

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

# REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 2024

njea.org



an education and advocacy resource



LAWTON C. JOHNSON  
SUMMIT MIDDLE SCHOOL

26

WHAT'S IN A NAME?  
LAWTON C. JOHNSON MIDDLE SCHOOL  
HONORS SCHOOL OFFICE MANAGER

30

MEDICAL TRAINING IN THE  
HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM

34

MORRIS FACULTY ASSOCIATION  
GRANTS COLLEGE STUDENTS'  
TEXTBOOK WISHES


36

CHERRY HILL LABOR MANAGEMENT  
COLLABORATIVE ENHANCES SALARY GUIDE

40

BIKE TECH AT  
MAINLAND REGIONAL

*What's in  
a name?*



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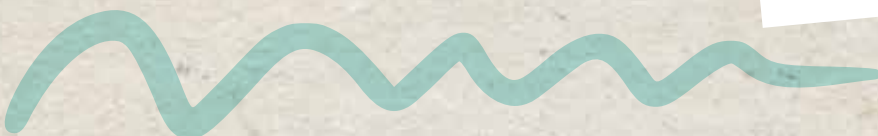
Lois Yunka, president of both the Middlesex County EA and the National Council for Education Support Professionals (ESP) Leadership International's 10th World Congress in Buenos Aires. Yunka, an attendance officer in Woodbridge Township, is the 2017 NJEA ESP of the Year.



Alexandria Twp. EA's Stefani Grossman (foreground) and Jackson EA's Sheri Ellenport share a laugh during a workshop on grievance processing at the NJEA Jack Bertolino Summer Leadership Conference.



Members of the Faculty Association of the County College of Morris staff protesting the firing of seven almost-tenured faculty in the spring of 2021, including the president, grievance chair and communications chair. Nonetheless, FACCM supported students. (See full story, page 34.)



# FEATURES



## 26 | WHAT'S IN A NAME?

With nearly 600 operating school districts and over 2,500 school buildings, New Jersey's public schools provide an opportunity to examine who is honored with a school named after them—and why. Just a sampling reveals amazing stories about what our communities value. As we collected these stories, one stood out: Lawton C. Johnson Middle School in Summit, Union County.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



## 30 | MEDICAL TRAINING INTO THE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Because of the changing nature of the country's career needs and the sweeping budget cuts of the 1990s, high school elective courses and technical education fell by the wayside. Programs such as woodshop and home economics were removed from the curriculum entirely and never replaced. It would be beneficial to reconsider career and technical education (CTE) as a way to tailor the educational experiences of our students in a way that actually prepares them for the future.

BY VIRGINIA FASULO



## 34 | MORRIS FACULTY ASSOCIATION GRANTS COLLEGE STUDENTS' TEXTBOOK WISHES

Like many college commuters across the state, students at the County College of Morris (CCM) struggle financially to cover the inflated costs of living, finding it hard to make ends meet. The Faculty Association of County College of Morris got creative to help ease students' financial burdens.

BY MICHELLE ALTIERI



## 36 | CHERRY HILL LABOR MANAGEMENT COLLABORATIVE ENHANCES SALARY GUIDE

Like many schools post-pandemic, Cherry Hill Public Schools struggled to hire and retain qualified staff. To turn things around the Cherry Hill Public School District Labor Management Collaborative worked to obtain \$1.5 million in salary guide stabilization.

BY KIMBERLY CRANE



## 40 | BIKE TECH AT MAINLAND REGIONAL

Mainland Regional High School is the first school in New Jersey to offer a bicycle technician course to high school students. The course is led by Tim Hanna, who began his career as a special education and English teacher. This eventually led to his current role in Mainland's Bike Repair shop. How does an English teacher end up in a high school bike shop?

BY TIM QUINN

# COLUMNS

- PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE 7**  
*Accomplishing great things together*
- THE ADVOCATE 8**  
*Resources for your local association*
- BULLETIN BOARD 12**  
*Cool stuff to check out*
- EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS 15**  
*Shining a light on others*
- LAW AND YOU 17**  
*70th anniversary of Brown v. Board.*
- THE NJEA REPORT 18**  
*Education in the news*
- HEALTH AND SAFETY 44**  
*Tools to tackle health and safety issues*
- RETIRED MEMBERS 46**  
*News and events*
- RAINBOW CONNECTION 49**  
*LGBTQIA+ matters in our schools*
- SUSSEX TO CAPE MAY 50**  
*Workshops and conferences*
- NJEA PRESERVICE 53**  
*The aspiring educator vote*
- MEMBER BENEFITS 55**  
*Get your money's worth*
- COMING UP 61**  
*What's next at NJEA*
- FINAL EXAM 62**  
*A great school year in the best public schools*

## The number **\$7.162 billion**

The state's Fiscal Year 2025 budget makes a record full pension payment of \$7.162 billion, including contributions from the State Lottery, bringing the total contribution to the pension fund under Gov. Phil Murphy to \$39.9 billion, or more than triple the total contributions made by the previous six administrations combined. This budget marks the fourth year in a row funding a full pension payment.

Source: "Governor Murphy Signs Fiscal Year 2025 Budget into Law," Retrieved June 28, 2024, from [nj.gov/governor](https://nj.gov/governor).



## Top 12 reasons to join

### Reason #1: Stronger Union, Better Outcomes

States with strong unions not only lead the nation in student achievement, but also in educators' pay and benefits. Strong unions lead to better outcomes for students, employees and our communities.

Visit [njea.org/top12](https://njea.org/top12) for more.

## 58

### NJEA BUDGET SUMMARY

Fiscal year ending Aug. 31, 2025



"Lawton C. Johnson Summit Middle School. Lawton C. Johnson speaking," is how the office manager answered the phone at this school in Union County school. Johnson was an alumnus of the district and an office manager.

PHOTO BY  
Jennifer C. Marsh

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# REVIEW

180 W. State St., P.O. Box 1211, Trenton, NJ 08607-1211 • 609-599-4561 • [NJEA.org](http://NJEA.org)

President: Sean M. Spiller | Vice President: Steve Beatty | Secretary-Treasurer: Petal Robertson  
Executive Director: Kevin Kelleher | Deputy Executive Director: Denise Graff Policastro

## Organizational Directory

### NJEA headquarters, Trenton

To reach any of the offices at headquarters, call NJEA's main number, 609-599-4561.

**Executive Office:** includes NJEA's statewide officers and the offices of the Executive Director; Human Resources; Human and Civil Rights, Equity and Governance; Legal Services; Organizational Development; and the Labor Management Collaborative.

**Business Division:** includes the offices of Accounting and Finance; Information Systems, Facilities, Mailroom and Production; Membership; and Comptroller.

**Communications Division:** responsible for all aspects of the association's communications efforts, both internal and external. The division produces the *NJEA Review* and [njea.org](http://njea.org); manages the Hipp Foundation and assists local and county affiliates with internal and external communications.

**Government Relations Division:** includes the Office of Policy and Politics, which addresses legislation, administrative code, policy and advocacy at a statewide and federal level, and the Office of Member and Political Organizing, which works with members at the county and local level to organize around local, state, and federal issues that affect public education.

**Professional Development and Instructional Issues:** assists members and local and county affiliates with instructional issues and professional learning. The division also monitors state level and school level implementation of administrative code as promulgated by the New Jersey Department of Education.

**Research and Economic Services:** Provides information to support state and local association programs and activities, including collective bargaining and policy analysis. Offers guidance on retirement issues and administers NJEA Member Benefits.

### UniServ regional offices

Provides extensive field services to members and local and county affiliates throughout the state, including negotiations assistance, contract administration and grievance adjudication, member organizing and local member consultation and representation. UniServ field representatives train local leaders and assist in the coordination of NJEA and NEA resources. UniServ regional offices are organized under four zones.

#### UniServ South

Reg. 1-3  
Director's office  
856-234-0522

Region 1 (Atlantic and Cape May counties):  
609-652-9200

Region 2 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties):  
856-628-8650

Region 3 (Burlington and Camden counties):  
856-234-2485

#### UniServ Central

Reg. 7-9, 11, 13 and 29  
Director's office  
732-287-6899

Region 7 (Ocean County):  
732-349-0280

Region 8 (Mercer County):  
609-896-3422

Region 9 (Monmouth County):  
732-403-8000

Region 11 (Middlesex County):  
732-287-4700

Region 29 (Higher Education):  
609-689-9580

#### UniServ Northeast

Reg. 15, 19-21, and 25  
Director's office  
973-321-3221

Region 15 (Union County):  
908-709-9440

Region 19 (Hudson County-North and Newark):  
201-861-1266

Region 20 (Hudson County-South):  
201-653-6634

Region 21 (Essex County, except Newark):  
973-762-6866

Region 25 (Bergen County):  
201-292-8093

#### UniServ Northwest

Reg. 13, 17, and 27  
Director's office  
973-347-0911

Region 13 (Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren counties):  
908-782-2168

Region 17 (Morris and Sussex counties):  
973-515-0101

Region 27 (Passaic County):  
973-694-0154

### MEMBERSHIP

Active professional: \$1,082 (full time); \$216.40 (full time \*low-earner); \$541 (part time); \$541 (on leave); \$216.40 (part time \*low-earner). Active supportive: \$520 (full time); \$104 (full time \*low-earner); \$260 (part time); \$104 (part time \*low-earner); \$260 (on leave). Retired professional: \$95; \$1,800 (retired life). Retired ESP: \$49; \$880 (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*. \*Low-earner threshold 2024-25 is \$23,200.





# PRESIDENT'S *Message*

## We accomplish great things together

Welcome back, it's going to be a great year!

There's something special about the fresh start that September brings each year. Whether you work year-round in schools or are a ten-month employee, when the whole team comes back together to start a new school year, it's energizing.

Make no mistake about it, our schools are strong because of the team of public school employees who are committed to making them great for every child. That hard work continues to pay off. New Jersey's public schools continue to be the best in the nation in almost every indicator, according to Education Week and U.S. News & World Report.

But we didn't get here without the hard work of our union colleagues who came before us. They fought for our students, our profession and us, long before we ever dreamed of entering education. In fact, many of us benefited from having them as our teachers and mentors when we were students, and their example is what led us to careers in public education.

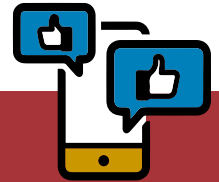
While we are proud to be part of the current team of educators working in schools, we are also part of an unbroken line of union members who have stood up for students and public school employees. We honor the work they put in to get us where we are today, and we are committed to maintaining and building upon their accomplishments.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, and we can accomplish great things together. Public education is under attack, but it is absolutely worth fighting for. As Marion Wright Edelman said, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world for the better." I still believe in the power of public education to change individual lives and the course of our country and our world. Our members are engaged with students to help them develop the skills to solve our most difficult problems. Every one of us is part of a student's success story. We are literally building a better future every day.

So this year, as you reenter your school year routines, I hope that you take a moment to appreciate the impact that you have on our students, and to recognize what the other members of our school team are doing to help children achieve their full potential. I'm proud to have given my professional life to public education, and I am grateful to my colleagues for making that same commitment. Together, we are creating tomorrow's success stories.

Thank you for all that you do every day for our students. I hope this is a wonderful year for each of you.

In Unity,



### SEAN M. SPILLER

Facebook

@SpillerforGovernor: What a great way to start the day! VP Kamala Harris picks Minnesota Governor Walz as her running mate. A geography teacher! Picking an educator as her Vice President is an affirmation for every educator out there—it is our time to have a seat at the table. Ninety days—let's make sure we elect Harris-Walz to lead!

On Aug. 6, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller shared a link to the New York Times' live election updates announcing that "Tim Walz is said to be Kamala Harris' choice for vice president." Spiller was overjoyed. Gov. Walz is a Minnesota educator, a former Congressman, and a current governor. Spiller announced this summer that he is running to be New Jersey's first educator governor in 2025.

### STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

@SteveBeattyNJEA: Such a fantastic group of County Teachers of the Year! Representing the tens of thousands of wonderful educators in each county, this group has risen above, distinguishing themselves among their peers ... This group does not rest on their laurels. They stick together and show up for their profession in all spaces, engaging in curriculum, policy, and politics. Congratulations to all of our new County Teachers of the Year!

On Aug. 7, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty shared a link to NJEA's announcement of the 2024-25 County Teachers of the Year. He shared how excited he is to work with them throughout the school year, and to take part in the panel that will select and announce the New Jersey State Teacher of the Year in October.

### PETAL ROBERTSON

Facebook

@PetalforNJEA: Kicking off Summer Lead with a reminder that our endorsed candidate is the BEST candidate. #spillerforgovernor #njeastandwithsean

On July 27, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson shared an image of an NJEA member at the Jack Bertolino Summer Leadership Conference wearing a purple shirt displaying the words "NJEA stands with SEAN!" On June 18, the NJEA PAC Operating Committee voted to endorse NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, a high school science teacher from Wayne, in the Democratic gubernatorial primary for 2025.

OFFICERS ONLINE

# The ADVOCATE

RESOURCES FOR YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION

## NJEA endorses Spiller for governor 125-member committee takes decisive early vote



NJEA's PAC Operating Committee endorsed NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, a high school science teacher from Wayne, in the Democratic gubernatorial primary on Aug. 12 for the 2025 election. The action followed a formal screening in accordance with NJEA's PAC guidelines. All currently declared candidates in that primary were invited to screen, and Spiller was the only candidate who accepted the invitation.

"I'm incredibly proud and deeply humbled to receive the endorsement of my fellow public-school educators," said Spiller.

"Too often, our voices are marginalized, and our expertise is ignored. I believe that the same talented professionals who have made our schools the very best in the nation for New Jersey students deserve a loud voice in making our state the very best place in the nation to live for our students, their families and all New Jersey residents. Public education is the foundation of a strong economy and a thriving democracy, and I am running to make sure New Jersey continues to lead in both of those areas. I look forward to working with my fellow NJEA members and all public education advocates across New Jersey to build a people powered, grassroots campaign that gives voters a voice in choosing the direction of our great state. This is our chance."

Spiller's fellow NJEA officers, Vice President Steve Beatty and Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson, praised the endorsement as well.

"I've worked with Sean for the last seven years," said

Beatty. "I know his commitment to our students and public schools, and his vision for a broader, more inclusive politics that brings working families together to fight for the future we all deserve. I'm thrilled to have a New Jersey educator, who knows what it's like to stand in front of a classroom and inspire a class of students, stepping up to inspire voters across New Jersey with a vision of what our democracy can be if we only are willing to work for it. I look forward to standing shoulder-to-shoulder with my fellow educators to elect Sean Spiller as the next Governor of New Jersey."

Robertson agreed.

"New Jersey is fortunate to have a candidate as smart, focused and dedicated to justice as Sean Spiller," said Robertson. "Not many people are willing to step up and lead when it is easier to stay back and complain. But Sean is a father who wants a better future for his family, an educator who wants greater opportunities for his students and champion of democracy who believes that 'liberty and justice for all' really does include everyone. He is going to bring optimism, vision and a fierce commitment to social justice to this campaign, and I am so excited to work with my fellow educators to make that vision a reality for everyone in New Jersey. Educators are stepping up here, and we know that our values align with the nurses, shop owners, truck drivers and other middle-class workers. This is a campaign for all of us."

NJEA has a history of early endorsements in gubernatorial primaries, having endorsed then-candidate Phil Murphy in October of 2016 and again in October of 2020. The committee has not yet set a date for a possible screening in the upcoming Republican gubernatorial primary.



Visit [SpillerforNJ.com](https://SpillerforNJ.com) to learn more, sign up for the campaign and donate



# Get your union news via NJEA's social media

## by Angel Boose

The reality is, in 2024, most people go to social media for their news. Knowing that, we share as much as we can about NJEA and all things affecting public education and public educators on our various social media pages.

If you scroll our social media pages you will find information about a broad variety of association related content:

- Professional development conferences and how to register for them.
- Opportunities to nominate educators for awards.
- Action you and members of your community can take to advocate for legislation that will affect public education and educators.
- Applications for grant money to support initiatives in your classroom, school, or district.
- Recognitions of members and their accomplishments.
- Celebrations of holidays and observances.
- Endorsements of pro-public education candidates selected by our NJEA PAC Operating Committee.
- So much more.

The goal of the NJEA Communications Division is to keep members informed. Our social media posts are just one way we aim to do that. We want you to know about and take advantage of opportunities to improve your pedagogy, to know the ways you can benefit from your membership, and how you can become or remain actively involved in our union to advocate for yourselves and the profession.

Whether you are an aspiring educator, a first-year teacher, an educational support professional, a member of color, a retiree, or an educator in the early, mid, or veteran stage of your career, our union offers every member a way to get involved and remain connected, in a way that is fulfilling.

### Share NJEA content

If you are the social media manager of your local or county association's social media pages, we encourage you to repurpose or reshare the information on NJEA's social media pages on your social media pages. Don't reinvent the wheel. Your members may not follow NJEA's social media pages, and we want to get our messages in front of as many members as possible. Share, share, share!

Take a minute right now to like and follow us on our social media platforms. Scan each of the QR codes to the right.

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*Angel Boose is an associate director in the NJEA Communications Division. She can be reached at [aboose@njea.org](mailto:aboose@njea.org).*



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njea.org

## Support the NJEA/NEA PAC-endorsed candidates

On the recommendation of NJEA's PAC Operating Committee, the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education has endorsed candidates for the presidency and in various congressional districts. The full list of NJEA/NEA endorsed candidates is:

### U.S. President and Vice President

- Vice President Kamala Harris and Gov. Tim Walz

### United States Senate

- Rep. Andy Kim

### United States House of Representatives

- NJ-1: Rep. Donald Norcross
- NJ-5: Rep. Josh Gottheimer
- NJ-6: Rep. Frank Pallone
- NJ-7: Rep. Sue Altman
- NJ-8: Rep. Robert Menendez Jr.
- NJ-9: Rep. Bill Pascrell
- NJ-11: Rep. Mikie Sherrill
- NJ-12: Rep. Bonnie Watson-Coleman

These are the endorsements as of Aug. 15. There may be additional endorsements in congressional districts 2, 3, and 10. Check [njea.org](http://njea.org) for the latest updates.

These endorsements were made by the National Education Association's (NEA) Fund for Children and Public Education, which makes endorsements in federal elections.

## Make a plan to cast your vote, support voting in NJ

NJElections.org is a one-stop resource for all the information you might need to make sure you are able to cast your ballot and fully participate in our electoral process. Make sure you're registered to vote, find your polling location, sign up for vote-by-mail and confirm voter deadlines all online. There also are resources to help students learn about the process and register to vote.

### Consider becoming a poll worker

Our democracy thrives when we all participate. In addition to voting and talking to others about the importance of voting, you might want to serve as a poll worker. If your district will be closed for Election Day, the process is even simpler, but any New Jersey public school employee is entitled to a state holiday, even if your district is not closed. Election Day is a state holiday in New Jersey.

Poll workers are paid \$300 on Election Day. You can apply to serve as a poll worker in New Jersey if you:

- Are a United States citizen and a resident of New Jersey.
- Are a registered voter in the county in which you reside.
- Are not running as a candidate in this election.
- Are at least 16 years of age. College and high school students are encouraged to apply.

Note: Those under 18 years of age will work limited hours per shift and do not have to be registered to vote. Contact your County Board of Elections for further information. You can find your county's information at [njelections.org](http://njelections.org).

Learn more at [njelections.org](http://njelections.org).

## State officer petitions available Sept. 3

Elections for NJEA state officer positions (president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer) will be held during the upcoming school year for the 2025-27 term.

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

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

Below are the anticipated deadlines and procedures for acquiring and returning petitions. Changes, if any, will be posted at [njea.org/NJEAelections](http://njea.org/NJEAelections).

Petitions will be available on **Sept. 3, 2024**. They may be obtained from NJEA Headquarters in Trenton, or from a county or unit representative on the NJEA Elections Committee.

All signed petitions must reach NJEA Headquarters at 180 W. State St., Trenton, or an NJEA-NEA UniServ office no later than **5 p.m. on Oct. 15, 2024**.

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

Balloting for contested positions will take place in the regular **2025 NJEA spring elections**.

