice, they become more persistent in their efforts, more resilient in the face of challenges and more willing to learn their way together. As a result, their students achieve more.

According to Hattie's statistical analysis as published in *Visible Learning*, a year's worth of learning has the effect size of 0.40. The influences that are among the highest relate to how teachers work together:

- Working together to evaluate their impact: 0.93.
- Moving from what students know now towards explicit success criteria: 0.77.
- Building trust and welcoming errors as opportunities to learn: 0.72.
- Getting maximum feedback from others about their

effect: 0.72.

Collective Efficacy, Jenni Donohoo's work, provides a way to begin thinking practically about collective efficacy by outlining six enabling conditions: advanced teacher influence, goal consensus, teacher knowledge about each other's work, cohesive staff, responsiveness of leadership and effective systems of intervention. Opening classroom doors is an efficient and clear way for teachers know about each other's work and solve problems together.

There is a marked difference between cooperation and collaboration. In a cooperative enterprise, we can accomplish a task because we share responsibility. But it's important to realize that cooperation is not a synonym for collaboration, which means something far more. Through collaboration, we can create something that would not exist without our combined thinking—or we can develop a solution that wouldn't have been considered without multiple minds addressing the problem.

For teachers to truly collaborate, structures must be put into place that create conditions that withstand the demands of the typical teaching day. It isn't enough to provide meeting time and it isn't enough to present teachers with a task or problem to solve. Collective efficacy, as Donohoo contends, "refers to teachers in a school characterized by an attitude that together

they can make a difference for students."

By opening classroom doors educators are learning to see and unlearning to judge. Together classroom teachers challenge existing beliefs about what students can learn and raise questions about the ways schools participate in the reproduction of inequality in education.

SEE FOR YOURSELF

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Meta-Analyses Related To Education*. UK: Routledge

Donohoo, J. (2016). *Collective Efficacy: How Educator's Beliefs Impact Student Learning*. CA: Corwin. 📖



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A CLOSER LOOK

AT CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Thousands of "Classroom Close-up NJ" segments are viewable and downloadable at classroomcloseup.org. A searchable database makes finding an entire show or individual segments on any topic easy.

February is Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month. To survey the broad selection of CTE-related show segments "Classroom Close-up NJ" has produced, visit classroomcloseup.org, click on drop-down menu under "Categories" and select among the multiple subject areas that connect to CTE.

On this page three of those segments are highlighted.

watch

CARING WITH COSMETOLOGY

Cosmetology students from Belleville High School make a difference in the lives of hospital patients by offering their services for free. Teacher Jenna Constantino helps her seniors receive the experience needed to obtain a New Jersey cosmetology license while giving them an opportunity to give back to their community.

JOB FAIR

Hamilton High School West's job fair connects students seeking summer or part-time jobs with employers. Students apply for jobs at area grocery stores, fast food outlets, Trenton Thunder, Six Flags and other businesses. Mark Laurenti's special education students can find permanent jobs that last beyond high school.

PASTRY ARTS

To preserve and promote the craft of baking, Dawn Foods act as mentors to students at The Ocean County Vocational Technology School. Master bakers, technicians and a sales team conduct workshops to demonstrate the latest products and baking equipment. Students get a look into the world of work and learn how to master the skills needed to run a pastry business.



CARING WITH COSMETOLOGY



JOB FAIR



PASTRY ARTS



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WATCH CCU ON NJTV

NJEA's "Classroom Close-up NJ" has won 16 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.

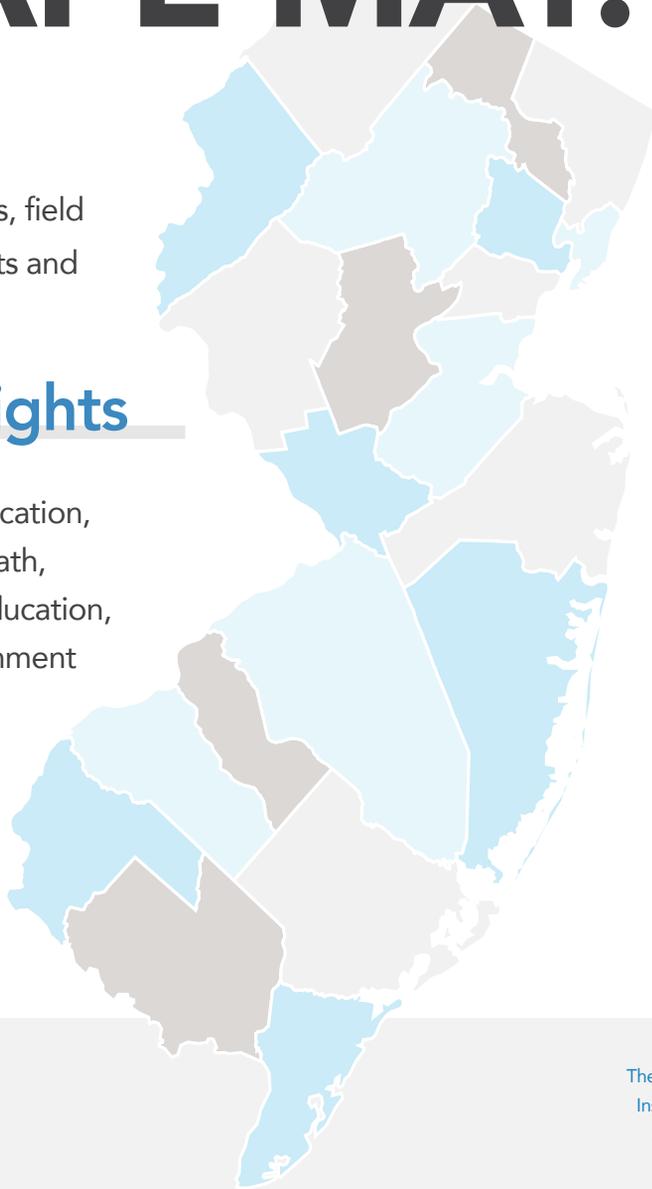
Visit classroomcloseup.org to watch individual segments or the entire show. On Twitter, follow @CCUNJ and "like" the show at [facebook.com/crcunj](https://www.facebook.com/crcunj). On Youtube, visit [youtube.com/c/classroomcloseup](https://www.youtube.com/c/classroomcloseup). On Instagram, search Classroom Close Up.

