

REVIEW



an education and advocacy resource




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*A game changer
for physical
education*



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- DYSLEXIA STUDIES — ORTON-GILLINGHAM (On-Campus)
- ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
- HIGHER EDUCATION (MA and EdD) — ALL ONLINE
- LEARNING DISABILITIES
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New! Early Literacy Specialist Program
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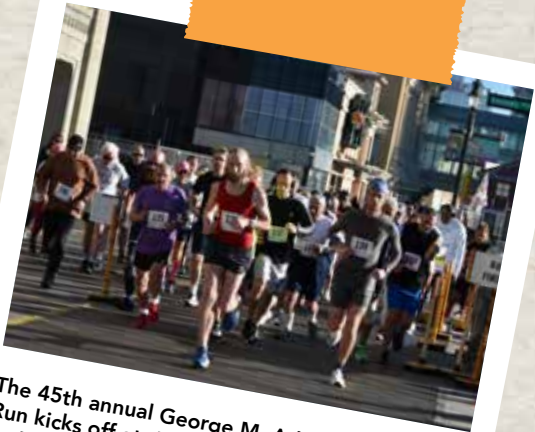


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The end of an era: After more than 47 years on NJEA staff, Martha Onuferko DeBlieu officially retired on Nov. 27, 2024. The Delegate Assembly took time from its deliberations on Nov. 9 to honor her. Known as the Queen of NJEA, DeBlieu wore a tiara while everyone else donned paper crowns bejeweled with her image. Martha was the editor of the *Review* from 1977 to 2001. She later served in NJEA's Professional Development and Research divisions. From left: NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, DeBlieu and NJEA Deputy Executive Director Denise Graff Policastro.



The 45th annual George M. Adams Boardwalk Run kicks off at the 2024 NJEA Convention early Friday morning, Nov. 8. See Page 16 for the results.



The Lenape District Support Staff association teamed up with the Medford Police Department for their annual toy drive. The police took the toys to their station where LDSS members later came by to wrap every gift.

FEATURES



SPILLER for GOVERNOR 2025

18 | SEAN SPILLER: THE CLEAR CHOICE FOR NEW JERSEY

Last June, NJEA members from across the state came together to endorse NJEA President Sean Spiller to be New Jersey's next governor. We have endorsed candidates before, but this is the first time we've been able to endorse a fellow educator and NJEA member for the highest office in New Jersey. The 2025 gubernatorial election is a historic opportunity for us to move New Jersey forward, and there is no better candidate to do that than Sean Spiller.



20 | A GAME CHANGER FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Thanks to generous grants from the NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education, Washington Township elementary schools in Long Valley transformed their health and physical education program through the Heart SMART I & II initiative.

BY KATHLEEN ERBE



24 | SPECIAL PROJECT UNITES MERCER COUNTY SPECIAL SERVICES AND HOPEWELL STUDENTS

So often, restorative justice is discussed in the abstract. In this article, active and retired educators from the Mercer County Special Services (MCSSD) and Hopewell school districts worked together with their students to help MCSSD students celebrate Halloween like any other kid. More than a charity project, the experience provided practical STEAM applications.

BY KATHRYN COULIBALY



28 | WHO'S WHO AT NJEA?

NJEA is a member-driven organization. As a union, we serve one another through the governing bodies, the committees and the staff that make up our association. Learn who's who in NJEA among each of these groups and connect with them to communicate your priorities.

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We don't ban books



The number 41

The number of NJEA committees, listed from pages 29 to 35, on which members can represent their respective counties. Committees also include representatives from higher education, NJREA and NJAEA.

Source: NJEA Executive Office

Top 12 reasons to join njea.

Reason #5: Legislative Accountability

New Jersey invests in public schools and school employees, but that doesn't happen without a strong union. Thanks to decades of NJEA members being actively involved in elections, New Jersey's public schools are the best in the nation!

Visit njea.org/top12 for more.



The Heart SMART initiative at elementary schools Washington Township, Morris County has transformed their health and physical education program.

PHOTO BY
Kathryn Coulibaly

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NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

REVIEW.

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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; 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*

New beginnings offer new opportunities

January is a month of new beginnings. As we return from the holiday break and resume our duties, it's good to reflect on where we are now. There are many opportunities ahead of us in 2025.

As groundbreaking as Gov. Phil Murphy has been as an ally of education and public school employees, his term is coming to an end, and we will be electing a new governor in November. As NJEA's endorsed candidate, I am eager to continue to build on what Gov. Murphy has done and to bring the voice of educators to the Statehouse.

As a father, an educator, former mayor, and a union leader, I am running for governor to ensure that state government works for us and the residents we serve in each of our communities. This is our time to reinvigorate public education to ensure that we will continue to lead the nation. At the same time, we must make New Jersey work for all New Jerseyans. No one sees that more clearly than public school employees. We are in every community in the state. We see the diverse needs our students and their families have. While we are educating them for the future, we cannot fail to recognize the challenges they face today.

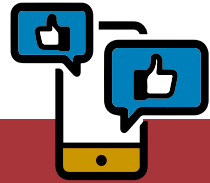
We need to put the work in now to ensure that we win the June Democratic primary. I urge you to join my campaign and help me continue to advocate for you. Learn more about how you can participate at the QR code below.

I want to wish you all a happy, safe, and healthy new year and to reaffirm that your union stands strong to advocate for you, your colleagues, your students and the profession.

In unity,



SeanSpiller.com



SEAN M. SPILLER

Facebook

@SpillerforNJEA: Meeting with Governor Tim Walz and Governor Phil Murphy to discuss our shared commitment to strengthening public education left me feeling empowered and inspired. The best way to support our public schools, unions and communities is to work together toward common goals. By working together, we will ensure that every student has access to high-quality education, every worker receives fair treatment, and every community has the resources it needs to thrive. Our campaign for governor is founded on these ideas, and I look forward to continuing to work with educators on the campaign trail!

On Dec. 10, NJEA President Sean M. Spiller shared photos taken at the Democratic Governors Association's Annual Meeting. Spiller continues to connect with other leaders and organizations to move forward our work as a justice-centered union, representing the best interests of students, educators, and public education.

STEVE BEATTY

Facebook

@SteveBeattyNJEA: Finishing out the week with the members of the Mount Olive Education Association with a great "Lunch in Local" at the high school talking about our issues and our power! Discussing pension justice, evaluations, culture and climate, and the Spiller for Governor campaign. Through it all, unwavering advocates who care for each student in their charge – and remembering that without a strong union, we don't have great public schools! We hope for the best, but plan for the worst – and resolve to hold fast to our values, beliefs, and each other: ready to organize and take collective action!

On Dec. 6, NJEA Vice President Steve Beatty shared images of members who attended the Lunch in Local at Mount Olive High School. He thanked all the members, co-presidents Ronan Cotter and Lisa Lamendola, and the field rep Antoinette Blaustein who attended for lunch and conversation.

PETAL ROBERTSON

Facebook

@PetalforNJEA: Shoutout to Somerset County for their MOC Cultural "Dress to Impress" Celebration last night! Members gathered to proudly represent their cultures while working to make deeper connections to their unions.

@PetalforNJEA: Shoutout to Somerset County for their MOC Cultural "Dress to Impress" Celebration last night! Members gathered to proudly represent their cultures while working to make deeper connections to their unions.

OFFICERS ONLINE

The ADVOCATE

RESOURCES FOR YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION

Become an NEA RA delegate

The 2025 NEA RA to be held in Portland

Over 9,000 delegates typically attend the annual National Education Association Representative Assembly (NEA RA). Delegates are charged with setting policy for the 3 million member organization. New Jersey sends between 500 and 600 delegates to the NEA RA, which will be held in Portland, Oregon from July 2 to July 6. Delegates are expected to arrive in Portland on July 1 and depart on July 7.

At the NEA RA, Delegates vote on amendments to the NEA Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules. They also vote on proposed resolutions and new business items, setting forth NEA's policy and position statements. Many of these actions have a direct impact on NEA members in New Jersey.

Delegates will elect members to the NEA Executive Committee as well as at-large positions on the NEA Board of Directors. If any vacancies occur in NEA officer or other Executive Committee positions, these may also be filled at the NEA RA.

Delegates must be elected

All delegates must be elected—either by members of their local association, a cluster of smaller local associations or as state delegates. Open nominations for all delegates are mandatory. Every member must have a reasonable opportunity to make nominations, to be nominated or to self-nominate.

Each local association may elect one delegate to the NEA RA for every 150 members, or major fraction thereof. If a local affiliate has fewer than 76 NEA members, it may join with one or more other local affiliates, each with fewer than 76 members, to form units for the purpose of representation. Allocation of delegate credentials is based on active membership in NEA as of Jan. 12.

All local affiliates must hold elections for local delegates and successor local delegates and inform NJEA of the results no later than April 10.

In addition to local association delegates, NJEA members will elect state delegates and successor state delegates this spring. Candidates nominate themselves for these positions online. Candidates are placed on the ballot according to the county where they are employed or their unit of representation (e.g., higher education).

To complete the online self-nomination form, go to njea.org/NJEAelections.



NJEA's officers at the 2024 NEA RA in Philadelphia. From left: NJEA President Sean M. Spiller, NJEA Secretary-Treasurer Petal Robertson and NJEA Vice President Steve Betty.

Ensuring ethnic-minority representation

NEA Bylaw 3-1.g requires each state affiliate to develop a plan to send a state delegation to the NEA RA that reflects the state's ethnic-minority proportions. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, 48% of New Jersey residents identify themselves as part of an ethnic-minority group. Thus, it is NJEA's goal to achieve at least that level of ethnic-minority representation in its delegation.

To assist in meeting the requirements of NEA Bylaw 3-1.g, the NJEA Delegate Assembly established ethnic-minority-concerns positions. One state delegate seat is set aside from every four seats allocated.

While it is anticipated that the establishment of these minority-concerns positions is likely to increase ethnic-minority participation at the NEA RA, members need not be a member of an ethnic-minority group to be elected to minority-concerns positions.

All NJEA members can self-nominate for both regular and minority-concerns positions. If elected in both positions, a member must decide which seat to represent so that a successor delegate can take the open position.

Similarly, members may place themselves in nomination at the local level and at the state level. Members who win both local and state delegate seats must decide which seat they will represent so that successor delegates can take the open positions.

For complete rules and procedures, and to self-nominate for state delegate and minority-concerns positions, visit njea.org/NJEAelections.

NJEA elections calendar 2025

Under the NJEA Constitution and Bylaws, the Rules for NJEA Elections, and the established rules and procedures of the NJEA Elections Committee, the following are the tentative deadlines and other dates relating to NJEA county and unit elections:

Jan. 15 – Official membership count

- Initial membership file sent to election vendor (Intelliscan)
- Copy sent to Elections Committee staff contact: Determination of governance positions to be filled (Exec./DA/DAA)
- Deadline for notifying NJEA of a change in unit of representation
- Petitions for governance positions available (Exec./DA/DAA)

Jan. 23 – Election Committee mandatory meeting

- Rules, procedures, and calendar reviewed and finalized
- Announcement of membership numbers, governance and RA positions by county/unit
- Review of nominating committee requirements, filing dates, electronic nomination process

Feb. 1 to Feb. 28 – As established by NEA

- Feb. 1: NEA RA online self-nomination begins at 12:01 a.m.
- Feb. 28: NEA RA online self-nomination closes at 11:59 p.m.

Feb. 24 – Deadline for county and unit nominating committees to convene

Feb. 27 - Petition deadline for nominations of county and unit elections, NJEA Governance positions, and constitutional amendments (5 p.m.)

- Deadline to make new nominations, in the event of a vacancy
- Deadline for candidates to withdraw their names from nomination (must notify NJEA Headquarters by 5 p.m.)

Feb 28 – Deadline for receipt of online self-nomination forms for state delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly (11:59 p.m.)

March 7

- NEA Representative Assembly-election vendor (Intelliscan) conducts random drawings for ballot positions for statewide units, drawings for state NEA RA ballot positions.
- Deadline for candidates to verify correct spelling and format of names and school districts for ballots.

April 1 to April 15 – Balloting

- Ballots due by noon April 15, 2025, at the address supplied with the ballots.

April 29 – Election Committee mandatory meeting to validate election results

- Election dispute hearings on challenge of actions related to the elections

May 1 – 2025-26 election cycle begins

All dates are subject to change.

Note:

- Failure of a candidate to properly validate their nomination online will result in disqualification.
- Local NEA RA election results MUST be received at NJEA HQ no later than Monday, April 10, 2025.
- In accordance with NJEA Bylaws, the Elections Committee may change the balloting period.
- In the event the balloting period is changed, the new balloting period will be published in the March issue of the *NJEA Review* and posted njea.org.

Enter your association for the NJEA Awards for Excellence in Communications

At the 2025 NJEA Convention, local and county associations will be recognized for excellence in three award categories:

- Most Effective Use of Communications Tools to Achieve a Goal
- Best Website
- Best Newsletter (print or electronic)

To be eligible for consideration, entries must come from local or county associations affiliated with NJEA, NJREA or the New Jersey Aspiring Educators Association (NJAEA).

Associations may submit one entry for each award category within one of the following six divisions based on size and association type:

1. Local associations (500 or fewer members)
2. Local associations (501 or more members)
3. County associations (8,000 or fewer members)
4. County associations (8,001 or more members)
5. County NJREA organizations
6. NJAEA campus-level associations

Local associations representing members working at institutions of higher education would compete in the appropriate local association division based on size. NJAEA entries must be submitted by campus-level chapters that

are recognized by their respective New Jersey institutions of higher education and are affiliated with NJEA.

In all instances, submitted materials must have been developed and created by members of the association entering the awards program during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years.

How to enter

Visit njea.org/commawards for details and online entry. The deadline to enter is May 15, 2025.

Clearing the record

In the article, "Let's Not Fear Having Courageous Conversations," which appeared in the December 2024 edition of the *NJEA Review*, a member's first name was misspelled. **Stevana Sims**, a school counselor at Glenfield Middle School in Montclair, is trained in restorative justice and played a key role in helping students work through the conflict described in the article. She is first named on Page 27 in the article. Her name has been corrected on the website version of the article found at njea.org/sitting-circle. The editor apologizes for the error.

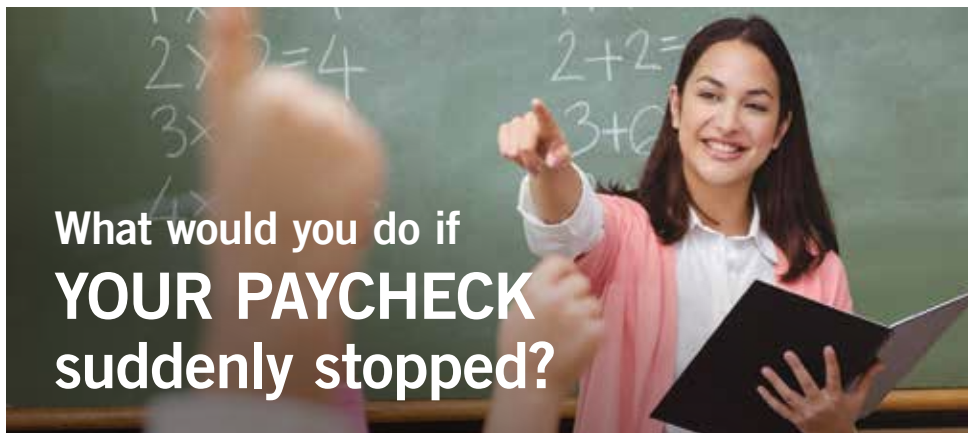
NJEA nomination procedures and election rules

For county and unit affiliate elections, such bodies may conduct regular nominating meetings, however, all information will be transmitted to NJEA electronically and each candidate will be contacted to validate his or her candidacy.

All self-nominations for the NEA RA will be conducted online. Members wishing to self-nominate will go to njea.org/NJEAelections to be linked to the self-nomination site. Self-nomination begins on Feb. 1 and concludes on Feb. 28.

Upon successful completion of the declaration of candidacy form, each nominee will receive a validation email, which when completed will confirm his or her candidacy.

Visit njea.org/NJEAelections for all election-related rules.



Help protect your income with the NJEA endorsed Income Protection Plans— Disability Insurance, Hospital Indemnity Insurance, and Critical Illness Insurance Plans, issued by **The Prudential Insurance Company of America**.

From your paycheck to your savings, NJEA wants to help you protect what's important to you should an unexpected disability, injury, or illness occur.

Applying is quick and easy. Visit enroll.njea.org to learn more!



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COOL STUFF



NJSBF SPEAKER'S BUREAU: REQUEST A FREE SPEAKER FOR YOUR CLASS

The New Jersey State Bar Foundation offers a free speakers bureau, where volunteer attorneys address school groups throughout the state on more than 30 areas of the law including Careers in Law, Turning 18 in New Jersey and Constitutional Law. Attorneys typically speak for approximately 60 minutes, including time for questions. Please allow at least 60 days for the arrangement of your request. Flexibility in date selection is appreciated. In-person and virtual options are available. Visit speakers.njsbf.org.



TEACHING ABOUT THE VIETNAM WAR

Through their organization, "Thanking Vietnam Veterans in Barnegat," Thy Cavagnaro and her husband Jimmy offer interactive presentations to students statewide about her experiences as a Vietnam refugee. They teach students about the Vietnam War, its refugees and the experiences of the Americans who fought in the war. The presentations are made age-appropriate for students from the elementary through higher education levels as well as for community groups. To learn more email Thanking.Vietnam.vets.in.Barnegat@gmail.com, call 908-461-8409, or explore their Facebook page, "Thanking Vietnam Veterans in Barnegat."



STEM CAREERS AND THE MILITARY

Are you looking for a unique and engaging way to inspire your students and spark their curiosity about STEM careers and the military? The 305th Air Mobility Wing Aviation Inspiration Mentorship (AIM) program offers students the chance to shadow various career fields across McGuire Air Force Base, meet inspiring role models, and take to the skies with the opportunity to fly aboard Air Force aircraft. For more information contact the 305 AMW AIM Director, Major Crystal Staszak at crystal.staszak.1@us.af.mil.



ARETÉ SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION OPENS

Areté is a concept that Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle discussed. It refers to the actualization of one's highest sense of self with moral excellence of character, regardless of one's circumstances or the adversities that one is likely to face on the path to greatness. Successful scholarship applicants will embody the meaning of Areté, distinguishing themselves as New Jerseyans on their way to realizing their dreams. They must demonstrate academic engagement, moral character and a commitment to their community.

Four \$5,000 Scholarships will be awarded to New Jersey seniors graduating in 2025. Scholarship recipients will be recognized at the 2025 New Jersey Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, invited to visit The New Jersey Hall of Fame at American Dream, and receive additional NJ-themed prizes.

Application Requirements

- Completed application, found at NJHallofFame.org/Arete.
- Current high school transcript.
- At least one letter of recommendation.

The application deadline is April 1.



NEA READ ACROSS AMERICA CALENDAR AVAILABLE

The Read Across America calendar is now available. With a unique theme each month and selections for elementary, middle, and young adult readers, it's a fantastic way to explore diverse books for your collection. Each recommended title comes with resources to help you bring these stories to life. You'll find activity suggestions, discussion questions and additional title recommendations that connect to the themes of the stories.

Visit the Read Across New Jersey page at njea.org/ranj for this calendar and other resources.



Hurdling challenges and making opportunities for students

Meet Mercer County ESP of the Year Donald Estrada

Throughout his professional life, Donald Estrada, a paraprofessional at Robbinsville High School, has found himself teaching.

Beginning with his career in corporate America, Estrada was a trainer who helped new hires learn the software used in car dealerships. But he always enjoyed working with children. After leaving the auto industry, he began working as a substitute teacher to see if it would be the right career change for him.

"I began substitute teaching, and then the principal asked me to apply for a leave replacement position," Estrada says. "It was part time, but I was eventually hired full time."

Estrada was hooked. For the past five years, he has worked in Robbinsville while he and his wife, Faunya, raise their family. His ultimate goal is to become a teacher, but he feels that the experience he's gained as a paraprofessional has been instrumental in helping him succeed in education.

"As a paraprofessional, I've been able to see how the classroom operates and what the expectations are," Estrada says. "I've enjoyed working with the teacher to meet students' needs."