## Nominations open for six awards recognizing achievement in equity and justice

Nominations are now open for five awards that will be presented during the NJEA Dr. Martin Luther King Human and Civil Rights Celebration on Jan. 11, 2025.

The awards open for nomination are:

- **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human and Civil Rights Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Human and Civil Rights Committee. Nominees may be an individual, group or organization working in the area of civil rights, and if eligible, NJEA members.
- **Equality Champion Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee. This award honors a member who has been a champion of human and civil rights, and who has had a significant impact on education and the achievement of equal opportunity for those facing discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **Elizabeth A. Allen Women in Education Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Women in Education Committee. Named for NJEA's first female president, the award honors a member or an individual living or working in New Jersey who promotes women's rights and equality for all persons, particularly in education.
- **Judith Owens Spirit Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee. Named for Dr. Judith Owens, the first African American president of NJEA, this award honors a member who has been a champion of ethnic minority rights and issues and who has had a significant impact on education and the achievement of equal opportunity for those facing discrimination because of their ethnicity.
- **Urban Educator Activist Award:** This award is conferred by the NJEA Urban Education Committee. The award honors active and retired members who have been champions for urban education and who and champion the well-being of all stakeholders in urban communities.
- **Marie Blistan Advocacy Award:** This award is conferred by the Exceptional Children Committee. Up to two awards may be made annually—one designated for NJEA active or retired members and one designated for other community members. The award honors active and retired members who have been champions for the rights of children and adults with exceptionalities.

Nomination forms and documentation for any of these four awards are due Oct. 31, 2024.

For awards criteria and to make a nomination, go to [njea.org/mlk-hcr-nominations](https://njea.org/mlk-hcr-nominations).

For more information, contact Colleen Lopez at [clopez@njea.org](mailto:clopez@njea.org) or 609-599-4561, ext. 2290.

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## Jim George Collective Bargaining Summit set for Oct. 25-26

The NJEA Jim George Collective Bargaining Summit will be held on Oct. 25-26 at the Doubletree Hotel and Conference Center in Somerset. The annual summit is an opportunity for local associations to come together for training opportunities that benefit members at the bargaining table.

Visit [njea.org/cbsummit2024](https://njea.org/cbsummit2024) to register.

## Nominate a local association for bargaining excellence

A local association that has demonstrated excellence in collective bargaining will be honored at the summit with the 2024 Jim George Collective Bargaining Award. Those nominated will also be recognized.

### Criteria

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

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

### Nomination

Local associations can be nominated by any NJEA member or NJEA staff member. To nominate a local, visit [njea.org/cbaward](https://njea.org/cbaward). To be considered for the 2024 Jim George Collective Bargaining Award, settlements must be ratified by both parties between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024. Nominations are due Sept. 6, 2024.

# COOL STUFF



## MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION SEASON IS OPEN

The New Jersey State Bar Foundation's mock trial competitions, for grades 3 through high school, include Law Fair (for grades 3-6), Law Adventure (for grades 7-8), and, for grades 9-12, the Vincent Apruzzese High School Mock Trial Competition, Courtroom Artist Contest and Courtroom News Reporter Contest. All provide interactive, civics-related learning experiences for students. Teacher workshops and webinars are scheduled for October—earn PD credits. There is no charge to attend workshops or webinars or to register to compete.

Visit [mocktrial.njsbf.org](http://mocktrial.njsbf.org) for more information about the competitions, the workshops and to register to compete.



## SPECIAL ISSUE OF RESPECT

The New Jersey State Bar Foundation's Challenging Racism From Past to Present, a 32-page special issue of **Respect**, a diversity and inclusion newsletter is available. The special issue begins with an article on slavery and the U.S. Constitution, examining America's founding documents through a racial lens. The remaining 11 articles and five sidebars examine other examples of institutional racism, including environmental racism, the racial wealth gap, racism in sports, and so much more. Challenging Racism is free and hard copies can be ordered from [publications.njsbf.org](http://publications.njsbf.org). The special issue may also be downloaded from that page—just open the Respect toggle.



## JOIN TEAM NJEA IN KOMEN WALK FOR PINK

The Susan G. Komen Foundation Walk for Pink will be held on Oct. 5 at Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson. Sign up individually to walk as a part of Team NJEA or form your own team under the Team NJEA banner. This is a great way to engage county and local memberships to further our efforts. Families and friends can also join Team NJEA to support the efforts of the association. Local and county associations should consider using a NJEA Public Education Partnership Grant (formerly Pride in Public Schools grant) to engage their school community with unity incentives. Donate to Komen under Team NJEA at [info-komen.org/goto/teamNJEA](http://info-komen.org/goto/teamNJEA) to join our team and/or make a donation through our team. Share the donation link and walk sign-up with colleagues, family and friends.



## SUPPORT THE HIPPI FOUNDATION BY RECYCLING YOUR INK CARTRIDGES

The NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education has partnered with Planet Green Recycle to recycle ink cartridges, reducing waste in landfills and raising funds for a worthy cause. It's simple to help:

1. Gather four or more ink cartridges.
1. Go to [planetgreenrecycle.com](http://planetgreenrecycle.com) to print out free USPS labels.
1. Use the Hipp Foundation's Program ID Code 31808 to ensure the foundation receives the credit for your donations.
1. Use any box to mail the ink cartridges to Planet Green Recycle for free.

If you purchase ink through Planet Green Recycle, the Hipp Foundation can earn 10% of every purchase. Please include the Hipp Foundation's program code, 31808, next to your name at checkout. Learn more about the Planet Green Recycle program at [planetgreenrecycle.com](http://planetgreenrecycle.com) and the Hipp Foundation at [njea.org/hipp](http://njea.org/hipp).

## MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS BRING LANGUAGES AND CULTURES TO LIFE

Old Farmers Road School in Long Valley fosters pride in multilingualism

The need to place more focus on diversity came about organically after Jeannette Ezeta, an English as a second language teacher at Old Farmers Road School (OFRS) in Long Valley, had an unexpected conversation with a group of young multilingual students early in the school year.

They asked for their native languages to remain a secret.

Recognizing the significance of this statement, Ezeta partnered with the school principal, Jenna Hawkswell, to reshape the students' perceptions of multilingualism. Their objective was to honor students' home languages and instill pride in the diverse cultural backgrounds within the school community.

### Messages from Around the World

This initiative led to the establishment of "Messages from Around the World," a weekly event where multilingual learners showcased greetings, songs or inspirational messages in their native languages over the loudspeaker. This sparked a deep appreciation of the love of languages in the OFRS community.

"I can speak French, Albanian and English," says second grader Elio Mile. "I was shy on my first day, but I don't feel that way anymore. I was a role model for kids to speak different languages."

Students who were initially hesitant about their multilingual abilities discovered a newfound sense of pride. Other students in the school eagerly volunteered to participate. What began as a platform for multilingual expression developed into a celebration of cultural diversity. Students were lined up down the halls to participate.

### Creating cultural connections

Through this initiative, students created cultural connections with one another and their families through a multitude of languages, including Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, Chinese, Mandarin, French, German, Polish, Edo, Hebrew, Swedish, Albanian, Guarani, Gujarati and more.

"I am very glad that my grandpa teaches me German, and I get to share what I have learned with the school," says third-grader Carly Redinger.

"I felt joyful to share the Swedish birthday song that was taught to me by my great grandmother," adds third grader Camilla Breen.

"I was inspired by the other students on the announcements," says fourth grader Charlotte Ward.

"Ms. Searles encouraged my classmates and me to share our languages with the school," says second grader Mikaela Paige, with a tinge of excitement. "She helped build my confidence in speaking Portuguese."



A special ceremony at the end of the school year honored participants with certificates, acknowledging their embrace of multiculturalism and multilingualism.

As an educator, Hayley Searles fosters language connections in her second-grade classroom.

"Multilingualism facilitates conversations with their families and promotes more interest in diversity and traditions around the world," Searles says. "It was truly incredible to see."

### A bridge to collaboration

The positive impact of this initiative extended beyond students, as all teaching staff engaged in professional development to understand the social, emotional and academic advantages of maintaining native languages alongside learning English. The PTO featured 40 students in a dedicated section of the yearbook, highlighting the richness of various cultures present within the school.

"We are super happy with the multicultural activities to promote and encourage kids to speak and be aware of other cultures and languages," explains parent Florencia Kennedy.

This initiative created a sense of belonging for all and was a collaborative experience for students, educators, administrators, and parents within the OFRS community.

Mikey Connolly, a fifth-grade student, summed it up best.

"I think it is important to learn different languages because it can get you far in life," he says. "You can also interact with other people from other places around the world."



Students had much to say about the program. Scan this code to read what they said.

45<sup>th</sup> Annual George M. Adams

# Boardwalk Run & Fun Walk

FRIDAY, NOV. 8, 2024 | 9 A.M. | RUN AND WALK

Clip, complete, & mail to:

**NJEA Boardwalk Run**  
NJEA c/o WSFS  
PO Box 13661  
Philadelphia PA 19101-3661

**Deadline for pre-entries Oct. 28**  
Make checks payable to "NJEA"

5,000-meter race (3.1 miles)

Course: Traffic-free scenic boardwalk in front of Atlantic City Convention Hall

First NJEA male and first NJEA female runner will receive awards.

Awards ceremony immediately following race at Boardwalk Hall.

Please pick up number on Thursday, if possible, at the Boardwalk Run Booth.

**Age group awards to top three in these categories (male and female):**

- Junior up to age 19
- Age 20-29
- Age 30-39
- Age 40-49
- Age 50-59
- Age 60-69
- Age 70-79
- Age 80+

**Entry Fees:**

- \$25 Pre-entry includes running shirt
- \$15 No T-shirt
- \$30 Thursday & Friday (includes shirt)

**Scan below** for online registration



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

(as of 11/9/2023)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Local Association \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Shirt size (Circle):    XXL   XL   L   M

This entry is for:

Please choose one:    NJEA Member    Non-member   |    Female    Male   |    Run    Walk

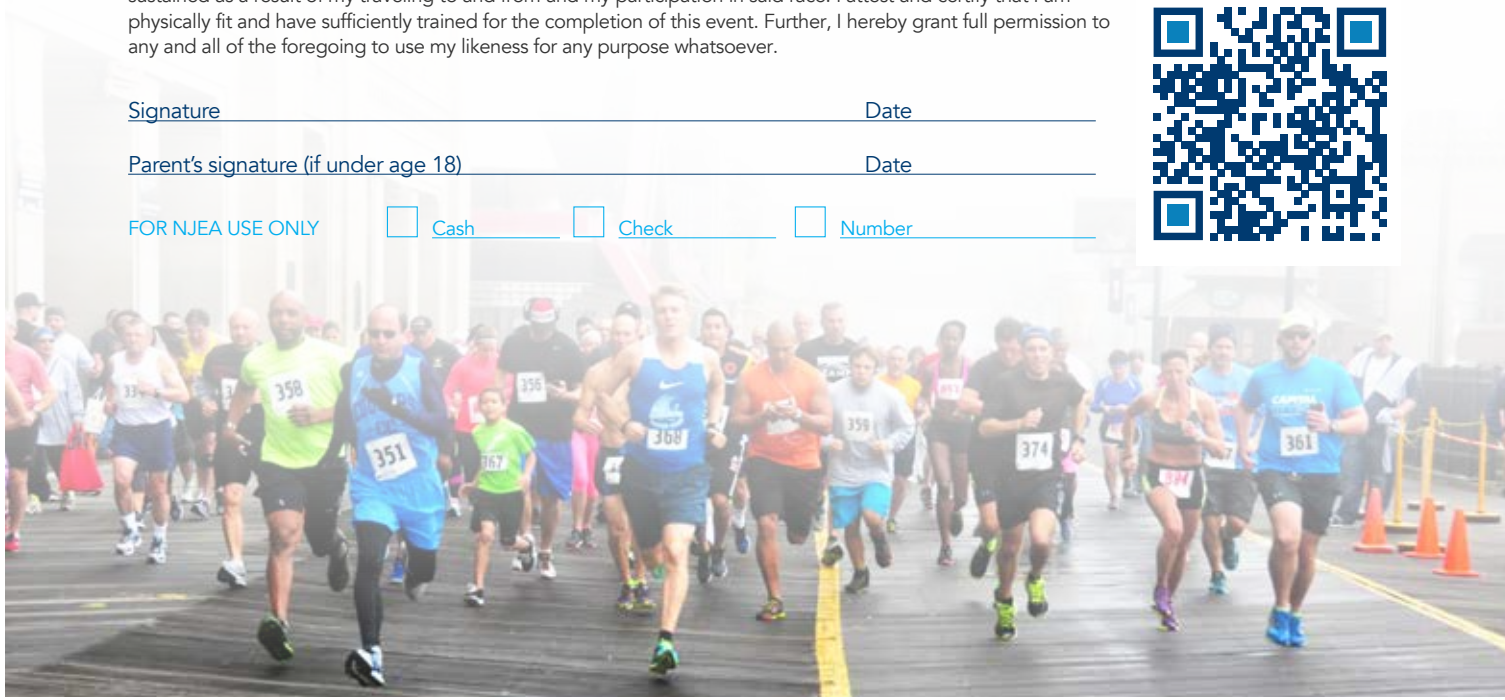
Pre-entry runners may pick up their numbers – and post-entry competitors may register for the race – at special Race Booth in the Convention Center on Thursday, Nov. 7 all day or at Registration Table at Boardwalk Convention Hall lobby at 8 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 8. Registration for the 5,000-meter Run closes at 8:30 a.m. on Friday Nov. 8. Shirts must be picked up prior to the race or after the race on Friday, Nov. 8.

In consideration for accepting my entry, I, for myself, my heirs, and administrators, waive and release forever any and all rights and claims for damages I may have against NJEA, its agents and employees, the City of Atlantic City, and any and all participating sponsors and supporters. I also release the above named for all claims of damages, demands, and actions in any actions in any manner due to any personal injuries, property damage, or death sustained as a result of my traveling to and from and my participation in said race. I attest and certify that I am physically fit and have sufficiently trained for the completion of this event. Further, I hereby grant full permission to any and all of the foregoing to use my likeness for any purpose whatsoever.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's signature (if under age 18) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

FOR NJEA USE ONLY     Cash     Check     Number



# Shining a light on others brings joy

## Meet 2024 Monmouth County ESP of the Year Erika Kerwin

Erika Kerwin smells success every day. As the building secretary at The Culinary Education Center, which is part of the Monmouth County Vocational School District, her office is next to the school's working bakery and restaurant.

"The bakery smells amazing, and the students are so excited to have you try what they've made," Kerwin laughs.

After a career in corporate America, Kerwin finds herself reveling in the community spirit of the school. She looks after the students the way she has guided her own daughters, now in their 20s, and both graduates of the Monmouth County Vocational School District Academy of Allied Health and Science. Kerwin sings the praises of the district and the students' accomplishments in a regular newsletter highlighting information and achievements that goes out to more than 400 subscribers.

"The newsletter is really a bridge to the community," Kerwin says. "We share information on what's going on at the school—open houses, pictures, if we have guest speakers. We highlight the students' achievements such as honor roll. We talk about special events and what new things are going on at the restaurant and bakery."

Kerwin found herself in the spotlight when she was announced as the 2024 Monmouth County ESP of the Year.

"It was so exciting to find out that I was named the Monmouth County ESP of the Year," Kerwin recalls. "I love my job and the people I work with. We're a small school community, but we're close knit and the kids are wonderful. There are a lot of characters. They're all very unique."

Kerwin is responsible for managing attendance twice a day since they are a shared time school. Now in her eighth

**When I worked in corporate America, I dreaded going to work, but now I love my job and being around the kids.**



Monmouth County ESP of the Year Erika Kerwin is recognized at the NJEA ESP Conference on Feb. 2. From left: NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson, Kerwin, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller

year in education, Kerwin also provides office support and enjoys doing communications, including the newsletter, social media and more.

Kerwin keeps busy as the vice president of the Monmouth County Vocational Education Association and the head of the scholarship committee. In addition, she has been coaching youth soccer for more than 17 years, although she took a break in the spring thanks to an increasingly busy schedule.

"When I worked in corporate America, I dreaded going to work, but now I love my job and being around the kids. It's a fun job!"

Kerwin knows the value of union membership and is working to educate others of the many benefits.

"I want to get us more involved in what's going on in our union," Kerwin says. "I'm on the negotiations team, but I'm one voice. Other secretaries need to get more involved if we're going to change things. That's the only way that we're going to get our voice out there—we need to show a united front." 🗣️

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# Honoring the 70th Anniversary of the Brown v. Board

By Katrina Homel

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. On May 17, 1954, the court decided in this landmark case that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. A second decision in the same case one year later required implementation of desegregation plans "with all deliberate speed." Though the *Brown* decision came down over a half century ago, the realization of its legacy, including what school desegregation and integration should like today, remains a critical discussion in public education.

In *Brown*, the court considered whether to overturn its 1896 decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, in which it found a Louisiana law requiring railcars to have segregated "separate but equal" accommodations was constitutional. The *Plessy* opinion had far-reaching consequences, including in public schools. In bringing a challenge the "separate but equal" doctrine in public schools, the NAACP and activists—including educators—carefully pursued a strategy to establish a legal framework that supported overturning *Plessy*. A New Jersey case from Trenton, *Hedgepeth and Williams v. Board of Education*, decided ten years prior to *Brown*, and which prohibited race-based discrimination in the state's public schools, was influential in this strategy. (See [njea.org/hw](http://njea.org/hw).)

Multiple cases, merged in the court's *Brown* ruling, challenged the "separate but equal" doctrine in public schools, including:

- *Briggs v. Elliott* (South Carolina)
- *Bolling v. Sharpe* (Washington, D.C.)
- *Brown v. Board of Education* (Kansas)
- *Davis v. County School Board* (Virginia)
- *Belton (Bulah) v. Gebhart* (Delaware)

Since first filing their cases, plaintiffs, who were Black students and parents, waited several years before being heard by the nation's highest court. Much was at stake for their families—for example, due to their involvement in the case, plaintiffs in *Briggs* were fired from their jobs and faced an economic boycott in their community.

In its opinion, the court declared: "We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." However, a long road was ahead in implementing this decision. White resistance to desegregating public schools resulted in the closure



Nathaniel Briggs (seated, center), whose parents were first to sign the *Briggs v. Elliott* lawsuit in South Carolina, spoke to NJEA members and staff at the NJEA Summer Leadership Conference.

of public schools in some districts. In Prince Edward County, Virginia (where the *Davis* case originated), public schools closed for five years after *Brown*. NJEA members contributed to supporting the Prince Edward County Free School Association, which provided desegregated schooling while the public schools were closed.

Seventy years later, school segregation continues to impact New Jersey schools. The ongoing case, *Latino Action Network v. State of New Jersey*, filed in 2018, challenges the constitutionality of the state's residency statute providing a free public education to students in the school district where they live (N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1). The lawsuit contends that historic discriminatory housing patterns leading to residential segregation results in school segregation under the statute. The plaintiffs cite data showing that 46.2% of Black and Latino public school students attend schools that are more than 90% nonwhite.

NJEA offers programming to further consider the history of the *Brown* and its legacy. For example, during recent leadership conferences, Legal Services teamed up with UniServ to offer a workshop on these topics. In the summer session, Nathaniel Briggs, whose parents were first to sign the *Briggs v. Elliott* lawsuit, spoke to members. Members should look for future programming about these issues, including a spring virtual workshop offered through NJEA's Professional Development and Instructional Issues Division.

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*Katrina Homel is an associate director of NJEA Legal Services and Member Rights in the NJEA Executive Office. She can be reached at [khomel@njea.org](mailto:khomel@njea.org).*

# NJEA Report

## NJDOE issues educator evaluation information for 2024-25 New SGOs are required for nontenured teachers only

Over the summer the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) released information on educator evaluation rubric weights, key dates in evaluation and other annual evaluation-related information. The NJDOE also issued guidance on student growth objective (SGO) collection, including an FAQ document, to provide additional details regarding the pause in SGO collection in effect for tenured teachers in 2024-25. The FAQ can be found at [bit.ly/24-25\\_SGO\\_FAQ](http://bit.ly/24-25_SGO_FAQ).