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MORE TO LEARN ACROSS THE STATE

100TH ANNUAL NJAHPERD CONVENTION

Join your colleagues in the New Jersey Association of Health Physical Education Recreation and Dance (NJAHPERD) on Feb. 24-27 as they celebrate 100 years of advocacy and professional development. The convention will take place at Ocean Place Resort and Spa in Long Branch.

Convention features include in-depth, pre-convention workshops on Sunday, and three full days of programming, general sessions, a networking lunch, an exhibit hall, raffles and socials.

Breakout sessions will focus on lifetime sports and activities, fitness education, technology, dance, health, inclusion, assessment and many other topics to provide you with 21st-century resources. National, Eastern District and NJAHPERD Teachers of the Year from elementary, middle and high school levels will share their expertise and will motivate you to return to your students with new ideas to promote lifetime wellness.

From the exhibitors you will have an opportunity to purchase equipment at discounted prices and participate in sessions that highlight their equipment and services. Thousands of dollars' worth of equipment for your school's program will be raffled off. You must be present to win.

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SHOWCASE

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

NJAGC 2019 CONFERENCE:

IGNITE PASSION WITH PURPOSE

The annual conference of the New Jersey Association for Gifted Children (NJAGC), "Ignite Passion with Purpose," will be held Friday, March 22 at the Conference Center at Mercer. The program is open to educators, curriculum supervisors and administrators.

Participants will hear the keynote, attend one breakout session in the morning, and attend two breakout sessions in the afternoon. Jeff Danielian, specialist in the affective needs of gifted and talented students, creativity and eminence, and

the school-home connection will present the keynote.

The keynote session and workshops will address what motivates gifted students to take ownership of their learning and how to inspire students to leave their comfort zones, capitalize on their passions and persevere through the inevitable failure they will encounter along the way, while incorporating the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Presenters will also speak on how to pursue and share unique interests and talents while developing individual skills and knowledge in the gifted field. Speakers will provide an overview of skills, share activities and materials,

and explore the educational and social emotional needs of high ability students. Two computer labs will be available for technology sessions.

The purpose of this conference is to provide opportunities for classroom teachers, teachers of the gifted, administrators and curriculum coordinators to gain insight into the educational and social/ emotional needs of gifted students and to support all those responsible for educating the gifted child.

Registration fees run from \$159 to \$219, depending on membership in NJAGC. Contact Sue Bosnjak at 856-273-7530 or bosnjaks@njagc.org for more information. Visit njagc.org to register.

ments of NJAHPERD.

Submit your request for educational leave as soon as possible and register online once you receive approval.

Register at njahperd.org. The registration deadline is Friday, Feb. 22. There is no on-site registration. Attendees must be current NJAHPERD members through Feb. 28, 2019.

ATTEND THE NGSS SUMMER INSTITUTES IN SUMMER 2019

Is your classroom aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)? As the third year of implementation begins, many educators are ready to deepen their understanding of several foundational aspects of the NGSS:

- Developing and using phenomena.
- Developing instructional and assessment tasks that meaningfully integrate practices, crosscutting concepts, and core ideas.
- Prompting student responses using crosscutting concepts.
- Supporting students in using core ideas to construct explanations supported by arguments.
- Supporting students in defining engineering problems and developing/optimizing solutions.

This summer, the Science Education Institute at Raritan Valley Community College offers two weeklong Institutes designed to support teachers and supervisors with the implementation of the NGSS. These institutes are based on what we are learning about NGSS implementation through our work with teachers in New Jersey and across the nation. The institutes are updated to reflect best practices.

- Grades K-5: July 22 – 26
- Grades 6-12: Aug. 5 – 9

The Summer Institutes provide an immersive experience with the vision behind the NGSS and its three dimensions: the core ideas, the practices and the crosscutting concepts. Participants engage in NGSS-aligned investigations to experience how Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas are meaningfully integrated in instruction and assessments in physical science, life science, earth science and engineering. Every day there will be multiple opportunities for reflection and structured time to plan NGSS-aligned lessons.

The Science Education Institute recommends sending leadership teams of three

to seven teachers. These teachers can then support each other and their school and district colleagues as they implement what they have learned.

Both weeklong Institutes are held at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg.

Each day begins promptly at 9 a.m. and ends by 3:30 p.m. Light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

The Institutes are led by Dr. Wil van der Veen, a nationally recognized expert on the NGSS and science education and a member of the New Jersey State Leadership Team for the NGSS. The Institute is co-facilitated by K-12 classroom teachers from the NGSS Teacher Leader Program.

The fee is \$300 for the week, or \$250 for registrations received by March 31.

Register early as the Summer Institutes tend to fill up quickly.

For more information and to register online visit raritanval.edu/ngss or contact Tina Gandarillas at tina.gandarillas@raritanval.edu or 908-526-1200, ext. 8942.

To develop a long-term NGSS professional development plan for your district, email Dr. Wil van der Veen at wil.vanderveen@raritanval.edu.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS ROUNDTABLE

Ocean County Soil Conservation District Announces its 22nd annual Environmental Educators Roundtable, which will be held on April 17 from 3 to 8 p.m. The event takes place at the Lighthouse Center for Natural Resource Education in Waretown.