Estrada, who ran track in high school as a hurdler, saw an opportunity to work with students on the track team. He started as an assistant coach and became the head coach for Robbinsville in Spring 2024.

"I have a real passion for track and field, and I love to share that with students," Estrada says. "I've been able to help develop some hurdlers to compete at the state level. I love seeing them succeed."

Another area where Estrada is having a deep impact on students is with the school's Black Culture Club.

"The Black Culture Club is something that another teacher and I created when we saw a need for our students to explore Black history and culture," Estrada says. "We hold a festival every February for Black History Month and invite vendors and the community. For the past five years, we've taken students to Washington, D.C., to visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture. In 2023, we created a college scholarship for



club members. We asked them to write about how Black culture impacted their lives. One student talked about how the club helped him embrace and share his culture. That's fantastic and was absolutely one of the goals of the club, but we are also helping all of our students. Many non-Black students go on the trips and are eager to learn more."

Estrada was surprised and honored to be named the 2024-25 Mercer County ESP of the Year.

"I didn't even know that it was possible to be the county ESP of the Year," Estrada says. "It is a great honor to be recognized alongside other paraprofessionals and ESPs. It's had a huge impact on my life. I feel very humbled, but it's also emotional because sometimes you don't feel like what you do is recognized or seen. This is a reward for the hard work that we do. I have three daughters, ages 10, 8, and 5. I tease them that their dad is kind of a big deal!"

NJEA member's pension victory reverses TPAF transfer denial

Case demonstrates need for pension law reform

By David Bander

In *Susan Seago v. TPAF*, the New Jersey Supreme Court considered the appeal of NJEA member Susan Seago, who began employment with Edison Township Schools as a paraprofessional in 2004. In this position she was enrolled in the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), the pension fund for most noncertificated school employees. During the 2017-18 school year, she resigned and was hired as a teacher in the same district. In this position she was enrolled in the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund (TPAF), a different pension fund that covers most certificated school employees.

In July of 2017, she sought to transfer her 13 years of pension credit in PERS to her new account in TPAF. The reason for this was so that she would not have to "start over" at a lower pension tier with less generous benefits. A PERS-to-TPAF transfer application must be completed within two years of the last PERS contribution.

Seago completed her portion of the application and then submitted it to the district to complete its portion. In 2019, Seago received a letter indicating that she still had an active PERS account. She followed up with the district, who assured her that it submitted her application on time.

In August 2020, more than three years after she had completed her portion of the transfer application, the district realized that it had erred and had not submitted the application. It wrote to TPAF acknowledging its error and asked to process the application as if it had been submitted on time. TPAF denied this request, concluding that it "had no authority" to depart from the two-year requirement to submit a transfer application.

NJEA Legal Services steps in

With NJEA Legal Services and its network attorneys at her side, Seago challenged TPAF's action. The Appellate Division upheld TPAF's decision. But in a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court reversed the Appellate Division and directed that Seago's transfer application be processed correctly.

The court found that despite the statutory and regulatory language, principles of equity—such as the fact that Seago acted in good faith, took reasonable steps to follow up with the district and would have suffered significant harm, along with the district's clear and unambiguous error in not submitting the application—favored Seago.

Viewing the matter as a whole, the court found that TPAF's denial was "arbitrary, capricious and unreasonable" and not in the interest of justice.

This decision was ultimately favorable, but it highlights the difficulties that can arise when membership in a pension fund expires after two years. If Seago's account expired after a longer period, the district's error might not have mattered. Many NJEA members take extended leave during their careers—for childbirth and bonding or medical disability, for example—and could potentially face the prospect of having their pension accounts expire while they are on leave.

Take action for pension justice

Seago's experience is one reason why the union's Pension Justice campaign is so important. The campaign has numerous components, but one of the bills before the Legislature, A-1675, would correct the precise issue before the court. To read the text of the bill, click on "Search Bills" and enter A1675 at njleg.state.nj.us.

The bill would extend, from two years to 10 years, the period of inactivity that is required before membership in a pension fund expires. Thus, a member could return to work up to 10 years after leaving employment and continue with their existing pension account. This would bring significant peace of mind to those on an extended leave of absence, unemployed, disabled or otherwise unable to work. You can contact your legislators to support A-1675 by scanning this QR code.

For additional resources on this topic, visit njea.org/pensionjustice, and sign up to become a Pension Justice Advocate today!

David Bander is an associate director of NJEA Legal Services and Member Rights in the NJEA Executive Office. He can be reached at dbander@njea.org.



Scan this QR code to take
action for pension justice.

NJEA Report

Community celebrates trailblazing teacher A hero's lasting legacy

By Toney Jackson



The Hackensack community came out to celebrate Nellie K. Parker's life on Sept. 30 at the school named for her. The celebration included official proclamations from the Bergen County Board of Commissioners.

As a child attending Nellie K. Parker School, I walked through halls holding history. The school's namesake, Nellie Katherine Morrow Parker was the first Black teacher in Bergen County, battling racism and discrimination with grace, determination and dignity. Today, as a Nellie K. Parker Elementary School (NKP) teacher, I have the honor and duty of sharing her story and legacy.

On Sept. 30, the Hackensack community came out to celebrate Parker's life.

Parker achieved her dream of becoming a teacher in 1922, despite the barriers she faced. She was one of the first, if not the first, Black teachers in Northern New Jersey. Her contributions to education and New Jersey's rich history are shining examples of the enduring values

Toney Jackson is a fourth-grade teacher at Nellie K. Parker School in Hackensack, which he attended as a student. He is a poet, illustrator and speaker. Jackson can be reached through toneyjackson.com.

of civic-mindedness, diversity, equity and inclusion the Hackensack School District seeks to practice and impart to all students and stakeholders.

Planning a community celebration

In 2016, Nellie K. Parker School Day was proclaimed in Bergen County by the Board of Chosen Freeholders (now the Bergen County Board of Commissioners) at an event celebrating the 35th anniversary of the renaming of Maple Hill School to Nellie K. Parker Elementary School. Parker's story and legacy are part of history shared by everyone in Hackensack regardless of what school they attend.

The idea for this community event sprang from a desire to make sure that Parker's story continues to be told and resonates for generations to come. With the help of NKP instructional coach and fellow former NKP student Arlena Brinson-Jones, we built our plan around a three part goal: engage, enlighten and encourage.

We aimed to engage our diverse community by inviting all stakeholders to participate, enlighten through sharing Parker's story and its relevance to Hackensack's history, and encourage others to continue the inspiring work she started. We shared our vision with our principal, Lillian Whitaker, who drew on her own deep ties in the community to help us choose our invited panelists and guests.

Co-workers collaborate for a cause

Brinson-Jones and I recruited current and former employees to help bring the idea to fruition. Staff members performed and helped with decorations, acted as ushers and served dinner and refreshments to guests. The dinner was catered by Paula's Soul Food Cafe, with sweet treats from Pat's Delites, two of the city's culinary gems. All of the food was provided thanks to an NJEA Public Education Partnership grant received through the Hackensack Education Association (HEA).

"Nellie K. Parker's legacy is a reminder that our impact as educators extends beyond those who appear on our class rosters each year," said HEA President Caseen Gaines, who himself is an NKP alum. "She served her community with grace and love, never forgetting who she was, even though the community didn't always appreciate and accept her. Her work continues in the work we all do in our classrooms and communities each day."

The program was an ambitious undertaking and required help on all fronts.

"Once the word was out about what we were trying to do to honor Parker, staff members came out and selflessly volunteered their time to make it happen," Brinson-Jones recalled. "I thought perhaps we'd have some difficulty finding enough panelists for the program, however that was certainly not the case. Each and every panelist we contacted excitedly accepted our invitation to participate."

In a moment that surely made Parker's soul smile, an NKP staff choir led by Principal Lillian Whitaker sang a song saluting Parker. The group's glorious harmonies and gospel stylings resounded throughout the auditorium, delivering lyrics that painted a picture of Parker's impact.

This is what community looks like

Months of planning culminated in a powerful and enriching evening featuring a panel of distinguished guests discussing Nellie K. Parker's impact and legacy. The panel included municipal historian Albert Dib; former Hackensack Board of Education (HBOE) Trustee Harold Williams; clerk to the Board of Bergen County Commissioners, former NKP parent and former HBOE President Lara Politt; Superintendent Anthony Marseglia; current Hackensack Superintendent Dr. Thomas McBryde Jr.; current NKP Principal Lillian Whitaker, parishioner and friend of Parker, Brenda Perkins; and retired Hackensack teacher and lifelong resident Rosemary Flowers-Jackson.

The Honorable Judge Sandra Ann Robinson, a former student of Parker, was not physically present, but I shared quotes from an interview she granted me weeks earlier. I asked her how she and her classmates felt in Parker's classroom.

"We felt loved," she said.

The panelists shared keen insights from their experiences with Parker and the city and schools of Hackensack. I had the joy of hosting the event and posing questions of the panelists. Anecdotes recounted Nellie K. Parker's kind spirit, powerful persistence, care, courage and true devotion to her students and to education.

"I thought it was really cool," said Ramon Flores, a fourth grader at NKP. "I liked that they had a bunch of different people sharing their experiences. I liked how they had some people who actually met Nellie K. Parker, and how they taught me a lot about her and the school."

An event to remember

Reflecting on what made Parker a force for good in both the schools and surrounding community, panelist Brenda Perkins noted that "harmony" was Parker's gift. Parker created beautiful harmonies as a musician, leading and accompanying choirs in churches and teaching piano lessons outside of school. She also brought harmony to the lives of students and others in and out of the classroom, striking all the right notes to comfort and inspire.

As the evening concluded, attendees reflected on Parker's lasting impact, which we will certainly continue to carry forward.

Winter Vacation Giveaway

A+ Travel, an NJEA partner in our Member Discount Program, is running a promotion to reimburse one lucky member the cost of their travel booked through A+ Travel.

So, in addition to discounted car rentals and hotel stays, someone is going to get a free trip! Book your travel by March 31, 2025, through the link below to be entered into this giveaway: tinyurl.com/APlusTravel



Boardwalk Run results

Runners in the 45th annual NJEA George M. Adams Boardwalk Run streaked across the finish line early Friday morning at the 2024 NJEA Convention. Justin White and Lisa Camoisi were the fastest overall male and female members in the run. NJEA staff member Brian Rock crossed the finish line just ahead of White.

It's never too early to start training for the 46th annual Boardwalk Run, which kicks off at the 2025 NJEA Convention on Friday, Nov. 7.



You're never too old for the Boardwalk Run. From left: NJEA members William Indek (78), John Kuhi (80), Alex Dobrowolski (85) and Joseph Cozzi (82) have run nearly all 45 of the Boardwalk Runs.

Bib #	First Name	Last Name	Time
129	Brian	Rock	20:17
139	Justin	White	20:30
137	Richard	Porta	20:34
142	Stephen	Miller	22:31
147	Kyle	Bennett	23:34
146	Jonathan	Lyon	23:39
143	Kevin	Smith	24:20
244	Lisa	Camoisi	24:45
144	Stephen	Whitehead	24:59
127	Alexis	Albaret	25:01
136	Devin	Menker	26:14
124	Kevin	Flood	26:15
263	Megan	Baldwin	26:53
268	Raquel	Foote	27:26
266	Kirstyn	Connors	28:45
251	Nancy	Doran	29:17
265	Mindy	Domato	29:20
138	Ryan	Griffen	29:25
264	Maureen	Baldwin	29:37
250	Gianna	Beckmeyer	30:19
145	Ted	Tympanick	30:58
259	Amanda	Ruppel	31:41
130	Michael	Gallo	31:57
260	Carlye	Waniak	32:23

Bib #	First Name	Last Name	Time
257	Jennifer	Keeney	32:57
256	Cassandra	DeVita	32:25
131	Raymond	Vikete	33:26
267	JoJo	Martin	33:35
254	Carolina	Londono	34:35
133	David	Burdick	35:14
258	Kyra	Burdick	35:19
247	Sue	Wilson	35:27
134	Joseph	Cozzi	35:40
253	Francis	Velez	36:13
132	Enrique	Manlapid	36:53
249	Taylor	Payne	37:05
135	Alex	Dobrowolski	37:24
261	Brianna	Gardner	38:45
246	Getta	Bakker	39:31
252	Christine	Carlen	39:37
1092	Katina	Ingram	40:46
248	Angela	DeLuccia	40:48
1105	Caroline	Bell	41:23
141	John	Kuhi	41:58
140	Paul	Gibbons	43:49
128	Ronald	Burgess	45:07
1100	Elizabeth	Nahl	46:43
125	Pete	Moran	46:44

Bib #	First Name	Last Name	Time
1099	Alduha	Rahim	46:59
1091	Reginald	Ingram	48:43
1101	Martin	Ware	49:00
1102	Clare	Arena	49:01
1110	Brian	Earls	51:10
1103	Megan	DeLamater	51:50
126	William	Indek	54:52
1108	Ashley	Gerlach	59:57
1109	Judy	Arcaro	59:58
1111	Stephanie	Gibbons	1:00:39
1090	Lisa	Wilson	1:00:40
1093	Jolene	Bene	1:01:03
1094	Hailey	Thompson	1:01:05
1097	Gina	Lozano	1:02:12
1095	Micaela	Sierra Legelen	1:02:13
1089	Rose	Holz	1:06:08
1098	Judith	Beckmeyer	1:06:09
1106	Shannon	Pericone	1:06:15
1107	Lyn	Goldsworthy	1:07:38



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The NJEA Members of Color Network cordially invites you to join us for our

3rd Annual Empowerment Conference

in spring 2025. Members can join us for one or both dates. Our goal is to accommodate as many interested attendees as possible. Watch for registration details in late January. We look forward to an engaging day of learning and growing together.

Preregistration required – opening February 2025.

Updates and details can be found at njea.org/MOC

Sean Spiller:

the clear choice for **New Jersey**



Last June, NJEA members from across the state came together to endorse NJEA President Sean Spiller to be New Jersey's next governor. We have endorsed candidates before, but this is the first time we've been able to endorse a fellow educator and NJEA member for the highest office in New Jersey.

The 2025 gubernatorial election is a historic opportunity for us to move New Jersey forward, and there is no better candidate to do that than Sean Spiller. Sean is a science

teacher, a union advocate, a former mayor and councilman, and a husband and father with a long history of community service and leadership. He is the only candidate who will protect the progress we have already made and help us reach new heights for students, educators and hardworking New Jersey families.

Sean knows that New Jersey is a great place to live, to work and to learn, but he also knows that families here struggle to make ends meet. Sean will be a governor who focuses on what our students, educators and the hard-working families who call New Jersey home need.

Learning from the past

NJEA members know the damage that can be done by a hostile New Jersey governor. In his two terms, hostile Gov. Chris Christie gutted pensions and health benefits, broke the school funding formula, underfunded local schools by billions of dollars, ignored the state's pension obligation, pushed privatization of educational support professionals' jobs, supported vouchers and tuition tax credit schemes, imposed onerous paperwork burdens, weakened tenure protections and railed against unions.

That's why, in 2016-17, NJEA members spent more than a year working to elect a pro-education successor to Christie.

Since then, Gov. Phil Murphy has worked with us to drastically lower health insurance costs and deliver important job protections for educational support professionals. He is fully funding our pensions, reversing a decades-long trend. He has provided record funding to local districts as he works to undo the damage done by Christie. He's brought stakeholders together to work on evaluation reform and the elimination of student growth objectives (SGOs). Seven years after he took office, our schools and our state are moving in the right direction.

Building on the momentum

So, what's at stake in the 2025 election? In a word: everything!

New Jersey's next governor will determine whether we build on the progress of the Murphy years or return to the insults, attacks and financial devastation of Chris



Christie. There will be a new administration in Washington, D.C. this year that is determined to undermine public education to make way for a takeover by private and religious schools funded by our tax dollars. That's why New Jersey's next governor will also help determine whether our state continues to have the best public schools in America, where teachers are free to teach, and students are free to learn.

In 2025, Sean Spiller is the candidate we can count on to protect our progress, to move us forward, to stand up for our democracy and to make New Jersey a model for the rest of America. 🇺🇸

How can we elect Sean?

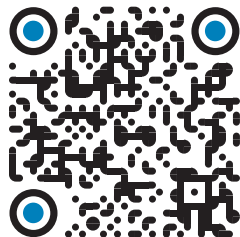
So how do we elect Sean Spiller and ensure a better brighter future for our students, our families and ourselves?

- **Commit** to voting for Sean in June's Democratic gubernatorial primary. With the support of NJEA members, their families and other New Jersey residents who share his vision of a New Jersey that works for all of us, Sean has a clear and obvious path to victory.
- **Volunteer** with Sean's campaign to help spread the word that New Jersey has a great pro-education, pro-working family candidate for governor.
- **Donate** to his campaign to make sure Sean's message gets out to everyone in New Jersey.
- **Talk** to your colleagues, friends and family in New Jersey about why you are supporting Sean Spiller for governor in 2025.

Finally, keep your eyes and ears open for more information about how you can be part of NJEA's campaign to help New Jersey elect America's best education governor.



Volunteer



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Why

Sean Spiller is the right choice for NJEA members AND for New Jersey

As a parent, educator and union leader, Sean Spiller believes New Jersey needs to work for everyone.

For educators, that means we can count on him to stand up for our values and priorities:

- **School funding** – Sean knows that every student in every district deserves the resources necessary to learn, thrive and grow. He will work to make sure New Jersey has a fair system to fund all public schools.
- **Pensions** – Sean understands the importance of a secure, reliable pension after a career of dedicated service to students. He will work to strengthen our current pension system and to make sure it is funded so you can confidently count on it.
- **Unions** – Sean knows that unions built the American middle class. He will stand up for the right of working people to unionize and will work with unions in New Jersey to make sure our state is a great place to live, work and raise a family.

For working families, that means we can count on him to hear our voices and address our concerns:

- **Affordable housing** – As mayor of Montclair, Sean helped pass that city's first rent control rules. As governor, he will work to ensure every New Jersey family can afford a place to live.
- **Access to health care** – Everyone deserves access to affordable health care. Sean will work to lower costs and widen access. And he will always stand up for reproductive freedom.
- **Protecting democracy** – The right to vote, the freedom to read and the right to speak up against injustice will be protected in New Jersey when Sean is governor. He believes in our democracy and will defend it against anyone in New Jersey or Washington D.C. who tries to undermine it.



Go here to learn more about Sean's values and priorities.



Hipp Foundation Grant Spotlight

A GAME CHANGER FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION

By Kathleen Erbe

Thanks to a generous grant from the NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education, Washington Township elementary schools in Long Valley transformed their health and physical education program through the Heart SMART I & II initiative. The innovative program, designed by a team of dedicated health and physical education teachers, equips students with heart rate monitors and pedometers. By using these tools, students can track their fitness levels and gain a deeper understanding of their cardiovascular health.

The initiative began with an initial grant of \$9,880, which allowed the team to introduce Heart Zones technology into the curriculum. The idea was sparked at the New Jersey Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NJAPERD) Annual Conference, where the team discovered Heart Zones technology and its potential to deliver precise, actionable fitness data for both students and teachers.

Kathleen Erbe is a Health and Physical Education teacher at Benedict A. Cucinella Elementary School in Washington Township Schools, located in Long Valley. She can be reached at Kerbe@wtschools.org.

Building on the success of this initial implementation, the team secured an additional \$9,558 in funding to expand the program across all elementary schools in the district. This expansion has enabled more students to experience the benefits of a personalized approach to fitness, emphasizing the value of active and healthy lifestyles.

This year, the program is set to grow even further. Bluetooth-enabled pedometers will be introduced, and the use of Heart Zones technology will extend districtwide, ensuring all elementary students can participate. By blending cutting-edge tools with a focus on health education, the Heart SMART initiative continues to inspire lifelong habits of wellness among students.

Why heart rate monitors are a game changer for physical education

Imagine a classroom where every student is motivated to push their limits, where they can see real-time progress in their fitness journey and where learning about health feels as exciting as the activities themselves. That's the power of heart rate monitors in physical education!

That's exactly what you will see as you enter a gymnasium in Washington Township's elementary schools—as students enter the gym, they eagerly select their assigned heart



Students at Washington Township’s elementary schools use Heart Zones heart rate monitors during physical education classes to actively explore the connection between cardiovascular exercise and heart health.

rate monitors. By simply pushing a button, they sync to the Heart Zones fitness app, displaying real-time feedback about their heart rate and color-coded zones that reflect activity intensity. This engaging experience motivates students to challenge themselves, as they strive to exceed their heart rate thresholds and embrace the joy of movement.