Score calculations remain unchanged from prior school years, as shown in the table.

mSGP Teacher	Non-mSGP Teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70%: teacher practice (observations)</li> <li>• 25%: student growth objectives (SGOs)</li> <li>• 5%: median student growth percentile (mSGP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 85%: teacher practice (observations)</li> <li>• 15%: student growth objectives (SGOs)</li> </ul>

SGOs are required for nontenured teachers only. Districts are prohibited from collecting new SGOs from tenured teachers in 2024-25 and states an educator's most recent SGO score will be applied to 2024-25.

For nontenured teachers, including those in their first year of employment in the district, SGOs are required and must be set by Oct. 31. For those beginning employment

after Oct. 1, SGOs must be set within 25 teaching-staff-member working days.

Nontenured teachers who do not teach in subject areas that require a median student-growth percentile, i.e., non-mSGP teacher, must complete two SGOs, while nontenured teachers in subject areas that include an SGP are required to set one SGO.

Members required to complete SGOs are advised to familiarize themselves with all local policies and procedures around SGOs as soon as possible.

The law on the SGO pause applies to teachers only. Tenured teaching staff members who are not teachers (nurses, school counselors, etc.) may still be directed by their district to set SGOs, but this is not and has never been a requirement in regulation. Local association leaders in districts where this is occurring should immediately reach out to their UniServ field representatives.

All other AchieveNJ regulations remain unchanged from prior years. The mSGP component will remain for certain educators as set forth in regulation. Districts must communicate evaluation policies and procedures to staff annually by Oct. 1. This includes information on evaluation rubrics, procedures for observations and conferences, and more.

Regulations pertaining to professional development plans (PDPs) and corrective action plans (CAPs) remain unchanged. Individuals who will be on CAPs in 2024-25 should contact their local association leadership, if they have not already done so.

## PENSION UPDATE

TOTAL PENSION FUND:  
\$67.04 BILLION

All reports and financial statements are posted on the Division of Investments' website at [nj.gov/treasury/doinvest/index.shtml](http://nj.gov/treasury/doinvest/index.shtml).

The totals below reflect market values as of May 31, 2024, and for comparison, April 31, 2024. The figures, which are rounded, may not reflect the current market values of some alternative investments through the period noted, because of lags in reporting under industry standards. **Please note that as of the April investment report, the Police and Fire Retirement System funds are no longer invested with the state and local pension funds. This was about one-third of the total.**

	May 31, 2024		April 30, 2024	
	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation	Market Value (\$ billions)	Asset Allocation
Global Growth	\$38.28	57.10%	\$37.06	55.51%
Income	\$12.89	19.23%	\$12.66	18.97%
Real Return	\$5.18	7.73%	\$5.16	7.73%
Defensive	\$10.67	15.92%	\$11.87	17.77%
Other	\$0.02	0.02%	\$0.02	0.03%
Total	\$67.04	100%	\$66.76	100%

# njea 2024 convention

## NJEA Convention announces exciting keynote speakers, entertainers

### Mavis Staples

Thursday, Nov. 7 at 9:30 a.m.  
Convention Center



**Mavis Staples, an extraordinary talent and pivotal voice of the Civil Rights Movement**

The legendary Mavis Staples will be the headlining keynote for the 2024 NJEA Convention! Known for her soulful energy, powerful music and unwavering commitment to social justice, Staples and her band will open NJEA Convention with an electrifying and deeply moving performance.

A pivotal voice of the Civil Rights Movement, Staples has spent decades inspiring change through her extraordinary talent and passionate advocacy. From her early days with The Staple Singers to her illustrious solo career, she has consistently been a beacon of hope, joy and resilience. Staples' music and message not only capture the energy and spirit of this moment in history but also propel us forward. Staples' music serves as a cross-generational bridge of harmony and advocacy, continuing to inspire and empower all who listen.

Her voice is a powerful reminder of the struggles and triumphs of the Civil Rights era, and her presence continues to inspire new generations to fight for justice and equality.

*Photo by Danny Clinch*

### Mychal Threats

Thursday, Nov. 7 at 3 p.m.  
Convention Center



**Mychal Threats, America's favorite librarian**

Mychal Threats got his first library card at the age of 5 and never looked back. After earning his master's degree in library and information science, he went on to become the supervising librarian at the very same library.

Now, he uses social media to share the stories of library kids and library grown-ups that he encounters in Library Land. He's also open about his mental health and talks about it in hopes that it'll help others in their mental health journey.

You won't want to miss his keynote at the NJEA Convention.

### Chasten Buttigieg

Friday, Nov. 8 at 9:30 a.m.  
Convention Center



**Chasten Buttigieg, teacher, bestselling author and LGBTQIA+ rights advocate**

Chasten Buttigieg, husband of former mayor and presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg, has become a popular figure in his own right. The teacher's wit, intimate social media musings, and inspiring speeches have prompted glowing media coverage and declarations that he "won the 2020 spouse primary."

As his husband launched a campaign that made him one of the most talked-about Democrats in the 2020 race, Chasten leveraged his own platform to bring attention to improving public schools, access to arts education, and mental healthcare.

After leaving the 2020 campaign trail, he published his first book, *I Have Something to Tell You*. In this moving, uplifting memoir, he recounts his journey to finding acceptance as a gay man.

Throughout the campaign, Chasten came across many people who have felt supported and loved by his message: "You belong. You are loved. You are welcome here."

In addition to his keynote, Chasten will participate in a moderated Q&A.



*Watch for a fourth keynote to be announced soon!*

# MEET THE NJEA MEMBERS WHO ARE THE 2024-25 COUNTY TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

NJEA is proud to join with students, school employees, parents and others in congratulating the NJEA members who are the 2024-25 New Jersey County Teachers of the Year.



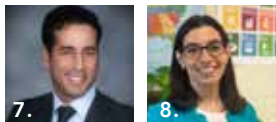
**1. Atlantic**  
Carly Broomhead is a visual arts teacher at Emma C. Attales Middle School in the Absecon School District.



**2. Bergen**  
Margarita Diakos is a special education teacher at Ramsey High School, in the Ramsey School District.



**3. Burlington**  
Margaret Fanourgakis is a health and physical education teacher at Shawnee High School in the Lenape Regional School District.



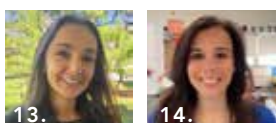
**4. Camden**  
Stacey Brown-Downham is an elementary reading interventionist at J. Fithian Tatem Elementary School in the Haddonfield School District.



**5. Cape May**  
Antonio Martín Franco is a Spanish and health and physical education teacher at Stone Harbor Elementary School in the Avalon Stone Harbor School District.



**6. Cumberland**  
Karolina Mills is an English as a second language teacher at Marie D. Durand Elementary School in the Vineland School District.



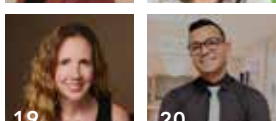
**7. Essex**  
El Houcin Houssam is a mathematics teacher at West Side High School in the Newark School District.



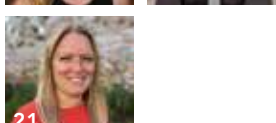
**8. Gloucester**  
Vanessa Poggioli is a mathematics teacher at Thomas E. Bowe Middle School in the Glassboro School District.



**9. Hudson**  
Kelly Carroll is a districtwide multisensory reading specialist based at Mary J. Donohoe Community School in the Bayonne School District.



**10. Hunterdon**  
Meghan Luick is a mathematics teacher at North Hunterdon High School in the North Hunterdon-Voorhees Regional High School District.



**11. Mercer**  
Nicole Hamlet is a biology teacher at Trenton Central High School in the Trenton School District.

**12. Middlesex**  
Kristen Johnson is a social studies teacher at Carteret Middle School in the Carteret School District.

**13. Monmouth**  
Sara Mazzone is an English teacher at Red Bank Regional High School in the Red Bank Regional High School District.

**14. Morris**  
Alyssa Guagenti is a gifted and talented and special education teacher at Jefferson Township Middle School in the Jefferson Township School District.

**15. Ocean**  
Jill Falletta is a first-grade teacher at Beach Haven Elementary School in the Beach Haven School District.

**16. Passaic**  
Bernadette Orsita is a Spanish teacher at Manchester Regional High School in the Manchester Regional High School District.

**17. Salem**  
Deanna Miller is an agri-science teacher at Woodstown High School in the Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional School District.

**18. Somerset**  
Stefanie Lachenauer is a skills for success and global leadership teacher at Montgomery Upper Middle School in the Montgomery Township School District.

**19. Sussex**  
Mary Houghtaling is an English teacher at Kittatinny Regional High School in the Kittatinny Regional School District.

**20. Union**  
Alejandro Mejia is a Spanish teacher at David Brearley Middle-High School in the Kenilworth School District.

**21. Warren**  
Jennifer Mazziotta-Walter is a K-8 visual arts and gifted education teacher at Harmony Township School in the Harmony Township School District.

# Kittatinny High School's Holocaust and Genocide Research Center

By Kathryn Coulibaly



Mary Houghtaling (l) and her students hosted Maud Dahme, a Holocaust survivor (center) and Ann Arnold (holding flowers), the daughter of a Holocaust survivor.

Nearly six years ago, Kittatinny High School English teacher Mary Houghtaling was teaching a world literature class to seniors, and it was a struggle. The students weren't connecting to the material, until Houghtaling introduced Elie Wiesel's *Night*, the story of how he survived the Holocaust as a teenager in Romania and his experiences in Auschwitz and Buchenwald.

"My students were completely gripped by the book," Houghtaling recalls. "Across the board they said, 'We want to know more.'"

Houghtaling reached out to the Jewish Foundation for the Greater Metro West, which connected her with Mark Schonwetter and Fred Heyman, two Holocaust survivors who came to the school and talked to the entire school community about their experiences.

## Creating the center

Motivated by the experience, and the students' responses to it, Houghtaling decided to pursue a center at the school where students would be able to read and learn more.

During the pandemic, Houghtaling pursued a second master's degree, this one in Holocaust and genocide studies. For her capstone project, she wanted to work on creating the center. Once everyone returned to the buildings, Houghtaling worked on it with a team that included supervisor Carol Fishbone, who was instrumental

to the work. The school offered a free space in the library, and Houghtaling began working on the center.

One day, three seniors in study hall came into the library and offered to help Houghtaling. Michael, Andrew, and Caedon ended up becoming fully engaged in the project.

"They painted the sign on the wall, they came up with plans and fundraisers," Houghtaling says. "They were like teacher assistants, constantly coming up with new ideas and implementing them. And they brought in other students, too. By the end of the year, there were 19 students painting maps on the wall and writing positive messages. In all, more than 52 students participating, and former students even came in to help, including one of our former graduates, Patrick Lynch."

## Donations, volunteers and programs bolster center

With donations and support pouring in, the center really took off. Gayle Rosenthal, the director of Stockton University's Sara and Sam Schoffer Holocaust Resource Center, who has since passed away, donated books and Elie Wiesel's autograph. Students came in and painted murals during their spring break. The murals now include portraits of Sojourner Truth, Sitting Bull, Elie Wiesel, and depictions of Darfur and Rwanda.

As a group, they created a pantry where students can take what they need, including snacks, toiletries and books.

They also participated in an "Adopt a Survivor" program with the Jewish Federation. Students came in and painted portraits of Holocaust survivors.

Maud Dahme, who survived the Holocaust as a hidden child, came and spoke to students, as well as Ann Arnold, Mark Schonwetter's daughter.

Houghtaling is teaching a Holocaust and Genocide Studies course through the world literature curriculum and the class is linked to Stockton University. Students can earn four general education credits for the coursework.

Houghtaling, her students and colleagues are immensely proud of what they have built, and the impact that it has on the entire school community. To their knowledge, theirs is the only high school in the state with a Holocaust and Genocide Research Center.

"We're trying to create humanitarians here," Houghtaling says. "This was the most moving, incredible thing that's happening in my career."

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*Kathryn Coulibaly is the associate editor of the NJEA Review and provides content and support to [njea.org](http://njea.org). She can be reached at [kcoulibaly@njea.org](mailto:kcoulibaly@njea.org).*

# The power of storytelling in providing mental wellness support

By Michael Lovaglio

Last April, students from various Mercer County schools met to listen, read and annotate Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech on the 56th anniversary of its delivery.

A student raised their hand with tears in their eyes and asked if King knew he would die the next day. King's confession that he would like to "live a long life," as well as his brave and resolute decision to see beyond his desire for "longevity," spurred the student's tears. It's the experience of relating with King that caused their emotional response, and it's a story that continues, decades later, to evoke a strong response.

The use of storytelling as both balm and scaffolding is fundamental to wellness. From Anime to Taylor Swift, we are drawn to personalities and stories, in part, because they teach us something about ourselves.

Real-life stories build connections with emotions

My experience teaching English in both high school and college classrooms served as preparation for leading the New Jersey Statewide Student Support Services (NJ4S) hub for Mercer County, where my team and I are tasked with providing mental wellness and prevention programming. Services range from public workshops on building and maintaining healthy relationships to brief, clinical interventions for individuals in crisis. Evidence-based models are used to promote mental wellness and to connect students and their families to community resources.

Often, real-life stories are utilized to help students connect with their emotions and the larger human experience.

This model of support aligns with prevention education practices, builds resilience and teaches coping mechanisms.

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*Michael Lovaglio is the hub director for the New Jersey Statewide Student Support Services (NJ4S) hub in Mercer County. NJ4S is a program equipped to deliver prevention education programming that suits the needs of the community using evidence-based curriculum in eligible schools throughout New Jersey. Working closely with schools, after-school programs, summer camps, and other community-based providers, NJ4S hubs across the state are dedicated to providing mental wellness services to students and families so they have the resources needed to succeed and grow. Learn more at [nj4s.nj.gov](http://nj4s.nj.gov). For more information on NJ4S in Mercer County, email Lovaglio at [MLovaglio@cctrenton.org](mailto:MLovaglio@cctrenton.org).*

Using the prevention education model as a guide, the NJ4S Mercer Hub offers accounts of empathy, perseverance, and resilience, stories that encourage compassion, kindness and a sense of efficacy.

## Programs to meet community needs

NJ4S hubs throughout the state are crafting their programming to fit the needs and interests of the communities they serve. Colleagues in North Jersey are helping students address the social anxiety that comes with starting middle school. NJ4S hubs in South Jersey throw "prevention picnics" to make substance use prevention resources more visible in their towns. In Mercer County, we've embraced the power of storytelling.

My team had the privilege of shepherding students as they shared their testimonies in personal essays and articles this past year. The crafting of personal stories harnesses strength and vulnerability and molds it into resilience.

Take the following confession from a recent graduate of Princeton High School: "Recently, a teacher told me empathy is a superpower I possess. He's not the first to share that sentiment. People tend to say I'm caring and kind. Little do they know, being empathetic is how I cope."

Fusing prevention education with storytelling and working in collaboration with schools, townships and community leaders is an effective means of serving students. It is not a singular solution, but a piece of a larger effort as we all navigate the ongoing mental health crisis in the State of New Jersey.

Powerful storytelling leaves a mark—when used effectively, it can strengthen students' mental well-being.



## NJ Hall of Fame at American Dream opens its doors

Sing with the stars, fly to the moon, and interview your favorite celebrities—education, inspiration, and so much more await students and educators alike at The New Jersey Hall of Fame at American Dream in East Rutherford.

NJEA is a founding sponsor of the New Jersey Hall of Fame.

The Garden State is renowned for its produce and the incredible talent, intelligence and ingenuity grown here. Now, you can bring your students to a first-of-its-kind state showcase designed to engage visitors in the stories of some of the world's most renowned inventors, actors, entrepreneurs, activists, athletes and astronauts who all have New Jersey roots.

Each exhibit presents a unique facet of our state's rich cultural tapestry, offering an inclusive, immersive experience for including:

- A holographic karaoke stage to sing alongside legends, including Gloria Gaynor, Dionne Warwick and Frankie Valli.
- A simulated flight to the moon with the Astronauts Scott and Mark Kelly guiding the way.
- The 1941 Model T that was gifted to Thomas Edison by Henry Ford.
- A Late Night Jersey TV Studio with simulated interviews with icons such as Danny DeVito, Connie Chung, Laurie Hernandez and Joe Piscopo, offering insight into their careers and achievements.
- Virtual reality Inductee Hometown Tours in the front seat of Bon Jovi's classic Chevelle.
- The New Jersey Wall of Fame, which highlights the stories and induction videos of more than 100 inductees.

With countless attractions awaiting discovery and inspiration abound for the next generation of Garden State greats, the New Jersey Hall of Fame is an unparalleled learning destination for New Jersey students. To learn more, visit [NJHallofFame.org](http://NJHallofFame.org). To explore field trip opportunities and access complementary lesson plans, contact Alexandra Genova at 201-503-4052 or [alexandra@njhalloffame.org](mailto:alexandra@njhalloffame.org).

The New Jersey Hall is located 1 American Dream Way in East Rutherford in Court G on Level 3.



NJ Hall of Fame at American Dream Visitors interact with NJ Hall of Famer Danny DeVito in the Late Night Jersey Studio.

### NJEA member Nicholas Ferroni encourages visits to the NJ Hall of Fame Museum



"As someone who was born in New Jersey, raised in New Jersey, who went to Rutgers University, and who now teaches history in New Jersey, I can say with certainty that growing up here—and learning about our state's history and those who were shaped by New Jersey—impacted me so much.

I grew up with such a sense of pride, and as a teacher, I know that ensuring our students and residents learn about the people who have shaped not only our state and culture but the culture of this country. The New Jersey Hall of Fame Museum is imperative to inspiring future generations by knowing that so many individuals who went on to change the world, grew up in their community, or chose to call New Jersey home.

The museum also provides such an engaging and interactive experience that is impossible to reproduce in a classroom, and for that reason and so many others, I strongly encourage educators and families, to visit the museum and be inspired by the individuals, their stories, and the state-of-art attractions."

# Advocacy and professional development all summer long

Just because it's summer, NJEA members don't sit still. Throughout the late spring summer there were opportunities for members to advocate for the profession and to develop their professional and career skills.

At the NJEA Carol Watchler LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference in May, former NJEA presidents Michael Johnson and Joyce Powell were interviewed by NJEA SOGI Committee Chair Chris Cannella and Carol Watchler about leading NJEA as gay and lesbian persons. In June, the Members of Color Network drew a capacity crowd. NJEA President Sean Spiller announced to members nationwide his candidacy for governor of New Jersey at the NEA Representative Assembly in Philadelphia.

Later in July members grew their professional skills at the NJEA Impact Conference. In late July, current and aspiring local, county, and state leaders engaged weeklong advocacy training at the NJEA Summer Leadership Conference.

Here are a few photos from each event. Visit [flickr.com/njea/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/njea/) for more.







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1. Organizing Field Rep Eric Jones speaks about NJEA's first Black president, Dr. Judith Owens at the NJEA Members of Color Empowerment Conference, held June 7-8.
2. At the NEA RA in Philadelphia, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller announces to NEA members on July 4 that he is running to be the next governor of New Jersey.
3. Four delegates to the NEA RA from Monmouth County at the morning New Jersey caucus meeting on July 5. From left: Mary Scott, Felicia Hardman, Niurka Coy-Bush and Steve Koumoulis.
4. Joyful attendees at the NJEA Members of Color Empowerment Conference, held June 7-8.
5. The NJEA Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee, NJEA's leadership team, and Carol Watchler (center) celebrate another successful NJEA Carol Watchler LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Conference, held May 10-11.
6. The members NJEA Leadership Committee were easy to find in their color-coordinated shirts at the NJEA Jack Bertolino Summer Leadership Conference, held July 27-31.
7. Stacey Best, a school secretary in Montclair, shares her viewpoint at the Summer Leadership Conference workshop, "ESPs: You Are Essential. You Matter!"
8. New Jersey view of the thousands of NEA members at the NEA RA in Philadelphia this July.
9. Cliffside Park School #3 librarian Iveth Yelegen proudly sports her New Jersey Association of School Librarians T-shirt as she greet the keynote speaker at the NJEA IMPACT Conference, Helena Donato-Sapp. The conference was held on July 17.
10. Delegates to the NEA RA from Camden and Gloucester counties: Laurie Gibson-Parker from Cherry Hill EA and Shereen Ducasse, Kevin Jablonowski and Qiana Stanard all from Washington Township EA.