It will feature an array of hands-on and interactive activities and field experiences to motivate and inspire educators to incorporate Barnegat Bay Watershed topics into their curricula. The informative and adventurous program explores the watershed and facilitates networking with environmental educators while gathering resources, ideas and lesson plans to take back to your classroom and school.

Doors open at 3 p.m. for an Open House that will showcase resources, refreshments and a light dinner. Workshops are offered from 4:30 to 6:45 p.m., followed by dessert and light refreshments. The keynote presentation will run from 7 to 7:45 p.m.

Wrap-up, evaluations and professional development certificate distribution conclude the event.

The fee is \$25.

The deadline to register is April 1. Contact

Becky Laboy, Education Outreach Specialist, Ocean County Soil Conservation District at 609-971-7002, ext. 114 or education@soildistrict.org.

MAITLAND P. SIMMONS SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR SCIENCE TEACHERS

Interested in shifting your science instruction from a place where students are just “learning about” to one where they are “figuring out” the how and why?

The New Jersey Science Teachers Association (NJSTA) announces the 15th annual Maitland P. Simmons Memorial Award Summer Institute designed for teachers of science in grades K-12. This five-day institute, titled “NGSX: Science Exemplar System for PD,” is designed to help teachers learn about the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and three-dimensional science teaching and learning that is described in The Framework for K-12 Science Education. NGSX brings the expertise of NRC framework developers, experts in teacher learning, and expert professional development facilitators to science educators.

NGSX is organized into learning pathways structured to immerse participants in the three dimensions of learning: core ideas of science, scientific and engineering practices and crosscutting concepts called for in the framework. Using a web-based system of tasks, tools, and resources in a study group format, the NGSX experience combines firsthand science investigations, videotaped expert commentary and classroom case studies along with facilitated individual, small-group and whole-group discussions. Because these tasks, tools and resources are located on a web-platform they are available to participants at any time outside of scheduled study group meetings.

The institute will be held on the Busch campus of Rutgers University in Piscataway, July 8-12. Throughout the dynamic sessions, 24 teachers will be offered opportunities to collaborate and enrich their ideas. The productive goal is to transform learning experiences into lessons.

Daily light breakfast, breaks, and lunch will be included.

The institute is supported by the Maitland P. Simmons Memorial Award Scholarship Fund

of NJSTA which covers all costs for NJSTA members. Information and online Applications are available at njsta.org.

Successful applicants will be required to submit a \$100 reservation fee within one week of notification to be refunded only upon successful completion of the institute. Applicants who are accepted must commit to attend each full day of the program.

All teachers of science are welcome to apply, but teachers who are accepted for the institute must become NJSTA members to participate.

MATH WORKSHOPS OFFERED AT RUTGERS

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

Following are workshops offered in March. Workshops in April and May can be reviewed at the indicated websites.

HIGH SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

- Friday, March 22, 33rd annual Rutgers/AMTNJ conference: Good Ideas in Teaching Precalculus, and . . . , Grades 9-16.
- Thursday, March 28, Empowering Students Who Ask, "When Are We Ever Going to Use This Math?" Grades 6-12.

Registration and information: tinyurl.com/AMTNJ-DIMACS-HS-2018-19

MIDDLE SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

- Tuesday, March 12, Geometry Investigations with GeoGebra, Grades 6-8.
- Thursday, March 28, Empowering Students Who Ask, "When Are We Ever Going to Use This Math?" Grades 6-12.

Registration and information: tinyurl.com/AMTNJ-DIMACS-MS-2018-19

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

- Friday, March 1, Multiplication and Division Concepts and Development of Calculation Fluency, Grades 3-5.

Registration and information: tinyurl.com/AMTNJ-DIMACS-Elem-2018-19

CAMDEN COUNTY COLLEGE OFFERS MINI-COURSES AND FREE LECTURE SERIES

The Camden County College Center for Civic Leadership and Responsibility (CCLR) is offering five-week mini-courses that started in late January. Each course costs \$30. For \$75, you may take unlimited mini-courses through Aug. 31, 2019. In addition, the CCLR offers a free lecture series, special events, and a free 15-week course.

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

MINI-COURSES

Evenings at Blackwood campus

- Jan. 28 – March 4 Society: From Dawn to Collapse
- Jan. 29 – Feb. 26 We Wuz Robbed!
- Jan. 29 – Feb. 26 Dangerous Democracy: Plato's Critique
- Jan. 23 – Feb. 20 Social Dancing and Its Relationship to Social Movements
- Jan. 31 – Feb. 28 It Happened on Broadway – Exploring the American Musical

Evenings at Rohrer Center in Cherry Hill

- Jan. 28 – March 4 The Top 10 Inventions of the 20th Century: How Did They Come About?
- Jan. 29 – Feb. 26 Sojourns and Synagogues
- Jan. 29 – Feb. 26 Appreciation of Opera
- Jan. 23 – Feb. 20 Fearing and Laughing: The Coen Brothers
- Jan. 31 – Feb. 28 The Societal Impact of Henrietta Lacks' Immortal Cell Line

Free 15-Week Course

- Jan. 23 – May 8 Topics in History: Contemporary Muslim World

Free lecture series at Blackwood Campus

- Austria on Film
- Feb. 5 – Fascination with Vienna in Film
- Feb. 12 – Early Kubrick
- Feb. 19 – Film Noir: The Austrian Influence
- Feb. 25 – An Odyssey of Groundbreaking Cinema
- March 5 – The Sound of Music Story

TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS THROUGH THE POWER OF THE ARTS

The arts, as a core curricular area, are a meaningful component of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Learn more about the opportunities to include the arts as an important dimension of student learning. This session will help school and district leaders to better understand how a consistent commitment to arts education leads to positive school climate, family and community engagement as well as students' academic and social-emotional development. This is an opportunity to learn directly from both practitioners and researchers about the impact of arts learning.