By combining physical activity with technology, students learn to stay in target heart rate zones, measure progress and see the impact of exercise on their bodies.

Empowering students to take charge of fitness

Heart rate monitors empower students to take charge of their fitness journeys. Instead of guessing how hard they’re working, students receive instant feedback, showing them when they’ve hit their target zones or when adjustments are needed. This creates a personalized, interactive learning experience that keeps students engaged. The excitement of seeing their heart rate rise during a game and knowing they’re improving their fitness is a powerful motivator!

For younger students, the monitors help bridge the gap between physical activity and heart health. Whether skipping, running or jumping, they see how their movements affect their heart rates, making the connection between effort and fitness tangible.

Older students delve deeper into the science of cardiovascular health, learning how different activities—

such as running or cycling—impact heart health in unique ways. By comparing heart rate data from various exercises, they can design fitness plans tailored to their goals, building knowledge and habits they’ll carry for a lifetime.

Turning data into motivation

One of the most exciting aspects of using heart rate monitors is how they turn data into a powerful motivational tool. Students wearing monitors can track their heart’s recovery time, monitor their endurance and challenge themselves to do better each time. It’s not just about competition—it’s about *personal progress*. Seeing their progress reflected in numbers reinforces their effort and encourages them to stay engaged.

Students, teachers and parents can all benefit from the valuable insights provided by heart rate data. Teachers can download detailed activity reports to assess individual progress, tailor lessons to meet students’ needs and ensure safe exercise levels. Parents also gain a window into their child’s fitness journey, reinforcing healthy habits at home and fostering a collaborative approach to physical education.

Making physical education more fun and effective

Integrating heart rate monitors transforms physical education into a more engaging and effective experience. Teachers can create challenges such as, “How long can you stay in the target zone during an obstacle course?” or

“Can you improve your recovery time after a sprint?” The possibilities for fun, goal-setting activities are endless—and the best part is that every student can succeed at their level.

Heart rate monitors aren’t just for tracking—they’re a teaching tool. They help students visualize how their heart rates spike during intense activity and recover afterward. With this knowledge, students can develop a deeper appreciation for how important it is to maintain a healthy heart throughout their lives.

A bigger picture: heart health and beyond

As childhood obesity rates continue to rise, it’s more important than ever to provide students with tools that not only teach them about fitness but empower them to make healthier choices. The use of heart rate monitors in P.E. brings health education into the 21st century. It aligns with modern educational standards and offers students a tangible, interactive way to connect with their health.

More than just a cool gadget, heart rate monitors are a fun, data-driven way to learn about physical fitness. The best part? Students don’t just learn at the moment—they carry these habits and lessons into their adult lives, creating a foundation for a lifetime of health.

Why it matters for teachers

For teachers, heart rate monitors aren’t just a way to track student performance—they’re a game-changing tool for providing personalized, real-time feedback. With the ability to see how each student is performing, teachers can adjust activities on the fly, ensuring every student gets the most out of their workout. It also allows teachers to measure the effectiveness of their lesson plans, track progress over time, and provide individualized support where it’s needed most.

Join the Heart SMART revolution!

In short, the integration of heart rate monitors into physical education is about more than just fitness—it’s about teaching kids to be mindful of their health, encouraging active lifestyles and giving them the tools to succeed. From motivating students with personalized fitness data to improving cardiovascular education, these devices bring the science of health into real life. It’s a win-win for students, teachers and parents.

Are you ready to help students take charge of their fitness? With heart rate monitors, you can inspire a generation to understand their bodies better, push their limits, and lead healthier lives. 🏃‍♂️



Integrating heart rate monitors into health and physical education classes can enhance student engagement and motivate them to take ownership of their personal health and fitness journeys.

The Heart SMART team

The health and physical education team in Washington Township’s elementary schools is composed of four dedicated educators who are passionate about student wellness: Kathleen Erbe, Patti Ressler, Kevin Churchill and Bonnie Hanna. Together, they’ve spearheaded the Heart SMART I & II initiative, seamlessly integrating technology into the health and physical education curriculum.

Some highlights of the new three-year contract include:

- Kathleen Erbe brings 21 years of experience to Benedict A. Cucinella School, where her innovative teaching methods inspire students to develop lifelong healthy habits.
- Patti Ressler, with over 25 years of experience at Old Farmers Road School, excels at fostering engaging lessons that empower students to prioritize health and fitness.
- Kevin Churchill is a seasoned educator with nine years of experience at Flocktown-Kossmann School. He employs innovative approaches to foster meaningful relationships and promote healthy habits.
- Bonnie Hanna, with 19 years of experience at Flocktown-Kossmann School, emphasizes making healthy choices and embracing physical activity as a vital part of students’ daily lives.

This exceptional team is committed to making a lasting impact on their students’ health and well-being, paving the way for a healthier, more active future.

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Educators connect students from Mercer County Special Services School District and Hopewell for a magical Hallowheels project.

Special project unites Mercer County Special Services and Hopewell students

By Kathryn Coulibaly

Put a group of educators together, and you're going to get results, usually beyond your wildest dreams.

Joan Alito, an NJREA member retired from the Mercer County Special Services School District (MCSSSD), Nancy Greener, an NJREA member retired from the Hopewell Valley Regional School District (HVRSD), Karen Demeter, teacher at Mercer Elementary School in MCSSSD, Dr. Barbara McCarty, a media specialist at Timberlane Middle School in HVRSD, along with Helen Corveleyn, a teacher at Timberlane (HVRSD) used their connections, expertise and commitment to students to create a Hallowheel to remember for students at MCSSSD and HVRSD.

The project began with McCarty whose cousin, Dr. Melissa Rose, works with an organization called Children's Assistive Technology Service (CATS) in Virginia.

"CATS accepts donations of gently used pediatric adaptive equipment, cleans and refurbishes the donations and provides them to children with disabilities who need it," McCarty says.

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

Rose is the clinical director of the organization, so McCarty is familiar with their work and a special annual project called Hallowheels.

"With Hallowheels, families build costumes for their children who use assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, walkers, adaptive strollers and communication devices, and post their photos on the CATS website as a fundraiser," McCarty says. "For a dollar a vote, people can choose their favorite costume and the proceeds are put back into CATS."

CATS begins calling for people to make costumes over the summer. McCarty felt this would be a perfect project for Corveleyn's Medical Detectives STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) elective class.

"I thought, 'Wouldn't it be cool to do an authentic STEM application?'" McCarty recalls. "In addition, we were hoping that a practical STEM project might inspire greater participation in our science fair. We also wanted to get more families involved, so we wrote an NJEA FAST grant." (See sidebar on Page 26.)

McCarty and Corveleyn wanted to get historically marginalized groups to think about going into STEM careers.

"We thought if we could get kids thinking about the

assistive devices and what other children like them would want, we could really inspire them," McCarty says. "We had CATS talk to the kids about what they do, and Helen inspired them to consider how this would fit into a career in STEM. This project really touched on a lot of different areas."

Kids helping kids be kids for Halloween

One of the biggest obstacles was finding students who need assistive devices. McCarty reached out to Alito and Greener, who suggested working with MCSSSD.

"Children in wheelchairs rarely get the costumes they want for Halloween," Alito says. "It's difficult to build something that works for them, so they'll get a witch's hat or a firefighter's helmet. This was an opportunity to give them the costumes they'd always wanted."

"We began making plans in August," McCarty recalls. "None of us had done anything like this before. I certainly had never built a Halloween costume out of PVC pipes."

The MCSSSD students had big dreams for their costumes.

"The kids got to say what kind of costume they wanted," Alito says. "Some wanted to be a train conductor or a member of Paw Patrol. They were able to communicate what they wanted using iPads or other assistive technology to let the students in Hopewell know their wishes."

Meanwhile, the Hopewell team began working in mid-September. There were approximately 60 students in Corveleyn's Medical Detectives class and 15 more students in the after-school STEM program who worked on the project.

"We introduced students to the project and to their clients, who they now call their friends," McCarty says. "We talked to them about the mechanics of building but also about empathy and what the experience would be like for the children they were designing for."

Timberlane students developed vision boards of what the costumes their clients wanted would entail. From there, they made sketches. The deadline to complete and deliver the costumes was Oct. 22, because they had to have the contest pictures up on the CATS website by Oct. 24.

Ultimately, the Hopewell students designed 12 costumes for students in wheelchairs. Ten of them were for MCSSSD students, and there was one student at Timberlane Middle School and another student at the elementary level in Hopewell.

The day they delivered the costumes was exciting for everyone involved.

"There were so many students from Hopewell who wanted to meet the MCSSSD students, we had to have them apply and write testimonials to claim their spot," McCarty says. "About 27 students were able to make the trip to MCSSSD."



Mercer County Executive Dan Benson poses with students and their Paw Patrol design.

The Hopewell students were excited to meet their clients, deliver the costumes and see the other children's reactions. They also received a tour of the school to learn more about MCSSSD.

"The children at MCSSSD were thrilled to have costumes that fit them," Alito says. "There wasn't a dry adult eye in the room the day we delivered the costumes and connected the students."

"We had one student who loved wrestling," McCarty says. "The students built him a wrestling ring and a belt to go with it. He was over the moon. It was an opportunity for our students to be creative and for the other students to get something they don't usually have access to."



Smiles—and an occasional mustache—completed each perfect Halloween costume.

Alito urges educators to reach out to their networks, including retirees, to help them with big projects.

Hallowheels leads to more projects

While the project began as a Halloween activity, the students so enjoyed getting to meet each other that there are plans to bring them together again.

“We’re doing a Share the Fare book donation project during our Scholastic Book Fair and bringing about 25 students from Hopewell to MCSSSD in December to deliver the books and read to our new friends,” McCarty says.

The goal is to continue to find ways to bring the two groups of students together.

“When the kids from Hopewell came to MCSSSD to present the costumes to the students, it was a great experience for both sides,” Alito says. “Oftentimes, these are two populations who never meet. The kids in Hopewell were so kind and curious and really wanted to know so much more about the students and the school in general.”

“Our schools are only 20 minutes away from each other, but this experience really opened up their eyes to a school and a community that they weren’t aware of and are now interested in,” McCarty says.

“It was a lot of figuring things out as we went,” McCarty says. “We will certainly be doing this again next year. We raised more than \$3,000 in donations for CATS from our costumes.”



NJEA FAST grants

The MCSSSD and Hopewell educators agree that finding funding for the project was vital. They applied for an NJEA FAST grant, also known as NJEA’s Families and Schools Together Work for Children. They applied for a \$2,500 grant, which they used on costumes, promotional items and to fund a table at the Hopewell Haunted Hallways event that educated Hopewell families about the project.

FAST works to encourage families to be involved in their children’s education, to enhance their academic progress and to feel welcome in public schools. FAST is a coalition of education advocates, community groups and schools working together to foster family involvement. Local associations can apply for FAST grants to help them implement projects to forge stronger connections between families and their local schools. For more information, go to njea.org/fast.



While their schools are only 20 minutes away from each other, this project brought students together who might have never met and helped them build friendships.

Once a teacher, always a teacher

Everyone involved agrees that the project would have never been possible without the connections, energy and support of two retired teachers, Alito and Greener, who happen to be sisters.

"I always say that retired teachers are an untapped resource out in the community. We want to stay connected to the careers that we had for so many years," Alito says. "The wheels are always turning as to what's next and how to stay connected to the field of education, as much as possible."

Alito urges educators to reach out to their networks, including retirees, to help them with big projects.

"I was an educator for 38 years," Alito says. "People would say, 'I thought you were retired.' But 'retired' can vary for a lot of people. The new kind of retired is going out and doing the things that I feel really passionate about and want to do."

Alito says that there were teachers she worked with for more than 30 years who had tears in their eyes seeing MCSSSD students be so excited to have these other students paying attention to them.

"We don't have to work in isolation; in fact, we shouldn't be," Alito insists. "You realize the value of these kinds of experiences when you actually go out into the community. This is win-win for everyone."

And, as Alito says, "Once a teacher, always a teacher." 🙌

Children's Assistive Technology Services (CATS)

CATS provides for the re-use of pediatric rehabilitation equipment and assistive technology devices in Virginia. CATS is a no-cost resource for children with disabilities who need adaptive equipment and whose families have limited resources, have been denied authorization from insurance or need equipment short term. Learn more at atdevicesforkids.org.

Hallowheels is CATS annual fundraising extravaganza, now in its eighth year. This unique event celebrates kids with disabilities in any costume of their choosing and also showcases one-of-a-kind children's costumes, thoughtfully designed around their mobility devices. View the other Hallowheels entries at hallowheels.org/vote.



NJEA OFFICERS



President
Sean M. Spiller



Vice President
Steve Beatty



Secretary-Treasurer
Petal Robertson

NJEA ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTORY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The NJEA Executive Committee includes the three officers, plus one or more representatives elected from each county or equivalent unit of representation, based on membership enrollment. County and unit representatives serve for three-year terms, except as necessary to stagger terms of office. Weighted voting is utilized to reflect the one-person, one-vote principle. The committee meets monthly to conduct Association business.

Atlantic: Melissa Tomlinson; Bergen: Esther A. Fletcher, Robert M. La Morte; Burlington: Tamara Y. Beatty; Camden: Laurie Gibson-Parker; Cape May: Tammi J. Lee; Cumberland: Ashanti T. Rankin; Essex: Sharon Ortiz; Gloucester: Ryan Griffin; Hudson: Ronald F. Greco Jr.; Hunterdon: Susan R. Vala; Mercer: Christine Sampson-Clark; Middlesex: Jennifer Herrick, Melissa Vega; Monmouth: Steven C. Koumoulis; Morris: Kerri Lee Farrell; Ocean:

Lisa M. Simone; Passaic: Marco A. Martinez; Salem: Colleen C. Gilmartin; Somerset: Amy L. Salinger; Sussex: Carla Mancuso; Union: Richard F. D'Avanzo; Warren: Laurie A. O'Brien; Higher Ed: Tobyn DeMarco; NJREA, Joan M. Wright; Non-Classroom Teacher: Marie Battist-Rock; NJAEA: Bianca Nicolescu

State Officers: Sean M. Spiller, Steve Beatty, Petal T. Robertson,

NEA State Directors: Karoline Bethea-Jones, Brenda M. Brathwaite, Theresa L. Fuller, Laurie Gibson-Parker, Lauren Greenfield, Temika Langston-Myers, Sue McBride, Peter J. Moran, Barbara B. Rheault, Mark Richards, Stacy A. Yanko; NJREA: Joan M. Wright, NEA Director at Large: Tarsha N. Lawson

DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

The NJEA Delegate Assembly (DA) formulates Association policies. The DA includes 123 representatives proportionately elected from the counties for two-year terms. Each county is represented by its affiliated county association president plus one delegate for each 1 percent of the state total of active members of the Association. In addition, one delegate each represents retired, student, and administrative members who do not otherwise have the representation through normal channels.

Atlantic: John-Fred Crane, Trisha Houck, Cassandra Montague, Barbara Rheault, Maryam Sarhan; Bergen: Kathleen Arlin, Rommy Buttafuoco, Jennifer Clemen, Mariann Kronyak, Howard Lipoff, Cynthia Lota, Sue McBride, Shari Mendelson, Yolanda Salazar, John Sassi, Michael Warren, Michael Yannone; Burlington: Melissa Foremny, Christine Hewitt, Catherine MacManiman, April Newman, Jason Pope, Anthony Rizzo; Camden: April Brown, Lisa Campisi, Ebony Freeman, Dali Kilpatrick, Sturac Meyers, Janelle Mungro, Kimberly Robinson-Taylor; Cape May: June Camizzi, Stacey Salerno; Cumberland: Nicole Carminati, April Stevenson-Kinder, Tiffanie ThrBak, Ed.D.; Essex: Christine Candarella, Joseph Dedalonis, Danielle Earle, Keith Hinton, Louann Lobasso, Rocio Lopez, Michael Tedesco; Gloucester: Stephen Balaity, Chrissy Kosar, Melba Moore-Suggs, Salvatore Randazzo, Stephen Whitehead; Higher Ed: Peter Helff; Hudson: Daniel Abbadessa, Hery

Acosta, Rachel Blue, Daniel Granda, Erin Mooney, Marquisha Reynolds, Gene Woods; Hunterdon: Robin Kiefer, Carol Rocha; Mercer: Talithea Duncan, Sandra Herrington, Antoinette Hopkins, Daniel Siegel, Patricia Yaple; Middlesex: Nicole Del Popolo, Noelle Ebler, Daniel Fields, Joseph Landolfi, Carolyn Muglia, Frank Paprota Jr., Timothy Simonitis, Michael Wildermuth, Lois Yunka; Monmouth: Christina Jannarone, Denise King, Michael Marino, Jo Anne Montanti, Danielle Price, Sarah Reichenbecher, Michael Reilly, Diane Vistein; Morris: Lee Ann Brensinger (Substitute for County President), Jon Congilio, Angela Cordova, Ann Marie Finnen, Amal Hussein, Malani Leitzel, Lisa Mangione; NEA Director: Robert La Morte; NJAEA: Matthew Yuro; NJREA: Jacqui Greadington, Joan Wright, John Zurka; Non-Classroom Teacher: Shareen Shibli; Ocean: Kevin Bliem, Ronald Donnerstag, Jaclyn Finnigan, Susan Morgan, Gina Pizzuto, Richard Ryan; Passaic: Susan Butterfield, Brenda Carswell-Avery, Marvin Fields, Patricia Kebrdle, Carolyn McKinney-Croix, Aiat Oraby, Robert Sarti; Salem: Diana Castiglione, Jennifer Lehr; Somerset: Andrew Coslit, Daniel Epstein, Marisol Espinoza, Gayle Faulkner, Gayle Nelson; Sussex: Gerda Bakker, Angela Deluccia, Ann (Vicky) Smith, Union: Annice Benamy, Michael Boyd, Lakahia Carter-Blocker, Keith Coston, James Frazier, Julie Klikus, Kelee Mitchell-Hall, Ann Margaret Shannon; Warren: Erin Durkin, Bianca Guidici

DELEGATE ASSEMBLY ALTERNATES

The NJEA Constitution provides for elected alternates for Delegate Assembly members. Members of the Delegate Assembly who cannot attend a meeting may designate an alternate from their county to act in their respective places. Alternates must bring written statements from the Delegate Assembly member whom they represent.

Atlantic: Sandra Peart, Stacey Sweeny; Bergen: David Bradler, Jennifer Clemen, Susan Marinzulich, Andrew Policastro, Anthony Rapetti, vacancy (4); Burlington: Michele Fuller, Keturah Harris, Stacey Williams, vacancy (1); Camden: Tyeisha Jefferies, Madeleine Leach, Jeannie Long, Sharita Stinson; Cape May: Cynthia Rosenberg; Cumberland: Jaclyn Conahey; Nicole Kinsey; Essex: Jessica Cavagnaro, Linda Kelly-Gamble, Leah White; Gloucester: Collin Aregood, Laurie Boyle, Sharon Pizuta; Higher Ed: Michelle Perkins; Hudson: Andrew Bove, Richard

Geissler, John Marques, Minnie Williams, Barbara Young; Hunterdon: Margaret Esposito; Mercer: Agueda Porras, Kelly Susinski, Twanda Taylor-Vessels; Middlesex: Marilyn Edge, Asela Laguna Mourao, William Smith, Maureen Strzykalski, Susan Waldron; Monmouth: Casey Barilka, Louis Castagno, Allison Connolly, Stephanie Kelly, James St. Angelo; Morris: Nanette Fandino Diaz, Vilkaren Hopson, Patricia Ressler, vacancy (2); NJREA: Roger Baker, Joanne Palladino; Ocean: Kevin Bliem, Nancy Jubert, Veronica Kriegl, Susan Wiemken; Passaic: Trent Johnson, Megan King, Billy Krakower, Selena Lawson, Todd Pipkin, Michael Tecza; Salem: Amy Tighe; Somerset: Randi-Lee Childers, Daniel Cyckowski, Martin Deutschman; Sussex: Carla Brunelle, Patricia Trentanelli; Union: Lillian Alston, Johanna Amaro, Carlos Esquivel, Tanya Martin-Cooper, Tonya Scott-Cole; Warren: Scott Elliott

NJEA COMMITTEES

AFFILIATION

The Affiliation Committee: 1. reviews, investigates, and makes recommendations on the applications of local, county and special interest associations requesting NJEA affiliation; 2. periodically reviews affiliation standards and a random sampling of local and county affiliates to ensure compliance with NJEA and NEA affiliation and Local Association Financial Assistance Program (LAFAP) standards; 3. reviews problems involving disaffiliation; 4. makes recommendations for appropriate action by the Delegate Assembly.