# *What's in a name?*

Lawton C. Johnson Middle School honors school office manager

*By Kathryn Coulibaly*





With nearly 600 operating school districts and over 2,500 school buildings, New Jersey's public schools provide an opportunity to examine who is honored with a school named after them—and why. Just a sampling reveals amazing stories about what our communities value. As we collected these stories, one stood out: Lawton C. Johnson

Middle School in Summit, Union County.

Johnson was an alumnus of the district and an office manager who had the distinct honor of having the middle school named after him in 2004, while he was still employed there. Johnson proudly served in Summit's school district from 1954 to 2007. He passed away in 2009, but his friends and colleagues hold many fond memories of him and his dedication to Summit's students and staff.

Here are a few recollections from the people who knew and worked with him, and the impact that naming the school for a local citizen, alumnus of the district, and educational support professional has on the school community.

### **Beth Thomas: School library media specialist**

Mr. Johnson was Summit Middle School. He was there when the first teacher arrived in the morning and stayed there late into the evening. He was all about the school and his church. When he uncharacteristically did not show up to church one Sunday, the first place his church friends thought to check for him was Lawton C. Johnson Summit Middle School (LCJSMS). He had fallen ill in the school parking lot. Not long after, he was diagnosed with cancer. He worked for as long as he could.

Mr. Johnson hardly ever took a sick day in his over 50 years of employment. But he knew how to enjoy his downtime. I remember one of his favorite vacation spots was Bermuda and he enjoyed high tea at the Short Hills Hilton. He had a great sense of humor, which is needed when working in a middle school.

The school was named after Mr. Johnson in honor of over 50 years of service. He began working in the main office while still a student and after graduation became a full-time employee.

During Black History Month, there is a morning announcement about Mr. Johnson's life and legacy. Our

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*Kathryn Coulibaly is the associate editor of the NJEA Review and provides content and support to [njea.org](http://njea.org). She can be reached at [kcoulibaly@njea.org](mailto:kcoulibaly@njea.org).*

library has pictures and news clippings of when the school was named after him, and we tell students they can look in yearbooks going back to the 1950s and see Mr. Johnson.

One of our technology cycle teachers has invited us to her class to teach her students about how technology has evolved at LCJSMS. Part of our presentation highlights Mr. Johnson. From film strips to overhead projectors to smartboards, Mr. Johnson was there for it all.

After the school was named after him, I remember him finding great humor in answering the phone, "Lawton C. Johnson Summit Middle School. Lawton C. Johnson speaking."

Buildings are often named after well-known historical figures or people who have donated money to the institution. To recognize a dedicated and loyal employee, who was a product of the Summit school system, was very forward-thinking of the board of education. And to do it while he was alive and still working meant that students and staff could get to know someone worthy of such an honor.

### **Maureen McCandless: Retired social studies teacher and supervisor**

I met Lawton in 1979, so there are many stories to tell! Lawton was brilliant at running the main office and dealing with the staff and all of our issues. He was warm and personable and a delight to converse with. I never saw him lose his patience with any of us and there were plenty of reasons to lose patience!

Seeing Lawton first thing in the morning meant that the day was going to be OK because he was there. Lawton had an infectious laugh and a great sense of humor. He had a unique relationship with everyone on the staff.



Mr. Lawton C. Johnson stands in front of the school that bears his name. Johnson was an alumnus of the district who served as the office manager. His career in the district spanned 53 years.



The current staff of Lawton C. Johnson Middle School proudly stand where Johnson once stood on the steps of the school that was named for him.

Lawton was well-known beyond the school. If you mentioned Lawton's name, chances are, the person had heard of him. He was devoted to his church and did a great deal of work for it. He also ran community projects such as First Night and food drives. If you had a problem, Lawton did what he could to help.

Reverend Denison Harrield from Wallace Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church first brought the idea of naming the school in Lawton's honor to the school board. It made sense to name the school for him. He started working there when he was still in high school and knew about all facets of the school. He was the school's heart and soul.

I can recall many years ago attending a staff development day at the Reeves-Reed Arboretum in Summit. One of the activities was about which "body part" we all represented on the staff. Lawton was the "neck" and had a T-shirt with that on it. It was a perfect way to refer to him!

I believe my career in Summit was much richer because of Lawton Johnson. I owe him so much for everything he did for me, and for making it a great place to work. When I was making up my mind about retiring, the first thing I considered was that Lawton had retired and was no longer there to brighten my day.

### **John Ross: seventh-grade science teacher**

I first met Mr. Johnson as a clueless seventh grader at Summit Junior High School. As a bit of a scatterbrain, I

often left things in school that I would need at home. This meant many frantic car rides to the school well after school hours. I would bang on the door and Mr. Johnson would always kindly answer and let me in to go to my locker. He would occasionally open a classroom if I was desperate for something I had left behind.

Once I began teaching in Summit, his kindness, compassion and giving spirit were evident in everything he did. Every school dance, field trip, school musical or any activity seemed to be always organized by Lawton. He would help with kids getting permission slips completed or helping with funds if someone could not afford the fee. He made sure every event went off without a hitch.

For the staff, he made every life event special. Bridal showers, baby showers, birthdays and retirements were always celebrated with class and style. Nothing slipped by Lawton's caring nature. If you had a sad moment due to loss or illness, flowers and a card always showed up. If you needed meals, a sign-up sheet was produced, and he organized all deliveries. Often, he would be the one showing up at your doorstep with something warm and delicious. He was a true gentleman whose kindness and love came through everything he did.

Lawton spent over 50 years at the junior high/middle school: first as a student, then as a student office assistant, then as an office manager. No one in town had a broader connection to the Summit community than Lawton.



School custodian Barry Bridges has worked in the district for 29 years. He fondly remembers working with Johnson.

Someone of his stature needs to be recognized because he would never ask for, or want, the spotlight. He was always in the background making everyone else's lives brighter. There will never be another Lawton C. Johnson. He was one of a kind!

### Steffany Baptiste: Former LCJSMS special education teacher

*Editor's note: Baptiste is now an assistant principal in Fair Lawn.*

On Nov. 1, 2007, we hosted Claude de Jager, principal at Amstelhof of Primary in Paarl, Western Cape, South Africa at Lawton C. Johnson Summit Middle School. Upon arrival that morning, Mr. Johnson greeted our guest at the door. Mr. de Jager was simply amazed to see that Mr. Johnson, the man named on the building, was standing before him and was a Black man. Due to the South African history of the Apartheid, Mr. de Jager was surprised and impressed that Summit, New Jersey would take such a notable step to name their building after a Black man—something that had never happened at that time in Paarl. To Claude de Jager, he was meeting a legend.

And indeed, Lawnton C. Johnson is a legend. 🇺🇸



## Public Schools throughout New Jersey honor local, national heroes

There are many more stories of the people who have been honored with having a New Jersey public school named for them. We encourage you to share your stories of such people. Find the online version of this story on NJEA's Facebook page and use the comments section to tell your school's story. You can also email those stories to [NJEAREview@njea.org](mailto:NJEAREview@njea.org).

Here are just a few:

### Jackson

Christa McAuliffe Middle School is named after educator and astronaut Christa McAuliffe who was killed when the space shuttle Challenger exploded on liftoff in 1986. McAuliffe is the originator of the saying, "I touch the future, I teach."

### Ringwood

Peter Cooper Elementary School is named after an inventor and businessman who spearheaded efforts to link communications between the United States and Europe and who, along with his wife, invented and popularized the product that is now known as Jell-O.

### Trenton

Darlene C. McKnight Elementary School is named after a paraprofessional and parent liaison who worked in the district. She served as secretary of the Trenton Paraprofessionals Association and on the negotiations team for several contracts. In the city, she did extensive work with churches, community-based organizations, peace advocacy groups, shelters, soup kitchens, and NJEA Families and Schools Together Work for Children.

Hedgepeth-Williams Middle School is named for Gladys Hedgepeth and Beline Williams who spearheaded a lawsuit against the Trenton Board of Education, to send their children to the all-white Junior School #2. With attorney Robert Queen, the case went to the state Supreme Court in 1944, which in Hedgepeth and Williams v. Trenton Board of Education ordered the desegregation of all New Jersey Public Schools.

Dr. Crosby Copeland Jr. Elementary School is named for an army veteran who went on to teach in Trenton. He later served as the school district's superintendent for eight years. Following his retirement, he remained active in community and professional organizations and was a mentor to youth in Trenton.

### Union City

Jose Marti STEM Academy is named for Jose Marti, a Cuban national hero who fought for Cuba's independence from Spain and was a noted writer and poet.

Eugenio Maria de Hostos Center for Early Childhood Education is named for a Puerto Rican educator and intellectual who fought for Puerto Rican and Cuban independence.

### Vineland

Sgt. Dominick Pilla School is named for the U.S. Army Ranger who died in the Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia in 1993. Pilla was from Vineland.



# Bringing medical training into the high school classroom

*By Virginia Fasulo*

## Career and technical education addresses gaps

It is well-established that each student is a unique individual, with specific needs, goals, backgrounds and learning styles. Despite this, education is still heavily standardized, all the way from curricula to testing.

Because of the changing nature of the country's career needs, and the sweeping budget cuts of the 1990s, electives and technical education fell by the wayside. Courses such as woodshop and home economics were removed from the curriculum entirely and never replaced. I believe that it would be beneficial to reconsider career and technical education (CTE) as a way to tailor the educational experiences of our students in a way that actually prepares them for the future.

In October of 2023, my school and I were recognized for our Biomedical Sciences program when I received the Milken Educator Award, one of the greatest honors of

my life to date. I hope to use the platform provided by this national award to facilitate real change in the way we view career-based education and to promote the idea of bringing health care programs into more schools in the United States.

## My story

My path into education was a long and winding one. My own mother was a home and careers teacher for close to 40 years, and she used to bring me with her to her classroom during the summers, where I helped her clean and prepare for the students' arrival in the fall.

I was always struck by the amount of care and effort she put into maintaining a well-balanced environment that somehow felt like home while also mimicking a professional kitchen where students could learn real skills in a fun, engaging way. My father painted the walls with culinary themed murals, and my mom always wore her black executive chef's coat to show her students what a real professional looks like in the field.

Her culinary classes did the catering for her school's events, giving her students hands-on experience in food service and hospitality, and helping to bring her school community closer together.

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*Virginia Fasulo, a 2023 Milken Educator Award winner, is a science teacher at Lodi High School, where she serves as an association representative for the Lodi Education Association. She can be reached at [v.fasulo@gmail.com](mailto:v.fasulo@gmail.com).*



Virginia Fasulo with her students. Lodi High School opened a state-of-the-art Biomedical and Exercise Lab featuring a fully equipped hospital wing with three suites. Photo from Milken Family Foundation.

My mother’s efforts paid off. She was consistently one of the most popular and effective teachers in her district and won multiple awards for her programs throughout the years.

However, despite witnessing my mother’s success and happiness in her career, I always believed that I would go into medicine in some form or another. I became a veterinary assistant in high school, and this hands-on experience taught me more about medicine than a thousand textbooks ever could have. I still consider it one of the most important and formative times of my youth, and I will be forever grateful to Dr. James Lawless for providing me with that opportunity at such a young age.

In college, I went into the pre-med program, and signed up with the campus’ volunteer ambulance corps. During this time, I was again struck by how much on-the-job training benefited me and helped develop both physical and soft skills.

I also worked as a lifeguard, where, as well as serving as a first responder, I also taught swim lessons—my first real experience in the role of teacher. I found myself increasingly drawn to human medicine, thanks largely to my comparative anatomy professor. He was a maverick in his own field, suggesting zoonotic disease epidemiology

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**It would be beneficial to reconsider career and technical education (CTE) as a way to tailor the educational experiences of our students.**

as a compromise between the fields that held my interest. I latched onto the idea and began working toward my master’s in public health upon graduating.

In February 2008, one semester before I was scheduled to finish graduate school, my father was diagnosed with Stage 3 non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. Feeling helpless and terrified, I began training for a triathlon with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society to help raise money for research into his disease.

One spring day after a particularly tough workout, I collapsed on the track, unable to breathe, and was given my own lymphoma diagnosis on April 1, 2008, two days after my 24th birthday.

Dad and I started treatment on the same day in May, and after six rounds of chemo and a month of radiation, we were both declared to be in remission that October.



As Milken Educator Awards Senior Vice President Dr. Jane Foley (left) and recipient Virginia Fasulo (right) look on, a Lodi pre-med student demonstrates equipment used to practice drawing blood. Photo from Milken Family Foundation.

This experience brought my family closer, and totally changed the trajectory of my life.

I finished my master's in epidemiology in 2010, and afterward, began working for the American Cancer Society. There I organized special events and conducted patient outreach and education. During this time, while working with high school students and teaching patients about their diagnoses and the resources that could help them, I realized that teaching was what I was meant to do. In 2014, I received the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship to go back to school for a degree in education. I graduated with my master's degree the following year.

### **CTE should be relevant and widely available**

I began my teaching career as a high school biology and general science educator, with classes at every level of student ability within the same school day, ranging from special education to Advanced Placement. This was challenging, but the experience also opened my eyes to the real meaning of differentiated education.

Despite their differences in interests, personality, and academic ability, I found that all of my students responded positively to stories about my personal experiences in science and medicine, and that relating subject matter to real-life scenarios engages their interest in a way that theoretical instruction just cannot do.

Everything changed for me during my second year of teaching. I was approached by a group of students who wanted to go into medicine but weren't sure how, or where, to start. As someone whose life has revolved around medicine, both as a recovered cancer patient, and having worked in several different fields of health care and public health, I was well suited to help them.

I started a Pre-Med Club that year. When 80 students showed up to my first meeting, I knew we were onto something. That summer, I began teaching an anatomy and physiology class, and soon that one pre-med class turned into two, which has since turned into a full blown pre-med curriculum featuring four different courses covering a range of subjects in the medical field.

Since our first year, the Pre-Med Club has attended six live surgeries, hosted countless guest speakers from various fields, attended various medical trainings including "Stop the Bleed," done organ dissections and even had a two-hour Facetime session with social media personality and "plastic surgeon to the stars," Dr. Miami.

Local hospitals and doctors' offices have been excited to get involved as well, creating excellent learning, networking and even potential career opportunities for our students.

In 2020, we opened a state-of-the-art Biomedical and Exercise Science Lab featuring a fully working hospital wing with three suites, all boasting real, functioning medical



equipment. We have two CAE Patient Simulation Training Mannikins, each in their own working hospital bed. We also have a phlebotomy and physical exam suite, and augmented reality simulations. In eight years, my school went from having no medical curriculum at all to being on the cutting edge of career-focused education in biomedical and exercise science.

Our newest addition to the program is a pre-veterinary and agricultural club, where students learn about animal husbandry, gardening and the veterinary field. We keep five Delaware hens in our school's courtyard, which is surprisingly easy despite the urban setting of our campus. This project began during the pandemic as a way to keep students engaged while virtual. I hatched the eggs in an incubator in my home, and live-streamed the whole process. It actually worked!

The students were so excited to see the chicks develop and hatch, and even as adults, the hens are highly engaging for even the most apathetic students. The chicken habitat has become a schoolwide project that crosses curricula: our math and physics departments host chicken races to learn about calculating speed, and we even got our engineering and construction teams to design and build a state-of-the-art chicken coop, including a working HVAC system.

## The changing world of post-COVID education

With my background in epidemiology, I always knew that the pandemic was never just going to be a two-week-long situation, and that the consequences of it would be far reaching, particularly in health care and education. We are seeing this play out in real time now, with issues ranging from student apathy and record-low mental health to the staff shortages in health care and education.

We are trying to educate students who are less engaged and more distracted than ever, while also being bombarded by ever-changing policies and political attacks, all created by people who, for the most part, have never been educators. Students are entering the workforce feeling less prepared than they should, both academically and emotionally, and this is, in part, due to the gap between what we teach and what our students need to know—in college and beyond. It is my belief that putting a heavier focus on CTE could help bridge this gap.

Now, when I teach, I don my white lab coat and my stethoscope to show the students what a professional in the field looks like, the same way my mother did with her chef's jacket all those years ago. It is my sincere hope that my students leave my classroom feeling as inspired and prepared for their future careers as hers did. 🏠

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# Morris Faculty Association grants college students' textbook wishes

Faculty takes action amid a global pandemic and anti-union animus

By Michelle Altieri

**Editor's note:** Since the article was originally written, Pride grants have been renamed as Public Education Partnership (PEP) grants (see sidebar). However, the overall program may still be referred to as the Pride in Public Education program. The word "Pride" has been replaced in the article that follows when grants are specifically referenced.

NJEA PEP grants can make a real difference in our communities, but using those funds to support college students specifically sometimes takes thinking outside the box. This is true in normal times, let alone when faculty members find themselves in the midst of a global pandemic that provides good cover for unprecedented anti-union actions from an administration intent to break our union.

Like many college commuters across the state, students at the County College of Morris (CCM) struggle financially to cover the inflated costs of living, often working part or full time while juggling four or five courses at a time. Institutional financial support can help cover some of the costs, but many students still struggle to make ends meet.

As Pride chair, I knew that NJEA guidelines do not allow PEP grants to be used for tuition waivers or the purchase of gas cards, but the acute struggles on our campus got me thinking about how we might be able to ease students' burdens in a real way.

That same semester I was brainstorming was in the spring of 2021 when our administration announced they were not reappointing seven almost-tenured members

of the Faculty Association of County College of Morris (FACCM), including the association president, grievance chair and communication chair. This outright union bust came on the heels of our ratification of one of our strongest faculty contracts in the college's history, as well as several on-campus actions that showcased our growing strength and power.

That spring our union was in true crisis as we simultaneously worked to restore our faculty members' jobs and fought to keep our members from succumbing to an escalating culture of fear. What I didn't know at the time was that this budding Pride initiative would become an essential part of keeping our solidarity intact.

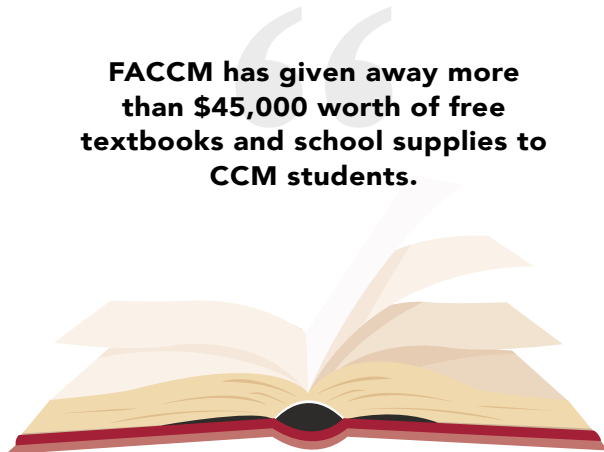
## An FACCM lending library

Our first giveaway was developed with a "lending library" concept through which we would provide free general education course textbooks to students. We worked with the college bookstore and the English department to purchase dozens of composition texts in anticipation of our first giveaway in the fall of 2021, but we were met with a "cease and desist" letter from the college's lawyer in an attempt to put a stop to the event.

Here we were, still reeling from both the COVID-19 pandemic and a catastrophic union bust, and the administration was threatening outright legal action if we went forward with our first Pride event. It doesn't take much to grasp the devastating impact that had on faculty morale. Fortunately, several members found the courage to wear their red shirts and run the event so that CCM students could receive their first round of free textbooks.

This lending system worked well. Students returned their copies when they no longer needed them, and we added new titles each semester to extend the reach of the

**FACCM has given away more than \$45,000 worth of free textbooks and school supplies to CCM students.**



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*Michelle Altieri is an associate professor of communication at the County College of Morris and currently fulfills the roles of Pride chairperson and chief social media administrator for the Faculty Association of County College of Morris (FACCM). She can be reached at [faccmpride@gmail.com](mailto:faccmpride@gmail.com). For Pride, FAST and legal updates, follow FACCM's @saveCCMfaculty accounts on Instagram, Facebook, X and Threads.*



Through and NJEA Pride in Public Education grant (now Public Education Partnership grants) the Faculty Association of County College of Morris supplied textbooks to students who needed them.

program. For several semesters we did just that, and the Pride events became positive moments in otherwise dire times while FACCM members were engaged in a three-year campaign of survival: devoting hundreds of hours to supporting the legal defense team trying to get our faculty reappointed, helping dozens of members navigate the grievance process, enduring retaliatory attacks from the administration, and appealing to college trustees, county commissioners and elected representatives for oversight—all to no avail.