The event takes place on Feb. 21 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Foundation for Educational Administration (FEA) Conference Center, 12 Center Drive, Monroe, New Jersey. The program is sponsored by ArtsEDNJ and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association FEA.

Presenters:

- Rose Acerra, President, NJPTA
- Vincent DeLucia, Educator-in-Residence, Director of Training and Professional Development, New Jersey School Boards Association
- Rosie Grant, Executive Director, Paterson Education Fund
- Adrienne Hill, Principal, Hedgepeth Williams Middle School of the Arts, Trenton Public Schools
- Bob Morrison, Director, Arts Ed NJ
- Diana Pasculli, Chief Public Affairs Officer, New Jersey Department of Education
- David Wish, CEO, Founder, Little Kids Rock

The cost is \$149. Registration and details can be found at bit.ly/embracingarts.

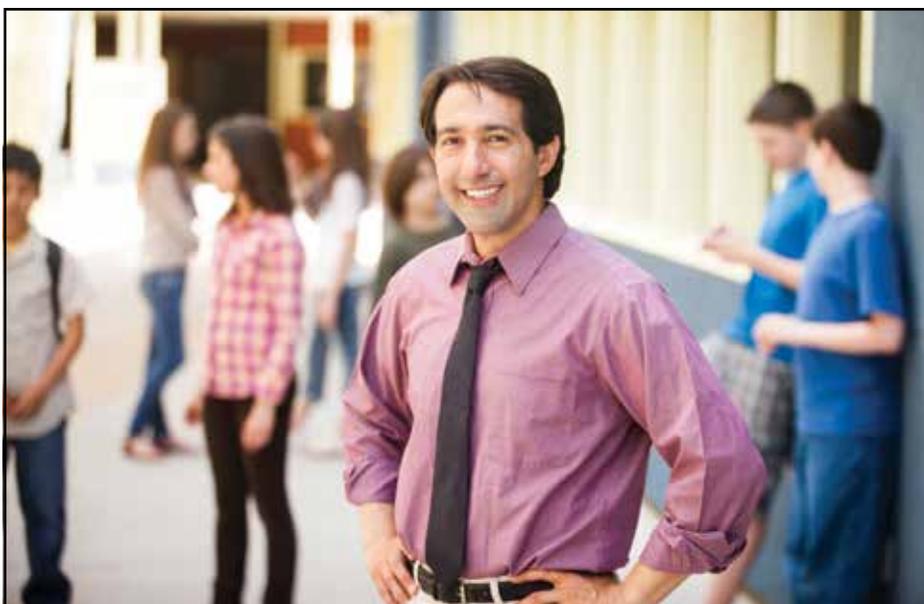
For questions, email Kira Ruzzuto at kira@artsednj.org.

STAFF NEWS

HIRES AND PROMOTIONS



NJEA welcomed **KIMBERLY CRANE** to full-time staff on Jan. 2 as a temporary associate director in the Communications Division. Crane is on leave from her position as dean of staff and students at Bartle Elementary School in Highland Park, where she has worked since 2001. Prior to her service as dean, Crane was an art teacher. She has served as president of the Highland Park Education Association and in various other HPEA positions. She served on several Middlesex County Education Association committees and NJEA committees. She was a member of the NJEA Bolivar Graham Practicing Apprenticeship Program Class of 2015, where she apprenticed in the Government Relations Division. Prior to her full-time position at NJEA, Crane has worked as a consultant in the Communications Division since 2015. 🏠



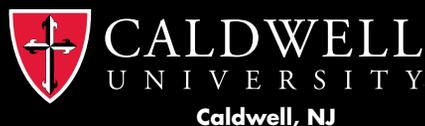
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JOIN US AT OUR NEXT
INFORMATION SESSION
FEBRUARY 27 • 6:30 P.M.

RSVP caldwell.edu/visit





PAST, PRESENT
AND FUTURE

FOUR STUDENTS RENEW NJREA SCHOLARSHIPS

College students who earn scholarships from NJREA may renew them in each year that they meet the criteria for the award. Recipients of the Isabelle M. Hickman four-year scholarship are eligible for renewal in each of next three years after they first receive the award. They must maintain a college GPA of at least 3.0.

Recipients of the Fred E. Aug Community College Scholarship are eligible for renewal in their second year. They must maintain a college GPA of at least 2.75.

BENJAMIN SCHRAGGER is a senior at Rice University and a recipient of the Hickman Scholarship. He is majoring in sports management and holds a spot on the President's Honor Roll, which recognizes the top 30 percent of students at the university and requires a minimum GPA of 3.93.

Benjamin was especially enthusiastic about his sports public relations course thorough which he served as an intern for a New York City public relations agency that represents, among others, Alex Rodriguez, Kevin Durant and Lance Armstrong. An athlete himself, Benjamin pitches for the Rice varsity baseball team.

JEREMY CONOVER is a junior at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) where he majors in psychology and is a recipient of the Hickman Scholarship. He plans to work with individuals with special needs in a clinical or counseling setting.

Outside of the classroom, Jeremy coached

a Special Olympics soccer team and continued his job as an academic, vocational and social mentor for the Career and Community Studies Program. This program is offered by TCNJ for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

RYAN DEVINE is attending Dickinson College where he majors in economics and is a recipient of the Hickman Scholarship. During his freshman year, Ryan believed that he learned as much in the classroom as he did outside of the classroom. He quickly discovered that college academics are not for the faint of heart, as he found himself working harder than ever.