Chair: Gerard Campione, Middlesex

Staff contact: David Bander

Associate Staff Contact: Meghan Westbrook

Atlantic: Heather Flaim; Bergen: Anthony Rapetti, Thomas Schram; Camden: Mary Iovacchini; Cape May: Walter Johnson; Essex: Catherine Kondreck; Gloucester: Collin Aregood; Hudson: Marquisha Reynolds; Mercer: April Locato; Morris: Nanette Fandino Diaz; NJREA: Barbara Toczko; Somerset: Daniel Epstein; Union: Keith Coston

BUDGET

Working with data and suggestions provided by staff, officers, the Executive Committee, the Delegate Assembly and other committees, the Budget Committee: 1. prepares and recommends an annual budget for consideration by the Delegate Assembly; 2. examines trends related to membership growth, revenues and program expenditures; 3. regularly reviews the expenditures within cost centers for compliance with D.A. policy; 4. makes recommendations to the Delegate Assembly or Executive Committee, as appropriate, for transfers between cost centers; 5. reviews the auditor's report on all NJEA accounts and expenditures; 6. reviews NJEA investment policy; 7. reviews NJEA capital assets.

Chair: Secretary-Treasurer Petal T. Robertson

Staff contact: Karen Kryven

Associate Staff Contact: Cecilia Tromp

Atlantic: Melissa Tomlinson; Bergen: David Bradler; Burlington: Andrew Jacobs; Camden: Janelle Mungro; Cape May: Tammi Lee; Essex: Christine Candarella; Gloucester: Melba Moore-Suggs; Higher Ed: Peter Helff; Hudson: Kevin Reed; Hunterdon: Susan Vala; Mercer: Sandra L. Herrington; Middlesex: Michael Wildermuth; MLR Committee Chair: Tiffanie ThrBak, Ed.D.; Monmouth: Robin Dreuer; Morris: Lisa Lamendola; NJREA: Robert Kapp; Ocean: Kathleen Hall; Passaic: Patricia Kebrdle; Salem: Rachael Lester-Battiatia; Somerset: David Yastremski; Sussex: Deborah Wakefoose; Union: Ann Margaret Shannon

CERTIFICATION, EVALUATION, AND TENURE

Certification, Evaluation and Tenure Committee: 1. studies, reports on and makes recommendations concerning program improvements, training opportunities and problems in pre-professional education, certification, evaluation and tenure; 2. monitors State Board of Education and other agencies related thereto; 3. develops strategies to educate the general population about the purpose and necessity of tenure, academic freedom and the evaluation process; 4. works in conjunction with the Instructional Issues and Professional Development committees to disseminate information to the profession.

Chair: Dayna Orlak, Bergen

Staff contact: Elizabeth Yucis

Associate Staff Contact: Jamaya Newton

Atlantic: Malissa Ridley; Burlington: Lisa Chiavuzzo; Camden: Michele Ransone; Cape May: Catherine Krause; Cumberland: Chrysta Wilson; Essex: Joy Burnett; Gloucester: Joyce Farr; Hudson: Charlene Bini; Mercer: Melissa Watros; Middlesex: Hannah Pawlak; Monmouth: Elizabeth Semanchick; Morris: Mark Henaghen; NJAEA: Ashley Leach; NJREA: Martin Sharofsky; Passaic: Megan King; Somerset: Fontella Best; Union: Chrystal Parr-Allen

CONGRESSIONAL CONTACT

Composed of at least one representative from each county, the Congressional Contact Committee: 1. maintains contact with New Jersey's congressional delegation regarding NEA/NJEA's legislative program; 2. makes NJEA members aware of the Association's federal legislative program and the need for membership activity in support of that program; 3. chairs screening committees in congressional races; 4. maintains a close working relationship with NJEA lobbyists and NJEA Government Relations.

Chair: Patricia Kebrdle, Passaic

Staff contact: Michael Flynn

Associate Staff Contact: Christie Procell

Atlantic: Tim Mancuso; Bergen: Fanny Cruz-Betesh; Christopher Sheridan; Burlington: Jason Pope; Camden: John Senft; Cape May: Walter Johnson; Cumberland: Michael Morton; Essex: Joseph Dedalonis, Michelle Williams-Wong; Gloucester: Laurie Boyle; Higher Ed: Lori Podstupka-King; Hudson: Rosanne Versaci; Hunterdon: Marie Corfield; Mercer: Sandra Herrington; Middlesex: Chiarina Guzik; Monmouth: Jacqueline Kruzik, Marcella Slog; Morris: Christopher Hurd; NEA Directors: Brenda Brathwaite, Theresa Fuller, Laurie Gibson-Parker, Robert La Morte, Temika Langston-Myers, Sue McBride, Peter Moran, Barbara Rheault, Stacy Yanko; NEA Director at Large: Tarsha Lawson; NJAEA: Matthew Yuro; NJREA: Susan Clark; Ocean: Elaine White; Passaic: Tara Temprano; Somerset: Gayle Faulkner; Union: James Frazier

CONSTITUTION REVIEW

The Constitution Review Committee: 1. reviews and coordinates suggestions for study of constitution or bylaw changes; 2. works in conjunction with other NJEA committees requiring their review of amendments; 3. prepares language for proposed constitutional changes; 4. reviews and makes recommendations to the Delegate Assembly concerning proposed amendments to the constitution or bylaws.

Chair: Scott Elliott, Warren

Staff contact: Cindy Matute-Brown

Associate Staff Contact: Colleen Lopez

Atlantic: Alphonso Harrell; Bergen: Cean Spahn; Burlington: Michele Fuller; Camden: Madeleine Leach; Essex: Dwight Holmes, Enrique Manlapid; Gloucester: Denise Dawson, Dorothy Grieb; Hudson: Madonna Morris; Hunterdon: Robin Kiefer; Mercer: Deborah Goodkin; Middlesex: Valerie Nelson; Monmouth: Gail Maher; Morris: Lee Ann Brensinger; NJREA: Michael Kruczek; Ocean: Elissa Waller; Passaic: Tanisha Barkley-Johnson; Somerset: Randi Lee Childers; Union: Alissa Valiante

CONVENTION

The Convention Committee: 1. reviews themes and general convention program plans; 2. promotes and evaluates member participation and attendance; 3. develops procedures for and evaluates programs offered by NJEA-affiliated groups; 4. develops standards for exhibits and evaluates compliance of exhibitors; 5. evaluates overall program scheduling; 6. recommends to the Executive Committee the NJEA Convention dates, location, and program.

Chair: Catherine MacManiman, Burlington

Staff contact: Vicki Serreino

Associate Staff Contact: Krista Orellana

Atlantic: Cassandra Montague; Bergen: Susan Marinzulich; Camden: Sturac Meyers; Cape May: Stacey Salerno; Cumberland: Jaclyn Conahey; Essex: Sharon Johnson; Gloucester: Robert Sheridan; Higher Ed: Mickey Dickenson; Hudson: Nadine Collins; Hunterdon: Peter Moran; Mercer: Marlena Ventura; Middlesex: Devin Menker; Monmouth: Rachel Donovan; Morris: Guada Jacob; NJREA: Cynthia McCray; Ocean County: Mitchel Gertner; Passaic: Lauren Spiller; Somerset: Patrick Frain; Sussex: Lisa Fahrenfeld; Union: Tonya Scott-Cole

DELEGATE ASSEMBLY RULES

The D.A. Rules Committee considers and recommends the rules under which the Delegate Assembly conducts its business.

Chair: John Zurka, NJREA

Staff contact: Cindy Matute-Brown

Associate Staff Contact: Colleen Lopez

Bergen: Kathleen Arlin; Burlington: Melissa Foremny; Camden: Sturac Meyers; Cape May: Stacey Salerno; Passaic: Robert Sarti

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The Distinguished Service Award Committee considers and evaluates candidates for the NJEA Ruthann Sheer Distinguished Service Award for Education and makes appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Chair: Danielle Clark, Camden

Staff contact: Steve Baker

Associate Staff Contact: Lynne Nelson

Atlantic: Georgia Charles; Bergen: Argine Safari; Cape May: Alice Barnes-Vasser; Middlesex: Jennifer Olawski; Morris: Kerri Lee Farrell; NJREA: Stacy Morgan Santo; Passaic: Brenda Carswell-Avery; Somerset: Mary Macrae; Union: Lillian Alston

EDITORIAL

The Editorial Committee: 1. supervises the *NJEA Review* and other Association publications designed for internal communications with the membership, within the framework of policy laid down by the Delegate Assembly and the Executive Committee; 2. reviews printing contracts, advertising rates, and policies; 3. sets and maintains a continuing evaluation of standards for articles, illustrations, and style; periodically reviews standards to make sure they actively promote content submissions from diverse member voices and that the standards do not create barriers to content from diverse member voices; 4. determines and recommends issues and ideas to be addressed to the membership through the Association publications and the website by: reviewing survey and polling data to maintain awareness of NJEA's demographics to ensure equitable representation and identification of issues members wish to see addressed; staying abreast of trends in public education and union organizing; intentionally discussing publication and website content with members from diverse backgrounds and job categories; periodically reviewing content to ensure that diverse voices are represented; recommending strategies to amplify the voices of underrepresented members.

Chair: Lauren Greenfield, Essex

Staff contact: Patrick Rumaker

Associate Staff Contact: Sara Ream

Atlantic: Alphonso Harrell; Bergen: Claudette Peterkin; Essex: Amanda Best; Gloucester: Salvatore Randazzo; Hudson: Linda Miller; Mercer: Hussain Haqq; Middlesex: Andrew Lewis; Monmouth: Steven Tetreault; NJAEA: Madison Baca, Rana Yildirim; NJREA: Miriam Reichenbach; Passaic: Sonya Squitieri; Union: Marcy Helmstetter

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

Consisting of representatives from support and teaching staff, the Educational Support Professionals Committee: 1. examines and makes recommendations on active-supportive member needs, services and programs; 2. recommends activities and programs to organize groups not yet affiliated with NJEA; 3. reviews efforts to develop all-inclusive local organizations; 4. gathers and reviews data related to privatization initiatives and reports these findings to the Delegate Assembly

and Executive Committee; 5. develops and initiates training opportunities for school personnel.

Chair: Joann Houck, Burlington

Staff contact: Robert Antonelli

Associate Staff Contact: Sabrina Moore

Atlantic: Trina Jenkins; Bergen: Rommy Buttafuoco; Burlington: Sandra Wilcox; Camden: Pamela Clark; Cape May: Kenneth Bassett; Cumberland: Kathie Lynch; Essex: Sabina Ellis; Gloucester: Roberta Rissling; Hudson: Marquisha Reynolds; Hunterdon: Katherine Beggiato; Mercer: Antoinette Hopkins; Middlesex: Nancy Cogland; Monmouth: Regina Jagoo; Morris: Mark Eckert; NJREA: Barbara Newman; Ocean: Nancy Jubert; Passaic: Derrick Watson; Salem: Amy Tighe; Somerset: Nicky Neeraj Badlani; Sussex: Carla Brunelle; Union: Michael Boyd; Warren: Scott Elliott

ELECTIONS

The Elections Committee: 1. sets standards and procedures, subject to the general policies of the Delegate Assembly, for all elections under the NJEA Constitution, and for the conduct and eligibility of candidates for elected office; 2. oversees NJEA elections procedures within counties or units; 3. conducts any necessary state elections; 4. provides oversight for the tabulation and certification of ballots; 5. resolves state elections disputes.

Chair: Joe Toma, Middlesex

Staff contact: Katrina Homel

Associate Staff Contact: Meghan Westbrook

Atlantic: Katharine Watson; Bergen: Thomas Schram; Burlington: Maria Rivera; Camden: Jeannie Long; Cape May: Tiffany Lively; Cumberland: Leah Fahber; Essex: Shirley Henry; Gloucester: Brian D'Ottavio; Hudson: Diane Mackay; Hunterdon: Donna Pontoriero; Mercer: Kelly Susinski; Monmouth: Allison Connolly; Morris: Patrick Fahy; NJREA: Toni Guerra; Ocean: Jim Lubrani; Passaic: Rosilind Abreu; Salem: Amy Tighe; Somerset: Jennifer Tuller; Sussex: Theresa Snyder; Union: Lisa Palin; Warren: Russa Nollstadt

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

The Exceptional Children Committee: 1. proposes and reviews legislation that impact children with special needs; 2. designs NJEA efforts to implement and enforce existing legislation, rules and regulations that require adequate programming; 3. relates such concerns to educational and community groups with similar interests; 4. disseminates information to school personnel regarding issues that affect programs and children with special needs; 5. coordinates efforts with affiliate groups on areas of concern; 6. develops and initiates training opportunities for school personnel.

Chair: Tomeka Sanderlin, Atlantic

Staff contact: Camy Kobylinski

Associate Staff Contact: Krista Orellana

Atlantic: Marla Bennard; Bergen: Rick Gladstone; Camden: Tyeisha Jefferies; Cape May: Shawna Mulford; Cumberland: Carmen Porter; Essex: Lance Hilfman; Gloucester: Malika Moore; Hudson: John

Marques; Mercer: Rhonda Williams; Middlesex: Francine Wilden; Monmouth: Elizabeth Lieberman; Morris: Anjali Kallianpur; NJREA: Shirley Hicks; Ocean: Ronald Donnerstag; Somerset: Gayle Faulkner; Warren: Russa Nollstadt

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The Government Relations Committee: 1. reviews and considers state and national legislation; 2. carries out the legislative policy of the Association; 3. lobbies legislators and other political leaders and decision makers; 4. works with county and local education associations to establish continuous lobbying efforts with legislators and representatives of state agency policy-making boards and commissions; 5. oversees county and local legislative action team efforts; 6. educates leaders and members about the necessity of political action efforts to make legislative advances; 7. maintains a close working relationship with the NJEA lobbyists and NJEA Government Relations Division; 8. networks with other unions, organizations or special interest groups to secure legislative goals established by the Delegate Assembly; 9. chairs screening committees in N.J. legislative races.

Chair: Christina Dare, Gloucester

Staff contact: Marybeth Beichert

Associate Staff Contact: Christina Alexander

Atlantic: Trisha Houck, Maryam Sarhan; Bergen: Christopher Sheridan, Howard Lipoff; Burlington: Christine Hewitt, Steven Nahill; Camden: Katherine Morris, Breanna Ratkevich; Cape May: Cynthia Rosenberg, Stacey Salerno; Cumberland: Sherman Denby, Temika Langston-Myers; Essex: Christopher Cannella, Nickarson Paul; Gloucester: Brian D'Ottavio, Stephen Whitehead; Hudson: Rosanne Versaci, Gene Woods; Higher Education: Lori Podstupka-King; Hunterdon: Devon Emerick, Ian White; Mercer: Agueda Porras, Grace Rarich; Middlesex: Timothy Simonitis; Monmouth: James St. Angelo, Erin Wheeler; Morris: Brian Adams, Mark Eckert; NJREA: Susan Maurer; Ocean: Susan Morgan, Richard Ryan; Passaic: Tanisha Barkley-Johnson, Todd Pipkin; Salem: Leslie Wright-Pinheiro; Somerset: Daniel Epstein, Henry Goodhue; NJAEA: Drew Kazim

HEALTH BENEFITS

The Health Benefits Committee: 1. reviews the operations and administration of the N.J. State Health Benefits Plan; 2. recommends changes needed in the N.J. State Health Benefits Plan's administrative guidelines to ensure the highest quality coverage for NJEA members; 3. studies proposals relating to the health insurance funds and joint insurance funds offered by employers; 4. assesses members' needs related to basic health insurance coverage and supplemental coverage; 5. reviews legislation and regulations governing health insurance coverage in New Jersey and makes recommendations for changes to better meet members' needs; 6. proposes initiatives

to ensure the maintenance of health benefits for retirees; 7. develops and initiates training opportunities for school personnel.

Chair: Catherine Krause, Cape May

Staff contact: Thomas Predale

Staff contact: Felicia Tard

Atlantic: John-Fred Crane; Bergen: Susan Dziob; Burlington: Melissa Foremny; Cumberland: Nicole Carminati; Hudson: Lisa Dunn; Mercer: John Forte; Middlesex: Matthew Hrevnak; Monmouth: Tiffani Monroe; Morris: Laura Rivera; NJREA: Judith Ruff; Ocean: Cheryl Berman; Somerset: Martin Deutschman

HEARING COMMITTEE ON CENSURE, SUSPENSION, AND EXPULSION

The Hearing Committee on Censure, Suspension and Expulsion: 1. conducts due process hearings when charges are filed against a member related to censure, suspension and expulsion; 2. reviews and considers proposed changes to the standards and procedures for censuring, suspending and expelling members; 3. reviews charges and hears cases, when appropriate, concerning censure, suspension or expulsion; 4. makes recommendations, as necessary, to the Executive Committee.

Chair: Lori Lalama, Passaic

Staff contact: Aileen O'Driscoll

Associate Staff Contact: Meghan Westbrook

Burlington: Tomika Lamb; Essex: Sharon Ortiz; Higher Ed: Peter Helff; Mercer: Twanda Taylor; Middlesex: Jarrett Lampkin; Non-Classroom Teacher: Taysha Gateua-Barrera; Ocean: Ron Donnerstag; Union: Lakhia Blocker-Active Support (ESP).

HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Higher Education Committee: 1. studies and reports on issues in higher education, such as member advocacy, funding, regulations and legislation; 2. monitors the Commission on Higher Education; 3. makes recommendations for appropriate strategies and actions; 4. assists in implementing NJEA policies on higher education; 5. reviews legislation impacting higher education; 6. develops and initiates training opportunities for school personnel.

Chair: Mecheline Farhat, Bergen

Staff contact: Marcia Kleinz

Associate Staff Contact: Karen "Skip" Perry

Atlantic: Cheryl Garwood, Michelle Perkins; Bergen: Michael Echols, Peter Helff, Alan Kaufman; Burlington: William Whitfield; Camden: Zaida Nogue; Cumberland: Arthur Horn; Executive Committee: Tobyn DeMarco; Gloucester: Anna Roth; Hudson: Michael Ferlise; Mercer: Edward Carmien; Monmouth: Brent Costleigh, AnnMarie Johnson; Morris: Stephen Kaifa; NJAEA: Bianca Nicolescu; NJREA: Paul Belmonte, Thomas Harrington; Ocean: Jayanti Tamm; Passaic: Christopher Mueller; Warren: Kerry Frabizio

HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

The Human Rights Committee: 1. studies and recommends how members and their associations can contribute to equal opportunities and improved human relations; 2. develops and publicizes teaching strategies to promote diversity education for children and adults; 3. reviews timely issues such as diversity, ethnicity, human relations and discrimination; 4. conducts the annual human rights conference and recommends Human Rights Award winners, if any; 5. develops and initiates training opportunities for school personnel.

Chair: Fayette Weatherington, Essex

Staff contact: DaQuan Bashir, Ed.D.

Associate Staff Contact: Colleen Lopez

Atlantic: Karol Ball; Bergen: Kelly Cruz; Burlington: April Newman; Camden: Ebony Freeman; Cumberland: Rosa Colon; Essex: Theresa Maughan, Gloucester: Qiana Stanard; Hudson: Rachel Blue; Mercer: Paige Hinton-Mason; Monmouth: Bridget James; Morris: Nanette Fandino Diaz; NJAEA: Jacques Lapeyrolerie; NJREA: Betty Meeks-Manning; Ocean: Dorothea Douglas; Passaic: Robert Sarti; Salem: Nicole Cerqueira; Somerset: Fawnya Gibson; Union: Kelee Mitchell-Hall

INSTRUCTION

The Instruction Committee: 1. recommends programs to aid members with instructional issues and accommodating student learning styles; 2. recommends programs to be presented at NJEA conferences and the annual convention; 3. monitors activities of agencies related to instructional issues; 4. stimulates and reviews research and proven innovations in its area of interest; 5. identifies instructional concerns and researches solutions; 6. considers long-range problems and policies affecting the profession and the association; 7. works in conjunction with the Certification, Evaluation and Tenure and Professional Development committees to disseminate information within the profession; 8. studies, reports on, and makes recommendations concerning programs addressing problems in instruction.