Nevertheless, the Pride textbook giveaways held at the start of each semester continued to offer positive events that members were willing to risk supporting because they were putting free books directly into the hands of students. In an environment of documented retaliation against faculty members who wore FACCM T-shirts or

buttons, showing up to a Pride event turned into an act of resistance in and of itself.

### Stepping out of a comfort zone

There was a domino effect that couldn't be ignored: The more members attended events and publicly supported FACCM, the more others were willing to take a step out of their comfort zone and volunteer their time as well. Through all the darkness, the textbook giveaways were a bright spark that showed—to ourselves and the administration—that our union was surviving, despite all the barriers we faced.

"Pride in a healthy organization had been an idea, a branding to boost our image," current FACCM President Dee McAree remembers. "After the firing, it became an esprit de corps."

But it wasn't perfect.

Unfortunately, a fundamental flaw of the lending system is that it only helps a limited number of students. A student has to be enrolled in those specific courses to take advantage of the free books. Right from the beginning, student excitement from receiving a free textbook was tempered by the student disappointment of those leaving the event without one.

### Wish Fulfillment serves more students

The FACCM Wishlist Fulfillment program, which was developed by me along with President McAree and FACCM Treasurer Debbie Poetsch, provided a way for us remedy that flaw. The Wishlist allows us to accept student requests for specific textbooks or access codes on a first-come first-serve basis.

We can meet students' needs, no matter their major or the courses they are taking. This serves an unlimited number of students until the money runs out and we are never left with a library of unused textbooks to shelve. After one year of piloting this new version of the giveaway, I'm happy to report that more students are able to start the semester with the resources they need as a direct result of NJEA PEP grants.

At the time of publication, FACCM has given away more than \$45,000 worth of free textbooks and school supplies to CCM students! We are also awaiting the final Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) ruling that we hope will reaffirm the September 2023 hearing examiner's decision to reappoint our fired faculty members.

While the last three years of FACCM's 50-year history has been fraught with unprecedented anti-union animus, we are grateful for the many members who faced adversity head-on to help our association survive.

"Pride is not just good will," President McAree reflects. "It is resistance. It is unity." 🏠



## Pride grants are now PEP grants

In May 2024, the NJEA Delegate Assembly approved a name for the Pride in Public Education community outreach grants. They are now known as PEP grants. PEP stands for Public Education Partnership grants.

For more information about PEP grants, visit [njea.org/pep](http://njea.org/pep).

# LMC = RESULTS

## Cherry Hill Public School District Labor Management Collaborative works together to obtain \$1.5 million in salary guide

By Kimberly Crane

Like many schools post-pandemic, Cherry Hill Public Schools has struggled to hire and retain qualified staff. The crux of the struggle in Cherry Hill was the district's ranking for starting salaries. Cherry Hill ranked 478 out of 498 statewide for new hires with a bachelor's degree, and 456 out of 497 statewide for those with a master's degree. In a year with record school staff shortages, low starting salaries equals low staff recruitment and retention.

"At the high school and middle school levels, we had a lot of members covering additional periods," explains Cherry Hill Education Association (CHEA) President Steve Redfearn, who has been a member of the New Jersey Labor Management Collaborative (LMC) since August 2022. "When we sought candidates for open positions, our starting salary was so low that we couldn't get qualified candidates in the door."

### Searching for solutions

The Cherry Hill Board of Education began addressing the salary guide issue at its meetings in 2023, publicly addressing the need to improve teacher recruitment and retention. With guidance from the board's professional association and the New Jersey LMC, the board included CHEA and district stakeholders in the discussions.

Despite the departure of LMC-supportive board members, Joel Mayer and Gina Winters, discussions continued with Cherry Hill Superintendent Dr. Kwame Morton, Board President Miriam Stern, other board members and administrators in the human resources and business offices.

"It is helpful to bring all of the partners together," Redfearn elaborates. "We needed the perspective of our HR folks on why we couldn't get qualified candidates. We needed the superintendent's perspective as well as our board, knowing about all these open positions and our members taking on additional periods."

Morton played a pivotal role in ensuring the success

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



Participants in the Cherry Hill School District Labor Management Collaborative discuss priorities.

**"It's exciting to think about what other accomplishments we can attain in the future within the Labor Management Collaborative structure."  
– Cherry Hill EA President Steve Redfearn**

of the collaborative, as well as creating a welcoming environment and fiscally appropriate salary guide that made the district a contender for new hires.

"As a district, Cherry Hill is dedicated to fostering effective collaboration, believing it to be the cornerstone of all key decisions and improvement initiatives," Morton says. "In line with this commitment, the LMC played a crucial role by providing valuable input and engaging in meaningful collaboration to finalize the enhanced CHEA salary guide."

Redfearn said the board and administration really stepped up and realized that they had to do something before the staffing shortages began affecting student outcomes.



Cherry Hill School District Labor Management Collaborative includes the various local associations along with administrators and the school board. At the table on the lower right are Superintendent Dr. Kwame Morton (at end of table) and Educational Assistants of Cherry Hill President Rosemarie Casey (at table corner facing Morton).

“This is all about building and sustaining partnerships for our students,” Redfearn says. “Our students need consistency to reach their full potential, and this is achieved when the board, our district and the association leadership work collaboratively rather than in opposition to each other. It’s exciting to think about what other accomplishments we can attain in the future within the Labor Management Collaborative structure”.

**State funding cuts threaten progress**

As CHEA and the district awaited New Jersey state education aid numbers, they planned for what the salary adjustments would look like and how enhancements could be done within the district budget, its banked cap and 2% tax levy.

**“As a district, CHPS is dedicated to fostering effective collaboration, believing it to be the cornerstone of all key decisions and improvement initiatives.” - Superintendent of Cherry Hill Public Schools Dr. Kwame Morton**

When the state aid figures were announced, Cherry Hill experienced a nearly \$7 million reduction. The focus on tackling issues related to teacher recruitment and retention now expanded to include preserving programs and preventing staffing cuts.

CHEA, the school board, the Cherry Hill Fair Funding group, the Cherry Hill Zone PTA and district leadership, took their fight to Trenton and eventually received word that \$3.1 million would be restored from the \$7 million lost.

**Enhancing the salary guide**

Undeterred by the loss in state aid, the local association, the school board, superintendent and most district stakeholders remained committed to fixing the issue of staff recruitment and retention. The solution was clear: The salary guide needed an infusion of funds to enable the district to become a competitive option for qualified candidates.

“We revised our approach in the hopes that at least some aid would be restored, which did happen, so we were able to use part of the restoration aid toward the salary guide enhancement.”



**Collaboration Corner LMC  
New Jersey Labor  
Management Collaborative**

Welcome to our new series – Collaboration Corner LMC. Each month the NJEA Review will spotlight the success stories and progress of local associations participating in the New Jersey Labor Management Collaborative (LMC).

For more information on the New Jersey Labor Management Collaborative email Mike Ritzius, NJEA liaison to the New Jersey LMC at [mrizius@njea.org](mailto:mrizius@njea.org).

**“This is truly essential work that allows the board to gain greater understanding, engage more collaboratively and ultimately serve our primary stakeholders: the students.”**

**- Cherry Hill School Board  
President Miriam Stern**

For its part, CHEA requested that the NJEA Research and Economic Services Division develop a salary guide proposal for Cherry Hill that would:

Increase the entry level salaries to become more competitive within the region while also improving the overall standing in the entire state for recruitment purposes.

Provide additional enhancements to staff receiving higher increment increases at the top of the guide for their dedication to the district.

Maintain an incremental trajectory for upcoming negotiations that is sustainable and allows for a path to increase all salaries and in turn promote teacher recruitment and retention.

The salary guide produced by NJEA provided a framework for discussions in the Cherry Hill Labor Management Collaborative. This helped the group move closer to meeting the goal of attracting and retaining staff while protecting current positions and programs.

### **A \$1.5 million solution**

In May the school board began to discuss how to use the state aid restoration toward salary enhancements. At its June 2024 meeting, the board voted to use \$1.5 million to enhance the certificated staff salary guides.

Redfearn said CHEA members were pleasantly surprised by the news.

“They are kind of in shock because this hasn’t happened before here and is really unheard of anywhere,” Redfearn said. “We are entering into negotiations next year, and this puts us on a path to continue to enhance the starting salary at negotiations.”

Michael Ritzius, the NJEA liaison to the New Jersey LMC, says that local association members at all levels should be part of labor and management initiatives.

“During the collaboration process it is important for locals to invite association members into the conversation to maximize communication and understanding about goals and possible outcomes,” Ritzius says. “Just as with negotiations, everyone does not always get what they want. Collaboration, however, keeps the door open to continued improvements and solutions to many district issues and builds a culture of positive relationships.”

### **LMC = results!**

A collaborative labor management structure works when you have district stakeholders, like those in Cherry Hill, who are committed to the LMC process with the goal of creating positive outcomes for students.

“In the New Jersey Labor Management Collaborative, and working with Mike Ritzius from NJEA, we sit with our school board quite often,” Redfearn says. “These meetings provide an opportunity to work together on many issues. “This is a textbook case of why the New Jersey Labor Management Collaborative works. We achieved something that’s a win-win. It’s an excellent example of how you can work together to collaborate.”

Cherry Hill School Board President Miriam Stern views the LMC as a game changer.

“This is truly essential work that allows the board to gain greater understanding, engage more collaboratively and ultimately serve our primary stakeholders: our students,” Stern says. 🏡



*Great Public Schools for Every Student*

## **NEA’s Role in the NJ Labor Management Collaborative**

The New Jersey Labor Management Collaborative, an initiative dedicated to fostering productive relationships between labor and management in New Jersey’s educational system, thrives through the robust support of the National Education Association (NEA). This partnership exemplifies NEA’s commitment to enhancing educational environments not only in New Jersey but across the nation.

The NEA, as part of the National Labor Management Partnership (NLMP), a coalition of the national organizations of the nation’s educators, is cultivating a dynamic ecosystem of support that empowers districts to implement collaborative strategies effectively. Through providing crucial resources, expertise and ongoing consultation, the NLMP nurtures a sense of collective efficacy between labor and management, driving improvements in teaching conditions and student outcomes.

This collaborative approach has shown tangible benefits, leading to more cohesive school communities and a better educational experience for all stakeholders. By backing initiatives like the New Jersey Labor Management Collaborative, NEA demonstrates its dedication to fostering a culture of cooperation and mutual respect within the education sector, paving the way for sustained success and innovation.

For more information about NEA’s role in labor management collaboration, visit [nea.org/collaboration](https://nea.org/collaboration).

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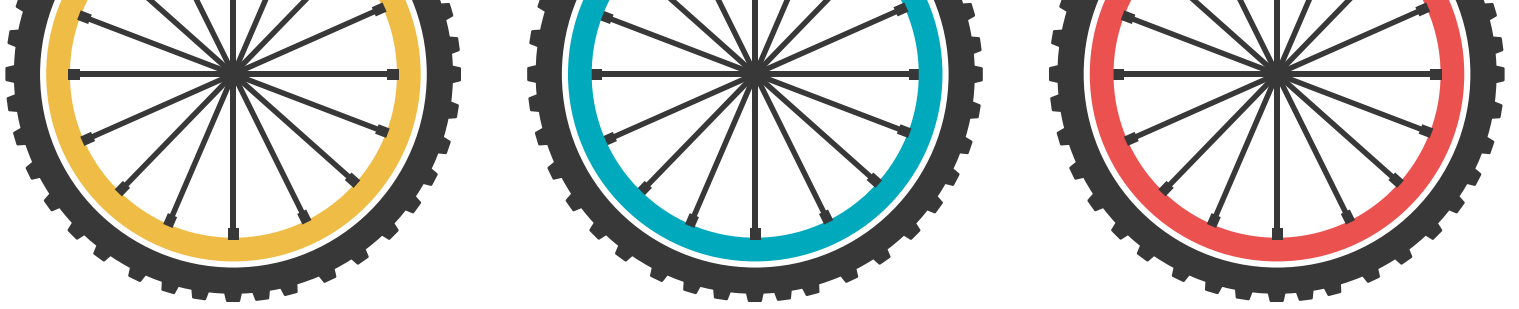
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# Wheels of change

Mainland Regional offers a unique bike technician course

By Tim Quinn

A bike shop? I thought schools only offered auto and wood shops. Not anymore! Mainland Regional High School is the first school in New Jersey to offer a bicycle technician course to high school students.

The course is led by Tim Hanna, who began his career at Mainland Regional High School (MRHS) in the fall of 1999 as a special education and English teacher. This eventually led to his current role in Mainland's Bike Repair shop. How does an English teacher end up in a high school bike shop?

## COVID reshaped priorities

As we went through and then came out of the pandemic, schools went through dramatic changes and student motivation wavered. Hanna found himself questioning his role as a teacher. Retirement was an option, but he still relished the classroom. He craved a new challenge, something that would ignite his passion once more. And so, after soul-searching and countless conversations with his family, he came to a decision: he wanted to teach a hands-on, practical skill—one that would empower students beyond the confines of textbooks.

Philadelphia, with its scenic streets and magnetic charm, became his inspiration. Hanna spent weekends exploring the city on his bicycle with his wife and daughters. But a series of flat tires led him to an epiphany: bike technicians, much like skilled labor, were aging with no recruits in sight.

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*Tim Quinn is a full-time special education teacher at Mainland Regional High School and a past president of the Mainland Regional Education Association. He can be reached at [timquinn87@yahoo.com](mailto:timquinn87@yahoo.com).*

*Tim Hanna, who is featured in this story, has served MREA as president, vice president and grievance chair at various times throughout his tenure, in addition to his teaching duties. For more information on how to start a bike repair shop in your district, email Hanna at [thanna@mainlandregional.net](mailto:thanna@mainlandregional.net).*



A view of the classroom in between classes.

Local bike technicians were in high demand and shops struggled to keep up with repairs. Skilled technicians were scarce. This is where he saw an opportunity to bridge the gap between classroom theory and real-world application.

## Project Bike Tech

Hanna's research led him to Project Bike Tech, a nonprofit in Boulder, Colorado that specializes in bicycle repair curricula. According to its website, Project Bike Tech (PBT) uses bicycle education as a conduit to teach core academics, enhance lives, create career opportunities and inspire new generations to be passionate about bikes. It is the only program of its kind in the country, and it is the on-ramp for young adults to develop a lifelong engagement with the bicycle lifestyle while learning key academic concepts.

PBT's primary program, Bike Tech in School, is an accredited high school elective that uses bicycle mechanics as a conduit to teach core academic standards and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) elements to students.

Project Bike Tech's proprietary curriculum currently is classified under the Transportation Sector of Career





NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty (l), an avid cyclist, recently visited Hanna's class.

Technical Education as an Introduction to Systems Diagnostics, Service and Repair. It incorporates career building skills and techniques as a component of the class. Students leave the course knowing the basics of portfolio building, resume writing and interview tactics.

Project Bike Tech has been around since 2007. The program got its start at the Bicycle Trip bike shop in Santa Cruz, California. The shop's owner and founder, Berri Michel, worked with a team from the shop to build the program from the ground up. The curriculum was created and developed by PBT along with industry partners to give students a base in bicycle mechanics. Additional modules were then introduced to encompass career preparation. This aspect of the class develops a student's professional skills whether they pursue a career in the cycling industry or any other field.

PBT provides the whole package of lesson plans, professional development and outfits classrooms with fully equipped workstations. The PBT program is now thriving throughout the Bay Area in California and is spreading nationwide. Over the years, PBT has successfully impacted more than 3,000 students.

Whether graduates directly enter the workforce or continue to college, they become aware of how core academic principles can be applied in real-world situations, how cycling can lead to a healthy and green lifestyle and

**NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty, an avid cyclist, visited the program and was impressed with the students' enthusiasm and accomplishments.**

how to properly present themselves as a prospective employee regardless of where they pursue a career.

### **Pitching the course to administration**

Armed with this knowledge, Hanna approached school administration. He proposed an elective course—an introduction to bicycle mechanics. Administrators loved the idea, and soon, the wheels were set in motion.

Hanna was awarded a grant through the National Education Association (NEA) for additional professional development through Bike Teacher, which is a one-to-one, 40-hour, complete hands-on bicycle mechanics repair and maintenance training program designed individually for diverse audiences.

According to its founder, Arthur Rodriguez, Bike Teacher was created out of a passion for riding bikes and working with his hands as a mechanic. He realized how impactful cycling can be for your body and mind. Helping others



**Students after riding down to Linwood City Hall to propose plans for the mountain bike trail on the MRHS campus.**

get rolling again and giving them the tools to fix their own bikes.

The Mainland Regional Board of Education contracted with Project Bike Tech to provide all the workstations, curriculum and professional development needed. A lab classroom was transformed into a bike repair shop. Students donned aprons, wielded wrenches and learned to diagnose and fix everything from flat tires to chain malfunctions. The administration and school board had invested about \$60K into the program but also in the future of these young learners.

In the planning stages, the administration had cautiously predicted two sections of the course. How many students would sign up for a class that involved grease-stained hands and the intricacies of bike chains? But as word spread through the hallways of MRHS, students from diverse backgrounds enrolled. At the end of course selection, there were five full sections—a full class load along with a wait list.

### **The preparation: Wrenching in the summer**

During the summer, Hanna spent four days at Project Bike Tech in Boulder participating in professional development and learning the curriculum. In addition, through the NEA grant, he was able to attend a five-day, 40-hour training program to gain bicycle mechanic certification endorsed by the Professional Bicycle Mechanics Association through Biketeacher.com in San Jose.

But Tim's journey did not end there.

To fully understand the intricacies of the bicycle industry, Hanna spent his summer working at Tuckahoe Bike Shop in Atlantic County. Side by side with seasoned bike techs,

he honed his skills, learning the art of wheel tuning, brake adjustments and gear tuning. Along the way he built solid relationships and was ready to present and troubleshoot issues effectively with his students.

His passion and enthusiasm for giving this opportunity to his students was fully embraced by not only Tuckahoe, but several other Ocean City boardwalk bike rental businesses. These businesses have been instrumental in the program's success. They donate parts and provide jobs to students who have completed their first year of the program.

As the year progressed, the classroom transformed into a workshop. Six workstations, each equipped with tools and spare parts. Hanna guided his students through the basics—the anatomy of a bicycle, the art of tire removal and delicate brake adjustments. But it was not about nuts and bolts; it was about instilling a passion for craftsmanship and problem-solving.

### **Opportunities**

It has not been all smooth sailing. Challenges have arisen—the stubborn rusted bolt or irreparable part. Students have been presented with many troubleshooting situations that require critical thinking skills learned in the course. Many students have picked old, battered bikes out of the trash and repaired them. One student, Mason, took a trash-picked bike, redesigned, repaired and repainted it for a Father's Day present for his dad.

Another student, Juventino, secured summer employment at Tuckahoe, just like his teacher.

"We did so much more in class than at work," Juventino says. "We took entire bikes apart down to each nut and bolt and put them back together. At work, I just do the easy stuff—flats, gears, grease."

Juventino loves going to work to fix things, but also the sharing of stories with customers and camaraderie among the staff. His career readiness has soared as he navigates customer service.

This program has benefited students and staff. Both can bring their bikes in for tune-ups and repairs for no charge. The students fill out work orders and complete them as they come in. Business has been so good that the district has had to use an additional classroom and outdoor storage locker to store bikes.

Bicycle repair class participates also in weekly bicycle rides around the local community. Prior to taking bicycle repair a student named Brad did not know how to ride a bike. Now he does.

"It's my favorite class at MRHS, we ride bikes and fix them," Brad says. "It's great!"

### **Having a little fun**

One recent trip was to Linwood City Hall to meet with the planning board. The students presented plans to build



Students on a ride down to 9th Street into Ocean City to watch the implosion of the smokestack at the BL England Power Plant.

a BMX course on district grounds. They laid out all the specs for the board and were granted approval.

The district agreed to the project if it was student driven. Mainland Regional is providing the dirt for the track and the students collaborated with the computer-aided design classes on the layout. The students will move all the dirt themselves and complete the course at no charge to the district. Down the road, they hope to explore starting a competitive BMX club.