In addition to his studies, Ryan is a student athlete who plays basketball for Dickinson. This summer Ryan was diagnosed with Celiac disease. Throughout this process, he learned to transition to a gluten-free life, which was not an easy journey. Ryan pledges to continue to work hard and thanks NJREA for helping him attain "this wonderful gift of education."

SAMANTHA GORLICK is a sophomore at Ocean County College, majoring in education and sociology and is a recipient of the Aug Community College Scholarship. After completing her freshman year, she changed her major from chemistry to sociology. Samantha believes that entering college will always be one of the biggest transitions in her life, and she thanks the NJREA for both the scholarship and the opportunity to make her future goals a reality.

SUPPORT CHILDHOOD LITERACY

Calling all NJREA members! It's time to grab your stovepipe hats and get ready to read. Each March, the National Education Association (NEA) works to build a nation of readers through its signature program, NEA's Read Across America. Now in its 20th year, this year-round program focuses on motivating children and teens to read through events, partnerships, and reading resources.

This year, Read Across America Day is Friday, March 1, the day before the birthday

of children's author, Dr. Seuss. Throughout the state and the months of February and March, hundreds of New Jersey schools, libraries, and community centers participate by bringing together kids, teens, and books.

NJREA calls for every child to be reading in the company of a caring adult and urges its members to support childhood literacy by reaching out to their local schools to see how they can help.

Around the counties

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

GLOUCESTER COUNTY REA invites you to its annual Laura Maltman Health and Wellness Workshop on Thursday, March 14. For details, check the GCREA newsletter. To attend, call Candy Zachowski at 856-228-6854.

JOIN MIDDLESEX COUNTY REA for its spring meeting/luncheon on Thursday, March 14 at the Grand Marquis in Old Bridge. An NJEA Members Benefits fair will be held, and a cardiologist from Deborah Hospital will be the guest speaker. The cost is \$30. To attend, call Anne Chomko at 732-675-1734.

MONMOUTH COUNTY REA will hold its spring meeting/luncheon on Tuesday, April 9 at the Knob Hill Gold Club in Manalapan. The cost is \$30. To attend, contact Sue Shrott at 732-995-7754 or sushrott@gmail.com.

MORRIS COUNTY REA's next meeting/luncheon will be held on Wednesday, March 13 at the Zeris Inn in Mountain Lakes. Author Trish Chambers will be the guest speaker. The cost is \$30. To attend, Cheryl Doltz at 973-818-1353.

The **PASSAIC COUNTY REA** will hold its next meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, March 27 at the Brownstone House in Paterson. To attend, call Kitty Sausa at 201-445-7577.

SALEM COUNTY REA's winter meeting/luncheon will be held on Monday, Feb. 25 at the St. John's Parish in Salem. A representative from the Salem County prosecutor's office will be the guest speaker. The cost is \$16. To attend, call Rosemma Ward at 856-534-0782.

UNION COUNTY REA welcomes you to its winter meeting/luncheon on Tuesday, Feb. 26 at The Westwood in Garwood. The cost is \$25. To attend, call Donna Mertz-Burkhardt at 908-686-2390.

The **WARREN COUNTY REA's** next meeting/luncheon will be held on Wednesday, April 3 at the Hawk Pointe Country Club in Washington. For more information, visit www.wcrea-njea.org. To attend, call Vickie Rhinehart at 908-319-1995.

The **NJRE-CENTRAL FLORIDA** invites you to its winter meeting/luncheon on Wednesday, March 20 at the Chesapeake Bay Grille at the Arlington Ridge Golf Club. The transition to Aetna Educators' Medicare will be the topic of discussion. To attend, call Steve Mockus at 352-638-2609. 📍

NJEA PRESERVICE

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

WATCH, LISTEN, SHARE AND ACT

BY JESSICA QUIJANO

We are called every day and every year to listen to others, share our own gifts and act to make a difference. I first answered that call as an NJEA Preservice member, and I continue to answer it as I move forward as a full-time active member.

I believe that every action we take, every word we say, and even what we leave unsaid are the building blocks that define us. Each piece of our past is a lesson learned and a memory to carry us through the good and bad times, but it is also a connection that we have to others. My story is shaped by others' narratives. I also must share my story, listen to the stories of those around me and combine the two.

NJEA CONVENTION

My first opportunity beyond my own campus came at the NJEA Convention. When I first entered the Atlantic City Convention Center, I wondered what the convention was all about and why we had time off every year for it.

To me, the event was just a name, a brand that I recognized but one that I did not understand. I had not

A former president of NJEA Preservice, Jessica Quijano is a teacher at Melvin Kreps Middle School in East Windsor. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in STEM education from The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) in May 2017 and earned her master's degree in urban education from TCNJ in May 2018.

yet decided the educational content in which I would specialize, what certification endorsements I'd seek, and which grades I wanted to teach. So, I attended a wide range of workshops, visited many of the exhibitors and had a bag of free goodies to take back home with me.

The whole convention was impressive, but what stood out to me was the confidence of one preservice member from my college. I watched as she introduced herself to every person that passed by and shared her passion about NJEA Preservice. She spoke of many opportunities that I had never heard of, such as the NEA Student Leadership Conference, the NJEA Urban Education Symposium, and local and county association events.

The light she carried within her sparked something in me, inspiring me to say yes to attending another event. She connected with others, sharing her passion and experiences.

NJEA PRESERVICE CONFERENCE

Listening, sharing and acting is a tradition at the NJEA Preservice Conference. Sessions such as STEM implementation, First Year FAQ, EdTPA and Loan Forgiveness allow members to learn not only how to best support their students but also how to support themselves. Over the

years there has been a shift in putting the focus back onto the needs of our members. We are always focused on the situations our students bring with them to the classroom each morning, but we rarely focus on the situations the faculty and staff are coming from. Professional development allows us to network with people, share ideas, and grow. The presenters share what they know, including their successes and their failures.