Chair: June Camizzi, Cape May

Staff contact: Kim Pinckney, Ph.D.

Associate Staff Contact: Jamaya Newton

Atlantic: Tamar Lasure-Owens; Bergen: John Sassi; Burlington: Lisa Chivavuzzo; Camden: Gregory Louie; Cumberland: Reef Bates; Essex: Linda Johnson-Battle; Gloucester: Lawrence Hickman; Hudson: Shawnte Cheatham, Chere Glover; Mercer: Elizabeth Brasor; Monmouth: Bryan Hackett, Lisa Marie Varley; Morris: Ann Marie Finnen; NJREA: Renee Wilson; Ocean: Veronica Kriegl; Passaic: Melanie Vasa; Salem: Sophia Hovermann; Somerset: Loydes Lewis; Union: Annice Benamy; Warren: Matthew Hoyt

LEADERSHIP

The Leadership Committee: 1. assesses training needs of NJEA affiliates and leaders; 2. makes recommendations concerning development, evaluation and revision of leadership training programs; 3. oversees the planning of the Summer Leadership Conference, its programs and logistics; 4. develops and initiates leadership training opportunities for association members and leaders.

Chair: Ann Kaspereen, Warren

Staff contact: Michael Saffran

Associate Staff Contact: Jennifer Roche

Atlantic: Stacey Sweeny; Bergen: Fanny Cruz-Betesh; Burlington: Melissa Foremny; Camden: Vacant; Cape May: Jay Wynn; Cumberland: Nicole Carminati; Essex: Jessica Alvarez; Gloucester: Collin Aregood; Hudson: Mark Klein; Mercer: Twanda Taylor; Middlesex: Daniel Fields; Monmouth: Thomas Ballard; Morris: Angela Cordova; NJAEA: Bianca Nicolescu; NJREA: Minnie Mozee; Passaic: Maria Ross; Salem: Renee Jost; Somerset: Andrew Coslit; Sussex: Stacy Yanko; Union: Stephanie Ross

MEMBER BENEFITS

The Member Benefits Committee studies and makes recommendations on: 1. insurance programs; 2. education programs on financial products; 3. car leasing or purchasing; 4. consumer buying plans; 5. travel programs; 6. any other consumer service plans benefiting the membership; 7. retailers who offer discounts to members; 8. programs available to members provided by boards of education and local, county, state or national associations.

Chair: Diane Vistein, Monmouth

Staff contact: Beth Schroeder-Buonsante

Associate Staff Contact: G. Lorraine Jones

Atlantic: Robin J. Moore; Bergen: Lori Henderson-Manning; Burlington: Anthony M. Rizzo; Camden: Tyeisha Jeffries; Cape May: Jennifer Loper; Cumberland: Jennifer Pokrovsky; Essex: Louann Lobasso; Gloucester: Stephen Balaity; Hudson: Jocelyn Martinez; Hunterdon: Carol Rocha; Mercer: Patricia Yapple; Morris: Vacant; NJREA: Jeanne Kiefner; Ocean: Daniel Staples; Somerset: Renee Heller; Sussex: Michelle Visco; Union: Stacy Dauphin; Warren: Lisa Buhl

MEMBERSHIP

The Membership Committee: 1. promotes and maintains unified association membership; 2. reviews appropriateness of membership and dues categories; 3. secures members for NJEA and the NEA; 4. reviews and studies the means used to orient members to the programs and services of NJEA; 5. gathers data on membership projections and makes recommendations for creating membership growth; 6. coordinates activities of county and local membership chairpersons; 7. reviews and maintains names, addresses and organizational information of NJEA members.

Chair: Kevin Bloom, Middlesex

Staff contact: Jaime Valente

Associate Staff Contact: Cecilia Tromp

Atlantic: Jayne Carmen; Bergen: Jill Schwerd; Burlington: Anthony Rizzo; Camden: Joy Patterson; Cape May: Stephanie Greenberg; Cumberland: Mildred Johnson; Essex: Linda Kelly-Gamble; Gloucester: Eileen Healey; Hudson: Felicia Glover; Mercer: Karen Pouria, Danielle Price; Hunterdon: Erika Krimm; Middlesex: Lois Yukna; Monmouth: Louis Castagno; Morris: Amal Hussein; NJAEA: Matthew Yuro; NJREA: Frances Davis; Ocean: Nancy Jubert; Passaic: Karen Cawthern; Salem: Michael Wichart; Somerset: Laurel Suk; Sussex: Michelle Visco; Union: Arthur Rodgers; Warren: Valerie Gary

MINORITY LEADERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

The Minority Leadership and Recruitment Committee: 1. encourages multi-ethnic members to become active in all levels of association work; 2. recruits multi-ethnic members for association involvement; 3. identifies and recommends ways to attract multi-ethnic members to school employees' professions; 4. develops and initiates training opportunities for school personnel.

Chair: Tiffanie ThrBak, Ed.D., Cumberland

Staff contact: Eric Jones

Associate Staff Contact: Linda Calehuff

Atlantic: Tomeka Sanderlin; Bergen: Michelle Hammond-Dudley; Burlington: Janet Adams; Camden: Brittany Lamb; Cape May: David Farrow; Cumberland: Nicole Kinsey; Essex: Jean Jackson; Gloucester: Shereen Ducasse; Hudson: Irene Pike; Mercer: Aaryenne White; Middlesex: Chere Glover; Monmouth: Mary Scott; Morris: Vilmay Hernandez; NJAEA: Jacques Lapeyrolerie; NJREA: Vires Simmons; Ocean: Maria DeVenecia-McFarland; Passaic: Aiat Oraby; Salem: Alberte Olivier; Somerset: Aida-Janet Wahba; Union: Michael Boyd

NEA ACTIVITIES

The NEA Activities Committee: 1. promotes attendance and other activities of local and state association delegates to the NEA RA; 2. reviews and coordinates financial and logistical information related to NJEA's delegation to the annual NEA convention.

Chair: Tamara Beatty, Burlington

Staff Contact: Antonio Castanon Luna

Associate Staff Contact: Colleen Lopez

Atlantic: Karol Ball; Bergen: Mariann Kronyak; Camden: Sharita Stinson; Cape May: Tammi Lee; Cumberland: Taja Morton; Essex: Kiara Gary; Gloucester: Robert Scardino; Hudson: Andrew Bove; Mercer: Renee Szporn; Morris: Malani Leitzel; NJREA: John Zurka; Ocean: Gina Pizzuto; Passaic: Trent Johnson; Salem: Michael Wichart; Somerset: Marisol Espinoza; Union: Charisse Parker

NEA ISSUES

The NEA Issues Committee: 1. advises the association on issues relating to the NEA; 2. initiates the screening of candidates for NEA positions; 3. provides information to the NJEA delegation regarding issues and programs being promoted by NEA.

Staff Contact: Cindy Matute-Brown

Associate Staff Contact: Colleen Lopez

NEA Directors: Brenda Brathwaite, Theresa L. Fuller, Laurie T. Gibson-Parker, Lauren B. Greenfield; Sue McBride, Peter J. Moran, Barbara B. Rheault, Mark Richards, Stacy A. Yanko; NJEA Director – NJAEA: Matthew R. Yuro; NEA Directors at Large: Karoline Bethea-Jones, Ph.D., Temika Langston-Myers, Tarsha N. Lawson; NEA Resolutions Committee: April N. Brown, Marilyn Edge, James R. Frazier Jr., Henry E. Goodhue III, Theodore Graham, Patricia Guerra-Frazier, Jaclyn Headlam, Chrissy Kosar, NEA Resolutions Committee Alternate: Malissa Ridley

NJEA PAC OPERATING

The NJEA PAC Operating Committee: 1. supports candidates for state and federal offices on a nonpartisan basis, who are proven or potential friends of education; 2. takes a leadership role in NJEA/NEA PAC fundraising; 3. coordinates candidate screening, selection, campaign and support efforts; 4. reviews PAC guidelines for appropriateness; 5. educates the membership about the need for political involvement and the rationale and process used for selecting endorsed candidates; 6. supports the general operations in statewide political action efforts and campaigns; 7. supports efforts by local and county associations completing endorsements for candidates at the local and county level using the NJEA-PAC guidelines.

Chair: Vice President Steve Beatty

Staff Contact: Deborah Cornavaca

Associate Staff Contact: Mary Kemery

The 125 member NJEA PAC Operating Committee consists of NJEA's officers; the NJEA Executive Committee; NJEA Government Relations and Congressional Contact committee, the county association presidents, the president of NJAEA, three NJEA active support members, the NJREA legislative chairperson, vice chairperson, and three NJREA legislative regional coordinators, one representing north New Jersey, one representing central New Jersey and one representing south New Jersey.

PAUL DIMITRIADIS RIGHTS FUND

The Paul Dimitriadis Rights Fund Committee: 1. investigates and recommends ways to raise funds for the Paul Dimitriadis Member Rights Fund; 2. oversees the expenditure of funds to locals and members in crisis; 3. identifies efforts required to raise these funds.

Chair: Kelee Mitchell-Hall, Union

Staff Contact: Dan Goldman

Associate Staff Contact: La Tonya Reid

Burlington: Roxanne Jackson; Camden: Katrina Squire; Essex: Lance Hillman; Gloucester: Roberta Rissling; Hudson: Erin Mooney; Mercer: Gerald Pinner; NJREA: Romaine Street; Somerset: Patrick Frain

PENSION POLICY

The Pension Policy Committee: 1. studies and makes recommendations on problems and solutions relating to teacher retirement and other pension or benefit programs designed to help members and their dependents attain financial security upon retirement, disability and/or death; 2. reviews legislative proposals related to changes in the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund and Public Employees Retirement System pension systems; 3. reviews actions of the respective pension boards of trustees.

Chair: Howard Lipoff, Bergen

Staff Contact: Sarah Favinger

Associate Staff Contact: Roxie Muhsin

Atlantic: Ashley Souders; Camden: Breanna Ratkevich; Cumberland: Shamia Brandon; Essex: Rocio Lopez; Gloucester: Michael Acchione; Hudson: David Streater; Hunterdon: Molly Esposito; Mercer: Daniel Siegel; Monmouth: Casey Barilka; Morris: Kathleen Paterek; NJREA: Irene Savicky; Passaic: Ryan Cohen; Somerset: Theresa Fuller; Union: Tanya Martin-Cooper

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Professional Development Committee: 1. researches, initiates and promotes appropriate activities in continuing professional education, in-service professional development and professional standards; 2. stimulates research and proven innovations in its areas of interest; 3. considers long-range problems, policies and solutions required in areas affecting the profession and the association; 4. makes recommendations concerning programs to be presented at NJEA conferences and the annual convention; 5. works in conjunction with the Instruction and Certification, Evaluation and Tenure committees to develop recommendations related to furthering professional "best practices"; 6. reviews and recommends legislative and regulatory proposals; 7. disseminates such information among the profession; 8. develops and initiates training opportunities for school personnel.

Chair: Jennifer Clemen, Bergen

Staff Contact: Dawn Howlen

Associate Staff Contact: Tamanyka Booker

Atlantic: Brenda Brathwaite; Bergen: Caseen Gaines; Burlington: Lisa Chiavuzzo; Camden: Denise Jones; Cape May: June Camizzi; Essex: Toi Hinton; Gloucester: Joyce Farr; Higher Ed: Bridget Turner; Hudson: Linda Miller; Hunterdon: Donna Pontoriero; Mercer: Kathryn Graf; Middlesex: Joseph Landolfi; Monmouth: Kelly Fisher; Morris: Angela Cordova; NJREA: Diane Stelacio; Ocean: Elisa Waller; Passaic: Shaye Brown-Crandol; Salem: Sophia Hovermann; Somerset: Louis Guglielmo; Sussex: James Marion; Union: Tonya Scott-Cole; NJAEA: Ashley Leach

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee: 1. promotes and protects the legal and professional rights of members; 2. investigates the legal status of members who are in contest regarding their rights and responsibilities as school employees and as citizens; 3. reviews cases involving affirmative litigation in such areas as rights for non-tenured employees, academic freedom, negotiations and hardship cases resulting from member rights efforts; 4. supervises staff investigations and assistance for members and associations, when warranted; 5. recommends appropriate action to the Executive Committee, including the granting of financial assistance.

Chair: Marguerite Cahill, Somerset

Staff Contact: Kaitlyn Dunphy

Associate Staff Contact: Sarah Santana

Atlantic: Sandra Peart; Bergen: Andrew Policastro; Cape May: Kimberle Bruckno Moore; Cumberland: Rachel Reinhart; Essex: Michael Tedesco; Gloucester: Stephen Balaity; Hudson: Jose Garcia; Mercer: Michelle Marrazzo; Monmouth: James St. Angelo; Morris: Amal Hussein; NJREA: Arlene Volkin; Passaic: Lauren Chavis-Ferrer; Union: Lori Davis

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Public Relations Committee: advises on NJEA' statewide advertising and public relations programs; on affiliate organizations' public's perception of public schools, school staff, NJEA and professional organizations as transmitted by the media – newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and films; on media materials and organizational efforts to involve members and affiliate leaders in public relations, community action, and association campaigns for reaching parents and other citizens; and on training opportunities for school personnel in public relations and community organizing.

Chair: Debra Baer, Mercer

Staff Contact: Meredith Barnes

Associate Staff Contact: Lisa Logan-Leach

Atlantic: Jayne Carmen; Bergen: Donna West; Burlington: Kimberly Niehaus; Camden: Felicia Cade-Turner; Cape May: Cynthia Rosenberg; Cumberland: Christopher Mohan; Porter; Essex: Amanda Eineker; Gloucester: Eileen Healey; Hudson: Edwinta Rhue; Hunterdon: Devon Emerick; Middlesex: Noelle Ebler; Monmouth: Patricia Dasaro; Morris: Ann Marie Finnen; NJREA: Susan Vigilante; Ocean: Chris Loeffler; Passaic: Heather Polk; Salem: Robert Fitzpatrick; Somerset: Randi Lee Childers; Union: Annice Benamy

SCHOOL FINANCE

The School Finance Committee: 1. studies school funding proposals; 2. reviews the source of revenues used to provide state, county, and local funding to public education – nursery through graduate level; 3. develops strategies to create community and citizen awareness as to how educational funds are utilized; 4. suggests legislative changes or modifications required to ensure adequate funding for our public education system, nursery through graduate level; 5. makes recommendations regarding legislative initiatives designed to improve the financing of all forms of public education in the state.

Chair: Mariann Kronyak, Bergen

Staff Contact: Dan Goldman

Associate Staff Contact: G. Lorraine Jones

Atlantic: Tim Mancuso; Camden: Veronica Bishop; Cumberland: April Stevenson-Kinder; Gloucester: Lawrence Hickman; Hudson: David Streater; Mercer: Pasqualin Adonizio; Monmouth: Allison Capone; Morris: Laura Rivera; NJREA: Michelle Fox; Passaic: Theodore Graham; Salem: Rachael Lester-Battiata; Somerset: Henry Goodhue

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

The committee deals with sexual orientation and gender identity/expression issues pertaining to all persons in the school community.

Chair: Christopher Cannella, Essex

Staff Contact: Michael Rollins

Associate Staff Contact: LaQuia Norment

Atlantic: Karen Williams; Bergen: Michael Sherbin; Camden: Sofia Capinha; Cape May: Kenneth Bassett; Cumberland: April Stevenson-Kinder; Essex: Sidney Flournoy; Gloucester: Karen Thompson; Hudson: Edwinta Rhue; Hunterdon: Katherine Beggato; Mercer: Irene Allesee, Caitlin Kazim; Middlesex: Susan Waldron; Monmouth: Allison Connolly; Morris: Dustin Weinstein; NJREA: Karen Hughes; Ocean: Jennifer Ansbach; Passaic: Erin Kelly; Salem: Nicole Cerqueira; Somerset: Max Rodriguez; Sussex: Karen Clobberly, Patrick Hanson; Union: Terron Singletary

STAFF PENSION FUND TRUSTEE

Chair: NJEA President Sean M. Spiller

Staff Contact: Kristen Sherman

Associate Staff Contact: Melody Martin-Washington

The Board of Directors of the NJEA Employees Retirement System is responsible for administering and carrying out the provisions of the pension program for NJEA staff members.

TECHNOLOGY

The Technology Committee: 1. studies the impact of technology on educational programs; 2. reviews technology curricula proposals and initiatives for educational appropriateness; 3. reviews state-supported funding proposals and makes recommendations for funding improvements to provide the equipment, personnel, programs and training necessary to institute all aspects of technology education; 4. educates NJEA members, legislators and policymakers about the varied components of technology education; 5. recommends the types of programs needed in every school district to ensure students become technologically literate; 6. develops and initiates training opportunities for school personnel.

Chair: Sabina Ellis, Essex

Staff Contact: Kim Pinckney, Ph.D.

Associate Staff Contact: Tamanyka Booker

Atlantic: Maryam Sarhan; Bergen: David Ahn; Burlington: Christopher Bowman; Cape May: Julie Stratton; Cumberland: Jonathan Gonzalez; Gloucester: Kevin Jablonowski; Hudson: Daniel Abbadessa; Hunterdon: Peter Moran; Mercer: Olive Giles; Middlesex: Pallavi Shetty; Morris: Raymond Vikete; NJREA: Patrica Jones; Ocean: Melissa Krupp; Passaic: Lori Lalama; Salem: Bethany Hannah; Somerset: Daniel Cyckowski; Union: Kristin Nunes; Warren: Karen Wester; NJAEA: Rana Yildirim

UNISERV

The UniServ Committee: 1. hears suggestions and appeals and makes recommendations about the UniServ Program to NJEA's Executive Committee; 2. collects the data needed to effectively evaluate current program and service offerings to local and county affiliates and members; 3. evaluates the UniServ staff's training program; 4. evaluates the entire UniServ Program in terms of service to unified local and county associations.

Chair: Ellen Ogintz, Mercer

Staff Contact: Patrick Manahan

Associate Staff Contact: Beth Georgette

Atlantic: Barbara Rheault; Bergen: Laurie Murrell; Burlington: Stacey Williams; Camden: Katherine Morris; Cape May: Patrick Holden; Cumberland: Deanna Nicosia-Jones; Essex: Michael Byock; Gloucester: Anthony Cappello; Hudson: John Marques; Hunterdon: Carol Rocha; Middlesex: Carolyn Muglia; Monmouth: Laura Dipietro; Morris: Brian Adams; NJREA: Frank Harsanyi; Ocean: James Osborn; Passaic: Francis Koterba; Salem: John Romano; Somerset: Daniel Mayer; Union: Alissa Valiante

URBAN EDUCATION

The Urban Education Committee: Identify solutions to improve educational equity issues in urban school districts. Study pertinent data and members' needs in order to elevate the voices of all of the stakeholders in urban education to build long-term sustainability that impacts systemic issues. Study strategies and programs needed to address the barriers that prevent students in urban settings from receiving opportunities suitable for all students to achieve their potential. Develop relationships with other entities that support NJEA's goals in urban education. Collaborate with other appropriate NJEA committees.

Chair: Todd Pipkin, Passaic

Staff Contact: Amanda Adams

Associate Staff Contact: Kimeisha Boyd

Atlantic: Lateefah Scott; Bergen: Alison Morgan-Black; Burlington: David Parker; Camden: Crystal Love; Cumberland: Sherman Denby; Essex: Christal White; Gloucester: Melba Moore-Suggs; Hudson: Samantha Pelletreau; Mercer: Ruth Orama; Middlesex: Paul Bryant; Monmouth: Felicia Hardman; NJREA: Geraldine Lane; Passaic: Nicole Fuller; Somerset: Gayle Nelson; Warren: Ruth Cahill

VOCATIONAL, CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The Vocational, Career and Technical Education Committee 1. makes the association aware of changes occurring in vocational education; 2. reviews federal and state legislative proposals and regulations that impact vocational education and educators; 3. reviews certification requirements and makes recommendations for improvements; 4. considers problems in vocational education in New Jersey; 5. makes recommendations for solutions to the Executive Committee and Delegate Assembly.