### Moving forward

This year the program will expand with a Level 2 component that addresses more than just the repair portion of bicycles, but the physics and design of the bikes themselves. There is so much more to bicycles than just riding and repairing them. The curriculum expands on math, music and English skills in many ways. The course is a pathway for any educator to have students working with their hands and expanding their knowledge from there.

On a recent site visit, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty, an avid cyclist, met with one of the classes and was impressed with the students' enthusiasm and work they have accomplished.

"I have been to many schools and toured many shop classes, but never a bike class," Beatty says. "This is an excellent opportunity for students to work with their hands and gain real-world career readiness skills."

Who would have ever thought that a bike repair shop class would ever happen? Hanna did and has done it. 🚲

## Resources



### Project Bike Tech

[projectbiketech.org](http://projectbiketech.org)

Project Bike Tech (PBT) uses bicycle education as a conduit to teach core academics, enhance lives, create career opportunities and inspire new generations to be passionate about bikes. It is the only program of its kind in the country, and it is the on-ramp for young adults to develop a lifelong engagement with the bicycle lifestyle while learning key academic concepts.

### Bike Teacher

[biketecher.com](http://biketecher.com)

Bike Teacher is an independent bicycle mechanic school located in San Jose, California. It offers beginner to advanced courses, certifications, and service repairs.



# Got health and safety issues?

## Check out these tools for tackling them

By Dorothy Wigmore

There's lots to do as the school year starts. Health and safety tools could be on your list. You likely will need at least one during the year.

To be clear, whatever you do in a school, you have the right to a healthy and safe job. It's the law.

The state's Department of Health enforces and consults about that law through PEOSH, or Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health. PEOSH works with the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development and other agencies too.

But the law's just the minimum. Government resources also tend to assume the issues and processes are technical, that you just need information.

It's much more. Workers' health and safety is a union and labor issue. It's a wonderful organizing topic, requiring the power of multiple voices speaking collectively from a justice perspective, to prevent and fix hazards. It recognizes that "an injury to one is an injury to all". So the tools and skills must fit these needs.

### Where to start

#### 1. Is there a committee?

If you've got a health and safety question or concern, ask co-workers or someone on the local association executive

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*Dorothy Wigmore is a long-time health and safety specialist and WEC consultant. She has worked in Canada, the U.S. and Mozambique, focusing on prevention and worker participation to solve job-related hazards. She's also a pioneer of body and workplace mapping and other tools to find and fix those hazards.*

board or your UniServ field representative about a health and safety committee. These committees can fall by the wayside over a summer and need reviving in September.

Committees are key tools in any school and the starting point for organizing around health and safety. If one doesn't exist, now's a good time to pull some folks together to start one, with help from your UniServ field rep and local association. If there is one, you could join or work with it about your issue. See the NJEA Review article from September 2020, "Health and Safety Committees Knowledge + Action = Change," for more about knowledge activism. You can find it by searching the article title at [njea.org](http://njea.org).

#### 2. What about training?

Whether you're a health and safety newbie, an individual activist or a committee member, you need training. There's lots to learn, especially for knowledge activists – people who use information and skills to get things changed. (Being a "technical expert" doesn't work nearly as well.)

Like many topics, there are:

- Principles involved (e.g., fix the hazard not the worker, prevention is the goal).
- Rights and responsibilities to clarify (e.g., your right to know about hazards, the employer's responsibility to fix them).
- Activities to learn (e.g., walk-throughs/inspections, making sense of a data sheet).
- Skills to learn and use (e.g., making the case for change, organising members/co-workers).
- A framework that pulls these together.



## Resources

For formal training, NJEA provides health and safety workshops at state, regional and local events. Ask your local association building rep or officer or UniServ rep about what's planned and request topics you need.

Less formally, check out articles in past copies of the Review, or their digital versions at [njea.org](http://njea.org). Going back many years, they are full of information about a broad range of topics from rights to specific hazards to organizing members about various issues.

### 3. What are the issues?

Like other union activities, it's important to know what health and safety hazards or issues co-workers/members face or care about. If you're concerned about a hazard or issue, it may be affecting others too. Tools to find these common issues include:

- Body mapping to see patterns of symptoms, injuries, illnesses or diseases ("this is the first time I've known I'm not alone in my pain" – search "Maps Reveal the Invisible" at [njea.org](http://njea.org)) – conduct them at membership meetings, lunch or other breaks.
- Workplaces maps to see hazards, especially stressors and other things that often are not visible (search "Maps Reveal the Invisible").
- Questionnaires/surveys, presenting results visually (body and/or workplace maps, graphs, etc.), done in/with groups, plus discussion about what's missing, how to find out more, who can help with what, and other next steps (search "Are Job-Related Hazards Affecting Members' Health?" at [njea.org](http://njea.org)).
- Make visual displays (e.g., maps, graphs) of OSHA 300 logs (of reported injuries, etc.) for the last few years to see patterns of symptoms/effects and where they're found (search "Key Resources Help NJEA Members Use Health and Safety Rights" at [njea.org](http://njea.org)).

It also helps to:

- List past issues and what happened with them, especially if they weren't resolved (ask the UniServ field rep, local association officers, previous health and safety committee members and co-workers).
- Add topics based on legally required programs (search "Health and safety committees Knowledge + Action = Change") and union policies and convention resolutions (UniServ field reps can help).
- Set priorities based on agreed-upon criteria (see Resources below).
- Ask what other local associations are tackling, their solutions and strategies to get them.
- Share the load with others, formally in a committee or informally with co-workers.

### 4. What about resources?

Health and safety articles in the NJEA Review and the NJEA Health and Safety Manual provide plenty of information about specific hazards, committee activities and more. So too do people and organizations. The resources list is a start.

### Take a breath

Yes, there's a lot to do when you get into health and safety. The load is less when it's shared. It's rewarding and can be fun. Just take a breath occasionally. You've nothing to gain but your health, your safety and a unique organizing opportunity for your local. 🏠

#### Beautiful Trouble

For principles, tactics, methods and stories  
[beautifultrouble.org](http://beautifultrouble.org)

#### Wigmorising

Committee process toolbox (e.g., *Criteria for decision-making - setting priorities about hazards to tackle*), Dorothy Wigmore  
[bit.ly/wigmorising-hscomm](http://bit.ly/wigmorising-hscomm)

#### Hazards Magazine

A long-time UK health and safety group's on-line resources  
[hazards.org](http://hazards.org)

#### Healthy Schools Now

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

#### LOARC

Health and Safety Representation: Writing the Workers Back In  
[bit.ly/loarcworkersguide-1](http://bit.ly/loarcworkersguide-1)

#### National Council for Occupational Health and Safety

An activist health and safety organization  
[nationalcosh.org](http://nationalcosh.org)

#### NJEA

NJEA Health and Safety Manual  
[njea.org/download/9266](http://njea.org/download/9266)

Compilation of health and safety articles by topic  
[njea.org/health-safety](http://njea.org/health-safety)

Organizational Development health and safety contact *Health and safety contact Mike Rollins (request through your UniServ field rep)*

Worksite Safety and Health Committee

Find your county rep to this committee

- Visit [njea.org](http://njea.org) and log in.
- Hover over your name in the upper-right hand corner, then slide down and click on "Committees."

#### New Jersey Work Environment Council

[njwec.org](http://njwec.org)

For technical information, walk-through help, ask your UniServ field rep.

#### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Creating Healthy Indoor Air Quality in Schools  
[epa.gov/iaq-schools](http://epa.gov/iaq-schools)



PAST, PRESENT  
AND FUTURE

## MBOS: PENSION INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Do you have questions about your retirement account? Need to change your withholding? Having trouble getting through to the state's Division of Pensions by telephone? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, consider signing up for the Member Benefit Online System (MBOS). Signing up will enable you to check the status of your account at any time, from anywhere.

MBOS is an internet-based application that allows registered members to check on their pension retirement account, as well as change their address, change or begin direct deposit of pension checks, change life insurance beneficiaries, acquire federal and state tax information, and update federal and state tax withholdings.

Registration is easy. New users need to follow the directions provided in this article and remember to write down their login information for future use. If you are already registered before retiring, you do not need to register again. Simply continue to use your login ID and password from the account you established when you were an active employee; however, you will need your retirement account number to switch to a retired user.

If you have registered for MBOS but cannot remember your login ID, you can request that it be emailed to you by visiting the MyNewJersey portal online. For additional information about MyNewJersey, or to contact the MyNewJersey support staff, visit [my.nj.gov](http://my.nj.gov).

### Multifactor authentication

The Division of Pension and Benefits require multifactor identification by all MBOS users to improve the security of its online systems. Multifactor identification keeps your account more secure because you log in with two sets of factors: your ID and password, which are "something you know," and a unique code that's displayed on a device you are using, such as a mobile phone, computer or tablet. In other words "something you have. The code will be different each time you log in.

MBOS accounts for members that have either not set up Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) or have not recently accessed their account have been locked. To regain access members, need to follow the procedure below:

1. Go to the MBOS login page and use the "Need help?" link.
2. Click "Request Help."

3. Click "Other Problem."

4. Click "Yes, continue with my Help Request."

5. Complete the information with as much information you can remember and click "Submit Your Help Request."

More detailed information is available on the New Jersey Division of Pensions website at [state.nj.us/treasury/pensions](http://state.nj.us/treasury/pensions). There are also videos in the Video Library on the Division of Pensions and Benefits website [nj.gov/treasury/pensions/videos.shtml](http://nj.gov/treasury/pensions/videos.shtml) that can assist with registration and issues related to login problems.

For questions about the Member Benefits Online System (MBOS), visit [nj.gov/treasury/pensions/mbos-register.shtml](http://nj.gov/treasury/pensions/mbos-register.shtml) or call the Division's MBOS Help Desk at 609-777-0534.

### Do you have changes in your medical benefit information?

Changes to medical benefit information are made through [MyNJBenefitsHub.nj.gov](http://MyNJBenefitsHub.nj.gov). All new retirees must submit their applications online.

Registration is accomplished through a website called Benefitsolver. Once you are registered, there will then be a link on your MyNewJersey homepage. If you have any questions, you can contact the New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits Client Services at 609-292-7524.

### Registering for Benefitsolver

If your district was not a member of the SEHBP while you were employed, you will need to register for Benefitsolver to access information about retiree health benefits.

1. Go to [MyNJBenefitsHub.nj.gov](http://MyNJBenefitsHub.nj.gov).
2. Click the "Register" button and follow the steps required. Make sure to answer "Yes" to having a MyNewJersey account and have your MBOS login information handy.

Going forward, you should see a button from Benefitsolver when you log into MBOS.

# Around the counties

*For questions and/or concerns, or if your county is not listed, please check your county newsletter or reach out to your county REA for more information. For trip details, check your county newsletter.*

## **BERGEN COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 8:** Fall meeting and luncheon at Seasons Catering. The guest speaker will be Mike Salerno. Reservation deadline is Oct. 1, and the cost is \$50. To attend, call Marie Papaleo at 201-407-2543.

## **BURLINGTON COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 10:** Fall meeting and luncheon at Marco's at Indian Springs Country Club. Reservation deadline is Sept. 27, and the cost is \$25. To attend, call Donna O'Malley at 609-268-0838.

## **CAMDEN COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 8:** Fall meeting and luncheon at Tavistock Country Club. Reservation deadline is Sept. 26, and the cost is \$30. To attend, call Diane Merlino at 856-498-9593.

## **CUMBERLAND COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 9:** Fall meeting and luncheon at Millville Motorsports Park. To attend, call Pam Garwood at 856-392-6909.

## **ESSEX COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 16:** Fall meeting and luncheon at Hanover Manor. The guest speakers will be NJEA President Sean M. Spiller and NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson. Reservation deadline is Oct. 9, and the cost is \$40. To attend, call Kathie McKoy-Osborne at 973-715-6591.

## **GLOUCESTER COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 2:** Fall meeting and luncheon at GCREA office. Reservation deadline is Sept. 25. To attend, call Margery Walsh at 856-381-1123.

## **HUNTERDON COUNTY REA**

**Sept. 19:** Fall meeting and luncheon at Mountain View Chalet, for members only. To attend, call Joyce Kucyn at 908-479-6656.

## **MERCER COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 23:** Fall meeting and luncheon at Mercer Oaks Golf Club. Reservation deadline is Oct. 10, and the cost is \$35. To attend, call Lisa Rizziello at 609-577-6158.

## **MIDDLESEX COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 10:** Fall meeting and luncheon at The Grand Marquis. Reservation deadline is Oct. 3, and the cost is \$45. To attend, call Susan Jaysnovitch at 732-925-1606.

## **MONMOUTH COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 8:** Fall meeting and luncheon at Gramercy, to meet and greet PAC-endorsed local candidates. Reservation deadline is Sept. 27, and the cost is \$45. To attend, call Debbie Adamchak at 848-459-2672.

## **MORRIS COUNTY REA**

**Sept. 11:** General meeting/luncheon at Birchwood Manor. The guest speaker will be Heather Darling-Morris, County Surrogate, and NJEA Government Relations representatives. Reservation deadline is Sept. 1, and the cost is \$35 for members and \$55 for guests. To attend, call John Williams at 609-504-9681.

## **OCEAN COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 17:** Fall meeting and luncheon at the Clarion Hotel in Toms River. Meeting topic: Induction of new officers by former NJEA President Edithe Fulton. The cost is \$32. To attend, call Pam Raynor at 862-268-5210.

## **PASSAIC COUNTY REA**

**Sept. 25:** Fall meeting and luncheon at The Brownstone in Paterson. Cost is \$35. To attend, call Kitty Sausa at 201-445-7577.

## **SALEM COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 28:** Fall luncheon meeting at St. John's Episcopal Church in Salem. The guest speaker will be Nicki Burke. Reservation deadline is Oct. 21, and the cost is \$17. To attend, contact Rosemma Ward at 856-467-4795.

## **SOMERSET COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 9:** Fall meeting and luncheon at Bridgewater Elks Club. The guest speakers will be NJREA President Joan Wright, Mike Salerno, NJEA Research, and Aetna Representatives. Reservation deadline is Oct. 3, and the cost is \$28. To attend, call Kathy Kapp at 908-722-7715.

## **UNION COUNTY REA**

**Oct. 8:** Fall luncheon and general membership meeting at Casa del Rey in Roselle Park, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be guest speakers from the NJEA Research and Economic Services (to discuss health benefits) and Government Relations divisions. Reservation deadline is Sep. 30, and the cost is \$40. To attend, call Donna L. Mertz-Burkhardt at 908-686-2390.



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# SAFER BY DESIGN

By Amy Moran, Ph. D. (she/her)



Welcome back to another wonderful school year! As we prepare our rooms and routines for success, let's recommit to celebrating LGBTQIA+ culture all year long.

New Jersey has several important policies that support us in our LGBTQIA+ inclusion work and safer schools practices:

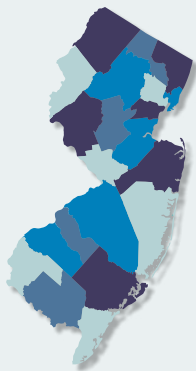
- **2010 – Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights** (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14) addresses harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) in schools.
- **2017 – Social and Emotional Learning** (SEL) Competencies help ensure that students learn self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills.
- **2017 – Transgender Students Legislation** (S3067/A4652) enables anyone to use the school bathroom or locker room that corresponds with their gender identity and to be called by their chosen name and pronoun.
- **2019 – LGBT Curriculum Inclusion Mandate** (C.18A:35-4.35) which requires boards of education adopt curricular topics and materials that include instruction on the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.
- **2020 – Comprehensive Health and Physical Education** standards that support personal growth and development, emotional health, and social and sexual health in developmentally-appropriate ways by grade level.

All of these provide back-up for adults in schools as we affirm and celebrate our LGBTQIA+ students while providing opportunities for our straight, cisgender students to better understand and appreciate their queer peers, queer community members, and queer fellow Americans, past and present.

We've long understood that multiculturalism in curricula is a pathway toward student identity affirmation, a more positive classroom culture, and reducing incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying. Including queer culture within a multicultural lens is something many of us have been doing for years. We do it because it's the right thing to do, and because continuing to co-create safer learning spaces has positive ripple effects for everyone. Let's talk about some easy-to-activate best practices.

- **POST** a rainbow-themed poster or sticker on your classroom door, at the front of the classroom, and/or on your desk. The intersex-inclusive Progress Pride flag is one of the most inclusive designs.
- **INCLUDE** your pronouns on your e-signature for your school email, letting readers know what pronouns to use when referring to you and signaling to them that you're open to learning others' pronouns too!
- **CREATE** an "intake" form that lets you learn more about students—including their personal pronouns. Learn which pronouns they'd like for public classroom use (and whether they discreetly use other pronouns in one-on-one discussions).
- **CHOOSE** gender-neutral language when addressing your groups. Instead of "boys and girls" or "ladies and gentlemen," try "learners," "scholars," "writers," "scientists," or "problem solvers."
- **FORM** activity teams and learning groups by characteristics other than perceived sex or gender. Try groupings by, birth month or number of pets.
- **CONNECT** with your school's GSA adviser or an adviser in your district and invite GSA students to be guest speakers in your classroom. They'll likely have tons of experience-rich insight to share about making safer spaces for all. (Once "gay/straight alliances," GSAs can be "gender and sexuality alliances" to be more inclusive.)
- **START** a GSA. Check your district's extra-work-for-extra-pay listings, work with your principal and union president about how to get the club on the next board agenda, and get started once you have approval. [NOTE: Once a club is "board official," it's covered by district insurance—this protects teachers. Being "board official" also helps ensure you're being paid for your time and professionalism.] Let's draw inspiration from Kamala Harris's running mate Tim Walz, former social studies teacher and football coach who started Mankato High School's first GSA 25 years ago.

In other words, let's deepen our *rainbow connections*, making our teaching and learning spaces *safer by design*. Please share your own LGBTQIA+ inclusive back-to-school practices at [RainbowConnectionNJEA@gmail.com!](mailto:RainbowConnectionNJEA@gmail.com) 🏳️‍🌈



# SUSSEX TO CAPE MAY

Workshops and conferences

## highlights

Literacy and a trip to China

## SHOWCASE

Showcase experiences have been endorsed by NJEA's Professional Development Institute and are also posted on [njea.org](http://njea.org). Those seeking endorsement of a professional development experience that they will provide should email Dawn Howlen ([dhowlen@njea.org](mailto:dhowlen@njea.org)) and Tamanyka Booker ([tbooker@njea.org](mailto:tbooker@njea.org)) in NJEA's Professional Development Division.

## WEST JERSEY READING COUNCIL OFFERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The West Jersey Reading Council (WJRC) is committed to the development and support of literacy initiatives. Its mission is to promote literacy in Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Salem counties through professional development, active membership, partnership with the International Literacy Association and Literacy New Jersey, and dissemination of pertinent research and practices.

While WJRC members typically come from Burlington, Camden, Gloucester or Salem Counties, the council welcomes anyone from any county in the state to attend its virtual or in-person events.

A \$20 membership fee covers attendance at WJRC professional development events for the year. Once a member pays that fee, they are able to attend all professional development events at no extra cost.

Detail and registration links for the programs listed below are found at [westjerseyreading.org](http://westjerseyreading.org).

### Sept. 26

Increasing Interaction for Multilingual Learners: Tips, Tricks, and To-Dos  
6-7:30 p.m.  
Virtual

### Oct. 17

West Jersey Reading Council Fall Conference  
5-7 p.m.  
In-person: Pennsauken High School,  
Pennsauken N.J.

### Nov. 2

Ways To Develop a Family and Community  
Global Literacy Connection  
10-11 a.m.  
Virtual

### Dec. 12

How to Use Dialogic Reading to Strengthen Early Literacy Skills  
6-7 p.m.  
Virtual

### Feb. 19

Decoding in the Upper Grades  
6-7 p.m.  
Virtual

### April 9

Using LGBTQ+ Books in the Classroom in the Age of Book Bans  
6-7 p.m.  
Virtual

## TAKE PART IN THE K-16 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP CHINA STUDY TOUR

The New Jersey Chinese Teachers Association (NJCTA) is pleased to announce the New Jersey K-16 Educational Leadership China Study Tour taking place Dec. 15 to 21. This week-long program in China will help educational leaders start or strengthen their institution's Chinese programs or partnerships with Chinese schools.