One presentation at the annual conference that truly inspires me is the recognition of the New Jersey Teacher of the Year and county teachers of the years. These educators are willing to share their expertise, but also their flaws. They come to tell their individual stories; each one with a story that connects them to their audience. These educators will be the first ones to reassure members that sometimes it's a bumpy road but getting through it successfully is possible. Through them, we are called to challenge ourselves.

This year NJEA Preservice Conference is scheduled for April 13. Visit njea.org/preservice in for details.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

I urge everyone to create opportunities to hear the stories and lived experiences that surround you. As I move into the full-time membership,

I understand more than ever that we are an organization founded by people for people. It is our responsibility to continue to attend to those professional relationships with our fellow members, colleagues, and our students. 🏠



The NJEA Preservice Conference is an excellent opportunity to learn from experts and from fellow college students.

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TUITION-FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BENEFITS STUDENTS AND THE STATE

BY ALAN KAUFMAN
CHAIR, NJEA HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Attendance at the City University of New York was historically free. This began with its founding in 1847 as the Free Academy and continued until tuition was imposed by Mayor Beame in 1976 during a citywide fiscal crisis. Without free tuition it is unlikely that I would have attended college. But freed of a burden that my family could not afford, I was able to attend college, earn a bachelor's degree, and ultimately proceed to earn a Ph.D.

When I began teaching at Bergen Community College in 1989, tuition at New Jersey's community colleges was not free—but it was fairly low. Students of modest means were therefore able to pursue their educations beyond high school. Tuition, however, has risen over the years and is inching closer to tuition at the state colleges. As our students are sometimes those with modest family incomes, living in a state that we all know is expensive, college attendance has become problematic. In addition, whether high or low, tuition is more and more the principal source of funding for the community colleges. The theoretical community college funding model in which state and county contributions and tuition are divided relatively equally—and this was always just a theoretical model—appears no longer relevant.

Given this reality, New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy's, "Community College Innovation Challenge," which will offer free tuition to many New Jersey students, is a welcome—some would say a necessary—initiative, strongly supported by the members of NJEA's Higher Education Committee. Beginning in Spring 2019, students whose adjusted gross family income is below \$45,000 will be eligible to attend one of thirteen community colleges in the state. These "last dollar" Community College Opportunity

Alan Kaufmann is an associate professor at Bergen County Community College, secretary of the Bergen County Community College Faculty Association, and the chair of the NJEA Higher Education Committee.

THE STATE WILL BENEFIT NOT ONLY FROM A MORE ECONOMICALLY PREPARED WORKFORCE BUT ALSO FROM A MORE EDUCATED CITIZENRY

WITHOUT FREE TUITION IT IS UNLIKELY THAT I WOULD HAVE ATTENDED COLLEGE.

BUT FREED OF A BURDEN THAT MY FAMILY COULD NOT AFFORD, I WAS ABLE TO ATTEND COLLEGE, EARN A BACHELOR'S DEGREE, AND ULTIMATELY PROCEED TO EARN A PH.D.

Grants will cover tuition and fees for eligible students enrolled in at least six credits. Students will be awarded monies to cover whatever tuition and educational fees remain after receiving other federal, state or institutional aid. They will be required to maintain satisfactory grades.

Of New Jersey's 19 community colleges, 13 have been chosen to participate in the "Community College Innovation Challenge." The selected colleges are: Atlantic Cape Community College, Bergen, Camden County, Cumberland County, Hudson County, Mercer County, Middlesex County, Ocean County, Passaic County, Rowan College at Gloucester County, Salem County, Union County, and Warren County.

Twenty-five million dollars are being allocated by the state for this program, with \$20 million directed toward student tuition and fees and \$5 million toward administrative costs. Gov. Murphy recently said that "Every New Jerseyan deserves an equal opportunity to pursue their dreams." The governor further stated that "Making community college tuition-free will help New Jersey's young people and working adults earn post-secondary degrees to advance their careers. And it will help build the talented workforce that is the engine of our state's economy."

The governor's plan is laudable. If his ultimate goal to provide free community college tuition to all eligible New Jersey students comes to fruition, the state will benefit not only from a more economically prepared workforce but also from a more educated citizenry—which Thomas Jefferson called a necessary ingredient for a successful democracy. The "Community College Innovation Challenge" is a step in the right direction. 📖

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

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ACCESS DISCOUNTS

NJEA provides members with ACCESS Discounts—a nationwide program offering discounts on almost everything. ACCESS even offers My Deals, an app for finding discounts across the country.

You can also use merchants. accessdevelopment.com to recommend businesses to the ACCESS Discounts program.

CLICK & SAVE

NEA Click & Save allows members to take advantage of substantial savings and rewarding offers from our strategic vendors. The exclusive discounts are usually unique and not found through the normal discount channels. Log in to neamb.com/clickandsave to start benefiting today!

DO YOU NEED AN EYE EXAM AND/OR EYEWEAR?

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 Ave.
- Fairview, N.J. at 222 Bergen Blvd.
- Jackson Heights, N.Y. at 75-37 31st Ave.

See optical-academy.com to find locations for their site visits.

YOU CAN HELP TO ADD MORE DISCOUNT PROVIDERS

Simply share the link njea.org/mdp with any business that is willing to give NJEA members/families a special discount in return for free publicity.



BE SURE TO VISIT THE MEMBER BENEFITS SECTION AT MEMBERBENEFITS.NJEA.ORG.