Chair: Erin Wheeler, Monmouth

Staff Contact: Francine Pfeffer

Atlantic: Andrew Parker; Bergen: Kevin Rager; Burlington: Keturah Harris; Cumberland: Timothy Campbell; Essex: Joseph Dedalonis; Hudson: Robert Meyer; Mercer: Megan Ferdetta; Middlesex: Frank Paprota; Morris: Colleen Pascale; NJREA: Renee Mengistab; Somerset: Sheila Sullivan; Sussex: Deborah Wakefoose; Union: Julie Klikus; Warren County: Patrick Lilly

WOMEN IN EDUCATION

The Women in Education Committee: 1. reviews organizational and social policies for their impact on gender equity; 2. reviews curricula and instructional programs and their impact on health and social issues; 3. recommends strategies, programs and policies promoting gender equity; 4. develops and initiates training opportunities for school personnel.

Chair: Lisa Veit, Bergen

Staff Contact: Meredith Barnes

Associate Staff Contact: Lisa Logan-Leach

Atlantic: Sandra Peart; Bergen: Lauren Zucker; Burlington: Sabrina Austin; Camden: Tara Mozee;

Cumberland: Carmen Porter; Essex: Jessica Cavagnaro; Gloucester: Joyce Farr; Hudson: La-Shay Wilson; Mercer: Dana Lakins; Middlesex: Gabrielle Cavagnaro; Monmouth: Sarah Reichenbecher; Morris: Kathleen Harrington; NJAEA: Chelsea Berwick; NJREA: Joan Jensen; Ocean: Susan Morgan; Passaic: Kerrian Palmieri; Salem: Dawn Patrick; Somerset: Aida-Janet Wahba; Union: Lillian Gail Alston; Warren: Amanda Best

WORKING CONDITIONS

The Working Conditions Committee: 1. studies and recommends procedures for collective negotiations, salaries and fringe benefits and seniority rights; 2. studies working conditions problems and issues identified by the Delegate Assembly or other NJEA committees; 3. reviews and makes recommendations for improvements in all matters relating to the working conditions of school employees in order to improve their employment status and working environment; 4. recommends training opportunities for school personnel.

Chair: Barbara Rheault, Atlantic

Staff Contact: Maryanne Rodriguez

Associate Staff Contact: Tabatha Walton

Bergen: Susan Dziob; Camden: Lisa Campisi; Cumberland: Juanita Douglas; Essex: Evan McLaughlin; Gloucester: Michael Acchione; Hudson: Beverley Senior; Mercer: Lynda Walsh; Monmouth: Felicia Hardman; Morris: Guada Jacob; NJREA: Frank Foulkes; Somerset: Cheryl Mitchell; Union: Katherine Lewis

WORKSITE SAFETY AND HEALTH

The Worksite Safety and Health Committee: 1. serves as a watchdog on environmental issues; 2. monitors and recommends policy regarding environmental health issues in school facilities; 3. monitors curricular developments in New Jersey and the nation; 4. recommends training programs and the dissemination of pertinent instructional information in the interest of all members.

Chair: Keith Hinton, Essex

Staff Contact: Michael Rollins

Associate Staff Contact: LaQuia Norment

Atlantic: Ashley Vitullo; Bergen: Michelle Houston; Burlington: Tomika Lamb; Camden: Madeleine Leach; Cape May: Heather Sekela; Cumberland: Christopher Mohan; Gloucester: Robert Scardino; Hudson: Samantha Vreeland; Mercer: Corey Schrier; Middlesex: Andrew Lewis; Monmouth: Mary-Margaret Kurta; Morris: Eugene Behme; NJREA: Anna Picca, Rhonda Sherbin; Ocean: Brenda Douglas; Passaic: Robin Holcombe; Somerset: Genifer Leimbacher; Warren: Chris Coyle

YOUTH SERVICES

The Youth Services Committee: 1. recommends and implements initiatives, strategies, and programs related to vandalism, alcoholism, drugs, physical abuse, and other areas affecting children's school life and ability to learn; 2. develops and reviews legislation impacting children in correctional institutions; 3. recommends improvements and appropriate funding of social support programs; 4. disseminates information to educational and community groups with similar interests; 5. develops and initiates training opportunities for school personnel.

Chair: Cheryl Willis, Middlesex

Staff Contact: Amanda Adams

Associate Staff Contact: Kimeisha Boyd

Bergen: Martha Martinez; Burlington: Saidah Hart; Camden: Shawn Harvey; Cape May: Tiffany Lively; Essex: Leah White; Gloucester: Ta'Neeka Weathers; Hudson: Ellen Glover; Mercer: Rhonda Williams; Middlesex: Kim Scott; Monmouth: Mary Scott; Morris: Lee Ann Brensinger; Passaic: Susan Butterfield; Somerset: Christa McLaughlin

Every effort is made to produce an accurate organizational directory. If you wish to correct an error, email Sara Ream at sream@njea.org.

NJEA COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS AND PRESIDENTS

The county education associations, affiliates of NJEA, coordinate activities in political action, training, bargaining and organizing with local associations, as well as social activities. They provide a vehicle for local associations to network within the county and coordinate activities with NJEA. The elected county association presidents serve on the policy-making NJEA Delegate Assembly.

ATLANTIC COUNTY COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ASSN.

Barbara Rheault, President

PO Box 156, Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215-0156, (609) 593-3293

GLOUCESTER COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Chrissy Kosar, President

190 North Evergreen Ave., Suite 108, Woodbury, NJ 08096-1050, (856) 853-6673

OCEAN COUNTY COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ASSN.

Susan R. Morgan, President

317 Brick Blvd., Ste. 230, Brick, NJ 08723-6031 (848) 241-5653

BERGEN COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Sue McBride, President

210 W. Englewood Ave., Teaneck, NJ 07666-3512, (201) 833-9166

HUDSON COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Marquisha Reynolds, President

1600 John F. Kennedy Blvd, Jersey City, NJ 07305-1749, (201) 451-0705

PASSAIC COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Susan S. Butterfield, President

401 Hamburg Turnpike, Ste. 209, Wayne, NJ 07470-2139, (973) 595-7232

BURLINGTON COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Anthony M. Rizzo, President

621 Beverly Rancocas Rd., East Ridge Plaza Suites 3A and B, Willingboro, NJ 08046-3727 (609) 871-2232

HUNTERDON COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Susan R. Vala, President

13 Bloomfield Ave., Flemington, NJ 08822-1172 (908) 284-1640

SALEM COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Jennifer Lehr, President

106 N. Broadway, Pennsville, NJ 08070-1617 (856) 678-4886

CAMDEN COUNTY COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ASSN.

April N. Brown, President

2 Sheppard Rd. #700, Sheppard Office Park, Voorhees, NJ 08043-4787, (856) 489-1267

MERCER COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Daniel Siegel, President

4 Princess Rd., Bldg. 200, Suites 213 & 214, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648-2201, (609) 882-9228

SOMERSET COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Daniel R. Epstein, President

1140 Rt. 22 East, Ste. 100, Bridgewater, NJ 08807-1218, (908) 393-9000

CAPE MAY COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Stacey Salerno, President

502 S. Railroad Ave., Rio Grande, NJ 08242, (609) 554-0100

MIDDLESEX COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Lois Yukna, President

622 Georges Road, Suites 301-302, North Brunswick, NJ 08902-5601, (732) 448-0004

SUSSEX COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Angela Deluccia, President

Po Box 40, Newton, NJ 07860 (973) 534-9763

CUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ASSN.

Nicole Carminati, President

Dandelion Plaza, 1672 N. Delsea Drive, Suite A-2, Vineland, NJ 08360, (856) 794-1221

MONMOUTH COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Denise J. W. King, President

3301 State Rt. 66, Ste. 103, Neptune, NJ 07753-2758, (732) 455-5055

UNION COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

James Frazier Jr., President

77 Central Ave., Suite 201, Clark, NJ 07066-1441 (732) 574-0033

ESSEX COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Christine Candarella, President

886 Pompton Ave., Suite B-2, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1257, (973) 736-5650

MORRIS COUNTY COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ASSN.

Kerri Lee Farrell, President

Plaza 447 Suite 12, Route Ten East, Randolph, NJ 07869, (973) 366-0202

WARREN COUNTY EDUCATION ASSN.

Erin Durkin, President

716 Rt. 57, Stewartsville, NJ 08886-1535 (973) 222-0754

NJEA STAFF

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

The Executive Office, the primary link between governance and staff, oversees implementation of policies adopted by the Delegate Assembly and acts as a resource on all governance matters. Under the Executive Director's supervision, the Executive Office is responsible for overall staff direction and management.

It supports the Delegate Assembly and the Executive Committee and maintains the official records of these two bodies. It conducts NJEA elections and county association elections, where appropriate. It provides staff support on issues related to the NJEA Constitution and Bylaws, organizational structure, the conduct of meetings and the NEA Convention, and offers assistance and training to affiliates. It also maintains liaison with the National Education Association and Education International and works with the NEA directors.

In addition, it coordinates the NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education, the Bolivar L. Graham NJEA Intern Foundation and the NJEA Ruthann Sheer Distinguished Service to Education Award.

NJEA Member Rights, which comes under the Executive Office, coordinates the NJEA Legal Services Program, directing and managing the NJEA Legal Services Network and the Attorney Referral Program.

The Office of Human and Civil Rights, Equity and Governance and existing Organizational Development division are also under the Executive Director's supervision.

Also under the Executive Director's supervision are business operations, which includes personnel, business management, information systems and purchasing/production. These functions cover all aspects of the Association's fiscal, facilities, equipment/technology, membership records and personnel needs.

The Human Resources Office deals with personnel functions, including affirmative action and employee benefits.

Executive Office: Kevin Kelleher, Executive Director; Denise Graff Policastro, Deputy Executive Director; Carrie Herbert, Executive Assistant; Conswalo (Sway) Gilbert, Confidential Assistant; Michael Ritzius, Associate Director; Janet Bush, Program Assistant

Governance: Sean M. Spiller, President; Steve Beatty, Vice President; Petal Robertson, Secretary-Treasurer; Nancy Lomakin, Tamika Elder, Shannon Pellegrino, Executive Assistants

Human and Civil Rights, Equity and Governance: Antonio Castanon Luna, Manager; DaQuan Bashir, Ed.D., Cindy Matute-Brown, Associate Directors;

Colleen Lopez, vacancy, Administrative Assistants

Human Resources: Matthew DiRado, Esq., Director; Annette Ilagan, Senior Human Resources Specialist; Dawn Goatley, Human Resources Specialist

Legal Services/Member Rights: Aileen O'Driscoll, Esq., Director; David Bander, Esq., Kaitlyn Dunphy, Esq., Katrina Homel, Esq., Associate Directors; Meghan Westbrook, Administrative Assistant; Sarah Santana, Program Assistant

Organizational Development: Jasaan Boone, Director of GR – Member & Political Organizing; Robert Antonelli, Eric Jones, Michael Rollins, Michael Saffran, John Staab, Organizing Field Reps; Verlencia Waring, Administrative Assistant; Linda Calehuff, Sabrina Moore, LaQuia Norment, Jennifer Roche, Davella Ward, Program Assistants; Andrew Lewis, Kimberly G. Mauroff, Charisse L. Parker, Kathleen L. Paterek, Hannah Pawlak, Consultants

BUSINESS

Under the Executive Director's supervision are business operations, which include business management, information systems and purchasing/production. These functions cover all aspects of the Association's fiscal, facilities, equipment/technology and membership records.

The business management function handled by the Accounting Office encompasses the organization's financial and bookkeeping, property and membership records activities. The staff trains local affiliates on organizational management and supports affiliates on dealing with affiliation standards, bonding, auditing, incorporation matters and filing of tax reports. Working with the Association's secretary-treasurer, the office handles NJEA's financial records, payroll, taxes, paying bills and auditing. Budgeting, investments, insurance, bonding and inventory of assets also are coordinated. The NJEA Membership Processing unit maintains up-to-date membership records and dues accounting.

The Information Systems unit meets data processing needs and oversees the computer network used by staff throughout the state.

The purchasing/production function includes coordinating purchase orders, event contracts, office supplies and equipment acquisition, duplicating and mailing (including shipping/receiving and storage of NJEA materials) and buildings and grounds operations and management (including parking, security, reception, telephone services, catering, maintenance and custodial services).

Accounting: Karen Kryven, Comptroller; Kristen Sherman, Manager; Cecilia Tromp, Administrative Assistant; Brenda Pabon-Guadarrama, Michael Caracci, Associate Directors; Monica Winch, Chief-Business Services – Deschela Davis, Shirley Jones,

Principal Clerk – Bookkeepers

Building and Grounds: John Cottone, Director; James Buckley, Chief, Buildings and Grounds; Artie Eischeid, Oscar Gee, Sandra Martin, Principal Facilities Assistants

Information Systems: John Cottone, Director; Anthony Leuzzi, Ryan Stouffer, Sam Pinizzotto, Associate Directors – Software App Development; Donald Miller, Senior Network Architect; Rich Driscoll, Richard Roche, Jorge Salgado, Associate Directors – Senior Systems Administrators; Michael Oldani, Computer Technician

Mailroom/Printshop: John Cottone, Director; Eric O'Donnell, Chief – Duplicating and Mailing; Ryan Eischeid, Stephen Feuerstein, Principal Offset Operators; Gloria Lugo, Principal Receptionist; Andrew Mathis, Zann Williams, Principal Clerks

Membership: Jaime Valente, Manager; Eda Ferrante, Brian Rock, Associate Directors; Murjani Howard, Chief Membership Specialist; Leslie Newman, Chief Roles and Records Specialist, Catherine Raffaele, Administrative Assistant; Tammi Antonelli, Charisse Huff, Karen Snyder, Jennifer Pierce, Brian Halbing, Principal Clerk-Bookkeepers

Purchasing/Production: Kristin Sherman, Manager; Melody Washington, Andrea Meshofski, Chief-Business Services – Purchasing.

COMMUNICATIONS

NJEA's Communications Division is responsible for all aspects of the Association's communication efforts, both internal and external.

The division uses all media and communications platforms to inform NJEA members, education policymakers, New Jersey residents and public opinion leaders about the Association's values and objectives, to highlight the successes of New Jersey's public schools and to promote the professional excellence of NJEA members. The division deals with news media outlets to accurately share and promote NJEA's positions and priorities.

NJEA's monthly all-member magazine, the *Review*, is produced within the division. NJEA's primary public website, njea.org, and several other custom websites are created and maintained by the division, along with NJEA's official social media properties. All other print and audiovisual materials—including brochures, flyers, posters, videos and online content, among others—are also produced by the division.

NJEA Communications also provides communications strategy and support to local and county affiliates. It helps those affiliates create and utilize internal and external communications structures, develop public relations plans and media strategies and carry out communications organizing activities.

The division also:

- Sets and maintains brand standards for NJEA-produced materials.
- Produces targeted membership publications, including the *NJREA Newsletter*.
- Handles administration, fundraising and promotion of the Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education.
- Manages NJEA's Pride in Public Education advertising campaigns, as well as other Pride-related partnerships and projects.

Division Administration: Steve Baker, Director; Lynne Nelson, Elizabeth DeBarr, Administrative Assistants

Graphic Design: Jennifer Cohn Marsh, Associate Director; Gregg Poserina, Lead Design Assistant; Jennifer Larson, Technical Design Assistant; Nora Lenahan, Typesetter

NJEA Review: Patrick Rumaker, Kathy Coulibaly, Associate Directors; Sara Ream, Secretary

Public Relations: Meredith Barnes, Christy Kanaby, Stephanie Natera, Matthew Stagliano, Angel Boose, Associate Directors; Rebecca Novak, Technical Data Assistant, Lisa Logan-Leach, Secretary

Digital/Visual Communications: Diane Barry, Associate Director

Video Production: Nello Ciccone, Associate Director; Christopher Curto, Technical Video Assistant

Communication Consultants: Kimberly Bevilacqua-Crane, Jennifer Clemen, Joseph Coleman, Mariann Kronyak, Rodney Lane, Ani McHugh, David Yastremski

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

NJEA Government Relations coordinates NJEA's legislative activities and political campaigns and is responsible for monitoring the functions of government departments, bureaus and agencies, except for the New Jersey Department of Education and State Board of Education, which are monitored by NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues.

It also is responsible for working with Association committees that study educational legislation and regulations, which recommend educational policy.

The legislative and political action activities include, but are not limited to, legislative analysis and reporting, testimony before legislative committees, coordination of all legislative and congressional lobbying, state and federal political action efforts and legislative/political action training for NJEA members.

Member and Political Organizing: Jasaun Boone, Director; Marybeth Beichert, Eloy Delgado, Anna Hanzes, Adam Sheridan, Associate Directors; Verlencia Waring, Administrative Assistant; Christina Alexander, Chardae Ingram, Secretaries; Christina Dare, James Frazier, Patricia Kebrdle, Erin Wheeler, Government Relations Consultants

Office of Politics and Policy: Deborah Cornavaca, Director; Michael Flynn, Michael Giglio, Francine Pfeffer, vacancy (2); Associate Directors; Mary Kemery, Administrative Assistant; Christie Procell, Brenda Julian, Secretary; Marianne Frisina, Temporary Secretary

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL ISSUES

NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues oversees the professional and instructional interest of the organization and its members.

The division focuses on a wide range of professional development and continuing education issues. It has worked extensively with the New Jersey Department of Education to promote a positive professional development focus. The NJEA Professional Development and Instructional Issues works with the teacher-led State Professional Teaching Standards Board, County Professional Development Boards, and Local Professional Development Committees, which oversee continuing education in the state.

The division coordinates major statewide instructional issue conferences and scores of specialized meetings. It plans and administers the NJEA Convention—the Association's premier professional development event—developing and coordinating professional programs and activities, as well as overseeing facilities arrangements, logistical services and exposition services.

It is responsible for the NJEA Professional Development Institute, which endorses and promotes high-quality professional development programs.

In addition, the division acts as a resource on a wide variety of instructional subjects and professional issues, extending from such topics as reading to gender equity and youth services.

Division staff assist members and local and county affiliates in the field on these issues as needed through the NJEA-NEA UniServ network.

Professional Development and Instructional Issues: Chrissi Miles, Ed.D., Director; Dawn Howlen, Camy Kobylinski, Vicki Serreino, Elisabeth Yucis, Associate Directors; Felicia Davis, Krista Orellana, Administrative Assistants; Tamanyka Booker, Secretary

PD Consultants: Mariah Besas, Eric Brenner, Katie Burke, Shan Byrd, Greg Jablonski, Brian Janik, Pamela Koharchik, Danielle Kovach, Brenda Martin-Lee, Deanne Martini, Michael Mason, Jennifer Passuth, Jason Pukel, Tiffanie ThrBak, Cheryl Willis

ACCESS: Amanda Adams, Associate Director; Kimeisha Boyd, Secretary

ACCESS Consultants: Katherine Clark, Angela Coxen, Dena Grushkin, Carrie Ann Floyd, Carolyn Schultz, Diane Stelacio, Danele Still, Dorjima Tchourumoff, Linda Thomas

NJEA Consortium: Kim Pinckney, Ph.D. Associate Director; Jamaya Newton, Secretary

Teacher Leader Academy: Rich Wilson, Associate Director; Carolyn Thompson, Administrative Assistant

TLA Consultants: Johanna Amaro, Jonathan Ayer, Christine Candarella, Michael Fletcher, Brenda Martin-Lee, Deanne Martini, Jennifer Passuth, Estefania Rios-Gomez, Deirdre Varga

RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC SERVICES

The NJEA Research and Economic Services Division gathers, organizes and presents information to support state and local association programs and activities.

The division provides analytical and statistical information for other NJEA divisions, including determination of fiscal impact of proposed legislation, evaluation of workshops and conferences, review of educational research, guidance on issues of member benefits and retirement and consultation on local fiscal operations impacting the bargaining process.