The program is funded by NJCTA and Jilin International Studies University (JISU, a private college in China). Highlights include school visits, lectures on the Chinese educational system, a university tour and visits to local historical monuments.

The application deadline is Sept. 15, 2024. Your passport will need to have been valid at least six months prior to the date of departure. Learn more and apply at [usnjcta.org](http://usnjcta.org).

## MORE TO LEARN

### ATTEND THE 2024 NJCSS CONFERENCE

The 2024 New Jersey Council for the Social Studies will hold its annual conference on Monday, Oct. 21, from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The theme is "Challenges and Changes: Past, Present, and Future." The conference will be held at the Busch Student Center at Rutgers University in Piscataway.

Registration is \$90 and the conference fee includes a one-year NJCSS membership (Sept. 1, 2024 through Aug. 31, 2025.)

The three workshop sessions will be one hour long and run from 8:45 a.m. - 1:05 p.m. There will be a "business breakfast" and the names of local eateries for your lunch. Visit [njcss.org](http://njcss.org) and click on the conference link for registration, continuing updates and the overall program.

Questions? Email Hank Bitten at [hbitten@optonline.net](mailto:hbitten@optonline.net).

## PD TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH FOR PRE-K TO GRADE 12 STUDENTS

Growing Healthy Minds is a virtual professional development series which brings together school physicians, school nurses, school counselors, school administrators, educators and other school-based mental health professionals from across the state to improve mental health support for all students. Participants collaborate to achieve the goal of improving understanding of how to promote holistic mental and behavioral well-being and respond as student mental health concerns arise.

Participation offers the opportunity to:

- Join a statewide network of peers who share resources and lessons learned.
- Participate in monthly virtual learning sessions for didactic and case-based learning and mentorship.
- Benefit from support and guidance from a team of expert Hub Faculty.
- Access to a virtual library of student mental health information, resources and tools.

This virtual learning collaborative is led by seven subject matter experts:

- Iqra Baig, MD, MS, St. George's University School of Medicine Class of '23
- Jennifer Chuang, MD, Section Chief, Adolescent Medicine, Pediatrics Residency Program Director, St. Joseph's University Medical Center
- Kristina Donovan, PhD, Principal, Highland Park High School; Lecturer, Rutgers University
- Bert Mandelbaum, MD, School Physician for Montgomery, Hillsborough, North Brunswick, Chapin; Chair, Department of Pediatrics, Penn Medicine Princeton Health; Chair, NJAAP Task Force on Adolescent Health and School Start Times
- Kathy McCutcheon MSN, RN, NCSN, Executive Board, New Jersey State School Nurse Association; Lecturer, Rutgers University
- David Nash, Esq., Director of Legal Education and National Outreach for the Foundation for Educational Administration
- Laura Williams, School Counselor, Oak Valley School, Deptford; BIPOC Committee Chair, NJ School Counselor Association

The upcoming seven-session Growing Healthy Minds series will kick off in October 2024. All sessions are free, offer educational credit, and will be hosted virtually via Zoom. Participants may join individual sessions based on their availability.

For more information and to register, visit [njaap.org/ghm](http://njaap.org/ghm) or contact Program Manager Tizana Hoggs, MPA at [THoggs@njaap.org](mailto:THoggs@njaap.org).

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FROM RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

### NGSS workshop series

The Science Education Institute at Raritan Valley Community College offers a series of workshops for K-12 teachers and supervisors on how to support students as they investigate and make sense of phenomena in the classroom. Through these workshops, participants will explore all aspects of effective Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) aligned instruction.

Led by Dr. Wil van der Veen, author and a nationally recognized expert on the NGSS and science education, the workshops will be held at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg.

**Oct. 30: Using Core Ideas to Construct**

**Explanations for Science Phenomena**

**Dec. 11: Engaging Students in Practices Using Performance Tasks**

**Feb. 5: Making Crosscutting Concepts Explicit**

**Feb. 26: Using Explanation and Argument to Assess Student Learning**

**March 19: Defining Problems and Designing Solutions for Engineering Phenomena**

### Climate change workshop series

Science Education Institute at RVCC also offers a series of workshops for K-12 teachers and supervisors on how to support students as they investigate and make sense of Climate Change related phenomena. We will explore how K-12 educators can meet the increased focus on Climate Change in the revised New Jersey Students Learning Standards for Science.

**Dec. 4: Teaching About Climate Change in Grades K-12: Part 1**

**Jan 22: Teaching About Climate Change in Grades K-12: Part 2**

For both the NJSS and the climate change series, each workshop begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. Light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

The fee is \$150 per workshop per teacher. Participants will receive five professional development units for completing each workshop.

To register for either the NGSS or Climate Change workshops, visit [tinyurl.com/RVCC-REG24-25](http://tinyurl.com/RVCC-REG24-25). For more information contact Donna Frasca-Brady at [donna.frasca-brady@raritanval.edu](mailto:donna.frasca-brady@raritanval.edu) or 908-526-1200, ext. 8942.

### Use Starlab to make science come alive

The Science Education Institute at Raritan Valley Starlab is an inflatable dome on which you can project vivid images of the night sky, ancient mythological characters, our solar system and galaxy, Earth's weather patterns and geological features, or the biological cell. Starlab is easily



transportable and fits into a small car. It can be set up in 15 minutes and accommodates up to 30 students. The Starlab dome requires a clean floor space of 20 x 22 feet and a 12-foot-high ceiling.

A Starlab Training will be held in-person on Nov. 20 at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg and will begin promptly at 9 a.m. and end by 4 pm. At the training, participants will learn how to set up, maintain, and repack the Starlab system. Light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

The training fee is \$175. Teachers who complete the training are eligible to rent Starlab for a fee of \$450/week (\$350/week between June 1 and Dec. 1).

To register online use [tinyurl.com/RVCC-REGSLT](https://tinyurl.com/RVCC-REGSLT). For more information contact Donna Frasca-Brady at [donna.frasca-brady@raritanval.edu](mailto:donna.frasca-brady@raritanval.edu) or 908-526-1200, ext. 8942.

## MEMBER BENEFIT PLAN REPORT AVAILABLE

This is a summary of the annual report for the New Jersey Education Association Member Benefit Fund, Employer Identification Number 21-0524390, Plan No. 510 for the period from Oct. 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023. The Plan provides for group insurance and other welfare benefits. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

### Insurance information

The plan sponsor, NJEA, has a group contract with Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay temporary and long-term disability claims incurred under the terms of the plan. The premiums under this contract are paid by those NJEA members who chose to select coverage under the contract. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending Sept. 30, 2023, were \$34,646,691.

### Basic financial statements

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the Plan was \$1,745,761 as of September 30, 2023, compared to \$1,906,344 as of October 1, 2022. During the Plan year, the Plan experienced a decrease in its net assets of (\$160,583). During the Plan year, the Plan had total income of \$449,665, including earnings from investments of \$41,964 and other income of \$407,701.

Plan expenses were \$610,248. These expenses included \$135,752 in administrative expenses and \$474,496 in membership benefits paid on behalf of participants and beneficiaries.

### Your rights to additional information

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed here are included in that report: an accountant's report; financial information and information on payments to service providers; insurance information, including sales commissions paid by insurance carriers; assets held for investment; and transactions in excess of 5% of plan assets.

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, write or call the office of Beth Schroeder Buonsante, NJEA, Member Benefit Fund, 180 W. State Street, Trenton, NJ 08607-1211, Phone: 609- 599-4561. The charge to cover copying costs will be \$5 for the full annual report, or \$0.15 per page for any part thereof.

You also have the right to receive from the plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report. The charge to cover the copying costs given above does not include a charge for the copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan at the address above or at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department of Labor should be addressed to Public Disclosure Room N 1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.

# GET OUT AND VOTE

## Your voice as an aspiring educator matters

By Drew Kazim

At least twice a year, registered voters have the opportunity to go to the polls as one way to engage with our democracy. We decide who to vote for as they will lead our futures and influence the lives of our loved ones, friends and students. We should not take the ability to vote for granted. We must educate our communities to understand how much of an impact politics has on aspiring educators in particular and public education overall.

For example, the state budget that was recently passed by the New Jersey Legislature and signed by the governor includes funding to provide stipends to student teachers. Having such stipends become permanent rather than something that needs to be passed year-by-year is not only an opportunity to be more fairly compensated for aspiring educator's labor but also to be taken more seriously as we enter the field of education. But if aspiring educators chose not to vote or do not pressure our Legislators on issues that matter to us, we are harming our futures and our chance to use our voices.

Voting is just one tool we use to engage with our community and hope to change the world for the better. As aspiring educators, we are empowered by changing the world, but we cannot change the world if we do not use our toolkit.

While New Jersey is a pro-public education state overall, there have been numerous attempts in some communities in our state to ban books or attack diversity initiatives. That is why we must vote. We need elected representatives and leaders who support academic freedom and will not prevent teachers from doing their jobs—jobs that are hard enough already.

Public education is at the center of our democracy. Current educators, including school librarians and other professionals, express considerable concern for the future of public schools. We must not take for granted the protections we have, especially as some politicians threaten those protections.

There are candidates who want to create positive change in our communities and on the state level and the federal levels. The National Education Association's endorsed presidential candidate, Vice President Kamala Harris, was a part of an administration that protected students and staff during the COVID pandemic, expanded school lunch programs, fought for teacher diversity and against the anti-LGBTQIA+ policies in certain states.

NEA and NJEA PAC have also made endorsements of pro-public education candidates at the congressional level. See Page 10 of this edition of the NJEA Review for a list of these endorsed candidates.

Of course, we never tell our students who we vote for, but as role models it's important for them to know that we vote. If we want to remind our students how important their voice is, we must use our voices at the polls this November. 🗳️

*Drew Kazim is a student at The College of New Jersey where he majors in secondary education history. Kazim is the political advocacy chair for NJEA Preservice and represents preservice members on the NJEA Government Relations Committee and the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Committee.*



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- Psychologists
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[www.autismnj.org/conference](http://www.autismnj.org/conference)



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# MAXIMIZING YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Webinar Series

2024-2025

Join us for a series of webinars presented by NJEA/NEA Member Benefits and partners to help you maximize the benefits of membership.

Register at [njea.org/mbwebinars](https://njea.org/mbwebinars)

## SEPTEMBER 2024

- 16 Degrees Not Debt:** Student Loan Debt Relief @ 5 & 7 p.m.
- 21 Ways to Pay for College:** FAFSA 101 @ 10 a.m.

## OCTOBER 2024

- 2 What You Should Know About 403(b) Retirement Plans** @ 4:30 p.m.
- 16 Accessing Your Member Benefits & Ambassador Training** @ 4:30 p.m.
- 30 What is Income Protection & Why is it Important?** @ 4:30 p.m.

## NOVEMBER 2024

- 13 Holiday Shopping & Car-Buying Tips:** @ 4:30 p.m.
- 18 Degrees Not Debt:** Student Loan Debt Relief @ 5 & 7 p.m.
- 25 Road to Wellness:** Interactive Wellness Strategies @ 4:30 p.m.

## JANUARY 2025

- 8 Travel Planning** @ 5 & 7 p.m.
- 13 Degrees Not Debt:** Student Loan Debt Relief @ 5 & 7 p.m.
- 15 Dollars & Sense:** Meeting Your Personal Finance Goals @ 4:30 p.m.
- 22 Ways to Pay for College:** FAFSA 101 @ 7 p.m.

## FEBRUARY 2025

- 5 Unlocking Member Benefits** for NJREA Members @ 10 a.m.
- 5 Acceso a Sus Beneficios** para Miembros de NJEA/NEA (Espanol) @ 4:30 p.m.
- 12 Ambassador Training:** We LOVE Our Ambassadors @ 7 p.m.

## OTHER RESOURCES

Retirement Planning & MBOS:  
[njea.org/retirement-planning](https://njea.org/retirement-planning)

Professional development virtual webinars:  
[Learning.njea.org](https://learning.njea.org)

## MARCH 2025

- 5 NJEA Homebuying Helpers** @ 4:30 p.m.
- 10 Degrees Not Debt:** Student Loan Debt Relief @ 5 & 7 p.m.
- 19 Ways to Pay for College:** FAFSA 101 @ 7p.m.

## APRIL 2025

- 2 Springtime Planning** Using Your Member Benefits @ 4:30 p.m.
- 9 Ambassador Training:** Planning for Next Year @ 7p.m.

## MAY 2025

- 14 Summer Savings & Car-Buying Tips** @ 4:30 p.m.
- 19 Degrees Not Debt:** Student Loan Debt Relief @ 5 & 7 p.m.
- 28 What You Should Know About 403(b) Retirement Plans** @ 4:30 p.m.

QUESTIONS or Recordings? Contact Beth Buonsante at [bbuonsante@njea.org](mailto:bbuonsante@njea.org)

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# NJEA BUDGET SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR  
ENDING AUGUST 31

## PROPOSED INCOME AND EXPENDITURES (EXCLUSIVE OF PRIDE)

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2025 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
<b>INCOME</b>				
NJEA Membership Dues	\$ 125,385,821	128,360,880	133,985,770	4.38%
NEA Funds	6,029,323	7,003,000	5,444,000	-22.26%
General Income	6,829,464	1,644,720	2,193,630	33.37%
Publications	187,241	190,000	185,000	-2.63%
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>138,431,849</b>	<b>137,198,600</b>	<b>141,808,400</b>	<b>3.36%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
<b>PROGRAM SERVICES</b>				
Governance	5,904,007	6,213,400	5,902,000	-5.01%
Legal Services	13,157,968	13,512,900	13,307,900	-1.52%
Organizational Activities	1,998,047	4,172,000	4,663,200	11.77%
Organizational Projects	9,000,000	9,000,000	7,000,000	-22.22%
Communications	6,673,796	7,027,200	7,159,600	1.88%
Government Relations	4,872,025	5,304,100	5,758,100	8.56%
Organizational Development	4,922,164	6,107,600	5,919,600	-3.08%
UniServ Regional Offices	23,983,805	25,117,200	26,452,700	5.32%
UniServ Field Office	8,520,473	8,436,600	8,574,700	1.64%
Prof Development	4,736,683	5,086,800	4,681,100	-7.98%
Research & Economic Services	6,074,024	6,473,700	6,599,300	1.94%
Conventions	3,426,013	3,701,100	3,707,100	0.16%
Organizational Mgmt	8,055,459	8,421,600	8,488,100	0.79%
Membership Organizing	152,696	334,700	340,500	1.73%
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL</b>				
Executive Office	6,278,812	6,579,500	6,971,900	5.96%
Business and Finance	16,382,540	18,077,700	18,862,900	4.34%
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM, ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>124,138,512</b>	<b>133,566,100</b>	<b>134,388,700</b>	<b>0.62%</b>
<b>NET INCOME BEFORE USE OF FUNDS</b>	<b>14,293,336</b>	<b>3,632,500</b>	<b>7,419,700</b>	<b>104.26%</b>
<b>USE OF FUNDS</b>				
Current Postretirement	735,202	500,000	500,000	0.00%
VEBA - Cash Funding Adj	10,961,514	10,609,800	11,060,200	4.25%
Pension - Cash Funding Adj	(3,287,222)	(3,500,000)	(3,360,000)	-4.00%
	8,409,494	7,609,800	8,200,200	7.76%
<b>NET INCOME (EXP) CASH BUDGET</b>	<b>5,883,843</b>	<b>(3,977,300)</b>	<b>(780,500)</b>	<b>-80.38%</b>
<b>ADJ BACK TO ACCR'L REPORTING</b>				
VEBA - Cash Funding Adj	(10,961,514)	(10,609,800)	(11,060,200)	4.25%
Pension - Cash Funding Adj	3,287,222	3,500,000	3,360,000	-4.00%
	(7,674,292)	(7,109,800)	(7,700,200)	8.30%
<b>NET INCOME ACCRUAL BASIS</b>	<b>13,558,135</b>	<b>3,132,500</b>	<b>6,919,700</b>	<b>120.90%</b>

## NJEA OTHER FUNDS: PRIDE DUES

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2025 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Dues	\$ 12,625,618	\$ 12,961,600	\$ 13,511,100	4.24%
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>12,625,618</b>	<b>12,961,600</b>	<b>13,511,100</b>	<b>4.24%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Communication 3650	5,929,084	8,348,500	8,348,500	0.00%
Organizing 3907	4,855,913	4,613,100	5,162,600	11.91%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>10,784,998</b>	<b>12,961,600</b>	<b>13,511,100</b>	<b>4.24%</b>
<b>INCREASE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>1,840,620</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

## COMPARATIVE INCOME

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2025 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
<b>DUES INCOME</b>				
Active Professional	\$ 109,375,998	\$ 111,602,600	\$ 116,739,000	4.60%
Active Supportive	15,294,495	16,066,100	16,551,900	3.02%
Retired Members	717,991	680,680	691,870	1.64%
General Members	3,750	2,500	2,500	0.00%
Subscribing Members	1,250	500	500	0.00%
Preservice Members	(7,663)	8,500	0	-100.00%
<b>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP DUES</b>	<b>125,385,821</b>	<b>128,360,880</b>	<b>133,985,770</b>	<b>4.38%</b>
<b>NEA FUNDS</b>				
Uniserv Grant	3,416,778	3,417,000	3,417,000	0.00%
Uniserv Option Program	399,310	407,000	407,000	0.00%
Legal Defense (DuShane)	1,456,577	2,800,000	1,500,000	-46.43%
Legal Fee Reimbursements	25,076	50,000	50,000	0.00%
Member Benefits Grant	70,951	90,000	70,000	-22.22%
Cooperative Projects	659,218	239,000	0	-100.00%
Preservice Reimbursement	1,413	0	0	0.00%
<b>TOTAL NEA FUNDS</b>	<b>6,029,323</b>	<b>7,003,000</b>	<b>5,444,000</b>	<b>-22.26%</b>
<b>GENERAL INCOME</b>				
Convention Exhibits & Fees	369,193	406,500	406,500	0.00%
Interest & Investments	5,323,145	0	500,000	0.00%
Conference & Workshop Fees	861,045	912,000	960,000	5.26%
Teacher Leader Academy	48,790	156,000	156,000	0.00%
Member Benefits Income	68,669	30,000	30,000	0.00%
Grant Income	100,000	100,000	100,000	0.00%
Miscellaneous	58,622	40,220	41,130	2.26%
<b>TOTAL GENERAL INCOME</b>	<b>6,829,464</b>	<b>1,644,720</b>	<b>2,193,630</b>	<b>33.37%</b>
<b>PUBLICATIONS INCOME</b>	<b>187,241</b>	<b>190,000</b>	<b>185,000</b>	<b>-2.63%</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME PROJECTION</b>	<b>138,431,849</b>	<b>137,198,600</b>	<b>141,808,400</b>	<b>3.36%</b>

## NJEA OTHER FUNDS: CAPITAL ASSETS

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2025 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Investment Income	\$ 3,237,651	\$ -	\$ 500,000	0.00%
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>3,237,651</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Capital Assets	2,828,578	6,729,100	5,933,300	-11.83%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>2,828,578</b>	<b>6,729,100</b>	<b>5,933,300</b>	<b>-11.83%</b>
<b>INCR/(DECR) IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>409,073</b>	<b>(6,729,100)</b>	<b>(5,433,300)</b>	<b>-19.26%</b>

PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2025 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>				
Executive Committee 0400	\$ 3,096,472	3,178,200	2,813,000	-11.49%
Delegate Assembly 0410	309,297	317,500	345,000	8.66%
Elections 0430	340,963	352,000	352,000	0.00%
Officers 0440	1,981,293	1,976,100	2,058,600	4.17%
Committees 1400	175,982	389,600	333,400	-14.43%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,904,007</b>	<b>6,213,400</b>	<b>5,902,000</b>	<b>-5.01%</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES:</b>				
Organizational Activities 0470	1,278,985	3,307,000	3,763,200	13.79%
Human/Civil Rights and Equity 0450	470,044	605,000	530,000	-12.40%
Equity Alliance Conference 0455	249,018	260,000	280,000	7.69%
Women in Edu Celebration 0458			90,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,998,047</b>	<b>4,172,000</b>	<b>4,663,200</b>	<b>11.77%</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL PROJ 0471</b>	<b>9,000,000</b>	<b>9,000,000</b>	<b>7,000,000</b>	<b>-22.22%</b>
<b>LEGAL SERVICES PROG 0465</b>	<b>13,157,968</b>	<b>13,512,900</b>	<b>13,307,900</b>	<b>-1.52%</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL MGMT 0565</b>	<b>8,055,459</b>	<b>8,421,600</b>	<b>8,488,100</b>	<b>0.79%</b>
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>				
Communications Office 0600	4,713,247	4,871,300	5,110,200	4.90%
Other Services 0605	64,590	223,500	252,000	12.75%
Consultants 0615	140,700	170,400	170,400	0.00%
Media Relations 0620	75,072			0.00%
Public Relations 0630	20,735			0.00%
Review 0660	1,560,239	1,662,000	1,627,000	-2.11%
Women in Edu Celebration 0680	99,212	100,000		-100.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,673,796</b>	<b>7,027,200</b>	<b>7,159,600</b>	<b>1.88%</b>
<b>GOVERNMENT RELATIONS</b>				
Gov Relations Office 0700	4,130,034	4,300,300	4,546,300	5.72%
Legislative Field Proj 0720	663,269	892,000		-100.00%
Legislative Initiatives 0725			1,100,000	
Legislative Publications 0730	24,866	33,000	33,000	0.00%
Consultants 0740	53,856	78,800	78,800	0.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,872,025</b>	<b>5,304,100</b>	<b>5,758,100</b>	<b>8.56%</b>
<b>UNISERV PROGRAM REGIONAL OFFICES</b>				
Regional Offices 0899	21,650,816	22,339,700	23,686,900	6.03%
01 Galloway 0800	181,925	184,100	187,800	2.01%
02 Mullica Hill 0805	208,339	204,600	207,100	1.22%
03 Mt Laurel 0810	214,230	235,400	241,700	2.68%
05 Morrestown 0815	29,312	29,100		-100.00%
07 Toms River 0820	118,262	131,600	134,300	2.05%
08 Trenton 0823	7,102	14,300	14,300	0.00%
09 Wall Twp 0825	161,841	159,100	163,500	2.77%
11 Edison 0830	234,169	214,300	248,500	15.96%
13 Flemington 0835	133,365	256,800	230,900	-10.09%
15 Cranford 0840	135,336	156,200	160,000	2.43%
17 Parsippany 0845	52,272	276,500	280,800	1.56%
19 W. New York 0850	90,054	103,300	105,300	1.94%
20 Jersey City 0852	134,588	180,200	181,900	0.94%
21 Livingston 0855	181,001	196,600	199,900	1.68%
23 Emerson 0860	19,530			0.00%
25 Hasbrouk Hgts 0865	200,355	219,400	222,200	1.28%
27 Wayne 0870	116,155	125,700	126,300	0.48%
28 Stanhope 0873	107,472	77,300	48,300	-37.52%
29 Higher Ed 0875	7,684	13,000	13,000	0.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,983,805</b>	<b>25,117,200</b>	<b>26,452,700</b>	<b>5.32%</b>
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:</b>				
Organizational Dev Office 0900	2,428,964	2,911,400	2,612,900	-10.25%
Organizational Dev Field 0904		24,000	24,000	0.00%
Organizational Dev Program 0905	427,482	378,000	378,000	0.00%
Active Supportive 0910	339,023	421,000	421,000	0.00%
FAST Program 0915	27,160	50,000	50,000	0.00%
Conference Expenses 0920	353,294	459,300	488,400	6.34%
ESP & Inclusive Org 0930	23,525	76,200	106,200	39.37%
Summer Leadership Conf 0955	908,710	1,354,700	1,403,800	3.62%
Leadership Operations 0965	21,045	37,000	64,800	75.14%
New Member Orientation 0975	39,732			0.00%
Membership Recruitment 0977	11,925	20,000	20,000	0.00%
Membership Promotion 0980	50,148	33,500		-100.00%
Members of Color Initiative 0985	291,155	342,500	350,500	2.34%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,922,164</b>	<b>6,107,600</b>	<b>5,919,600</b>	<b>-3.08%</b>

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2025 Prop Budget	Budget Variance
<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>				
Prof Develop Office 1000	3,270,972	3,271,800	3,145,100	-3.87%
PD Learning 1005	96,946	368,000	368,000	0.00%
PD Capacity Bldg 1010	224,086	239,000		-100.00%
Training Consultants 1075	307,935	332,500	332,500	0.00%
ACCESS Program 1080	562,392	463,000	423,000	-8.64%
Teacher Leader Academy 1085	118,997	167,500	167,500	0.00%
Prof Development Conf 1097	155,355	245,000	245,000	0.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,736,683</b>	<b>5,086,800</b>	<b>4,681,100</b>	<b>-7.98%</b>
<b>RESEARCH &amp; ECONOMIC SERVICES</b>				
Research Office 1100	5,351,256	5,612,700	5,728,300	2.06%
Research Services 1105	227,399	219,500	229,500	4.56%
Member Benefits 1110	342,384	456,000	456,000	0.00%
Research Conference 1115	137,442	160,000	160,000	0.00%
Research Library 1120	15,543	25,500	25,500	0.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,074,024</b>	<b>6,473,700</b>	<b>6,599,300</b>	<b>1.94%</b>
<b>UNISERV FIELD</b>				
Uniserv Field Directors 1200	3,584,849	3,590,600	3,731,800	3.93%
Uniserv - South 1201	12,398	13,700	14,700	7.30%
Uniserv - Central 1202	6,367	14,200	14,800	4.23%
Uniserv - Northwest 1203	6,658	16,900	15,900	-5.92%
Uniserv - Northeast 1204	11,825	18,800	18,800	0.00%
Uniserv Field Program 1205	651,403	521,100	514,100	-1.34%
Field Consultants 1240	2,510,793	2,300,000	2,300,000	0.00%
Strengthening Locals 1250	509,544	1,030,000	1,030,000	0.00%
Higher Education 1260	86,981	111,300	114,600	2.96%
Leadership Operations 1265	1,139,655	820,000	820,000	0.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,520,473</b>	<b>8,436,600</b>	<b>8,574,700</b>	<b>1.64%</b>
<b>CONVENTIONS</b>				
NJEA 1095	2,355,909	2,469,100	2,475,100	0.24%
NEA 0475	1,070,104	1,232,000	1,232,000	0.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,426,013</b>	<b>3,701,100</b>	<b>3,707,100</b>	<b>0.16%</b>
<b>MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZING</b>				
Membership Organizing 0532	116,776	240,000	240,000	0.00%
Preservice 0535	35,920	94,700	100,500	6.12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>152,696</b>	<b>334,700</b>	<b>340,500</b>	<b>1.73%</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL</b>				
Executive Office 0435	4,598,019	4,842,000	5,093,900	5.20%
Administration 0460	1,628,708	1,574,000	1,671,000	6.16%
Personnel 0480	52,085	163,500	207,000	26.61%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,278,812</b>	<b>6,579,500</b>	<b>6,971,900</b>	<b>5.96%</b>
<b>BUSINESS &amp; FINANCE</b>				
Business Office 0500	9,080,965	9,843,800	9,885,800	0.43%
Accounting 0510	5,918	8,000	8,000	0.00%
Contract Obligations 0515	1,143,328	1,000,000	1,000,000	0.00%
Computer Center 0520	3,045,983	3,740,000	4,272,000	14.22%
Membership Processing 0530	297,407	355,500	275,500	-22.50%
Headquarters Operation 0540	2,094,497	2,271,900	2,478,700	9.10%
Mail Room & Production 0550	84,032	185,000	180,000	-2.70%
Financial Admin Fees 0580	226,503	190,000	240,000	26.32%
Insurances 0585	403,908	483,500	522,900	8.15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,382,540</b>	<b>18,077,700</b>	<b>18,862,900</b>	<b>4.34%</b>



**njea** | Professional Development & Instructional Issues

# Virtual Series for 2024-25

Join the NJEA Professional Development & Instructional Issues (PDII) Division as we delve into these topics for 2024-2025

**ALL WORKSHOPS WILL BEGIN @ 4:30PM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.**

## AUGUST 2024

**27 – Irrigating Book Deserts** presented by NJEA & Booksmiles (2 p.m.)

## SEPTEMBER 2024

**18 – An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI)** presented by NJEA's PDII Consultants

**24 – Survivors' Perspectives on Human Trafficking in NJ & Its Impact on Our Schools** presented by NJEA & The NJ Coalition Against Human Trafficking

**30 – The Underground Railroad in NJ** presented by NJEA Members Sundjata Sekou, Tariq Raheem, Muneerah Higgs & Sari Albutus

## OCTOBER 2024

**1 – Neurodiversity in a Singularly Focused World** presented by NJEA & Shana Francesca of Concinnate

**8 – Educator Evaluation in 2025 & Beyond** presented by NJEA's PDII Division

**22 – Arts Integration Foundations Pt. 1** presented by NJEA & ArtsEDNJ

**23 – Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Your Classroom** presented by NJEA's PDII Consultants

## NOVEMBER 2024

**13 – Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools for the Classroom** presented by NJEA's PDII Consultants

**25 – Road to Wellness** presented by NJEA & Rutgers Behavioral Health

## DECEMBER 2024

**3 – Using SEL to See & Connect Beyond Disruptive Behaviors** presented by NJEA & SEL4NJ

**16 – Incorporating Census Data in Classrooms to Teach Community Diversity & Foster Culturally Responsive Pedagogy** presented by NJEA & E Pluribus Unum

## JANUARY 2025

**15 – An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI)** presented by NJEA's PDII Consultants

**22 – How to Support Multilingual Learners Who Have Had Limited/ Interrupted Education** presented by NJEA & NJTESOL/NJBE

**28 – Arts Integration Foundations Pt. 2** presented by NJEA & ArtsEDNJ

## FEBRUARY 2025

**3 – Film Screening of "Till" with Writer Keith Beauchamp** presented by NJEA & The Amistad Commission

**5 – Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Your Classroom** presented by NJEA's PDII Consultants

**12 – What's Self-Esteem Got to Do with It?** Presented by NJEA & Answer

## MARCH 2025

**5 – Teacher Leadership & the Teacher Leader Academy (TLA)** presented by NJEA's PDII Division

**6 – Survivor Speaks & How to Bring Them to Your Classroom** presented by NJEA & the NJ Commission on Holocaust Education

**12 – Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools for the Classroom** presented by NJEA's PDII Consultants

## APRIL 2025

**9 – Providing Sex Education with Cultural Humility** presented by NJEA & Answer

**29 – Harnessing the Power of Graphic Novels in the Classroom** presented by NJEA & Teach Asian American Stories

## MAY 2025

**5 – Opening Up History: On the Road to Brown v. Board of Education** presented by NJEA & E Pluribus Unum

**12 – The Missing Stories** presented by NJEA & E Pluribus Unum



Scan to register  
for upcoming  
PDII events

# SEPTEMBER & beyond

In-person or virtual status of any meeting is subject to change.

<b>SEP</b> <b>06</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b> Executive Committee	<b>OCT</b> <b>05</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b> NJEA FAST Showcase NJEA Health and Safety Showcase	<b>NOV</b> <b>07</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b> Executive Committee
<b>SEP</b> <b>07</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b> Delegate Assembly	<b>OCT</b> <b>09</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b> Executive Committee	<b>NOV</b> <b>07-08</b>	<b>WED &amp; THURS</b> NJREA Convention
<b>SEP</b> <b>26</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b> NJREA Fall Luncheon	<b>OCT</b> <b>25-26</b>	<b>FRI &amp; SAT</b> Jim George Collective Bargaining Summit	<b>NOV</b> <b>08-09</b>	<b>THURS &amp; FRI</b> NJREA Convention

For more information go to [NJEA.org](http://NJEA.org)



**Join your fellow members for the Fall Showcase events on Oct. 5, 2024**

NJEA members from across the state will gather for two showcase events, both held on Oct. 5:

**NJEA FAST Showcase**  
8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**NJEA Health and Safety Showcase**  
Noon to 4:45 p.m.

**Attend one or both!**  
**Princeton Forrestal**  
 100 College Road East  
 Princeton, NJ 08540



Families and Schools Together Work for Children

8 – 9:15 a.m. .... Registration and Breakfast  
 9:15 – 10:45 a.m. .... General Session  
 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. ... Breakout Sessions

- Building Community Partnerships
- Special Populations and General Ideas
- Parent Conference/Latino Institute

12:30 – 1:30 p.m. .... Lunch



Scan here to register for the FAST Showcase.



Scan here to register for the Health and Safety Showcase.



Noon – 12:30 p.m. .... Registration  
 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. .... Lunch  
 1:30 – 3 p.m. .... Breakout Sessions

- Organizing Your Health and Safety Committee
- Staff Safety
- Indoor Air Quality/Mold

3:15 – 4:45 p.m. .... General Session

# Get ready for a great school year in the nation's best public schools

When New Jersey's 1.4 million public school children head back to school this month, they'll be attending the best public schools in the nation, according to data compiled by *Education Week* and *U.S. News & World Report*.

New Jersey invests in education, and thanks to that investment—and the remarkable public school employees who dedicate themselves to their students—New Jersey consistently ranks in the top three states on almost every major indicator of success. And it's well worth noting that our greatest competition comes from other states that have strong school employee unions and that make funding public schools a priority. They include Massachusetts, Connecticut and Maryland.

While test scores cannot tell the whole story of New Jersey's successes, we should take pride in the fact that 91.1% of our students graduate from high school in four years, which is one of the highest rates in the nation. Our preschool system is the best in the nation, providing students with a valuable head start in life. Across the board, New Jersey's public school students are national leaders in math, science and reading. And even as many more of our students are taking Advanced Placement exams, our scores continue to be the highest in the nation.

New Jersey also ranks number one in giving students educational opportunities, according to the latest Opportunity Index ([opportunityindex.org](http://opportunityindex.org)). Our students also enjoy a global perspective, since New Jersey public schools lead the nation in world language instruction. New Jersey public schools are leaders in educating students about, and celebrating, the diverse people and cultures who make our state strong.

In addition, New Jersey was the first state in the nation to mandate teaching Black history through the Amistad curriculum. We are also the first state in the nation to mandate the incorporation of climate change education across content areas throughout grades K-12. New Jersey also mandates curriculum on the Holocaust, genocide,

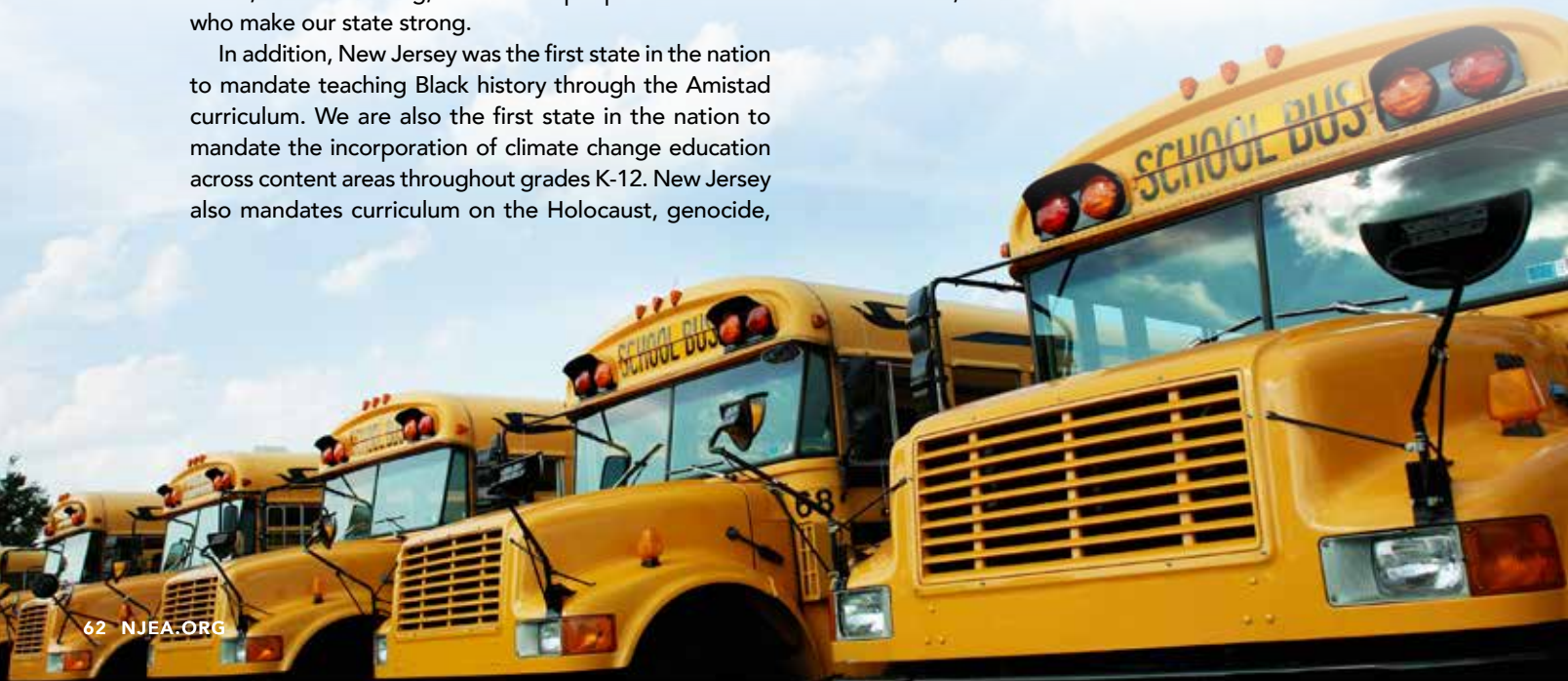
human rights, and the contributions and history of LGBTQ+ persons and persons with disabilities. New Jersey is also working to improve access to resources to improve instruction of Indigenous history in the state's K-12 schools and higher education institutions.

New Jersey's 18 community colleges are another point of pride, providing an affordable pathway for students to achieve their academic and professional goals. With many high schools now offering dual degree programs, students can earn college credits while still attending high school.

But New Jersey's public school success stories can't solely be quantified by data. Our students and staff are also national leaders. In 2023, New Jersey had three public school teachers honored with the Milken Educator Award, one of the most prestigious educator awards in the nation. For the last two out of three years, Princeton High School students won the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow competition. A Ridgewood High School student won NASA's Power to Explore Challenge. Newton High School's robotics team once again excelled in the FIRST robotics competition.

The goal of New Jersey's great public schools is to help every student reach their full potential. Our students' stories are the greatest indicator of our success. This past summer, dozens of New Jerseyans competed in the Paris Olympics, many of whom are graduates of our public schools.

From the sciences to sports, the arts to academics, New Jersey has so much to take pride in—let's continue to build on our successes to ensure that our students continue to lead the nation, and the world! 🌍





AMERICAN DAIRY  
ASSOCIATION NORTH  
EAST

# School meals fuel their academic success!

## Learning starts when hunger stops.

Today's students face many obstacles; hunger should not be one of them. Support alternative meal solutions such as *Breakfast after the Bell* to ensure all students are nourished and ready to learn.

Contact American Dairy Association North East for more information on how to fuel your students' academic success. [Schools@milk4u.org](mailto:Schools@milk4u.org)



# NJEA Convention

## Nov. 7-8, 2024



## Book your hotel room for a discount rate

Want to reserve a room in Atlantic City for the NJEA Convention at a great rate? These seven hotels are offering member-only rates to help you save money while you enjoy the convenience of being close to everything the NJEA Convention and Atlantic City have to offer.

- Borgata
  - *Limited availability*
  - *Friday reservation requires 2-night stay*
- Caesars
- Golden Nugget
- Hard Rock
- Harrah's
- Resorts
- Tropicana

Shuttle service will be available from the hotels listed here.

Go to [njeaconvention.org/hotels](https://njeaconvention.org/hotels) to check out the discount rates and to make your reservations.

You'll need to log in as a member to continue. Use your member PIN (found on your membership card) or the email address you've previously given NJEA and your password (the last four digits of your Social Security number, unless you've changed your password). Guaranteed shuttle service will be available to these hotels only.