FEBRUARY WEB GIVEAWAYS

In **FEBRUARY**, one member will win:

\$100 voucher toward vision services/eyewear at Optical Academy*.

RECENT WINNER:

DORINDA HAZELL-FORDE of East Orange EA won a \$100 voucher toward vision services/eyewear at Optical Academy*.

MAKE SURE TO **REGISTER ONLINE** EACH MONTH FOR THE WEB GIVEAWAY!

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

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FEBRUARY & beyond

for more information go to NJEA.org

2/1-3

Fri. to Sun.

**NJEA ESP
Conference**

2/9

Saturday

**Higher
Education
Summit**

2/13

Wednesday

**NJEA
Executive
Committee
meeting**

3/1

Friday

**Read Across
America Day**

3/1-2

Fri. & Sat.

**Winter
Leadership –
North**

3/22-23

Fri. to Sun.

**Winter
Leadership –
Central**

3/29

Friday

**NJEA Executive
Committee
meeting**

3/30

Saturday

**NJEA Delegate
Assembly
meeting**

4/6

Saturday

**T.E.A.C.H.
Conference**

4/12-13

Fri. to Sun.

**Higher
Education
Conference**



2019

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and COMMUNITY**

TUESDAY

July 16

SAVE THE DATE
DETAILS COMING SOON

deadlines

2/15

Winter Leadership Conference-Central
Event date: March 22-23

3/23

NJEA Preservice Conference
Event date: 3/13

3/23

Higher Education Conference
Event date: April 12-13

3/29

T.E.A.C.H. Conference
Event date: April 6
(Register by 2/15 and save \$10.)

READINESS FOR TESTS DOES NOT EQUAL READINESS FOR LIFE

END THE USE OF STANDARDIZED TESTS AS A GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

Educators want their students to graduate from high school ready to successfully enter the workforce, do well in college and actively engage in civic life. That is why standardized testing regimes take on deceptively hopeful names such as the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC). But when readiness for standardized testing is mistaken for readiness for college and careers, there are consequences—especially when a single test or a battery of tests replace 12 years of schooling and a faculty’s professional judgement.

Last spring, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) toured the state to learn firsthand the impact of standardized testing on teaching and learning. The department visited all 21 counties, holding more than 70 sessions to hear from 2,300 students, teachers, administrators and community leaders. As part of that effort, NJEA partnered with the department to design, host and facilitate four community meetings with NJEA members, educators, parents, students and other interested stakeholders. NJEA and the department also collaborated on two in-school sessions with high school students.

Following those sessions, it appeared the NJDOE was moving in the right direction by proposing changes to testing regulations that would reduce the number of tests administered to high school

students and reduce the amount of time students spent on the testing that remained. Unfortunately, political pressure led the State Board of Education to delay its approval of these changes, ultimately amending them by adding two additional tests and inserting language in the regulations that clarifies how remediation is handled for students who fail to score at a proficient level on the required tests.

The State Board’s amended language on remediation reads, “District boards of education shall provide students who have not demonstrated proficiency on the ELA 10 and Algebra I assessments with remediation and the opportunity to retake the applicable assessment if the student so chooses and with the opportunity to demonstrate such competence through one of the alternative means set forth below.”

That required remediation sounds reasonable enough, but as NJEA’s officers pointed out in testimony provided to the State Board of Education in January, “Districts could easily interpret this to mean that every student who fails a section of the PARCC needs to take a one-size-fits-all remedial course, rather than tailoring remediation to a student’s individual needs.”

The officers also pointed out that such remedial courses can get in the way of successful preparation for a student’s planned future.

“Students could be denied other

educational opportunities in lieu of this [remedial] course,” the officers noted.

That contention was not hypothetical. During NJEA’s sessions with the NJDOE last spring, a mother came forward to explain how remedial courses to pass the ELA 10 interfered with her son’s vocational education. His strong work ethic and stellar attendance record landed him on the honor roll nearly every marking period. His communication impairment, however, interfered with his ability to achieve a passing score on PARCC’s ELA 10.

In order to graduate, he was required to take remedial courses that took him out of classes that directly pertained to what he would pursue after high school—a career as a plumber.

NJEA supports standardized testing in schools when the tests are developmentally appropriate, reliable and valid indicators of student learning. Ideally, the creation of standardized assessments would involve New Jersey educators and key stakeholders in every phase of the process—assessment design, scoring criteria development, and the reporting of meaningful feedback.