Research and Economic Services: Dan Holub, Director; Liz Rylak, Administrative Assistant

Library: Vacancy, Associate Director; G. Lorraine Jones, Administrative Assistant

Member Benefits: Beth Schroeder Buonsante, Associate Director; G. Lorraine Jones, Administrative Assistant

Negotiations Assistance: Leigh Davidson, Michael Kaminski, Michael Salerno, Peter Vala, Gregory Yordy, Associate Directors; Jackie Candy, Michelle Randazzo, La Tonya Reid, Secretaries

Pension and Benefits: Bob Bobik, Sarah Favinger, Thomas Predale, Michael Salerno, Associate Directors; Roxie Muhsin, Secretary; Felicia Tard, Principal Clerk

Statistics and School Funding: Dan Goldman, Crystal Inman, Associate Directors

Pension Consultants: Ryan Cohen, Barbara English, Ann Marie Finnen, Rocio Lopez, Dr. Erland Nordstrom, Kathleen Parker, Laura Rivera, Joanne Sanferraro, Gary Wikander, Kathleen Wollert

UNISERV REGIONAL OFFICES

The NJEA-NEA UniServ Network provides extensive field services to members and local and county affiliates throughout the state.

Operating on a coordinated, statewide basis, the UniServ field representatives and office staff members work out of 16 regional offices to supply door-to-door service to members.

Four regional directors coordinate the UniServ network of regional offices and are assisted by four administrative assistants.

The 63 professional and 36 associate UniServ staff members are assisted by 100 part-time UniServ consultants.

The NJEA-NEA UniServ field representatives train local leaders and assist in coordination of state-national resources, including professional development, instructional improvement and human relations; negotiations service; contract administration and grievance adjudication; legal services; local member consultation and individual service; public relations and communications; legislative and political activity; leadership development skills; organizational management and membership promotion; inclusive-locals training, organizing assistance and goal development.

UNISERV SOUTH (REGIONS 1-3)

15000 Commerce Parkway, Ste. A,
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054-2212
(856) 234-0522

Patrick Manahan, Regional Director
Beth Georgette, Administrative Assistant
Kathleen Quinn, Field Organizing Specialist

REGION 1

Atlantic and Cape May Counties

436 Chris Gaupp Drive, Ste.201,
Galloway, NJ 08205-4464; (609) 652-9200

UniServ reps: Crysty Jenkins, Mario Montanero,
Stephanie Tarr

Office staff: Nina Garrett, Administrative
Assistant; Andrea Whilden, Secretary

Consultants: Anthony Angelozzi, Franklin
Butterick, Jean Hovey, Curt Nath, Stacey Salerno,
Lateefah Scott

REGION 2

Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties

Tomlinson Prof. Bldg., Ste. F, 7 Myers Drive,
Mullica Hill, NJ 08062-9512; (856) 628-8650

UniServ Reps: Desiree Brennan, Fatimah Hayes,
Louis Randazzo, Jessica Vasquez-Denney

Office Staff: Donna Pacetta, Administrative
Assistant; Elizabeth Parker, Secretary

Consultants: Sandra Beals, Alison Braun, Anthony

Cappello, Diana Castiglione, Stephen Garavento,
Mildred Johnson, Carmen Porter, Stephanie
Wheaton, Michael Wichart

REGION 3

Burlington and Camden counties

15000 Commerce Parkway, Ste. A.,
Mt Laurel, NJ 08054-2212; (856) 234-2485

UniServ Reps: Jim Boice, Jessica Cook, Ryan
McCarty, Angela McDermott, Caroline Tantum,
Harry Zakarian

Office Staff: Linda Sacks, Administrative Assistant;
Kristen Hunt, Secretary

Consultants: Deborah Bruhn, Joseph Coleman,
Marliese Filbert, Catherine MacManiman, Judith
Meyer, Janelle Mungro, Steve Redfearn, Ryan
Strothers, Lisa Tripani, Stacey Williams

UNISERV CENTRAL (REGIONS 7-11 AND 29)

Raritan Plaza II, 91 Fieldcrest Ave., Ste. A3,
Edison, NJ 08837-3627; (732) 287-6899

Jennifer Raike, Regional Director
Diane Gourley, Administrative Assistant
William Junker, Field Organizing Specialist

REGION 7

Ocean County

Bayview Corporate Center, 1433 Hooper Avenue,
Ste. 225, Toms River, NJ 08753-2200
(732) 349-0280

UniServ Reps: Mike Mannion, Wendy Sistarenik,
vacancy

Office Staff: Lily Tremari, Administrative Assistant;
Robin DeNoia, Secretary

Consultants: Michael Fletcher, Kimberlee Shaw,
Daniel Staples, Nicole Del Popolo, vacancy

REGION 8

Mercer County

172 W. State St., Trenton, NJ 08608-1104
(609) 896-3422

UniServ Reps: Alexander DeVicaris, Jennifer
Larsen, Susan Nardi

Office Staff: Gale Quinn, Administrative Assistant;
Dawn Vitella, Secretary

Consultants: Michele D'Angelo, Talitheia Duncan,
Jason Pukel, vacancy

REGION 9

Monmouth County

1345 Campus Parkway, Ste. A1, Wall Twp., NJ
07753-6828; (732) 403-8000

UniServ Reps: Christopher Johnson, Naomi
Johnson-Lafleur, Lorraine Tesaro, Tracie Yostpille

Office Staff: Ileana Rivera, Administrative
Assistant; Anne Elluzzi, Secretary

Consultants: Doug Dale, Denise King, Diane
Vistein, Erin Wheeler, Meghan Santonacita

REGION 11

Middlesex County

Raritan Plaza II, 91 Fieldcrest Ave., Ste. A3, Edison,
NJ 08837-3627; (732) 287-4700

UniServ Reps: Thomas Bohnyak, Brian Furry,
Nancy Grbelja, Thomas Hayden

Office Staff: Bianca Rey, Administrative Assistant;
Essence Gordon, Secretary

Consultants: Christopher Hines, Brian Geoffroy,
Keith Presty, Timothy Simonitis

REGION 29

Higher Education

180 W. State St., PO Box 1211, Trenton, NJ
08607-0211; (609) 689-9580

UniServ Reps: Marcia Kleinz, Maurice Koffman
Office Staff: Karen "Skip" Perry, Administrative
Assistant; Marissa Mayor, Office Assistant

Consultants: Edward Carmien, Nicholas DiCicco,
Mingyon McCall, Oron Nahom

UNISERV NORTHEAST (REGIONS 15, 19-25)

70 S. Orange Ave., Ste. 260, Livingston, NJ
07039-4919; (973) 321-3221

Thomas Hardy, Regional Director

Melissa Kirz, Administrative Assistant

Kimberly Scott Hayden, Field Organizing
Specialist

REGION 15

Union County

25 Commerce Drive, Ste. 380, Cranford, NJ
07016-2464; (908) 709-9440

UniServ Reps: Dominick Giordano, Allyson
Pontier, Maryanne Rodriguez, Theodore
Tympanick

Office Staff: Tabatha Walton, Administrative
Assistant; Jeanette Rodriguez, Secretary

Consultants: Kevin Bloom, Laura Morgan, Glen
Robertson, Gene Woods

REGION 19

Essex and Hudson counties

6600 Kennedy Blvd. East, Ste. 1L, West New York,
NJ 07093-4218; (201) 861-1266

UniServ Reps: Tom DeSocio, Edward Stevens
Office Staff: Kristy Pessoa, Administrative
Assistant; Jesenia Vasquez, Secretary

Consultants: Emily Litman, Beverley Senior,
Shareen Shibli

REGION 20

Hudson County

1600 John Kennedy Blvd., Ste. B, Jersey City, NJ
07305-1702; (201) 653-6634

UniServ Reps: Daniel Suarez, vacancy

Office Staff: Veronica Pereira, Administrative Assistant; Jesenia Vasquez, Secretary

Consultants: Emily Litman, Beverley Senior, Shareen Shibli

REGION 21

Essex County

70 S. Orange Avenue, Ste. 250, Livingston, NJ
07039-4903; (973) 762-6866

UniServ Reps: Luis Delgado, Adrian Rodriguez, vacancies (2)

Office Staff: Shaun Walker, Administrative Assistant; Carmen Torres-Izquierdo, Secretary

Consultants: Patricia Kebrdle, Cathy Kondreck, Thomas Manos, Chantal Rivers-Jasey, Jeremias Salinas, Christopher Tamburro

REGION 25

Bergen County

Heights Plaza, 777 Terrace Ave., Ste. 404,
Hasbrouck Heights, NJ 07604-3114;
(201) 292-8093

UniServ Reps: Carol Feinstein, RoseLouise Holz, George Lambert, Richard Loccke, Joe Tondi, James McGuire,

Office Staff: Dawn Valentine, Administrative Assistant; Laura Pometti, Secretary

Consultants: Michael DeOrio, Kelly Epstein, Laura Grasso, Marianne Kronyak, Cynthia Meier Lota, Dayna Orlak, Christina Ventre, Michael Warren

UNISERV NORTHWEST (REGIONS 13, 17, 27)

23 Rt. 206, Stanhope, NJ 07874-3264;
(973) 347-0911

Mayrose Wegmann, Regional Director
Brenda Champion, Administrative Assistant
Lakresha Harris-Hodge, Field Organizing Specialist

REGION 13

Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren counties

6 Route 173, Suite 201, Clinton, NJ 08809;
(908) 782-2168

UniServ Reps: Greg Babbitt, Ryan Edwish, Douglas Finkel, Donna Reaver, Fred Skirbst

Office Staff: Cheryl Woj, Administrative Assistant; Damary Galletto, Secretary

Consultants: Rebecca Bell, Stephen Halldorson, Christopher James, Cheryl Mitchell, Charisse Parker, Theresa Snyder

REGION 17

Morris and Sussex counties

601 Jefferson Road, Ste. 105, Parsippany, NJ
07054-3790; (973) 515-0101

UniServ Reps: LeShaun Arrington, Antoinette Blaustein, Hendrik John Klein, Vickie Walsh

Office Staff: Heather Marsh, Administrative Assistant; Chanae Phifer, Secretary

Consultants: Eugene Behme III, Christopher Cannella, Nicole Denton, Deirdre Falk, Lyn Lowndes, Louis Migliacci Jr., Patricia Resslerand, Nancy Richeda, Susan Sawey

REGION 27

Passaic County

Preakness Valley Office Park, 504 Valley Road, Ste. 150, Wayne, NJ 07470-3534; (973) 694-0154

UniServ Reps: Ron Bivona, Lori Cintron, Melanie Lemme, Sasha Wolf

Office Staff: Kathryn Maron, Administrative Assistant; Anne Chirico, Secretary

Consultants: Marc Foti, Larry Hurtado, Megan King, Kleo Papadatos, Brian Watson, Lisa Veit, Pamela Wilczynski



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There's no place for violence in our schools

By Dorothy Wigmore

Many forms of violence in New Jersey schools—and elsewhere—seem to be getting worse.

Reported bullying, bias and hate speech numbers are climbing in the state, especially affecting students from marginalized communities. New types of violence are being reported. Two recent Canadian studies warn that low-level anti-social classroom behavior, or incivility, increased since the pandemic started and found it can lead to bullying.

At violence workshops, teachers now talk about broken jaws and ask when to call the police, says Cecelia Leto, New Jersey Work Environment Council's project director.

"They're not getting the support they need," Leto says.

Educators are worried about being blamed for "attacking" students when it's the other way around and thinking about the need for witnesses and documenting incidents.

What's violence?

The International Labor Organization, an agency of the U.N., defines violence and harassment as, "a range of unacceptable behaviors and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment."

The World Health Organization's definition is broad, while the others focus on physical assaults or ignore gender. New Jersey's laws and guidance don't recognize power differentials, despite the state's Anti-Bullying Task Force's repeated recommendations that the concept be added to anti-bullying rules.

The state health and safety law does not mention of any type of violence, unlike its federal counterpart, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The latter's website still defines violence broadly, recognizing it is a spectrum from verbal abuse to physical assaults and, sometimes, death.

State law does say "aggravated assault" includes someone physically attacking or threatening to physically attack teachers, school bus drivers and other school staff and board members.

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 fix job-related hazards. She has advocated for violence prevention laws since the late 1980s.

What legal tools deal with school-related violence?

Without a specific law, state PEOSH enforcement staff must use the "general duty" clause requiring employers protect workers' health and safety. Federal OSHA has guidance and procedures for inspections and citations, and enforcement letters of interpretation they should use.

The latest relevant New Jersey law (N.J.S.A. 18A:17-43.4), passed in 2022, tackles violence through the Department of Education. Under the department's Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning, the security focus now requires district or school-based "threat assessment teams."

The department also oversees the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (ABR)—last amended in 2022. It applies only to students, unless staff are accused of harassment, intimidation or bullying (HIB) of students. A detailed HIB definition covers written or electronic communications and verbal or physical acts. Five regulations provide more details. The Education Law Center, has a guide for those using this law, including details about how it has been applied.

The Public School Safety Law requires the commissioner to submit annually a Student Safety and Discipline report to the Legislature. Part of the Student Safety Data System run by the Department of Education, it includes the department's response to the analysis and future objectives. It also is supposed to reflect the department's initiatives to help schools implement "Social Emotional Learning competencies, positive approaches to discipline, and improving school climate and culture."

The latest annual report shows 2021-22 school year HIB incidents were the highest levels recorded since counting began in 2017. The Anti-Bullying Task Force's December 2023 report described the 7,672 confirmed and 19,138 reported incidents as "staggering."

What about "threat assessment teams?"

Districts now must establish and train multidisciplinary "threat assessment teams" to identify and assess students demonstrating "concerning communications or behavior." (Profiling students is not allowed.) The goal is to help identify students with "concerning behaviors," assess the risk they will do something harmful and deliver strategies to manage the possible harm.

"That came about as a result of students calling in bomb threats, coming to school with weapons, swapping out guns for drugs in school bathrooms, that type of activity," says Aileen O'Driscoll, director of NJEA's Legal Services and Member Rights.



“Based on some of the legal cases we’re seeing in our own ranks, [these issues are] a relatively new phenomenon.”

The causes often are structural. The state’s teacher shortage, the “real lack of special education teachers in the ranks” and proper support for students who need it, likely contribute, O’Driscoll says. “The mental and emotional health consequences of the pandemic are greater than anybody probably realizes for these kids, and adults too.”

“It’s still so new, there’s not a lot of case law about it,” explains Katrina Homel, an associate director in Legal Services and Member Rights.

She has started doing workshops about the new law and what it means for NJEA members. At the same time, she and O’Driscoll are reaching out to the state bar association and others who need to know about the new law.

“We’re also gathering, and hearing more and more about, our members’ typical experiences in the classroom, around the physicality of students and the difficulty in getting the proper supports that the students and teachers need,” O’Driscoll says.

At the same time, they plan to collaborate with, and learn from, other National Education Association affiliates, such as California and Minnesota, to investigate what works and what doesn’t.

What can health and safety committees do?

New Jersey provides rules and guidance about school-related violence without always recognizing it’s a health and safety hazard and PEOSH’s enforcement role. That can make it difficult for health and safety committees and local associations to take a prevention focus, especially if incidents aren’t recorded on the injury and illness logs employers must keep, commonly called as “300 logs.”

Studies also show that supportive school culture, restorative justice and nonviolent communication—longer-term efforts—are more effective than security-focused responses.

The New Jersey School Climate Improvement Strategy Resource (see sidebar) cites studies about the successes and usefulness of the restorative justice framework in schools. Implementing it “requires a cultural shift away from punitive, zero-tolerance policies to more holistic, communal forms of understanding and assigning consequences.”

Committees should:

- Get training about violence prevention with a systems of safety focus (e.g., from New Jersey Work Environment Council).
- Survey and meet with members to get details about their experiences and concerns.
- Get a handle on all the district players involved around violence, including the new teams, trying to coordinate with them about reporting, training and prevention with a health and safety focus.
- Encourage and support members filing SSDS incident reports and insist they also go on the district’s “300 log.”
- Regularly review the log and other reports, looking for patterns and to determine what follow-up is needed, and by whom.
- Learn about, promote and use restorative justice policies and practices.
- File PEOSH and police complaints, when appropriate, with help from the local association and UniServ reps.

Resources

Education Law Center
edlawcenter.org

New Jersey Department of Education
New Jersey Anti-Bullying Task Force
 2023 report
bit.ly/nj-abtf

School Preparedness and Emergency Planning resources, including guidelines for “Behavioral Threat Assessment” Teams:
nj.gov/education/security

Student Safety Data System (including incident report forms):
homeroom4.doe.state.nj.us/ssds

NJEA
 NJEA Review
 “Violence is Much More Than Guns”
njea.org/job-violence

“Let’s Not Fear Having Courageous Conversations”
njea.org/sitting-circle

New Jersey School Climate Improvement Platform
njschoolclimate.org

OSHA
 “Workplace violence”
osha.gov/workplace-violence

PEOSH
 “Recording and Reporting Occupational Injuries and Illness Standard”
bit.ly/peosh-29cfr

AID-NJEA
 AID-NJEA is a free, confidential 24-hour telephone helpline for school staff members and their families. The helpline is staffed by active and retired educators and school counselors who are trained to counsel and support their colleagues. The program provides telephone support, information and resources for school employees experiencing some distress in their work or personal lives.

Call 866-AID-NJEA (866-243-6532) or email AID-NJEA@ubhc.rutgers.edu.



KNOWING WHAT TO DO UPON THE PASSING OF A FAMILY MEMBER

The death of a loved one is a traumatic event. Dealing with your own feelings, as well as those of the family, in addition to making all the necessary arrangements, can result in overlooked details and additional confusion.

It's helpful to plan ahead so that family members know what to do and are not left trying to figure things out in the midst of grieving.

Contacting the NJ Division of Pensions and Benefits

The New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits provides guidance to assist family members when a loved one passes who was vested in a New Jersey public pension. The following is excerpted New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits Fact Sheet No. 10, which can be downloaded at bit.ly/njpb-fs10.

The member's family or survivors should notify the Division of Pensions and Benefits at 609-292-7524 and provide the following information:

- The full name of the deceased person.
- The decedent's Social Security, pension membership, or retirement number.
- Date of death.
- The name, mailing address, and telephone number of the person handling the decedent's affairs.

Once a member's death is reported, the division reviews the member's account to determine what benefits, if any, are due. The division informs the named beneficiary or beneficiaries by letter of the benefits payable and sends the necessary claim forms.

The processing time for paying a claim depends upon when the Division of Pensions and Benefits receives the following items from the beneficiary:

- A certified death certificate; a photocopy is not acceptable.
- All claim forms, properly completed.
- Any payments sent to a deceased retiree (any monies due will be reissued to the beneficiaries or the estate).

Additional advice

In addition to notifying the New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits, NJREA and NJEA have created some general suggestions and should be adapted to your situation through family conversations and conferences with legal and/or financial advisors.

- Locate the family's important papers.
- Request several copies of the death certificate (there may be a fee). You will probably find that those who request a death certificate require an original.
- If a spouse/member was actively employed, or on a leave of absence and had not filed an application for retirement, contact the board of education where the decedent had been employed. The board will process the Division of Pensions and Benefits paperwork for life insurance benefits and for the return of pension contributions.
- If a spouse/member applied for retirement and their death occurred prior to the date of retirement, contact the New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits at 609-292-7524. The division will contact the beneficiaries named in the application for retirement to either select the retired or active death benefit.
- If a deceased member was retired and covered by the School Employee Health Benefits Program (SEHBP), the surviving spouse/domestic partner should request a retired change of status application, if they wish to continue coverage under the SEHBP.
- If the deceased was enrolled in Medicare Part B, notify Social Security.
- If the deceased had an NEA Group Life Insurance plan or NEA Dues Tab Insurance, contact that office at 800-637-4636.
- If death was due to an accident, and/or covered under the NJEA-endorsed Disability Insurance Program, contact Prudential at 800-727-3414.
- If the spouse/member was ever in the military service, notify the Veterans' Administration. There may be death benefits.

This is certainly not exhaustive list. Families should consult with an attorney and/or tax professional.

Around the counties 2024-2025

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.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY REA

March 12: Winter luncheon meeting at Millville Motorsports Park. To attend, call Pam Garwood at 856-392-6909.

ESSEX COUNTY REA

Feb. 12: Winter virtual meeting. The registration link for this 10:30 a.m. meeting will be emailed via Constant Contact. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. If you do not receive your registration link by Feb. 5, email Deborah Thurmond at dmyersthurmond@gmail.com. Please do not share the Zoom meeting link.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY REA

March 6: Spring luncheon meeting at The Grand Marquis. There will be an NJEA Member Benefits Fair. Reservation deadline is Feb. 27, and the cost is \$45. To attend, call Susan Jaysnovitch at 732-925-1606.

MONMOUTH COUNTY REA

April 8: Spring luncheon meeting at Jumping Brook Country Club. There will be an NJEA Member Benefits Fair. Reservation deadline is March 29, and the cost is \$45. To attend, call Debbie Adamchak at 848-459-2672.

MORRIS COUNTY REA

March 12: General luncheon meeting at Birchwood Manor. Reservation deadline is March 1, and the cost is \$35 for members and \$55 for guests. To attend, call John Williams at 609-504-9681.

OCEAN COUNTY REA

March 13: Spring luncheon meeting at Clarion Hotel and Conference Center. Reservation deadline is Feb. 27, and the cost is \$32. To attend, call Pam Raynor at 862-268-5210.

PASSAIC COUNTY REA

March 19: Spring luncheon meeting at The Brownstone in Paterson. The meeting is for members only. To attend, call Karen Monaco at 201-201-317-6869.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2024 NJEA CONVENTION

NJAEA'S PERSPECTIVE



NJEA President Sean M. Spiller greets NJAEA officers at the NJEA Convention. From left: NJAEA Secretary Chelsea Berwick, NJAEA President Bianca Nicolescu, Spiller, and NJAEA Vice President and NEA Director Matthew Yuro.

By Matthew Yuro

The New Jersey Aspiring Educators Association (NJAEA) had a wonderful time at the 2024 NJEA Convention, held in Atlantic City on Nov. 7 and 8. Together, aspiring educators learned new skills to add to their toolkits through professional development opportunities and over 200 workshops to choose from.

In addition, NJAEA showcased our brand-new logo and name by hosting a social media contest, where aspiring educator members entered to win a lime green Stanley cup by following our Instagram account and tagging us in any story posts. Kean Ocean President Kylie Smith won.

NJAEA also held its first unofficial business meeting at the 2024 NJEA Convention. NJAEA President Bianca Nicolescu, Vice President Matthew Yuro, and Secretary Chelsea Berwick presented updates on the NJAEA program, as well as some upcoming events to look forward to in the spring semester. We highlighted local chapter accomplishments, the Aspiring Ed PodSquad Podcast and hyped up the upcoming NJAEA Conference, happening on Saturday, April 5, 2025. 📍

Matthew Yuro is the vice president of NJAEA and an NEA Director representing aspiring educators nationally on the NEA Board of Directors.

Why aspiring educators attend the convention

This year, over 100 aspiring educators from across the state attended the 2024 NJEA Convention. Below are some testimonials from the aspiring educator point of view on their experience at the convention.

"Going to the NJEA Convention showed me how many facets go into shaping New Jersey public schools. Along with centering on current and upcoming teachers, I discovered that NJEA also represents school psychologists, support staff (ESPs), retirees and more."

- Catherine Gonzalez, SNJEA at TCNJ Secretary

"Convention was a day full of new insights. I learned how to incorporate new technologies and ideas into the classroom and how they can support us as teachers and our students. In an evolving world, the classroom will evolve as well. I left Convention this year with many considerations and new ideas for my future classroom."

- Cara Grabowski, SNJEA at TCNJ Social Media Chair

"My experience at NJEA Convention was great because I was able to go to different workshops and learn about classroom management techniques before getting into the classroom. I also got to go to various booths and hear what great things are being done for our schools in regard to social-emotional learning, which is crucial!"

- Kylie Smith, KOEA President

"By attending the NJEA Convention, I was able to network with other educators in the profession, as well as continue to grow my passion of learning as a future educator. Hearing from the inspirational keynote speakers this year was a huge highlight on my convention experience."

- Matthew Yuro, SNJEA at TCNJ President

"My favorite part of the 2024 NJEA Convention was having the opportunity to meet members through interviews on the Aspiring Ed PodSquad Podcast. The stories of their journey to becoming an educator and the impact that they have on students were all energizing, motivating and inspiring!"

- Chelsea Berwick, SNJEA at TCNJ Vice President

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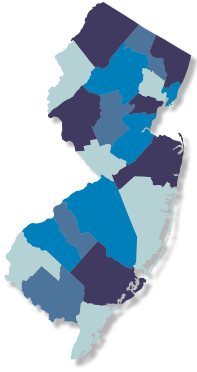
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SUSSEX TO CAPE MAY

Workshops and conferences

highlights

Language, gifted
education and civics

SHOWCASE

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

2025 NJTESOL/NJBE SPRING CONFERENCE Intersectionality: Shaping Experiences & Creating Opportunities

The 2025 conference of the New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/New Jersey Bilingual Educators (NJTESOL/NJBE) will have two components: an in-person conference and a video library conference.

In-person conference

The In-Person Conference will take place at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in New Brunswick on May 20-22. You can register for one, two or all three days. The conference will feature three keynote speakers: Alisha De Lorenzo, Dr. Patriann Smith, and Missy Testerman (2024 National Teacher of the Year).

In addition, you'll select from many presentations approved for the continuing education requirement, network with your colleagues and obtain the latest information on state and national initiatives. You can also meet with representatives at the sponsors' and exhibitors' booths to find the latest and greatest teaching tools. You can earn professional development hours throughout the day.

Video library conference

The Video Library Conference is a select collection of library presentations you will have access to view starting on May 27 using the conference platform. There is no set schedule, and you will be able to view the workshops from May 27 to August 21. By using your unique login, your hours will be tracked so that you can earn professional development hours through August 21. Please note that the select collection of presentations will not include the keynotes or special invited guest speakers.

Topics

Presentation topics will include General Interest, Content Area Instruction, Bilingual/ESL Preschool

through Grade 12, Higher Ed, Teacher Education, Adult Education, K-12 Administrators and Dual Language/Biliteracy.

Registration and more information

Register early for a discounted rate. Registration includes one free year of membership.

Visit njtesol-njbe.org/spring-conference/ for more information and to register.

For other conference questions email Caia Schlessinger, Conference Coordinator, at conference-coordinator@njtesol-njbe.org.

RENAISSANCE IN GIFTED EDUCATION A Festival of Creativity and Innovation

Join the New Jersey Association for Gifted Children (NJAGC) for its annual conference on April 11 at The Palace at Somerset, 333 Davidson Ave., in Somerset.

Explore sessions that celebrate the spirit of the Renaissance, emphasizing the power of creativity, hands-on learning and curiosity-driven discovery. Gain practical strategies to transform your approach to gifted education and learn how to foster environments where imagination and innovation thrive.

Connect with educators, parents and advocates who are passionate about revitalizing gifted education. Share ideas, discover new resources and leave with a renewed commitment to elevate the learning experience for every gifted child.

The fee for members is \$239 and \$299 for nonmembers. If you join NJAGC while you register, the rate is \$289.

For more details and registration, visit njagc.org.

More to learn

NJCSS OFFERS CIVICS WORKSHOPS

The New Jersey Council for the Social Studies is offering a series of workshop centered on civics. All the workshops are free. They will all be held at Rutgers University's Busch Campus Center in Piscataway, 8:30 a.m.-3p.m., coffee and lunch are included.

Five professional development hours are awarded for each session. Materials are provided. For workshop descriptions, more information and to register, visit civiced.rutgers.edu/events.

March 11: Teaching Civics in Elementary Grades

March 18: Project Citizen workshop for grades 3-12

April 2: We the People Workshop for Middle and High School Teachers

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Human and Civil Rights,
Equity, and Governance



A column by and for HIGHER EDUCATION MEMBERS

By Ed Carmien

Welcome to the higher education page here in your *NJEA Review*! This space is for all things higher ed. Our state's 18 community colleges currently host over 108,000 students who come to us from New Jersey high schools, as well as other states and even from around the world! They seek a degree, a certification, a leg up for transfer or just a chance to widen their horizons. As open-enrollment institutions we take everyone, in credit and noncredit courses, with thousands of options waiting to be tapped.

While most NJEA members work in our state's elementary, middle and high schools—making the state's schools some of the highest rated in the nation—many higher education faculty and staff are also represented by NJEA. This page will host monthly news and opinion, and information of particular note for higher ed folks, but also of interest to those who stock the pipeline with students who end up in the classrooms of our state's community colleges.

To help cast a wide net for material, NJEA has created a webpage just for higher ed content. At njea.org/highered, you'll find a link there where you can drop your comments, ideas, thoughts, speculations about what you wish to see in this column. We can't promise to turn every tip, concept or creative impulse into material for the *Review*, but we do promise to give everything a look.

While I volunteered to coordinate this column, I didn't volunteer to write something every month. My role is to act as a sort of acquisitions editor, to cultivate voices from around the state, to help bring the expertise of others to light here on this monthly page. Encouraging others to pass on their thoughts to you, our readers, represents my main job.

For example, our 18 New Jersey community colleges include nationally recognized sports teams, journalism

At njea.org/highered, you'll find a link there where you can drop your comments, ideas, thoughts, speculations about what you wish to see in this column.

programs and other standout elements. We might not be able to highlight every remarkable community college program in the state, but we can try!

I think it is important to reach outside of our union as well, to experts and thinkers in areas relevant to us in higher education. For example, I plan to invite words from our advocates and from the New Jersey Council of Community Colleges. I hope to hear from admissions people at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey about transferring to their doors from our houses of learning. Maybe the folks at Rowan University have a different take on transfers. I know Princeton University accepts transfer students from MCCC, my institution—maybe the Ivy League has yet another view.

We might have room to recognize truly amazing individual accomplishments, as the *Review* did several years ago by profiling a 52-year long career teaching math carried out by strong unionist Art Schwartz. Careers that long, lived by individuals committed to the union way, don't come along every day, every month or every year, but it can't hurt to pass along news of outstanding individuals you're aware of. We can't promise to find room to honor every remarkable higher ed member, but we'd still like to hear about everyone who stands out, for whatever accomplishment.

We hope you carry on reading and start to contribute things for us to read about. Find the link to share your ideas at njea.org/highered or send an email to HigherEd@njea.org with your ideas and possibilities. Because that's our main business, over here on the higher ed side of the union—possibilities.

Ed Carmien is a professor of English at Mercer County Community College (MCCC), and an NJEA consultant the Region 29 UniServ office, which serves the association's higher education members.

TRANSFORM CONFERENCE



Empowering Education Ecosystems: **TRANSFORM for Tomorrow**

Featuring a keynote by **Malcolm Jenkins**, a former NFL Player and entrepreneur, media personality, executive producer, writer, racial justice advocate and philanthropist.

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LMC helps Educational Assistants of Cherry Hill find a collective voice 2024 Camden County ESP of the Year shares her perspective

With Kimberly Crane

Rose Casey is the president of the Educational Assistants of Cherry Hill (EACH) and the 2024 Camden County ESP of the Year. With Cherry Hill Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Kwame Morton, the district and local association are actively engaged in labor-management collaboration.

How did EACH begin the LMC journey?

The district started a year prior to EACH getting involved. When Dr. Morton became the interim superintendent, one of the first things he did was come looking for me and say, "I want you to be a part of this." Knowing that I represent 300 people in 19 buildings meant a lot. That's basically how we got started. It was a year this past September that we began.

What were some of the first conversations like?

For the first few district meetings, I sat on the steering committee and observed. Working with other ESPs in the county drove home the point that ESPs are often set aside from other staff. Our concerns are often not heard. When something came up in the meeting, I would say, "Well how about the educational assistants? That affects us too." The group didn't realize that so many issues include us.

It started with making sure that my members' voices were heard. Now, a year later, there is an educational assistant on every building's LMC team.

How are the opportunities created by the LMC being taken advantage of by members?

Mike Ritzius came in to give an overview of what

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.

For information on the New Jersey Labor Management Collaborative, email Mike Ritzius, NJEA liaison to the New Jersey LMC, at mike@LMCpartnerships.org.

I encourage ESPs across the state to participate in LMC work.

LMC work looks like and what to expect. Each school building is run differently, but little by little members are getting the hang of it. We held an overnighter for educational support staff, certificated staff and principals where we worked out some differences between buildings. It was a big step for our members.

Also, our school calendar was reduced to 180 days for students but EACH members work 182 days. By working it out through the LMC we now get two professional development days and won't lose any pay.

Do you feel that there is more trust in the process now?

Yes. The main conversation at the overnight was about planning a wellness day for the last day of school. Teachers leave later in the year than educational assistants. It was suggested that we could come back and join the teachers. I said we weren't going to do a separate day. It was a hard conversation, but I think the members that were there now believe that they have a voice. They have a better understanding of how things are going now that they are organized.

What plans does EACH have to expand LMC work?

I'm planning to bring the members and reps at the building level together so everyone has a good understanding of the LMC process. We'd like to have Mike host another meeting to talk about trending issues. I would also like to encourage other ESPs across the state to participate in LMC work. I think it's very important to have a network that understands what you are going through. They can reach out to me if they feel I can help in anyway. (Casey can be reached at rosericcardo@yahoo.com.)

NEW JERSEY'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS OFFER A HOW-TO FOR CONGRESS

By Amy Moran, Ph. D. with Maika Schulman



Sarah McBride during her campaign for Congress. Photo: sarahmcbride.com

Good news! Delaware elected our country's first (known) transgender person to Congress, 34-year-old Rep. Sarah McBride (D). McBride's platform supports expanding access to health care, advocating for workers' rights, strengthening unions and bringing down costs. However, at orientation this past November, she was greeted with vitriolic hostility by fellow representatives Nancy Mace and Marjorie Taylor Greene who immediately, repeatedly and nonsensically demanded she not be permitted to use the women's bathroom.

At Rainbow Connection, we applaud McBride and her people-first agenda, but we also think that members of Congress could learn from New Jersey public schools' policies and practices, including those at right.

Amy Moran, Ph.D. is an out queer educator, leader and activist working to make education affirming and inclusive for all of their students and colleagues. Moran has taught middle school for 30 years and was a high school GSA adviser for 16 years.

Maika Schulman is a math teacher at Dwight Morrow High School in Englewood.

New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (NJLAD)

NJLAD has protected people in spaces of public accommodation since 1947. It was revised in 1991 to include sexual orientation protections, and again in 2006, to include gender identity and expression, including the right to access any sex-segregated facilities, such as restrooms or locker rooms. No adverse effects have been reported for cisgender students or teachers in these last 18 years.

Harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) prevention

If they tried their antics in our schools, the harassment, intimidation and bullying from Mace and Taylor Greene would be investigated and found to be harmful to McBride and to their collective ability to work on behalf of the American people.

Social-emotional learning

SEL Competencies, such as self-management, social awareness and relationship skills, would allow all members

of Congress to focus on the social and economic needs of the people they represent, as they were elected to do.

While we watch the charade by Mace and Taylor Greene play out on the national stage against McBride—shamefully emboldening other cisgender people to espouse antagonistic attitudes and outward hostility toward transgender people—it's important that we examine the unsubstantiated anti-trans myths these elected officials are perpetuating:

- The overwhelming majority of sex offenders are cisgender men (93%+), not transgender women.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one risk factor for committing sexual assault is hyper-masculinity, something decidedly *uncharacteristic* of trans women.
- A review of sexual assault complaints in places of public accommodation by a nonpartisan police research organization found *no* evidence of cisgender men dressing up as women or transgender and entering women's bathrooms to commit sexual assaults there.

But how about in schools?

- Where students were prevented from using bathrooms that matched their gender identity (unlike in New Jersey), transgender girls were 149% more likely to be sexually assaulted by cisgender

boys in the boys' bathroom that they were forced to use.

- 36% of transgender or gender-nonbinary students, ages 13-17, with restricted bathroom or locker room access, reported being sexually assaulted in the last 12 months.

What we know is that sexual assaults in bathrooms are happening to trans women and trans girls, not by trans women and trans girls.

So what's with the artificial outrage by McBride's Republican colleagues? As McBride attests, "Every bit of time and energy that is used to divert the attention of the federal government to go after trans people is time and energy not focused on addressing the cost of living for our constituents, and we have to be clear that there is a real cost for the American worker every time they focus on this."

As we return our focus to teaching all our wonderful students—regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression—perhaps Republican members of Congress should take a page out of New Jersey educators' playbook and focus on helping *all* Americans—including their colleagues.

Please share your own insights and LGBTQIA+ inclusive practices in schools at RainbowConnectionNJEA@gmail.com, and happy new year!



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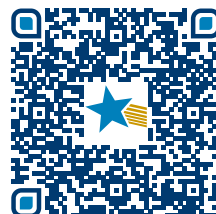


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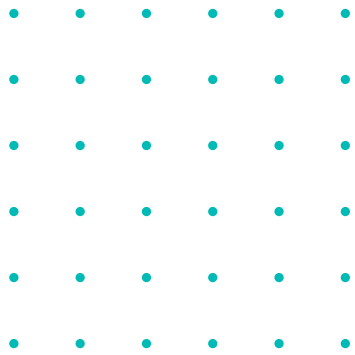
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Questions? Email Beth Buonsante at bbuonsante@njea.org.

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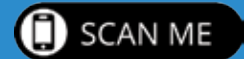
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JANUARY & beyond

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JAN 09	THURSDAY All Presidents Meeting	JAN 18	SATURDAY MLK Jr. Human Rights Celebration	FEB 07-09	FRI TO SUN ESP and Health and Safety Conference
JAN 10	FRIDAY Executive Committee	JAN/FEB 31-01	FRI & SAT Winter Leadership Conference South	FEB 21-22	FRI & SAT Winter Leadership Conference North
JAN 11	SATURDAY Delegate Assembly	FEB 05	WEDNESDAY Executive Committee	MAR 01	SATURDAY Members of Color Empowerment Conference

For more information go to NJEA.org



SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 4-6

njea Higher Education

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Further details can be found at njea.org/highered

In New Jersey, we don't ban books

We read them

On Monday, Dec. 9, Gov. Phil Murphy signed A-3446 into law. The bill, known as the Freedom to Read Act, protects New Jersey students' freedom to access and explore library materials offering a wide range of ideas, stories and perspectives. It prevents school districts from removing library materials simply because of objections to the ideas they contain.

The Freedom to Read Act ensures that boards of education cannot remove library materials because of the origin, background or views expressed. It prevents school boards from unconstitutionally censoring library offerings or stopping students from accessing developmentally appropriate library materials, including those that are diverse and inclusive.

The act also recognizes the important role that school library staff members hold. Recognizing the importance of protecting librarians and other library staff who have been targeted and harassed for providing students with access to the library, it protects them from legal attacks for doing their jobs.

The Freedom to Read Act is a monumental win for New Jersey's students, schools and libraries.

When students have a broad range of literature available to them, they can read, reflect upon and discuss diverse perspectives. They can explore worlds beyond their own and see their own worlds in a new light. When our schools uphold the right of children to pursue knowledge, we build empathy, understanding and a respect for learning in our communities.

Reading books builds bridges. Banning books builds walls.

At a time when students at every grade level are more prone to pick up a phone and get lost in social media, books encourage students to sit with ideas and think more deeply about them. When young people learn to think deeply, they begin to take charge of their learning and become hungry to learn more.

Unfortunately, what made the Freedom to Read Act necessary were the increasing attacks on books and on



Gov. Phil Murphy signs the Freedom to Read Act on Dec. 9 at the Princeton Public Library with education, community and legislative leaders. NJEA President Sean M. Spiller was present, standing at left. New Jersey Association of School Librarians President Karen Grant (at right) and North Hunterdon High School Librarian Martha Hickson (just behind Grant) were also present.

the library staff who curate and manage them. Last year, according to the American Library Association, 14 towns across New Jersey dealt with attempts to censor a total of 28 titles. And the most frequently challenged books addressed gender identity, sexual orientation and race. While book banners claimed they were protecting students, their actions instead harmed students, especially those who would no longer see themselves or their experiences reflected in the literature offered to them.

Racism and discrimination are real. LGBTQIA+ students are bullied at higher rates than their straight peers. The damage can be deep, and too often it is tragic. Adolescence is difficult regardless of identity. When young people can see themselves and their experiences in the books they read, it alleviates loneliness and isolation, and even saves lives.

If a parent or community member has a concern with a book, the processes built into the law will allow those concerns to be heard and evaluated. The law also guarantees school librarians, as trained and concerned professionals, will play a key role in the process.

The Freedom to Read Act will make it much harder to ban books in New Jersey and make it much easier for students to learn about themselves, their peers and the big, beautiful and marvelously diverse world we all share. 🌍

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