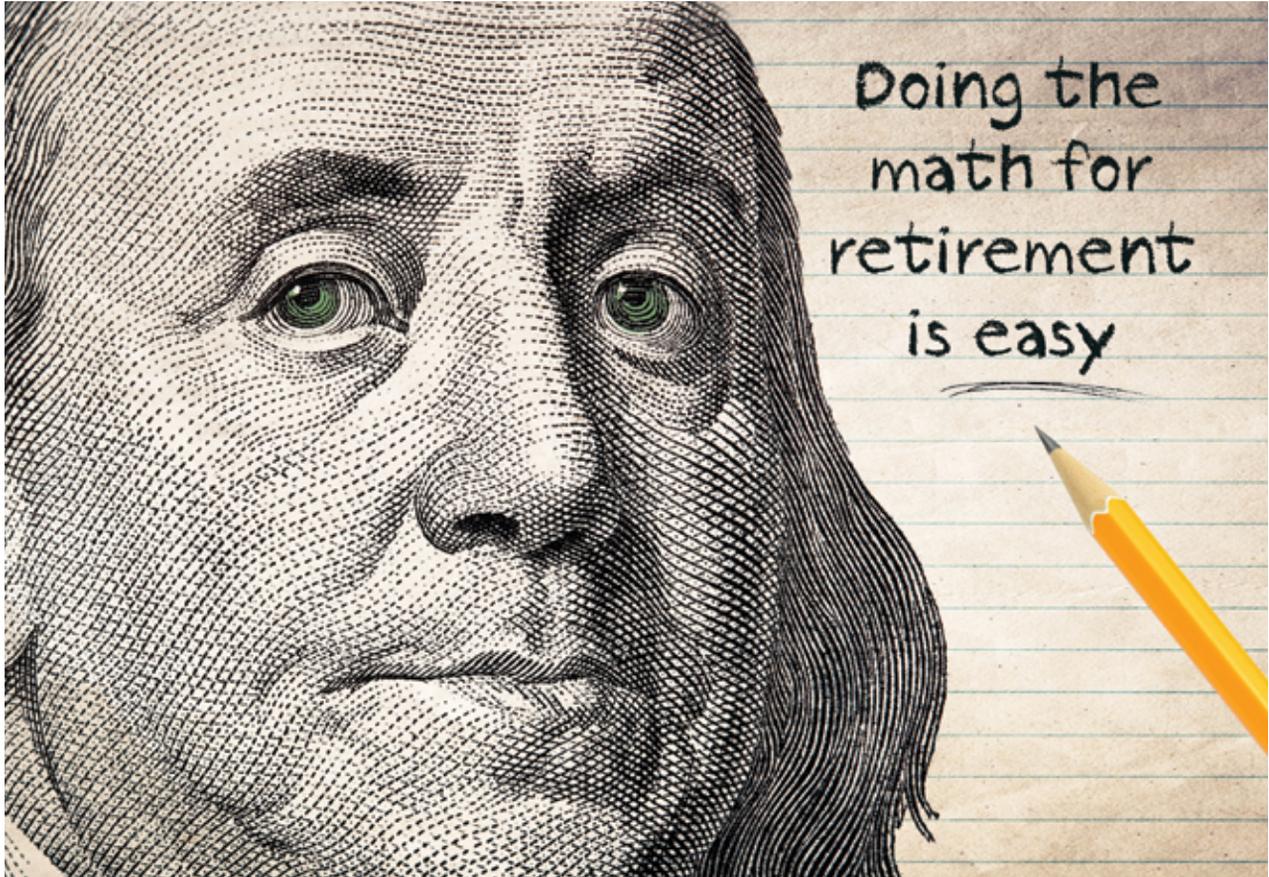
The Dec. 31 decision by an Appellate Court may finally force the NJDOE’s hand (see Page 14), requiring it to draft regulations that comply with the law, which permits only a test of language arts and math skills in the 11th grade as a graduation

requirement, rather than the multiple end-of-course tests required by current regulations.

But while it is sometimes well-meaning, the notion that success on a test equals success in college or career is flawed. NJEA has never supported high-stakes testing for either students or teachers and does not support the use of an exit test as a requirement for graduation—even in the 11th grade. NJEA has consistently upheld this position through decades of testimony before lawmakers and the State Board of Education, from the inception of the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) through to the use of the PARCC assessment today. New Jersey should join the 15 other states that dropped their exit exam requirements. There is no educational research that supports exit exams as an indicator of future success.

Standardized testing has a place in education—as a diagnostic tool to enhance individual student learning and as tool to get an overall measure of how a school is meeting its goals for the entire student population and its various subgroups. But there should be no place for a test that hinders a student’s future success in college, careers or civic life. 🏡

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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TEACHING, EQUITY, ACCESS, AND CHILDHOOD HEALING

SATURDAY, APRIL 6

**REGISTRATION / BREAKFAST / EXHIBITS 8 - 8:55 A.M.
PROGRAM ENDS AT 3:30 P.M.**

COST:

Early-bird special

(register by Feb. 15)

\$39 for NJEA members

Regular registration

(register by March 29)

\$49 for NJEA members

\$29 for NJEA Preservice

Nonmember registration is \$150

Register at njea.org/teach2019.

Online registration only, unless you are an NJEA Preservice member, a non-member wishing to attend, or registering with a purchase order. These individuals must register by calling Cindy Vannauker, at (609)-310-4263 ext. 2263. If submitting a Purchase Order, please forward a copy of the requisition form while awaiting district approval to Cindy Vannauker by fax (609)-599-1201 or email cvannauker@njea.org.

Only registered participants may attend.

No onsite registration.

In these changing times, we must come together to enhance our professional learning, support one another on our professional journey and expand our educational community.

Join us for this powerful new conference.

KEYNOTE

Dr. Pedro Noguera, Faculty Director for the Center for the Transformation of Schools at UCLA

TOPICS

Select two topics to explore in a daylong, interactive professional learning experience.

Full program descriptions are available at njea.org/teach2019

- Creating Equity in the Early Childhood Classroom through Hands-on Learning
- Teacher Leadership as a Tool for Advocacy, Equity, Justice, and Learning
- Paraprofessionals: Best Practices for Achieving Equity in the Classroom
- Power of Identity in the Classroom: Learning from Student Experiences
- Power of Reflection in Practice: New Teachers Rethinking Schools
- Think Global, Act Local: Supporting Immigrant Youth and Families
- Disrupting Misconceptions: Unleashing a Larger Truth
- T.E.A.C.H. English Learners: What Should I Know?
- Restorative Justice Practices in Our Schools
- What Works Best in Teaching and Learning?
- Student Voice as a Force for Equity
- Teaching for Black Lives

The conference provides five hours of professional learning credit. Participants must attend the entire session to receive a certificate.

For more information, or if you have special physical, communication, dietary, or disability-related need that may require assistance or accommodations to permit or facilitate your attendance/participation in the conference, please contact Cindy Vannauker at 609-310-4263 ext. 2263.